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1901-11-27

Senate.

The President took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION

WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY : BASS STRAITS

Senator CLEMONS

asked the Postmaster General, upon notice -

If he intends to take steps to prevent private persons from establishing telegraphic communication between Tasmania and the islands of Bass' Straits by a system of wireless telegraphy ?

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

- I propose to take steps, if necessary, to prevent unauthorized private persons from establishing telegraphic communication between Tasmania and the islands of Bass' Straits by a system of wireless telegraphy.

Senator Clemons

- What does " unauthorized " mean ?

Senator DRAKE

- It means not authorized by the department.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22nd' November (vide page 7703), on motion by Senator Drake -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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Senator PULSFORD

- There is one aspect of this question which, if all that has been said were true, would at once condemn the Bill of the Government as not being sufficient to meet the case with that speed which would be desirable. I may call it the humanitarian aspect. We have been told repeatedly that this traffic is honeycombed with evils so grave and serious as to be a disgrace to the Commonwealth. If one-half of that which has been affirmed were true, it would be our duty not to entertain any proposals for the continuance of the traffic ; and even if it meant the absolute destruction of the industry, it would be our duty to make the sacrifice, whatever the cost might be. But when I come to examine the question, when I find that the Government themselves think it is desirable to give five years in which to gradually terminate the employment of kanaka labour, when I find that the great majority of the anti-kanaka members - and may I say agitators - are also willing to grant this concession, then I begin to think that after all there may be some reason for the industry being allowed to go on as at present. I observe that the Bishop of Carpentaria has written a letter, in which he has very strongly supported the industry, and I take it that his lordship would not commit himself to such an opinion were the traffic in kanakas one that reflected a disgrace on Australia, and would reflect a double disgrace on a gentleman in his position. From some papers issued by Mr. Paget I find that the number of islanders who have continuously resided in Queensland for over six years is 4,416. Three years is the limit for which an engagement is possible, and as half the kanakas now in Queensland had an opportunity of returning to their islands at least three years ago, and there are now more than 4,000 who have resided there over six years, and some of them I believe for a much longer period than that, I can only conclude that the industry is not of that character which has been described by some persons. It is stated in Mr. Paget's papers that in the year 1900 the re-engagement of islanders who had previously served three years or were yet in Queensland without returning to their islands, numbered 4,131. That is, I think, a very tangible proof that the industry is not quite so black as has been painted. These papers also contain a reference to the death rate. Taking the last ten years, the average - per thousand for the first five years was 42.73, whereas for the last five years it has been only 30.6. Knowing what a large industry is carried on in Fiji, I turned up the Statesman's Year Book for 1901, and I got some very useful information on the subject of the death rate. On page 350 I found a reference to the population returns of December 31st, 1899. The population (besides native Fijians) consisted of 4,373 Europeans, 13,282 Indians, and 6,540 Polynesians. The

deaths for that year were as follows : - Fijians, 3,871, or about 40 per 1,000, against 30 per 1,000 of Pacific Islanders in Queensland in the last five years. The deaths of indentured Indians in Fiji were at the rate of only about 1 per cent., or a total of 143, and of Europeans at the rate of about 1 per cent. It seems to me to be an established fact that the natives of the South Sea Islands are a dying race, or, at any rate, that their death rate is very greatly in excess of that of not only the Europeans, but of such races as the Indians. I find that the death rate of the Pacific Islanders in Queensland is practically the same as that of the Fijians in their native home. Therefore once again I am driven to the conclusion that the industry in Queensland is not quite of the character which has been described by some persons. Then I would take some figures in regard to the half-castes. We are told that there are a number of kanaka half-castes in Queensland, and that this is a very dreadful matter. I am afraid that it is a very common thing for people to carry the sins of others in front of them, and to put their own sins behind them. The figures of the last census with regard to half-castes in Queensland are as follows : - Kanakas, 181 ; Chinese, 726 ; aboriginals, 1,533 ; other aliens, 41.

Senator Dobson

- But the number of kanaka half-castes with white women is only 41.

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Senator PULSFORD

- I thought that these figures represented the position as worse than it is. But I am content to let the 181 stand. It really represents 140 half-castes with aboriginals, and 41 half-caste's with white women in a period of 35. years. Contrasting that with the 1,533 half-caste aboriginals in Queensland alone, and then with the total of 7,067 half-caste aboriginals throughout the Commonwealth, I feel that we white people are not quite in a position to throw stones at the kanakas. Nor do I feel that we are in a position to say that this industry is so inherently bad. that it ought to be wiped away forthwith. I think that that aspect of the question may be regarded as being done with, and that we may proceed to discuss the matter on fair, reasonable, political, and business grounds. We have been told that this subject is dealt with in two separate Bills, and that it is necessary for us if we would understand and deal properly with it, to bear that fact in mind. For many years, on the Queensland Tariff, there has been a duty of £5 per ton on sugar, but as I suppose every honorable senator knows, it has been, entirely inoperative from the fact that the production of sugar there has immensely exceeded the consumption, and ' that the price of sugar in Queensland has been ruled by the world's market, and not at all influenced by the local Tariff. Some years ago, when the Queensland industry was in some little trouble, I remember that the present Prime Minister of Australia wrote a letter to the Sydney Morning Herald in which he stated that there were two ways in which the sugar industry might be helped. One, he said, was by putting on a protective duty, and the other was by allowing the planters to employ free labour. A considerable laugh-, went up at the expense of Mr. Barton when it was shown that there was already a duty of £8 a ton on sugar under the Queensland Tariff. The question is how far a duty is likely to be protective in regard to sugar, produced and consumed within the limits of the Commonwealth. The Tariff of the Government proposes a duty of £6 a ton on all sugars, and the same duty on syrups, whereas the excise proposed is £3 on sugar, and nothing on syrups ; and there is an arrangement that in a year's time, where white labour only has been employed, this excise shall be reduced to £1, and, further, that in five years' time the whole' of the excise shall be swept away. If it were possible to carry out the scheme that the Government have in their minds, it would constitute the most colossal job that Australia has ever seen. What do the figures mean? The Government say that the consumption of sugar in Australia totals something like 170,000 tons.. If the duty is protective, the whole of the 170,000 tons of sugar will be increased in value by the amount of £6 per ton, -representing a total of £1,020,000 for one year. The Government calculate that about 20,000 tons will be required to be imported, and at £6 a ton duty, that will give the Customs a revenue of £120,000. Consequently, the £6 a ton on the Australian sugar represents £900,000. For the first year the Government say that they will get £410,000. That is the figure given in their own estimate. But as the scheme of the Government progresses, it will work out in the following manner. The imported sugar will yield £120,000 to the Treasury. Queensland, supplying us with 125,000 tons of sugar, would get £750,000; New South Wales, supplying -25,000 tons, would get £150,000. That "is to say, the industry in those two States would get those large sums of money, -aggregating £900,000. It will be interesting to note the way in which Senator Drake referred to this matter when introducing the Bill. He said -

We cannot discuss this Bill altogether apart from, the financial proposals of the Government. The Government are proposing to ask the people of Australia to make a considerable sacrifice in order to facilitate the substitution of white for kanaka labour. That natural movement -which has been going on for a long time past in favour of substituting the higher paid and more effective labour for the cheaper and less effective labour can surely be greatly facilitated by the adoption of such proposals as the Government are submitting in another place. It is clearly necessary that these two measures should be considered together. A strong justification for the action of the Government in introducing this measure, and asking Parliament to deal with it now, is that until the people of Australia understand clearly what is to be the attitude of Parliament in regard to it, a decision cannot be arrived at upon the measure which has been submitted to honorable members in another place.

Senator Higgs

- The sugar duties.

Senator DRAKE

- I refer, of course, to the sugar duties contained in the Tariff. We must know, first of all, what a'ttitude Parliament is going to take up in regard to this Bill before honorable members in another place can be asked to decide what shall be done with the sugar duties.

Senator Pulsford

- Has the Postmaster-General figured out the sacrifice which Australia "is to be asked to make in that respect ?

Senator DRAKE

- No ; but I have heard it mentioned at £500,000.

Mr. Mantilini, one of Dickens' famous characters, on a certain occasion, when a sum of money was mentioned ending with a halfpenny, said - " Dem the halfpenny "; and that is very much the attitude of the Government with regard to the half-million pounds thus referred to by

Senator Drake. It appears that he would not have thought it necessary to refer to the monetary amount of the " sacrifice " if the question had not been put to him ; and when the question was put, the answer was not exactly in the terms given by Mansard, but it was that "somebody said" half-a-million. Some senator on this side of the chamber had interjected "half-a-million. In this easy and demure way did ' Senator Drake deal with this important matter of half-a-million of money, which was the amount which Queensland would get.

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Senator Drake

- Not which Queensland would get, but which Australia would

Pay- Senator PULSFORD. - Which Queensland would get; and if the amount obtained by the industry in New South Wales were, added, and the whole scheme of the Government came into 'full play, according to their own figures there would, as I have said, be a total of something like £900,000 distributed amongst those engaged in the industry. I say that that represents a most colossal job. It is very desirable that we should look at this money aspect of the question . from the point of view of the finances of one or two of the States. I will take the States of Tasmania and South Australia, because in both States a revenue of about £48,000 is being obtained from sugar. Tasmania consumes about 8,000 tons of sugar, and at £6 a ton the sum of £48,000 is paid by the consumers in that State. The Tasmanian Treasury has been enriched from year to year by the sum of £48,000. Every penny that has been collected by the duty has gone into the Tasmanian Treasury, to assist in meeting the engagements of that State, which are admitted by every one to be of a serious and important character. If we refer to the finance papers issued by the Government themselves, we shall find that in this present year the Government anticipate that Tasmania will obtain a total of about £25,000 from sugar. The balance of £23,000 will be lost to the Tasmanian Treasury. But please remember that it will have been paid by the people of Tasmania. That is to say, the people of Tasmania will have to pay £48,000 to the Government and to the industry, according to., the figures which have been submitted in the finance papers, but the Tasmanian Treasury will only receive about £25,000. . The other £23,000, forming a portion of this sum which Senator Drake calls the "sacrifice," will go to the industry. That is the amount when the scheme of the Government is only in its infancy. When that scheme is in full play the Treasurer of Tasmania is to receive not one single penny from excise. The whole of the excise will be gone from the State, and all that will be left will be a possible

£6,000 from imported sugar. Whilst all the time ,£6,000 is being paid into the Treasury, the people of Tasmania are to go on year after year paying the total of £48,000. Yet we are told that Tasmania needs consideration, and that the Tasmanian finances must be considered ! Now I will come to the case of South Australia. That State consumes about twice the quantity of sugar that Tasmania does - that is 16,000 tons. But the duty in South Australia is one-half the Tasmanian rate, or £3 per ton. Consequently, at the present time the revenue being received from 'sugar by the people of South Australia is the same as that being received in Tasmania, namely, £48,000. The papers issued by the Government show that South Australia is to pay £6 per ton, or £96,000. The South Australian sugar payments this year will be doubled, but the Treasury will only get about the same as before. When the scheme is in full operation, the total of £96,000 will be collected from the people of South Australia, , but only £12,000 will be paid into the Treasury of South Australia, whilst £84,000 will be sent somewhere else. The position as regards Tariff protection is clearly doubtful, because it can only be operative if the production of sugar can be maintained below a certain point, so that there shall be nothing for export, and the natural laws of protection are allowed to operate, unless, indeed, another factor steps in. I think, Mr. President, that the arrangements which are being made point to a considerable extent to the possibility of Australia being saddled with a sugar trust which may use the scheme of the Government for its own enrichment, and do very little for the enrichment of Australia as a whole. Behind the cover of this Tariff the Government will collect huge sums of money from the whole of the States of Australia, and some trust, without being able to do much for the industry, will be enabled to pay very" huge dividends. I want the Senate to understand that already, in the year 1898, Australia has produced more sugar than she consumed. That is to say, Queensland produced 163,000 tons, and, I think, New South Wales produced 25,000 tons in the same year - that is, a total of 188,000 tons. But the Government now only estimate a consumption of 170,000 tons; so that the production in 1898 was considerably above the consumption, and we find that for the next year the estimate of production is considerably in excess of the Government estimate of the consumption. We are told that in 1902 151,000 tons are expected to be produced in Queensland,, and if the production of New South Wales be only 25,000 tons, we shall thus have a total of 176,000 tons, again in excess of the Government's estimate of consumption. Every honorable senator can see that if a protective duty, aggregating 50 per cent., were given to the production of sugar, and sugar could be produced under the new conditions, the total output would increase so rapidly that it would be impossible really to obtain, any protection. The supply of sugar would be so great that the whole output would have to be sold at the world's prices, always providing that a sugar trust were not formed to maintain prices here while selling the surplus to the rest of the world at the world's prices. The planters, the farmers, and producers of sugar in Queensland, however, are not led away by this idea of a great protective duty. If they felt that they could obtain these huge sums of money, and continue the industry by the aid of that money, I am sure they would say - " Let us rest and be thankful,"and there would not be the agitation for better conditions which we see taking place from . one end of the industry to the other. Therefore, I ask honorable senators to bear in mind the peculiar circumstances attaching to the sugar duties ; and that, if the arrangements, suggested by the Government can be carried out, the burden thrown on the Tariff will be of a most colossal character. I ask the Senate also to view this matter from the ground which I shall take up in dealing with it : to throw out of consideration the other Bill, and to deal with the kanaka question on its own merits. We should deal with the question of the duty on sugar on its own merits when it comes before us. I should- like to say a word or two in regard to the climate in which sugar is produced. A good deal was said on this subject last week, and therefore I do not. propose to go into the matter lengthily, although it would be very easy to deluge the Senate with quotations. I am going to content myself with a short quotation bearing on this point from a statement by Sir Chas. Todd, the Government Astronomer of South Australia. Writing of the climate of South Australia, he states -

During the three summer months, December, January, and February, the heat is often very great, the temperature ranging in most years as high as 110 degrees. The mean for these months is 71 '3, 74 '2, and 74 '0 respectively, and the thermometer exceeds 90 degrees, on the average, on eleven days in January, ten in February, and nine in December.

Then Sir Charles Todd goes on to say -

The extreme dryness of the air, however, renders the heat very bearable and healthy.

In these few words lies the one secret in regard to temperature, which we have all to bear in mind. If a

heat be very fierce and dry, it is more bearable than a lower temperature which is saturated with moisture, and I can see that it is quite possible for us to be bearing a heat in a dry atmosphere which would be absolutely unbearable to white men working amongst the sugar cane. The Bishop of Carpentaria, in a letter referring to the farmers in Queensland, says -

All the farmers say the same, "If we are deprived of coloured labour, as things are at present, we are utterly ruined. We should prefer to employ white labour, but we cannot get it. We find it difficult in getting even ploughmen, though that is easy work, and as for cutting cane, we would not do it ourselves for our own cane, and no white men will tackle it in this climate."

Says the Bishop further -

There may be some element of exaggeration in this. As regards the ploughmen, it may be that men could be obtained by higher wages, but as to the cane-cutting, I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that what they say has a very large element of truth in it. Fifteen years ago I heard the same cry that the white man could cut cane, and I have been waiting all these years to see him do it, but have not seen or heard, of one instance.

The Bishop of Carpentaria writes, I believe, from the Mossman River, which is the extreme northern limit of the sugar growing districts. It is necessary that we should bear in mind the difference that exists between different sections of the sugar producing districts of Queensland. We must all be prepared to conceive the possibility of sugar being produced by white labour in the more southern portions of those districts, whilst at the same time the industry would be absolutely destroyed in the extreme northern part of Queensland by the abolition of Kanaka labour. I think it worth while to draw the attention of honorable senators to a quotation from a book by Mr. Benjamin Kidd, a very well known writer, and the author of a book entitled Social Evolution. He has written another book on the Control of the Tropics, in the course of which he says -

In the first place the attempt to acclimatise the white man in the tropics must be [recognised to be a blunder of the first magnitude. All experiments based upon the idea are mere idle and empty enterprises foredoomed to failure.

Further on he says -

We come, therefore, to a clearly defined position. If we have to meet the fact that, by force of circumstances, the tropics must be developed - and if the evidence is equally emphatic that such development can only take place under the influence of the white man - we are confronted with a larger issue than any mere question of commercial policy or of national selfishness. The tropics, in such circumstances, can only be governed as a trust for civilization, and with a full sense of the responsibility which such a trust involves. The first principle of success in undertaking such a duty seems, to the writer, to be a clear recognition of the cardinal fact that, in the tropics, the white man lives and works only as a diver lives and works under water. Alike in a moral, in an ethical, and in a political sense, the atmosphere he breathes must be that of another region, than that which produced him, and to which he belongs. Neither physically, morally, nor politically can he be acclimatised in the tropics.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- Mr Kidd's conclusions have been confused by the best authorities.

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Senator PULSFORD

- Mr Benjamin Kidd is a recognised authority on the subjects upon which he writes. I give his opinions to the Senate, and ask honorable senators to deal with them when they are considering the many other quotations that have been offered to them. I conceive that this question has to-day arrived at a very different stage from that which existed some years ago when those engaged in the industry in Queensland were merely planters. I believe that some ten years ago, when considerable agitation on the subject was aroused in Queensland, there were only 125 farmers engaged in the industry. I quote that figure from a speech made by Mr. Philp, in the Queensland Parliament, last Friday. We know from the papers before us that at the present time there are about 2,610 farmers who are gaining a livelihood by means of this industry in Queensland. Therefore, the position to-day is a widely different one from that of a few years ago. It is - not a position which affects a limited number of capitalists, but one which affects a very large and important section of settlers and the State itself. I desire now to put before the Senate some remarks made by the farmers of the Johnstone River district in the form of a petition to the House of

Representatives. They say -

That we were induced to go into sugar-cane fanning in -1893, at a time when all Australia was in dire distress, and an almost universal cry was raised almost imploring the people to go out on the land and produce, that being the first and most essential step in the direction of retrieving the losses of that period of awful collapse.

Every inducement was held out all round, and most especially and conspicuously was this so in sugar-cane Culture, for the Government of Queensland, through its Department of Agriculture, published and circulated broadcast, in the Colonies and Great Britain, a pamphlet in 1893 on sugar planting, a copy of which is appended, and it declared, inter alia, in the following exact words: - "The trouble about the labour supply had ceased ; that the country had decided that Polynesians shall supply the sugar producers with that labour which is necessary to the progress and development of the sugar industry. "It (cane-growing) is the most thriving and prosperous of the agricultural industries of Queensland," and the Government again stated specifically "Kanakas the country allows" the cane farmer.

The contents of that pamphlet, and the assurance, above all things, as to the labour were the sole inducements to us to settle in this district in and since 1893.

The majority of us have been eight years now carving our homesteads out of the vast impenetrable tropical scrubs of the densest of Australia's fertile regions.

We have made our homes in the full confidence and full belief of the absolute truth of the promise then made to us by the State of Queensland.

With most of us it has been the last effort of our lives, and if the principles of right and wrong are to be applied at all, we claim the first application of them. We have the strongest moral right with us. We have the laws of natural justice on our side. And we assert that, after years of toil under the most adverse conditions, that our past hard and severe experiences have proved to us that the labour (only) of the kanaka is a necessary part of the machinery which enables us to help to produce one and a half millions of wealth annually for circulation in the country.....

We respectfully assert that over 80 per cent, of the cane farmers of Queensland had the same inducements held out to them by the State Government, especially those at Mossman, Mulgrave, Herbert, Prosperine, several parts of the Mackay district, and the Isis most particularly.

We now only ask for a full, deliberate, and fair consideration of our case, and a reasonable application of the principles of right and wrong, and we believe we can honestly claim it, for to a man we were loyal to federation, because of our simple and pure belief in the ultimate- good it would be for the Empire generally, and a firm, and undying confidence in the mature judgment, and good faith of our fellow Australians in the South.

We do not ask for compensation, because' nothing can compensate us for the loss of our homes we so fondly and full of hope have carved out of the solid scrub, in the firm belief that, while providing for ourselves, we were building up a part of the bulwarks and defences of the State, and establishing on the almost impossible tropical freeboard of the North a yeomanry of which Australia would one day be proud. We appeal to Australia and the Empire to extend to us, in its fullest, widest sense, the first principles of right and wrong, the laws of natural justice, and rescue us and a noble industry from the chimerical fears of the representatives of a " class " who really are at the root of the present question, because they affect to fear that the kanaka will encroach on their domains, notwithstanding the fact that it is abundantly proved that the same kanaka is the simple means of: creating work, and highly-paid work, for thousands of artisans directly, and an untold number indirectly, and in face of the fact that the selfsame kanaka is strictly precluded by law from, doing any other work than "tropical agriculture."

We do not dilate upon the humane side of the question, for we feel too proudly conscious that no honorable fellow Australian would ever accuse us of aught but " fair play " to those who work for and are dependent on us.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray - That you will give every consideration to the peculiar conditions by which they are surrounded.

That you will cause a full inquiry to be made into the whole of the workings of the sugar industry of Queensland before finally placing upon the statute-book any enactments which will prejudice it, and, above all, that you will preserve intact the first principles of the Constitutions of the Empire, and hold our homes and means of livelihood sacred.

Dated this 14th day of October, 1901.

That is signed by a number of the farmers. We have been deluged with opinions from society after society, and body after body, and therefore I do not propose to inflict much on the Senate in that way myself. I think, however, I may draw attention to a resolution passed by the farmers of the Mossman Association.

The farmers of the Mossman River," the most northern Queensland sugar district, see nothing but ruin and destruction in the Kanaka Bill.

Then the Cairns association sends this telegram -

This society has placed on record, that in its opinion the proposed legislation means that the cane farmers will be ruined, and the land will revert to its natural state.

A large amount of discussion and dispute has taken place as to what Queensland itself desires in this matter.

Senator Higgs

- Hear, hear.

Senator PULSFORD

- We have been assured by the honorable senator, who now interjects, and by several of his colleagues, that Queensland contains a very large majority of people who wish to extend no greater mercy to the sugar industry than is contained within the clauses of the Bill which the Government has introduced. On the other hand, the Government of Queensland, society after society, and district after district, have protested against it, and the fact clearly remains that Queensland is not united on the subject. Although a certain number of people in Queensland, and a large number we may grant, desire the traffic in kanakas to be brought to an end at an early date, at whatever cost to the industry itself, there still exists a very large number of people whose views and whose influence must be considered. I was very much surprised on looking at the Brisbane Courier of Saturday last to find that the representatives of the labour party in the Queensland Parliament are not at all at one upon this matter. I find that Mr. Barber, who, I believe, is the gentleman who has succeeded Senator Glassey as member for Bundaberg in the Queensland Parliament, is prepared to give the sugar industry seven years in which to substitute white for kanaka labour.

Senator Higgs

- He has denied that since.

Senator PULSFORD

- I have in my hand a report of a speech made by Mr. Barber only on Friday last, in the Queensland Parliament, and seven years is the period which it appears he is prepared to allow:

Senator Higgs

- I assure the honorable senator that I have a letter stating that that is a gross misrepresentation.

Senator PULSFORD

- I find that Mr. Philp, the Premier, in speaking, said -

Even the honorable member for Bundaberg said seven years was a fair thing -

Mr Barber interjected

You misunderstood me. I said seven years for clearing them out altogether.

Those are Mr. Barber's exact words, spoken on Friday last. Something much more important remains still to be said. Mr.

Browne, who, I believe, telegraphed to Senator Higgs last week, and who is the leader of the Opposition and of the labour party in the Queensland Parliament, in the course of his remarks on Friday last is reported to have spoken as follows : -

He would say that if any harm came to the sugar industry - and he hoped it would not, and did not believe it would - if the men opposed to kanakas set their teeth more determinedly once and for all, those responsible for it were the gentlemen at the head of the Government, the Courier newspaper, and a few of the strong supporters of the Government. Had those people recognised that there was no hope for a continuance of coloured labour,' and come forward and said so, and said it was necessary to have a little longer time -

Mr. Cowley. They ask for an inquiry only.

Mr. BROWNE said that though he considered five years ample time, he considered that had there been .

a recognition that the black labour must cease, there would have been more time given.

That is the latest utterance from the leader of the Opposition in the Queensland Parliament. And I venture to claim, in spite of Senators Higgs and Glassey and several other representatives of Queensland, that they do not in this Senate fairly represent the views of Queensland in this matter.

Senator Glassey

- What a piece of gross presumption on the honorable senator's part ! Does the honorable senator represent the State of New South Wales ?

Senator PULSFORD

- I have succeeded in drawing Senator Glassey out of his calm repose, and perhaps he will now allow me to proceed. I say it is a fairly deducible fact that even the labour party--

Senator Glassey

- Why should the honorable senator presume to say that we do not represent Queensland ? Senator PULSFORD. - I shall allow Senator Glassey to rise and make an explanation if he chooses, but if he -does not choose I should prefer to be allowed to finish what I have to say. I say it is a fairly deducible fact from the evidence before us, that the majority of those who are entitled to speak at all in a public sense for Queensland are in favour of an extension of time.

Senator Glassey

- Who are they ?

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Senator PULSFORD

- Am I to answer that question? Does Senator Glassey believe that Mr. Browne has any voice in Queensland ? I have just quoted from Mr. Browne. Honorable senators can in their own minds and by their own votes attach what weight they choose to the quotation I have given, but the fact remains that Mr. Browne, the leader of the Opposition in the- Queensland Parliament, has put it on record so late as Friday last, that he is not antagonistic to granting more time to the sugar industry.

Senator Dobson

- That bears out everything that Senator Ferguson has always told us.

Senator PULSFORD

- I desire now to draw attention to some of the clauses of this Bill. .In clause 2 we have the term " Pacific Island Labourer," used, and the term includes -

All natives not of European extraction of any island except the islands of New Zealand situated in the Pacific Ocean beyond the Commonwealth.

The Pacific Ocean occupies about one-half of the surface of the globe. It is the greatest stretch of water the earth contains, and, within the Pacific Ocean there are a great many more islands than those from which Queensland has been in the habit of importing kanakas. Most of the islands of Japan are in the Pacific. The British island of Vancouver - a part of the Canadian dominions - is in the Pacific Ocean. By this clause there is no doubt at all that we include a large number of the people of Japan. It cannot be said that we include, them all, because on one side of some of the- islands of Japan there lies the Sea of Japan, and I take it, that to be in the Pacific Ocean means- that the waters of the Pacific must entirely surround the island. There are many of the islands of Japan which are absolutely surrounded by the waters of the' Pacific Ocean, and we have, therefore, by this clause included a considerable number of the people b"f Japan. I see that by paragraph (6), persons employed as part of the crew of a ship are exempt. There are exemptions under the Queensland Act, and I suppose this must be read in connection with them. This exemption, I suppose, will be taken to include those who are employed in the pearl shell industry, and we therefore see that a concession of a very important character is granted, not for five years, but in perpetuity.

Senator DRAKE

- Those are persons who are exempted under the Queensland Act. -

Senator PULSFORD

- Then I see there are exempted -

Persons possessed of certificates of exemption under the Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

I want to ask how we can pass this- Bill in priority to the Immigration Restriction Bill? How can we pass

this Bill through committee when it contains a clause referring to the Immigration Restriction Bill which we have not yet considered, much less agreed to ? I would remind the Senate that the Immigration Restriction Bill was passed through nearly all its stages before this Bill was put before the House of Representatives, and why we should be asked to agree to a Bill which refers to a provision in another measure with which we have not yet dealt is a question which I think needs some little explanation.

Senator Drake

- We did that when we were passing the Post and Telegraph Bill.

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Senator PULSFORD

- We have done two or three things which we ought not to have done, but the commission of a sin does not warrant its repetition. Clause 3 of the Bill reads -

No Pacific Island labourer shall enter Australia on or after the 31st day of March, 1904.

I draw the attention of the Senate to the fact that, taken in conjunction with the remarks I have made on the definition of the term "Pacific Island labourer," we have here a direct prohibition of the importation of a large number of the Japanese. I do not believe that that is intended, but we cannot get away from the fact that they are hit at by the clause. It seems to me that the Pacific Island labourer is looked upon as a poor sort- of "cuss," who may be kicked with impunity. The people of Asia proper have more or less strong friends, and they have to be treated with some . respect, and it seems strange to me, when I count .up the tens of thousands pf aliens in Australia, even in Queensland itself, that these few thousand South Sea Islanders should be picked out for expulsion, to be kicked out without hardly time to say their prayers. I should like the Senate to consider how clause 6, dealing with the granting of licences, can, possibly be equitably worked. The Bill provides that next year 75 kanakas shall be allowed to come back for every 100 that have- left, and in the following year 50 for every 100. If all the plantations in Queensland belonged to one owner I could conceive that this provision might be worked ; but when we have 2,600 farmers, the large majority of them employing coloured labour, with agreements expiring this month, next month, this year, or next' year, I conceive that we cannot in this way deal with them with any element of fairness. If one man employed six kanakas,. and the term of their agreement were up next year, then he would be entitled to four and a half, I suppose? I do not know bow it would be reckoned. Another man, further on, having six men, would have to get rid, the year later, of three, whereas any farmer who had this year imported the whole of the labour he required would not need to part with any for a term of three years. There will be very great difficulty in carrying out the clause as it stands with the slightest approach to fairness. The moment it is enacted that the importation must cease after five years, and that in the interval it must be limited, by that very action we give a considerable value to the kanakas who are now in Queensland.

Senator Charleston

- But they are under agreement.

Senator PULSFORD

- The kanakas are under agreement, but no agreement extends beyond three years, and there is nothing in this Bill or any Act which precludes a kanaka from making a new engagement when his agreement expires. Therefore, I take it that one .of the possibilities of this Bill is that a close corporation in kanakas will be established, and that, as the years roll on, their yearly price will increase. That is a contingency which the Senate must consider. In New South Wales, in 1888, a Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, raising the entrance-fee to £100. It is remarkable what an effect that had at once on the departures of the Chinese who were residents. In the period from 1883 to 1887 the departures of Chinamen averaged 1,764, ranging from 1,038 to 2,773 ; but in the ten years following the average fell to 581, although there were about 14,000 Chinamen, in New South Wales when the census was taken in 1891. The lesson to be learned from that is, I think, one to be remembered in our dealings with the kanaka question, and I put it to the Senate that the clauses of the Bill as. they stand do not fairly and reasonably meet the case. If we desire to get rid of the kanaka within a certain time we should decide in our minds what that time should be, and then limit the employment per acre or per number of acres, reducing it by a, given quantity every two or three years until the number expires.

Senator Dobson

- Does the honorable senator hold that we have the right to deport the kanakas? 22 p

Senator PULSFORD

- Clause 8 deals with the subject of deportation. The Government do not assume a right to deport, but only take permissive power. , Again, I ask the Senate to notice what there is behind the Bill. It is a piece of humbug from beginning to end. The clause reads -

An officer authorized in that behalf may bring before a court of summary jurisdiction -

It does not say that he " shall " do it. The matter of deportation is a serious one, and I can very well understand the hesitation which the Government have shown in taking a power, which I do not believe the Constitution bestows upon them, to deport Japanese and British subjects of various kinds who come under the definition of residents of the ' Pacific Islands. The Government may have some power, if they choose to put it into operation, to deport some of these South Sea Islanders who are without friends, or even those who have friends, if Ministers think they can be safely disregarded.

Senator Dobson

- But the definition of South Sea Islanders implies that they are under no jurisdiction of any State - that they belong to nobody.

Senator PULSFORD

- The definition of a Pacific Island labourer is a resident in any island within the Pacific.

Senator Dobson

- But not under the jurisdiction of any Power.

Senator PULSFORD

- It does not say not under the jurisdiction of any Power, but it says that - Pacific Island labourer includes all natives not of European extraction.

Senator Playford

- That includes Japanese and Javanese 1

Senator PULSFORD

-Of course it does. The Government take permissive power to deport. They dare not lay hands on a Japanese or a British subject and forcibly deport him.

Senator Walker

- Nor an American negro, I suppose ?

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Senator PULSFORD

- No ; but they might screw up courage enough to deport some of the residents of the South Sea Islands. I very much doubt whether they would be found game to draw the line in the way that would be required.

Then sub-clause (2) of clause 8 reads -

The Minister may order a Pacific Island labourer found in Australia after the 31st day of December, 1906, to be returned to the place from which he was originally brought into Australia, and thereupon he shall be returned accordingly.

Permissive power again is taken. I take it that we ought not to give the Government permissive power to deal in this way. with even South Sea Islanders, meaning the islands from which, we are in the habit of importing our kanakas. In Queensland we have a considerable number who have resided there for many years. Some of them are reputable citizens, some of them have lived there for years without offending against the laws, and some of them are comparable with advantage to many aliens from other parts of the world. I do not think it is fitting that we should do to the Pacific Islanders that which we are not prepared to do to the great mass of the aliens who have come to Australia from -the continent of Asia.

Senator CHARLESTON

- Is not that an argument in favour of using the word " may " instead of the word "shall "V

Senator PULSFORD

- It is in favour of having .no such clause ; it is in favour of dealing with the kanaka in the same way as we intend to deal with other coloured aliens. I take it for granted that the true course of legislation in regard to this measure would be that we should pass the second reading, go into committee, and then try to beat some common sense and fair play into it. We should certainly give to the sugar industry in Queensland a longer limit of life than seems to be possible for it under the Bill as it now stands.

Senator DRAKE(Queensland - Postmaster-General). - I beg to move -

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as will enable Senator Fraser to continue his speech

commenced on Friday last.

It will be remembered that Senator Fraser resumed his seat on Friday afternoon, and received permission to continue to-day ; but unfortunately he was not present at the commencement of the sitting.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Senator FRASER

- I am grateful to Senator Drake for his kindness in moving the resolution which allows me to continue my speech, and .to the Senate for its courtesy in granting the permission. I could not possibly be present earlier, as I had an important engagement which I could not break. I wish to clear up one or two little points before I conclude my speech. I am going to make one or two more quotations from the speech delivered by Sir Samuel Griffith at the time when his Government introduced the Bill under which Pacific Islanders are now working in Queensland. Sir Samuel said -

And it seems to me that there are only two alternatives - to do nothing, and let the sugar industry slowly struggle on until, the necessary European labour can be introduced and acclimatised, with the possible result that in the meanwhile it may be greatly diminished, if not altogether extinguished.

The other quotation which I wish to make is also from Sir Samuel Griffith's speech. He said -

I certainly shall not be deterred by any amount of abuse from pressing forward anything that I consider to be for the benefit of the country, and I do not think any useful purpose is to be served by adopting the arguments of abuse. Only to-day I received a- resolution on this subject, which contained the most remarkable combination of abusive epithets which I have ever seen in any resolution respecting, myself.

Sir Samuel Griffith also said

We have had for some years a large sugar industry going on in this colony. At present it is certainly not increasing j indeed, it is suffering under a very great depression - so great indeed that only three or four months ago it was the avowed intention of the owners of certain mills . and land to withdraw from the industry - to save as much out of the wreck at they could, and then withdraw. It is of no use denying, that. But if the sugar industry is doomed to. disappear, what have we to take its place ? Nothing. Some of us - I for one - have been struggling for years to induce white people to engage in that industry.

Senator Higgs

- That was a time of depression which afflicted all Australia.

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Senator FRASER

- I hope, at any rate, that Senator Higgs will recognise from what I have read that Sir Samuel Griffith has not changed his opinion. This measure was. passed, and is now in force. Another statement which I wish to read is from Dr. Maxwell. He says -

In Mackay district we find a medium in then economic state of things corresponding to the mean in the climatic conditions ; ' while in the ultra-tropical conditions of the northern district the white cane-grower confines himself more* wholly to the direction and overseeing of the coloured labour, which performs the greatest part of the field work. In the hot, moist conditions of the northern, cane-fields, the hand-weeding, trashing, and cutting ore. done wholly by coloured labour ; and it is in those severe climatic conditions, marked by heavy rainfall, and a hot, moist atmosphere, that hand- weeding and trashing are the most indispensable; or, in other words, where such acts of field work ore the most difficult to the white man, it is there that they are the most, urgent and necessary. About three-fifths of the total number of kanakas employed in sugar- work are found in the cane-fields of the tropical district of Cairns, and yet little more than one-third of the total cane areas of Queensland are found in that district. The facts that I have adduced show us that we cannot escape the determining action of natural conditions upon white settlement, and upon the labour efficiencies of the races ; and these facts also impress upon us the further fact that those conditions of nature must be kept in constant view when measures are being framed dealing with economic questions and situations which arise out of natural conditions. A measure, gentlemen, is now before the Commonwealth Parliament having for its purpose the total removal of kanaka labour, and the substitution of white labour throughout the sugar industry. With the principle of the measure, and with any reasons for or against its enactment other than economic reasons, I have nothing to do. Whether the kanaka shall go or not is a matter upon which I have not or shall not give an opinion. It is with the question of providing some adequate labour power for carrying on the sugar, industry of Queensland that I am concerned ; and I have said, and must say it again, that if the industry is made to

depend wholly on white labour, then cane-growing north of Mackay must die out.

Senator McGregor interjected on Friday afternoon, that one-fifth of the sugar produced in Queensland is grown in the north. I had not the facts by me "at the moment, but I have them now. I am going to quote the figures for the coining year.

Senator Glassey

- I quoted the figures for 1899.

Senator FRASER

- The figures I am going to give the Senate are up to the most recent date.

Senator Glassey

- We are placed at a disadvantage, because the honorable senator has private information.

Senator FRASER

- I am not going to split straws about a few thousand tons, but I wish the Senate to be placed in possession of the latest information. The estimate of the production of sugar for 1902 south of Rockhampton is 55,000 tons. The estimate of the production of sugar north of Rockhampton is 96,000 tons, making a total of 151,000 tons. This is an official estimate, and may be taken to be fairly correct. So that the production of the north, instead of being one-fifth of the whole, is about two-thirds of the whole. I hope, therefore, that Senator McGregor, recognising that he was under a misapprehension in the interjection he made, will see his way to vote for saving the men of the north.

Senator Glassey

- Senator McGregor was quite right according to the figures I quoted, which were for 1899.

Senator FRASER

- He was utterly wrong according to the most recent figures. 22 p 2

That error being corrected, I will say no more about it. On Friday I stated that there were 40,000 odd whites depending on the sugar industry. I find that I underestimated the number. There are 48,264 whites connected with the sugar districts: This statement is obtained from- official, sources. In the district of Cairns there, are 15,900, and in Mackay 11,000, or about 27,000 in the two districts. But in the whole of the sugar districts of Queensland there are over 48,000 whites engaged in connexion with the industry. That is a very important point for honorable senators, to remember.

Senator Higgs

- Senator Fraser has been telling us that the whites cannot exist in the north.

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Senator FRASER

- I have not said that a white man cannot exist in the north. I do not deny that whites can work in the mills in that district. What I have always contended is, that white men cannot trash the cane, and work in the fields of the north. I am prepared to give up a good deal in regard to my attitude on this question, if it can be proved that white- men can do field work in connexion with sugar- 1 cane at Cairns. The experts agree with me on that point. In my opinion, it is a travesty on wise government to ruin the cane farmers in North Queensland. And why ? To put the sugar industry into the hands of foreign growers. Why ruin the cane farmers of the North, and put the industry into the hands of growers in Java ? It is not as though all the sugar required in Australia could be produced in the southern, parts of Queensland. Bundaberg cannot produce all we require, nor anything like it. We shall have to buy sugar from Java and elsewhere, where servile labour is employed at 3d. per day, and there are no restrictive laws. We have the option, of continuing the present Act, or of extending the time allowed for the- abolition of kanaka labour for a few years, so as not to interfere with a profitable industry, upon which a vast number of whites are dependent.. I cannot understand why we should deliberately drive 500 or 600 farmers from the cane-fields of the north of Queensland to the south, and help to bring ruin on Queensland. The extension of the present system for a few years would -save the position, and I cannot conceive why the proposal of the .Government should be .carried .- out. I have a statement here, addressed by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture of Queensland - that is to say, the Minister of the department - to the Premier of that State, and but for the fact that I desired to read it, I should not have cared much if I had not been able to continue my speech to-day. It is a very forcible statement, and ought to commend itself to honorable senators who have not yet made up their minds on this question. The Minister is Mr. Dalrymple, member for Mackay in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, and his memorandum is as follows : -

At the present time sugar-growing is our most important agricultural industry. About one-fourth of all the cultivated land in Queensland is under sugar-cane, and three-fourths of the value of all Queensland's agricultural exports must be credited to sugar. The number of white persons directly or indirectly supported by the industry cannot be less than 20,000-

Senator MCGREGOR

- The honorable senator said, on Friday last, that there were 40,000 directly and indirectly interested in the industry.

Senator FRASER

- I gave the official records for the other statement - and the amount of capital invested because of it cannot be less than £7,000,000. Without it, such towns as Bundaberg, Mackay, and Cairns could hardly exist, and the splendid steamers now plying along the coast from Rockhampton northward would find their occupation gone. Should it be extinguished-, or even seriously injured, southern farmers would lose their best markets, and southern ironfounders their most profitable customers.

I know that the 20,000 does not include sailors, engineers, and sea-faring men generally, as well as foundry men.

Senator Higgs

- And the people who Consume the sugar.

Senator FRASER

- We do not desire to include them. The statement continues -

A brief sketch of its origin, progress, and prospects may therefore be of some interest just now.

The first attempt at sugar-growing in Queensland, on a commercial scale, was made in the early sixties, when the Hon. Louis Hope, a near kinsman of the first Governor-General of the Australian Commonwealth, commenced operations in the neighbourhood of Cleveland. His labourers were islanders from Erromanga and Tanna. By 1868 he had 80 acres under cane, and had received State encouragement in the shape of a grant of land on which to build a sugar mill. Meanwhile his example had been followed by other Queenslanders. In 1866 the Pimpama Sugar Company had 50 acres under cane, and, with very primitive machinery, had produced 30 tons of sugar, which realized £1,200. About the same time, John Spiller took 10,000 cane plants, to begin sugar cultivation with in Mackay. Soon afterwards, J. E. Davidson had 270 acres under cane in the same district

Very slowly did the industry begin to give indications of the magnitude it was to attain. In 1868 the quantity of land under cane in the north did not exceed 400 acres. In the whole State there were only ten mills, all of them poorly equipped. There were two in Maryborough, which could each turn out 30 tons of sugar a week, but there was not enough cane to keep them constantly working through the crushing season. The general capacity of the mills was 1 1/2 to 2 tons of sugar daily.

It is obvious that with such primitive appliances sugar-growing could not have been then a very profitable occupation. Indeed it is probable that the industry would never have survived had it not been that sugar was fetching from £30 to £40 a ton, and that, practically, kanakas were then permitted to do any work in connexion with a sugar plantation. Not only were they allowed to perform field work ; they were employed as scrub cutters, mill hands, draymen, and in other occupations from which they were subsequently, and are still, excluded by law. Even then it was demonstrated that sugar-growing could not be successfully earned on by white labour alone. Nearly every grower tried to do without black labour, but in the end discovered that sugar culture, in such circumstances, spelt ruin.

As time advanced the prospects of the sugargrower brightened. Facilities for procuring suitable labour were increased ; capital was easier to obtain ; the State gave the industry every encouragement ; and, ten years from the time when Captain Hope had harvested his first crop, the sugar manufactured in Queensland had risen to over 10,000 tons per annum. Ten years later it had risen to between 50,000 and 60,000 tons. During those ten 3'ears the area of land under sugar cane had increased from 13,000 acres to 59,000 acres, while the area under all other crops had increased only from 64,000 acres to 1 39,000 acres. In other words, the area under cane increased at the rate of 35 per cent, annually, while that under all other crops increased only at the rate of 12 per cent. Then came a period of decline.

I want honorable senators to take notice of this-

The number of acres under cane, which was 59,186 in 1885, diminished to 54,010 in 1886, to 51,815 in 1887, to 47,340 acres in 1888, and, indeed, did not get back to the figures of 1885 until 1893.

That was after the present Act was passed. This statement cannot be controverted.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- Has Senator Fraser the price of sugar at that time 'l

Senator Glassey

- That is a matter of no importance.

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Senator FRASER

- I would give the honorable senator anything if he would only vote the right way, but as I have very little hope of securing his vote for my view of the question, I am not going to waste my time over him. The memorandum continues - ;

During this period, of depression about 50 mills out of 166 ceased working, and the output of sugar in one of the lean years fell below 35,000 tons. What, it may be asked, was the cause of this disaster to an industry which had to all appearances been established on a durable basis, and had given promise of such splendid and lasting prosperity?

The answer is that an experiment had been tried at the expense of the sugar-grower, perhaps the most costly and ruinous experiment ever attempted in Australia. It is to be noted that it was not done at the wish of the sugar-grower, for he was already aware what the result would be. But, though it was attempted against his will, he had to discharge the account as if it 'had been incurred at his suggestion. Yet, expensive as it was, the experiment was in the end considered not an unmixed calamity ; for it was thought that one good result of it would be that never again would the industry be brought to the verge of ruin through the motives that had actuated the experimentalists.

It has been mentioned that, after some futile endeavours to grow sugar by white labour alone, the employment of kanakas became general on the plantations. But there was a large and ever increasing party in Queensland who held that black labour was unnecessary. This party, having obtained an overwhelming majority at the general election of 1883, brought 'into the Legislative Assembly a Bill which passed without division, and which provided that the issue of the licences for the introduction of kanakas should cease on the 31st of December, 1880.

In the interval efforts were made to introduce field labour from continental Europe, but without any satisfactory result-. It was hoped by those opposed to coloured labour that if the system of small holdings were substituted for that of large plantations - and that has come about in the most remarkable manner - which had up to the time prevailed, cane might be grown profitably by the small owner and his family without the help of black labour, with the assistance of the State in the provision of mills. The central mill system was accordingly instituted. Two such mills were erected at Mackay in 1880, and it was originally intended that these mills should crush only cane grown by white labour, but the event showed that the kanaka was still indispensable, even to the small farmer

In the meantime, the sugar industry, once so vigorous and prosperous, was slowly expiring. So unsatisfactory was its condition, that within five years of the date on which the Act was passed, a Royal commission was appointed to inquire into the industry. This commission presented its report in April, 1880. The report disclosed the fact that the Queensland sugar industry was decaying,- but the commissioners could not agree among themselves as to the best means of reviving it

By the end of 1881 it had become manifest that the continuance of the prohibition of South Sea Island labour would lead to an almost immediate collapse of the sugar industry.

Accordingly, a special session of Parliament was summoned in February, 1882, to deal with the question. Legislation was then passed which established the conditions under which Polynesian labour is available for sugar-growing to this very day. The debates and divisions on that legislation proved that the events of the preceding six years had not been without effect on all reasonable men - and I hope we shall deal with this question as reasonable men - and the proposals were carried by large majorities in both Houses of Parliament. When the question was raised at the general election in the following year, it was found that a corresponding change had taken place in the constituencies. -

So much for Senator Glassey's statement, in regard- to corruption. -

Of this last-mentioned fact there can be no doubt, though it has lately been asserted that the issue was never put before the people until the Commonwealth elections this year. The fact is, that at the general election of 1893 the sugar legislation of the previous year was challenged in the most emphatic way by

the leader of the Opposition, who made " a white Queensland " the; most conspicuous plank in his platform. Yet, the verdict of the constituencies was unmistakably in favour of the steps taken to save the sugar - industry. Two general elections have been since held, in 1890 and 1890, the result of each being; that people and Parliament decided to leave undisturbed the settlement arrived at in 1892.

Respecting the recent federal elections, and the contention that they prove Queensland to be hostile to existing labour arrangements, it need only be said that no such conclusion will be drawn by those who were aware of the influences at work during those elections. The labour party, it is, true, triumphed at the polls ; and the labour party is opposed to the employment of the kanaka -

From what we hear to-day, they are divided - even (where it is admitted he is providing employment for the white man. But the fact is that the victory went on this occasion to the minority, as it often does when the minority are thoroughly organized, and thoroughly united, and the majority are not only unprepared for conflict, but are hopelessly divided, if not about measures, at least about candidates. But for the ' unfortunate dissensions among those opposed to labour aims, dissensions about persons and not about principles, Queensland would now be represented in the Federal Senate by a united party, determined that a great Queensland industry should - be carried on according to Queensland ideas.

Senator Higgs

- Is that an impartial view of the situation t

Senator FRASER

- I believe it is true. Senator Higgs need not be very much concerned, because he has a six years' term to run.

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Senator Higgs

- There may be a dissolution.

Senator FRASER

- I would hail a dissolution with pleasure.

Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator might go down.

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Senator FRASER

- I would sooner go down in a good cause than up in a bad cause. The writer proceeds -

Probably if there had been any suspicion that one of the first Bills to be introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament, would be a measure dooming the sugar industry to destruction, such dissensions would have been impossible. But it was never imagined that the sugar industry was in immediate danger. It was thought that the Commonwealth Government would not dream of interfering with it, unless after a thorough investigation of the subject. Yet without any inquiry, the Commonwealth Government has resolved to revive the policy which nearly ruined the industry fifteen or sixteen years ago. It is true that before this Bill was framed, the Federal Premier commissioned Dr. Maxwell to furnish him with a report on some aspects of the sugar question. But the instructions he gave Dr. Maxwell almost precluded any reference to the labour problem. Yet in spite of this restriction Dr. Maxwell was able to show that the kanaka was a necessary factor in the production of sugar in the tropical portions of Queensland.

I have read ."Dr. Maxwell's report in regard to that -

It is to be feared, however, that Dr. Maxwell's unanswerable statement of the case will have little effect on the situation. So far from profiting by the blunder of 1885, the Federal Premier seems bent on repeating it. Possibly, after thousands of acres have been abandoned, and hundreds of farmers have been ruined, an attempt will be again made to undo the mischief, with perhaps less success than in 1892. The history of the industry since 1892 shows that time has been doing gradually, and without injury to the industry, what the Federal Premier means to do hastily and to its detriment, The number of white cultivators has been increasing year by year, and the number of black auxiliaries decreasing at a corresponding rate. ' Nothing has done so much to foster this tendency as the continuation and extension of the central mill system. Since 1892 no less than £500,000 have been advanced by the State in aid of that system. It was intended to advance a further £150,000 this year but for the action taken by the Federal Government. Probably if the industry were left to the Queensland Parliament to regulate, in another decade the central

mill system would be all but universal, and Queensland would in time present the unique spectacle of cane-sugar being grown on a vast scale by innumerable white cultivators with the help of an insignificant number of blacks. If anything is more remarkable than the expansion of the sugar industry between 1893 and 1901, it is the ever-increasing number of whites, and the everdiminishing number of blacks engaged in it during that period, a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of cane-growing. Those who have observed this phenomenon were not without hope that within a generation the regime, under which sugar is produced by whites and blacks in combination, would give place to a regime under which sugar would be produced by whites alone. And they noted with satisfaction that the race which would be indispensable during the transition stage, was the one subject race that need not be dreaded as a competitor, or as a contaminator of our own people. They were aware, moreover, that the kanaka is working here under conditions most favorable to his own health and happiness, that he receives a higher wage than is paid to any other coloured labourer of his status in the world, and that morally he is improved by his sojourn in Queensland. Nor did they fail to remark that his presence here has given rise to none of the evils noticeable in tropical regions where a dominant white caste exists among a subject black population. It is certain that with his aid thousands of acres now unoccupied can be made productive. It is equally certain that, deprived of his aid, thousands of acres now productive will go out of cultivation. For, under present conditions, he is necessary to the sugar industry, and if the sugar industry is destroyed in our northern coast districts, there will be nothing to take its place. There are people, of course, who hold that the kanaka could go at once without causing any loss to this State. But it is to be noticed that this doctrine is confined to those who have little or no knowledge of the subject, and little or no interest in forming a rational judgment concerning it. Those who have studied it closely, and particularly those who have embarked their all in the industry, take the opposite view. In conclusion, it must be urged that an industry of such importance to Queensland should not be sentenced to death, unless after a fair and impartial trial. It is the duty of the Commonwealth Premier, before pronouncing its doom, to cause an exhaustive investigation to be made. The honour of the Queensland Government is concerned in the question. For it was on the assurance of the Queensland Government, in 1893, that no steps would be taken to limit the supply of necessary labour, that hundreds of farmers were induced to invest their capital in sugar production? When the Commonwealth Government took over the labour problem from the State Government, it took over also whatever obligations the State Government had contracted thereon. Those obligations should be respected, unless there are grave reasons why they should lie set aside. It behoves the Commonwealth from the very beginning of its career to set an example of good faith and to avoid any action that savours of either cruelty or oppression. To make Australia the home of a white people exclusively is a noble ideal, but to do justice, whatever be the consequences, is nobler still. On this matter justice will certainly be outraged if any important step, such as is proposed to be taken by the Commonwealth, is taken without an inquiry. It is for an inquiry only that Queensland asks, and it is to be hoped that Queensland will not appeal in vain.

I wish to draw special attention to the concluding words that it is for an inquiry only that Queensland asks, and the writer hopes that Queensland will not appeal in vain. That statement is signed by D. H. Dalrymple, Secretary for Agriculture.

Senator Higgs

- And as big a partizan as any one on this side of the Senate.

Senator FRASER

- It is very easy for the honorable senator to make statements. I will only say a few words more.

Senator Higgs

- Go on. The honorable senator is interesting. .

Senator FRASER

- I would not cease for a week if I thought I could change one or two votes. I appeal to those honorable senators who have not yet made up their minds as to the way in which their votes will be cast. What will the difference be 50 years hence if we leave this industry undisturbed for a few more years, say for only five more years?

Senator MCGREGOR

- That is what we mean to do.

Senator FRASER

- What is the use of saying that when we have before us a Bill which will immediately cause the financial institutions to draw in their horns ? Do I not know it perfectly well 1 We are now dealing with a State which has advanced over £530,000 to benefit the people of Queensland, by establishing mills and cutting up the big estates into small cane farms. The scheme has been eminently successful, and the results are unique in the history of sugar-growing throughout the whole world. The early efforts of Queensland's Premiers and Parliaments have borne ample and good fruit. At present every municipal council in Queensland

Senator Higgs

- Draw it mild.

Senator FRASER

- What a flippant interjection ! If the 500 cane farmers of the north could come down to this Chamber and plead their case at the bar of the Senate, would Senator Higgs say " draw it mild "1 I do not think he would. He would not have the courage to do so, if he had the inclination. The honorable senator clearly shows that he does not realize the importance of the subject.

Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator said every municipal council in Queensland, which was drawing the long bow.

Senator FRASER

- I do not wish to overstate the case one jot ; but, so far as I know, every municipal institution, every agricultural society, -every chamber of commerce, every harbor board, and every association of men in Queensland is opposed to this measure, and while at one time, as honorable senators know, the leading papers of Queensland were against the kanaka traffic, they are now all the other way.

Senator Glassey

- Not at all. Both the Rockhampton papers go for its abolition.

Senator Ferguson

- Do not believe it. It is not true.

Senator FRASER

- I say that while at one time the newspapers of Brisbane were against the employment of kanakas, they are all now the other way. I have heard the Brisbane Courier abused by honorable senators, but do they mean to convey to the Senate that the municipal councils, the agricultural societies, the chambers of commerce, the press of Queensland, the Bishop of Carpentaria in Queensland, and the Parliament of Queensland, are to be ignored 1

Senator Higgs

- Not the Parliament; the Government.

Senator FRASER

- Yes; the Premier and Parliament of Queensland. The Premier speaks for 'the Parliament. He would not be there an hour if he had not a majority behind him. I know what I am speaking of. Only, the other day there were discussions on the subject in the Queensland Parliament. I have the Queensland Hansard here, and but that I do not desire to waste the time of honorable senators, I would quote from it. I can say that there were only a few speeches on the other side of the question. I repeat again, once for all, that of the four seats vacated by members who are now in the Federal Parliament-

Senator Higgs

- I thought the honorable senator would have been fairer than to use an 'illustration like that. The question was never raised at those elections.

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Senator FRASER

- I say that we have against this Bill the opinions of all the bodies I have named, and in the case of three out of four recent by-elections that have taken place, the seats were captured from the anti-kanaka party. They were all labour seats, and three' were captured, and are now in the hands of supporters of the Philp Government, who are opposed to the Bill which has been introduced here. I speak facts, and with all the facts staring us in the face, I ask the Senate to have an inquiry, which could be held during the short recess we are to have. We could invite the farmers of the north to come down and say what they mean. If 5 per cent, of the actual farmers of Cairns will say that they can grow sugar with white labour, I shall vote for the Bill. But to my mind it will be a monstrous shame for the Senate in rapid haste, without due inquiry, to pass a Bill against what I regard as the unanimous voice of Queensland. The representatives of

Queensland ought to hail with delight any honorable senator who will take up the cudgels on behalf of the Queensland Government, because if this is not a State right, then never will a State right arise, so far as I can see. No wonder that the Government of Queensland are anxious about this Bill when they have advanced £359,000 to sugar-growers in the north, for the erection of mills. They cannot afford to lose that sum, especially as there has been a deficit of about half-a-million.

Senator Higgs

- Through their own extravagance mainly. , Senator FRASER. - The labour party are the very men to support a policy of borrowing money and lavish expenditure. And what is the result of such folly 1

Senator McGregor

- Where did the honorable senator get that information ?

Senator FRASER

- From a 50 years' experience of Australian life, of which 30 years have been spent in the political arena. I do not say that the labour party have acted with malice or wrong intent, but they have been foolish enough to support a policy of lavish borrowing and extravagant expenditure, and of course the day of reckoning must ultimately come. In the face of Dr. Maxwell's report I cannot understand the Commonwealth Government following the course they are taking. They asked for and obtained a report, at a cost, I suppose, of £150 or £160. They knew that Dr. Maxwell was an expert with a world-wide knowledge of sugar-growing, gained in many parts of the world. They completely ignored his report, to which the Bill is diametrically opposed. Dr. Maxwell is clear and emphatic on the point that if the use of white labour is insisted on in the north of Townsville or in the Cairns district, the industry must die and die it will, and let its death be on the heads of those who vote for this Bill, or who in committee will not support an amendment, for I presume we are not going to divide on the second reading. I do not wish to put the Government in any difficulty.

Senator Higgs

- What amendment does the honorable senator propose "? ,

Senator FRASER

- I am not particular about the amendment. I shall be content if the industry is left alone for five years, or even if it is left alone until after the next general election.

Senator Higgs

- That is the secret of all the cry for an extension of time.

Senator FRASER

- If that cap fits let the wearers of it beware. I know Queensland well, having lived in some parts of it for a considerable time. When riding in the noon-day sun my horse has often rushed under a tree, and I have been unable to spur him out into the sun again. I have . seen bullock teams that could not be goaded from under the shade of a tree or a house. There is no necessity to pass this Bill this, session. Who is asking us to do it 1

Senator Higgs

- The people of Queensland.

Senator FRASER

- The people of Queensland and its Parliament are opposed to the haste which is being shown. Twenty five years hence who will be the worse if we delay the Bill for a session % I do not wish it to be delayed for a session. Grant an open inquiry which cannot last more than a few weeks during the short recess we are to have, and I shall waive my opinion if the evidence is against me. I do not want a kanaka or a black man here, but while they are here I shall extend the fullest measure of justice to them, and treat them honestly and fairly. Naturally, I have more respect for men of my own colour than for men of the other colour, and that is no disparagement to the latter. But what necessity is there for this haste t

Senator Playford

- What is the honor?, able senator advocating 1

Senator FRASER

- I am willing, and so are the people of Queensland, to accept any reasonable proposal. I am merely stating what can be done. I have not stated exactly what ought to be done. But any one of these courses will satisfy me, and, I believe, the people of Queensland.

Senator Charleston

- Has not the honorable senator shown that sugar cannot be grown without black labour in Cairns ?

Senator FRASER

- Yes.

Senator Charleston

- Then no extension of time can cure that.

Senator FRASER

- There is a divided opinion. Others say that sugar can be grown without black labour in Cairns. Senator Higgs says it can, and is it not fair to me, when I believe otherwise, that he should convince me that I am wrong ?

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Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator never found it necessary to employ the kanaka in heavy railway works. Let him give his own personal experience as to whether the white man can work in the sub-tropics or tropics.

Senator FRASER

- White men have worked on the high lands from Townsville arid right along to Flinders. I have driven from Barcaldine to near the Gulf, but driving on the open high land is very different from working in the cane-fields on the tropical coast.

Senator Higgs

- Is it different from working in a railway cutting 1

Senator FRASER

- In a railway cutting the men can work early in the morning and late at night, and that work, remember, need not be done in December, January, and February.

Senator Glassey

- But it is done all the year round. I have seen it done.

Senator FRASER

- For 30 years I have been a railway contractor, and have carried out very large works. A railway contractor is too good a judge to ask men to work in a cutting in the height of summer.

Senator Glassey

- They can work in railway cuttings in the far north, in the centre, and in the south. I have seen it done.

Senator McGregor

- Has the honorable senator ever stopped his works in January or February 1

Senator FRASER

- Frequently ; we reduced our hands in the very hot months.

Senator Dobson

- Other works have been, stopped.

Senator FRASER

- I know that other works have been stopped.

Senator Glassey

- I challenge the statement.

Senator FRASER

- I know men who could not get the work done.

Senator Glassey

- We want some proof of that.

Senator FRASER

- I have given sufficient proof, I imagine, to satisfy any unbiased mind that the work cannot be done. At any rate, let those who say it can be done give us some proof. That is all we ask them to do, and it is a reasonable request. I know a man who will give a bonus of £10 each to twenty white men who will proceed from this State to a Cairns sugar plantation, and work there for three months in the ordinary way.

Senator Higgs

- What wages will he give?

Senator FRASER

- I presume that the men will get the ruling wages up there and their board. I think that my friend would be prepared to give a bonus of £100 to any honorable senator who would go up there and do two months

work.

Senator Ferguson

- And I would give it for one month's work.

Senator FRASER

- I shall back up Senator Ferguson, who I know is as good as his word. In the face of all these facts, I cannot see how the Senate can refuse, when the Bill is in committee, to grant some redress, or to accede to the reasonable request of the farmers and the Government of Queensland, who, of course, do not want to lose the advance of £350,000 which they have made.

Senator Glassey

- - For what purpose did they advance that money ?

Senator FRASER

- To erect mills. Senator Glassey. - With the distinct understanding that the sugar had to be grown and produced by white labour.

Senator FRASER

- Queensland has suffered a five years' drought. On one property in which I am interested on the Warrego, 200,000 sheep were lost. Millions of sheep have been lost, and the outlook is something alarming. With a five years' drought and a deficit it is no wonder that the Premier of Queensland and his colleagues are alarmed at the new risk they are asked to run. I pray that justice may be done. If those honorable senators who have not made up their minds will hear both sides and judge fairly without a biased mind, they will come to the conclusion that the Bill should be amended as many of us desire. I am not particular which way it is done. I know Senator Playford to be quite agreeable to extend the time for a couple of years or so. I think that extension would satisfy the Queensland Government, and if not that, an inquiry would be equally satisfactory ; if not that, then something else. At any rate something should be done. I thank honorable senators for the hearing they have given me.

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Senator STYLES

- I need hardly say that I am thoroughly convinced that this is a very important measure. The debate has been very ably conducted. Some of the best speeches I have heard since I have been in this Chamber have been delivered in connexion with it. The honorable senator who has just resumed his seat has given us a fighting speech. Last week Senator Ferguson delivered a sensible and practical address from the same point of view. , Both -Senator Fraser and Senator Ferguson adopt the pro-kanaka aspect of the matter. Senator Millen made one of the most finished speeches I have heard for some time. When he saw a bladder painted like a bomb shell he did not run away from it, but simply stepped forward and punctured it with the art of an adept. Similarly when Senator Glassey saw a bladder painted like a bomb shell, he jumped on it with both feet. It is, in my opinion, idle to say that the Queensland people did not know that the kanaka would have to go. The sugar producers must have known that for a number of years. We are told that Mr. Cowley, who was formerly Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, in the year 1889 - that is twelve years ago - asked for the continuance of kanaka labour for another five years. Now, twelve years afterwards, the Barton Government bring in a Bill extending the time for another five years ; whereupon those who are in favour of the retention of the kanaka ask for ten years more. "Mr. Philp, the Premier of Queensland, has been referred to by Senator Fraser. We all know who Mr. Philp is, even though we have not had the honour of his acquaintance. In what I have to say of him I shall endeavour to treat him with all the respect due to a gentleman occupying so high and prominent a position in his own State as Mr. Philp does. But I say, argumentatively, that Mr. Philp represented no one but himself, -when he sent to this Chamber the letter to which reference has already been made. I will show why I think so. There is nothing to indicate that even Mr. Philp's Government is in accord with him, or that their individual opinions would be the same as his own if they were taken on a ballot. The Queensland Parliament has not spoken upon the question yet, and if it did Mr. Philp might be out of office next week, and the Government who would take the place of his Administration might adopt quite a different view of the question. So that although I attach importance to anything Mr. Philp might write or say, on account of his well-known honesty and ability, I cannot recognise that he speaks with authority upon this subject.

Senator De Largie

- He is not game to go to the country on the matter.

Senator STYLES

- I do not know whether that is so or not; but these are the reasons why I do not attach so much importance to Mr. Philp's letter as other honorable senators do. Dr. Maxwell has been referred to, and very properly so. I only regret that last week, owing to another public engagement, I was unable to stay and listen to the whole of his remarks upon this question. I should have liked to have heard him at length, because I find that there is a consensus of opinion amongst honorable senators that he is a conscientious and straightforward man who has had a great deal of experience and says what he believes to be true. I have read the little pamphlet, which contains the substance of his remarks, last week. Clearly Dr. Maxwell is an enthusiast. But I would remind the Senate that experts often make mistakes. It will not be necessary for me to refer to very many instances, but I may remind the Senate of a few. It is not so very long ago since we were told that there was no coal in Victoria, and that no payable seam would ever be discovered. Singularly, enough the coal importers and the experts both told us that such was the case. Yet coal has been discovered, and the mines are now being worked. Again, not many years ago, the mallee was declared to be a howling wilderness, which had to be left to the rabbits, the wild dogs, and a few squatters who occupied the land at half-a-crown per square mile per annum. Now there are over 500,000 acres of wheat in the mallee, which I look upon as a future granary of Victoria. Let me give a third instance. South Australia is to-day growing wheat north of what is known as the Goyder rainfall line. Mr. Goyder was a very able man, who, years ago, gave it as his opinion that it would be impossible to grow wheat beyond a certain line. But they have grown wheat there. In the days of my youth - in the early sixties - we were told by the squatters that wheat could never be grown in the Darling Downs, and that if it were grown there it would be a great shame to put white men with "the sickle into wheat fields in such a climate. But to-day wheat is being grown on the Darling Downs, and no one makes such a complaint. I recollect the time when it was said that the demand for an eight hours day would lead to all kinds of disasters. There were to be wars and rumours of war between employers and employed; industries were to be dislocated, and business was to be made impossible. But nothing of the sort has happened. Still more recently the minimum wage has been introduced on resolution of the lower House of the Victorian Parliament. I am not aware that any disasters have occurred. Senator Fraser will recollect, as will also the South Australian senators - especially Senator Playford - that 30 years ago it was said that railways could not be constructed without the assistance of contractors. But the "model State" set an example in the way of constructing railways by the State, and proved that it could be done. Twenty-five years ago South Australia constructed the railway from Burra to Hallett by day labour, and the experiment proved successful. Now we never hear of contractors being engaged for the construction of railways, except in the case of heavy work, where large quantities of plant are required. South Australia in 1876, was the first State to begin the construction of railways by the system of day labour, piece work, and petty contracts, and the railway constructed under that system was the cheapest piece of railway work done up to that time. I only mention these instances to show that experts very frequently make mistakes. Even the most reliable of them may lead themselves and other people astray. I say this because of what has been said of Dr. Maxwell's conclusions from the ascertained facts. Dr. Maxwell declares that whites cannot work in the cane-fields of northern Queensland. The other day Senator Ferguson referred to Mr. Swayne's utterances upon this question, and I have taken the trouble to look up the Brisbane Courier for myself to see what Mr. Swayne said. I find that the Brisbane Courier of 15th June, 1901, gives an account of a paper read by Mr. Swayne at the Agricultural Conference. In the course of it, he said -

The majority of that class (that is, small farmers) took their farms with the determination of doing the work entirely with white labour, but they were compelled to admit that a greater power than man prevented this owing to the unreliability of white labour in the tropics -

Mr. Dalrymple has stated that it can be done by white labour, and that it is only a question of time. Mr. Swayne continued - and the natural repugnance of men to work under conditions to which they were not constitutionally adapted. ... It was often said that higher wages would overcome the difficulty, and money was pitted against nature. He asked was it desirable that men, for the sake of a few pounds, should injure their constitutions?

That is only sentiment. It is a matter for a man's own consideration whether he will work under these

conditions or not. The same argument might be applied to men working in smelting works, and in other similar occupations. Mr. Swayne further said -

When the Homebush estate was out up, men started with the resolve to have no black labour. For the first year or two open forest land, adapted to horse implements, was cultivated, and several of the farmers who had the assistance of their children, who ought to have been at school, and their wives, to the injury -of their health, managed to adhere to their resolve.

Here we are told that healthy, strong white males cannot do the work which this man says that women .and children have done. It seems to me that this is about the most conclusive evidence which could be obtained that white 'men can do the work. Mr. Swayne added -

But in harvest time, when white canecutters were employed, there was much trouble. The following years were the same, very few going through with the work. If a man's family were kept cane-growing it would perpetuate the old caste system of India.

Therefore, a man's family could be kept cane-growing, but the objection would be, according to this argument, that the occupation would do injury to the women and children, and that there would be a caste system arising as there is in India. I have no desire to see women and children working at such an occupation, and I say that an industry which cannot be carried on without such labour as that should be closed up at once. In the Brisbane Courier of 19th June there is reported an interview with Mr. Moffatt, a well-known 'man. He deals with this question -

Well, Mr. Moffatt, do you think from what 3-011 saw and. heard that white men could work in the cane-fields ? - I am no authority on that matter. So far as physical endurance is concerned possibly the3' might, but there are other things.

What are those other things? - Well, cane, trashing and cutting is the very last job that a white -man would, care to tackle, according to the conversations I had from decent, honest working chaps in the sugar districts.

The working man looks upon employment in the cane-fields as " dae nae better." That surely does not mean reliable labour for the sugargrower.

The whole point- is the .unreliableness of the labour. I can well understand that they do not get the most reliable labour, for the reasons that the wages paid are such as do not attract high-class workmen who shrink from incurring the inconvenience and hardship attaching to working in the cane-fields. High-class workmen look for better employment, and for something which suits them better, and at which they can earn better wages. Second and third rate wages are paid instead of first rate wages, and consequently it can only be expected that second and third rate men will gravitate there. Under present conditions, high-class men can find employment more suitable to themselves at a better rate of wages. The other day we were told that had it not been for the northern cane-growers there would have been no federation. It is said that the people of southern Queensland were opposed to federation, but that the northern people voted for the Commonwealth Bill, and that, had not Queensland joined the federation, New South Wales would not have done so. Consequently, there would have been no federation at all. That is the argument which is used. But does any one for a moment suppose that the cane-growers joined the Federation out of mere sentiment? Did they not join it to benefit themselves ?

Senator Macfarlane

- On faith.

Senator STYLES

- We will see what the faith amounts to directly. They had a great deal of faith. They had faith that federation would give them a protected market with 3,800,000 people instead of the market of only 500,000 people which they then possessed. They knew that without federation they had to compete with the world when they sent their sugar into the other States, and the sugar-growers of Queensland were on the same terms as the sugar-growers of Mauritius Or Fiji in this respect. They wanted federation, but they did not want the terms proposed in this Bill. They knew that the cane-growers would be protected under federation, and that they would have the larger market, which, as business men, they saw would be greatly to their advantage. Very properly, therefore, . they voted for federation. I have looked over the figures showing the yields of sugar in Queensland for the five years ending 31st December, 1899. I did not do as Dr. Maxwell has done - I had to go to Coghlan for my figures. I find that the average annual yield for the five years was 114,400 tons, which at £5 per ton, represents £572,000.

That amount, according to the free-traders' view, is to be taken but of the pockets of the people and placed in the pockets of the cane-growers and sugar manufacturers. I understand them to say that the duty increases the cost to the consumer ; that the consumer has to pay, and that the money finds its way into the pockets of the canegrowers and manufacturers.

Senator Charleston

- The honorable senator believes that ?

Senator STYLES

- I do not. I am not taking some hypothetical estimate of what will happen. I am giving the actual figures showing what has happened. When Senator Pulsford was speaking I understood him to say that he took no account of the £1 per ton excise in favour of sugar grown by white labour. He estimated the total consumption at 170,000 tons in round figures, and said that at £6 per ton that would represent £1,020,000.

Senator Pulsford

- If the honorable senator will allow me, I said that when the Government scheme was in full working order those would be the figures. The Government propose to abolish the £1 per ton excise after 1906. My calculation of £1,020,000 shows what will be the monetary result when the excise duty of £1 per ton has gone, and not before.

Senator STYLES

- I understood Senator Pulsford to say also that the £1,020,000 would come out of the pockets of the consumers, because of the duty.

Senator Pulsford

- That is so.

Senator STYLES

- Yet in the same breath the honorable senator told us that immediately the local production of sugar exceeded the consumption, it would be sold at the world's prices. I should like to know how these two statements are to be reconciled. According to the honorable senator, immediately the production exceeds the consumption, we shall not have to pay any more for sugar than is paid in England.

Senator Playford

- The honorable senator said that would be so, except for the operations of trusts.

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Senator STYLES

--But the honorable senator was calculating on something that is not going to happen. The Federal Parliament will prevent anything in the nature of trusts of that kind. I have confidence that this Parliament will be able to protect the people against any such swindle. I am not going to make the result appear so rosy as Dr. Maxwell has done, nor, so far as the planters are concerned, do I intend to adopt Senator Pulsford's view. If there were 114,400 tons of sugar produced in Queensland during each of the five years under review - and 18,400 tons per annum were consumed in Queensland - some mistake has been made both by the Government - and I am sorry that I have to correct the Government that I admire so much as represented in this Chamber as well as Senator Pulsford who has followed in their tracks for once. I think the consumption of sugar has never reached 170,000 tons or even 150,000 tons per annum. Coy/dan gives it as being 139,967 tons. I am inclined to think the mistake has been [made by the Government, by including the figures inclusive of New Zealand. There is a line in Coghlan which shows the total as 170,000 tons, including that colony. This reduces the quantity. Strange to say, the production of New South Wales and Queensland combined during the five years I have referred to just about balanced the consumption in Australia. It amounted to 139,000 tons per annum, and a difference of 1,000 tons is not very much either one way or the other. The Queensland sugar-grower may say - " I was protected in Queensland 'before to the extent of £6 13s. 4d. per ton on refined sugar ; now you are giving me £5 a ton all over Australia. Under federation I am in a very much better position than I was, but if you had not given me anything I was protected to the extent of £6 13s. 4d." Under the old State system they received £122,667 per annum, but that leaves a balance of £450,000 a year to be gained under federation by the sugar producers of Queensland in excess of what they received before, providing the average production is the same as that for the five years ending the 31st December, 1899.

Senator Drake

- That is about it.

Senator STYLES

- Even a gain of £450,000 will not be a bad thing for them. It will mean £170 per annum for each of the 2610 planters. Dr. Maxwell declares that the additional payment involved by the substitution of white for black labour will be in round figures £370,000. If we deduct that amount from, the £450,000, we still have a balance of £80,000. Clearly when he wrote his pamphlet, Dr. Maxwell believed that white men could do this work. He refers in it ' to the £370,000 which will be the increase in wages caused by the substitution of white for black labour, and at page 8, he writes -

If then we bear in mind the number of kanakas in each district that the Kanaka Bill requires shall be substituted by white labour, we shall arrive quite accurately at the money cost of the substitution of white for black labour in the respective districts.

Senator Playford

- He divides the district into three, and says that in the Cairns district the industry will die out, and that there will be great loss.

Senator STYLES

- Cairns will lose £7,000 a year. But the State Parliament can step in under our Constitution, and, by resolution passed by the two Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, may be permitted to grant a bonus on the production or export of any commodity.

Senator Playford

- But not in any one particular district.

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Senator STYLES

- I do not know whether they could do that. There is one point which Senator Glassey made in reply to an interjection by me which had not been referred to before, and has not been referred to since. In the course of his speech on Friday, I asked him - and Dr. Maxwell does not touch on this point - what number of white men would be required to replace the blacks now employed in the industry in Queensland. I inquired how many whites would be required to do the work of 1,000 blacks if the latter were removed. Senator Glassey replied - " About 500." I look upon Senator Glassey as knowing a good deal about this matter, and if that be the case - and I have not heard it contradicted - it upsets at once the whole of Dr. Maxwell's calculations. Even if 800 white men have to be put on to replace 1,000 kanakas, all the figures given by Dr. Maxwell - in good faith - are not worth the paper they are written on. His facts, would be sound, but the conclusions derived from those facts would be unsound. If it be true that the white man is substantially better than the black, then, of course, the figures do not count. But if the figures do count, and assuming that the planters have to replace the black men by an equal number of white men, the £450,000 to which I have referred would give each of the 7,615 men £59 per annum. They need not give the full amount to every man, but if they give the white workers another 15s. or 20s. a week on what he receives at present, I think they will obtain the services of plenty of men: That, in my opinion, is highly probable although I know little about this question. I was glad to hear Senator Eraser repeat the assertion that the Government, the municipal councils, the chambers of commerce, and the harbor boards of Queensland - all employers, both public and private - are opposed to this Bill. They have a perfect right to obtain 'an alteration of- the Bill in order to suit their own desires, if they can do so.- But all these bodies are employers of labour, and if every white man who goes into the sugar-cane districts is to get 10s. or 15s. a week more than he receives at present, the rate of wages in all industries throughout Queensland will go up. Not only employers in the sugar industry, but all employers of labour 'will be affected. I can well understand that the municipal councils do not want these proposals, because they will have to pay another shilling a- day, perhaps, in these places, for the cane growers will be in a position, I " hope, to offer higher rates of pay to their workmen. The best class of working men will gravitate towards ' the cane-fields, unless they are paid more than they are now receiving from their present employers. I think that is an answer to all these bodies.

Senator Charleston

- There may be better wages in New South Wales- sugargrowing districts than in Bundaberg.

Senator STYLES

- Why not in other places ?

Senator Charleston

- Because the labour might not be so productive in; other places. i

Senator STYLES

- I am glad the honorable senator has mentioned that fact, because I find that in Cairns the wages paid to white men are 2.7 per cent, higher, while the yield is 27 per cent, higher than in the Bundaberg district. The wages paid to white workers in the Cairns district are 19 per cent, higher than those paid at Mackay, and the yield is. 75 per cent, higher. Comparing the New South Wales canefields with, those of Queensland, the yield per acre, according to Coghlan, is worth 19 per cent, more than in New South Wales, where they have to employ white labour. The planters in Queensland have federation : they have the protective duty throughout Australia, and they want to keep the blackfellow. as well. I suppose most of us would desire to do the same if we were in the position- of the Queensland sugar planters. There is a good deal of human nature about us all, and if we were growing cane we should want to do as . the planters in Queensland desire to do, notwithstanding what we might say on the platform' and elsewhere. If we did not act upon those- business lines we might as well shut up our cane farms, because we could not compete with others. Now there is a peculiar thing about the wages paid to kanakas. At Mackay, the kanaka, gets £39, 0s-. 10d. ; at Cairns, £36 6d. 9d. ; and at Bundaberg, where the white man can work, £37 2s. 3d. per year. Those figures are taken from Dr. Maxwell's report, and I accept them as accurate. It is an extraordinary condition of things that at Cairns, and Mackay the blackfellow gets less, in the latter case £5 per year less, than at Bundaberg. I do not know what is the reason for it, or why it should be so. Having heard the speeches delivered by honorable senators, and having read the series of articles which appeared in the Herald, I have arrived at the conclusion that the black man must go. We are all agreed upon that ; it is only a question of the time at which he shall go, and the method, to be adopted. The free-traders talk about an open door. Let us open the door how and send the kanakas out. I am told that many of them do not want to go back to their islands. Of course we know that they have some of the luxuries and some of the sins of civilization up at Cairns and at Bundaberg. I have said really more than I intended to say when I got up, and I thank, the Senate for the attention with which my remarks have ' been listened to*

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Senator Pulsford

- I desire as a matter of explanation to refer to the figures quoted by the honorable senator as to the consumption of sugar.. Senator Styles has unintentionally misrepresented me. He referred to Coghlan's figures, and it is a misunderstanding of Coghlan's figures which has led him astray. At page 4 12 Coghlan gives an estimate of the consumption of sugar per head for every one of the States. The average consumption for all the States of the Commonwealth is 99-6 lbs. If that figure is worked out for the population of the Commonwealth it will give a total of about 170,000 tons. Now, on page 535, which the honorable .senator referred to, Coghlan gives certain figures, and amongst others 170,000 tons; including 30,000 tons for New Zealand, but he says -

The quantity shown above does not necessarily represent the total consumption of sugar during, the year, because there may have been a surplus available from previous years.

Senator Styles

- And there may not have been.

Senator- Pulsford.- That may be so- -

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable senator cannot discuss the question.

Senator Pulsford

- The figures- are obviously wrong.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable member cannot make another speech. He can only, explain the way in which he has been misrepresented .

Senator Pulsford

- With great submission I am endeavouring to make clear to the Senate the basis upon which Coghlan rests these figures.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable senator will take his seat. He must see that if he is allowed to do that every other honorable senator will have right to do the same thing. We might then have every honorable senator making three or four speeches.

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Senator HIGGS

- There are two courses open to those of us who are from Queensland in dealing with this debate. One is that we should remain silent to a very great extent, and the other is that we should deal as fully as we can with the whole kanaka question. . I feel so satisfied in my own mind that it is the wish of the Queensland people that we should get rid of the kanaka as soon as possible, that I should be quite willing- to allow the debate to come to a close, but that there is a danger that if we allow the advocates of an extension of time to fill the Senate with arguments on one side only, it may be quoted against the Senate and the Federal Parliament later on, when the representatives of the Philp Government go, as no doubt they will go, to the Imperial authorities and endeavour to thwart the wishes of the Federal Parliament. I shall not at this stage go into the question as fully as perhaps it may be found necessary to do when we get into committee, but I shall, as rapidly as possible, pass in review what I regard as the more important points: Prior to doing so, I wish to read the telegram which I received from the leader of the Opposition in the Queensland Parliament, Mr. W. H. Browne, when we last met, and the reading, of which was objected to then, I am sorry to say; by Senator Gould. That telegram bore out the opinions which I held at the time, that the states ment sent to the President by Mr. Philp was not a statement of the Parliament of ' Queensland. T\$ was not a State document. It was, as Senator Styles has put it, probably only the - opinion of- Mr. Philp himself. This is the telegram I received from Mr. Browne - Parliament never consulted re Philp's letter- to Senate. Strongly protest against its being considered as expression of opinion of the Parliament of this State.

I venture to think that Mr. Philp, in his anxiety to stand up for the interests of the sugar-growers, and landed proprietors, and. shareholders of banks in Queensland, who are going to benefit by this extension of time, if it is obtained, has led many people to think that he is speaking for the Parliament and, practically, for the State of Queensland. Nothing is further from the fact. As- Senator Styles has said, it is quite possible that even the members of the present Philp Government in Queensland are- not behind the Premier in this matter. I know that one member of the Cabinet, the present Minister for Railways, the Honorable John Lahey, has stated at a public meeting that white men can do work anywhere, if they get the wages, and he instances Klondyke as one extreme, and the tropical regions as another. Mr. Philp does not tell us, in his statement, that the Government have asked him to speak on their behalf, and we know from Mr. Browne's telegram that he has not asked the Parliament of Queensland to back him up. I find that the Brisbane Courier of Friday last refers to this very question -

Now that this -difficulty has arisen -

That was the challenging of Mr. Philp's letter - would it not be well for the State Parlia-ment to vindicate Mr Philp's position ? It was alleged in the Senate yesterday that the State Premier represented nobody but himself. The reply to this accusation' can be made most effectively by those who are directly challenged, and both .the Council and the Assembly would do well to assert Mr. Philp's right to address the Senate as he has done.

The suggestion is of course that Mr. Philp might possibly attempt to get the Parliament of Queensland to back- him up in the action he has taken. In the issue-of the-

Courier, which was received this morning. I find the following : -

But our po'int is that Mr. Philp should have, insisted upon the "vote long ago. He has been trimming and shilly-shallying until his lack of initiative has been interpreted as weakness, and his desire to conciliate the labour party has been undoubtedly a source of very serious weakness to the State. The earliest opportunity should be taken to register the decision of the State Parliament, and so place the Government beyond the reach of criticism.

Even if Mr. Philp succeeds .in getting a majority vote in the Queensland Parliament to back up his action, it should not be considered sufficient for this Senate to grant either an inquiry into the sugar industry or an extension of time.

Senator Dobson

- Surely it -will be some evidence of a change of opinion on the part of Queensland.

Senator HIGGS

- The Senate would be very unwise to change its opinion in the face of the volume of evidence before it that the kanaka traffic should be stopped as soon as possible. Honorable senators representing southern States can hardly conceive the difficulties under which the people of Queensland labour in trying to express their opinion at the polls. Senator Glassey, during his exhaustive and able speech on the second reading of this Bill, referred to the change which took place on the part of some Queensland politicians, and honorable senators have said that it is evident that opinions on the black labour traffic have undergone a change. But they know well enough what election cries are, and that crises occur which bring about the submission of widely different questions to the electors. The question before the electors in 1893, which has been referred to, was expressed in the cry - "We will save the banks." The conservative party in authority at the time had opposed to them the late Sir Charles Lilley as leader of the Opposition, and Mr. Glassey as leader of the labour party, and they suggested to the people that if Sir Charles Lilley and Mr. Glassey and his fellows of the labour party were elected, the banks would close their doors on the next day. It was because the people believed that cry that they put into power the party which has by one method and another held office in Queensland ever since. Bolls have been packed. An organization has existed for the purpose of striking off the rolls at every possible chance every man who has been deemed to have sympathy with the labour party. If a man crossed from one side of the street to the other, and his opinions were known to be of a liberal or democratic character, he was struck off the roll merely because he had changed his residence.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Was that done in accordance with the Act ?

Senator HIGGS

- It was ; but the Act was passed by the party which has held office for so many years. If honorable senators care to look up the papers they will find that at each revision court hundreds of names have been struck off the rolls in this way. It is difficult for a man to get enrolled, and then he has a hard job to keep his name on the roll, because of the action of paid mercenaries employed by the conservative party.

Senator Keating

- Do they strike off the conservatives similarly ?

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Senator HIGGS

- The labour party has not the funds at its disposal to employ men to go round and find out the men who have changed their residence. In Queensland, too, a man can have a vote for his property. It is possible for a man to vote for no less than 60 electorates if he has an allotment of land in each. Senator Ferguson speaks of this as ridiculous nonsense, but I ask him if a booth is not established in Queen-street, Brisbane, for almost every electorate in the State 1 In one hour a man can vote for twenty districts. Such a state of things has been unknown in the southern States for many years. Honorable senators do not know the fight which the labour party and Opposition have had in Queensland. Mr. Philp, when he quotes the figures, does not tell us that the present labour and opposition party in Parliament represent as many votes, although, in point of representation, they are not numerically as strong, as are the Government. I observe that Mr. Philp has stated in his letter that the senators polled only 29,000 votes out of 104,000 electors on the roll. He is wrong, because there were only 98,000 electors on the roll at the time of the federal elections, so effectively had the opposite side succeeded in striking men off the roll. Senator .Smith has gone to the trouble of preparing the figures polled by the members representative of Queensland in the other House and the candidates who put up in opposition to them, and he will be able to show in opposite columns, a truer criterion of the strength of the anti-kanaka vote and the pro-kanaka vote in Queensland. The principle adopted by Mr. Philp and his followers is one which leads to such very hazy results that no reliance can be placed on it. What do they do t They take the total votes cast for the five senators in favour of abolishing black labour, and put against them all the votes polled for the unsuccessful candidates. It does not follow at all that the men who voted for the unsuccessful candidates would have refused to give some votes to- the winning candidates if some of the others had not stood. But it is absolutely impossible to arrive at a correct estimate, because plumping was allowed. Senators Dawson, Higgs, and Stewart got plumper votes in, I believe, thousands of cases: Senators Dawson, Stewart, Higgs, and Glassey got plumper votes. The names of Senators Dawson, Higgs, Stewart,

Glassey and Drake were bracketed. In very few cases did the electors vote for six candidates. How is it possible, under these circumstances, to arrive at an estimate on the principle adopted by Mr. Philp ? When we come to the other estimate, placing on one side the unsuccessful opponents of black labour and on the other the men who won seats in the other House, we shall get a fair idea of the wishes of the people of Queensland on the subject. It has been said that because the leading senators of Queensland got only 29,000 votes out of 98,000 votes on the roll, we cannot claim to represent that State. If we apply the plan to the position of Mr. Macdonald-paterson, of the other House, what do we find ? He was elected with 2,465 votes, out of 12,086 votes on the roll. Who will say that he is not entitled to represent the constituency of Brisbane, simply because he did not get more than 2,465 votes ? Mr. Edwards, who is also a very capable pro-kanaka advocate, polled 3,753 votes out of 12,250 votes on the roll, and his opponent, Mr. Turley, polled 3,298 votes. I do not say for a moment that either Mr. Edwards or Mr. Macdonaldpaterson does not represent his constituency. I think that having got a majority of votes cast, they are entitled to claim that they do represent their constituents. If men did not care to take the trouble to vote, then, undoubtedly, as silence is presumed to give consent, they are satisfied with the choice of those who did. The five senators who were elected by large majorities over the pro-kanaka candidates, have a right to carry out their pledge to the electors, which was that they would at the earliest possible date do away with kanaka labour.

Senator Dobson

- What does the honorable senator say to Mr. Browne's opinion that a seven years' extension might have been granted ?

Senator HIGGS

- That statement has been most unfairly used against Mr. Browne, He said that a five' years' extension was ample, but he added that if those who favoured an extension had gone another way about it they might have got seven years. Is it fair to claim that Mr. Browne, the leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, is in favour of an extension 1

Senator Dobson

- Everybody admits that the kanaka has to go. Why not give the seven years' extension 1

Senator HIGGS

- That interjection reminds me of the opinion I have held from the very commencement, that this agitation on the part of Mr. Philp and others is the purest bluff. If the proposition of the Government had been for a two years' extension, the sugar planters would have said - " Give us five years." If we had said that it should be seven years, they would have asked for ten years, or if we had said that it should be ten years, probably they would have asked for fifteen years. Senator Fraser let the cat out of the bag to-day when he said - " Let us wait until the general elections take place."

Senator Dobson

- What could be fairer ?

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Senator HIGGS

- Surely after my description of the electoral system, the honorable and learned senator will see how unfair it is. Not the 5.30 sugar-growers, but the men who are interested in holding land for speculative purposes, and in the banks, would spend thousands of pounds with the object of bringing about a different representation. By spending large sums of money ' they might succeed in defeating most of us. With the exception of Senator Ferguson, there is not one senator from that State whose election expenses cost him more than a couple of hundred pounds. Most of them were not in the position to spend money. They were elected on their merits, and it should be accepted as further evidence of their capacity to deal with this subject that money did not win them their seats here. We were elected on our platform, and its first and foremost plank was the abolition, as soon as possible, of kanaka labour. At my first meeting I was asked- - "If it should happen that no duty -were allowed to protect the sugar industry, would you vote for a continuance of kanaka labour 1" I said - " If it were a question of the continuance of the sugar industry and black labour, then I should vote in the opposite direction," and that is my position now. Briefly, I shall now refer to the fact that many harbor boards-, some municipal councils, and other bodies have passed certain resolutions. We all know that a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.

Senator Dobson

- These, mind, are all representative institutions.

Senator HIGGS

- We all know how these things happen. Probably the secretary of an association in Brisbane said, "We are holding a meeting, and we are going to send down a resolution. See if you can get a meeting of your committee or your society, and carry this resolution." Evidently that has been done in this case. In the aggregate these bodies probably do not amount to more than a few hundred persons.

Senator Dobson

- If the honorable senator were a member of a municipal council would he dare to pass such a resolution if he knew that the people's voice was against it 1

Senator HIGGS

- I was a municipal councillor for a little time. The position goes a-begging because it carries no pay, but a great deal of abuse and much hard work. Excepting those who put up for the honour of the position, the men who stand think there may be a few contracts about. It is regarded by some persons as a stepping stone to a position of greater prominence. But what alderman goes before his constituents and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, I intend to propose that we consider the kanaka question at our next monthly meeting." The thing never crops up.

Senator Dobson

- Senator Eraser's argument is that Parliament, the press, and all the representative institutions are against this Bill.

Senator HIGGS

- In the first place, the municipal councils have no mandate from the ratepayers to deal with this question ; and when Senator Eraser says that the Parliament of Queensland is in favour of the extension of time, the statement is not correct. With regard to the press, his statement is -very magnanimous, but no one is in a position to say that the whole press is in favour of the extension of time. As a matter of fact, the principal newspaper in Rockhampton, where Senator Ferguson lives, is against the extension of time, and in favour of the removal of the kanaka in the manner proposed by this Bill. A public meeting was held in Rockhampton, which declared that in its opinion the Barton proposals for doing away with the kanaka were perfectly reasonable.

Senator Ferguson

- It was a very small meeting.

Senator HIGGS

- That shows that there was no interest taken on the other side. The only public meeting of any importance held in Brisbane was a meeting to which admission was by ticket, and, in many cases, by the back entrance. The Mayor so far forgot himself as to refuse to accept an amendment to the resolution. In fact, the Mayor was so enthusiastic about the sugar question that he would not allow an opponent to get up on the platform, and so far forgot his dignity as to push this man off. The man was going to take an action against the Mayor unless he apologized through the public press.

Senator Keating

- How did the man manage to get in if he was opposed to the objects of the meeting?

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Senator HIGGS

- Some opponents got in, and I believe there was a considerable vote against the resolution. But the most important part of my remarks will deal with Dr. Maxwell. Let me say here that I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Maxwell at the meeting of honorable senators called to consider this question last week, and I join with those who testify to his courtesy. But having read his arguments I am placed in this position : that I now consider him either a dupe or an impostor. I know I ought to hesitate to apply those terms to Dr. Maxwell ; but when I come to consider his arguments and the premises upon which he has based his conclusions, I say that, either some people in Queensland are using him in an unfair manner, or he is doing something which is unbecoming to one in his position, and unworthy of him as a gentleman. He prefaces his argument by savins -

The localities where cane-growing is being pursued have been, for convenience of consideration, gathered up within three chief centres, these being known as the Bundaberg district, embracing everything south of Mackay; the Mackay district; and the district of Cairns, which includes every

cane-growing area north of Mackay. Bundaberg represents the more- temperate state of climate, Mackay the medium, while in the northern district of Cairns we run up into ultra-tropical climatic conditions. With the conditions of nature thus differentiated, and divided into zones indicated by the respective districts, I will, in the first place, set forth the proportions of white settlers who are cane-growers upon the areas under cane in the respective districts ; and afterwards note the relative numbers of kanaka labourers at work in the cane-fields within these districts. There are 2,610 cane-farmers in Queensland, and these are distributed as follows : -

Iti Bundaberg district, we have one farmer to 32 acres ; in Mackay, 1 to 42 acres, and in the district of Cairns, each farmer is cultivating 72 acres of cane. These figures show us that in the more temperate climatic conditions of the most southern sugar district, white settlement, expressed by the number of cane farmers upon the cane-growing areas, is to-day two and a half times more dense than in the severely tropical conditions of Cairns.

I will now note the proportions of kanaka labour employed in three sugar districts, and also in relation to the areas under cane. The total number of male kanakas in Queensland at this time, according to the figures furnished to me personally by Registrar-General Hughes, is 8,656, of which number, 7,615 are known to be engaged in sugar-cane culture, and are distributed through the districts as follows :-

I must apologize to the Senate for reading this statement at such length, but I want' to do justice to Dr. Maxwell. If he can explain away my conclusions I shall be only too pleased to apologize for anything that I may say. I want his statement to appear fairly in Hansard alongside what I have to say in regard to it - When we compare the number of kanakas with the areas of cane in the respective districts in Bundaberg, where the white settlement is the greatest, in that district there being one farmer to 32 acres, we find that there is only one kanaka to 24 acres ; in Mackay, where each white farmer controls 42 acres of cane, there is one kanaka to 17 acres, and when we reach the tropical areas of the Cairns district, where every farmer cultivates 72 acres of cane, there is one kanaka to less than 9 acres of cane. We thus see that the relative densities of white settlement upon the canegrowing areas, and the relative proportions of kanakas employed upon those areas in the respective districts, are very generally in accord with the variations in the climatic conditions of those districts.

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Upon these facts; or statements which Dr. Maxwell has set before us as facts, he bases certain conclusions to show why we should grant an extension of time, and deal with the sugar industry in some other way than that proposed by the Bill. After basing his argument upon these facts, he insults the members of the Federal Parliament, as I take it, in these words -

We cannot, by any mode of reasoning, come to consider that the measures now before the Federal Parliament indicate an adequate knowledge of the matters with which they propose to deal. It is also difficult to conceive that the Prime Minister has foreseen how his proposals must operate in the several sugar districts ; and it is mere justice to conclude that the right honorable gentleman does not apprehend what will be in' certain districts the fruits of their operation if they become enacted into law.

I venture to say that if the facts placed before the Federal Government by Dr. Maxwell and Mr. Philp are of no greater value than the facts presented to this Senate by Dr. Maxwell in his "Argument," then no person in this community can justly ask for an extension of time. What do we find to be the facts in connexion with the kanakas employed in Queensland ? I find from a report by the immigration agent, dated the 4th June, 1901, and dealing with the working of the Pacific Island immigration during the year ended 'the 31st December, 1900, that there are in Queensland 9,324 kanakas. The numbers of islanders in the respective districts, from estimates prepared by the several inspectors, on the 31st December, 1900, were as follow : - Brisbane district, 209 ; Beenleigh, 51 ; Maryborough, 331 ; Childers, 891 ; Bundaberg, 2,274 ; Rockhampton, 97 ; Mackay, 1,775 ; Bowen, 20 ; Ayr, 600 ; Townsville, 79 ; Ingham, 1,183 ; Geraldton, 590 ; Cairns, 529 ; Port Douglas, 335 ; and Thursday Island, 360 ; making a total of 9,324. According to the report of the immigration agent, there are 3,853 kanakas in the southern district, 1,775 in the Mackay district, and in the district of Cairns, including every cane growing area north of Mackay, there are 3,336. To these may be added 360 kanakas on Thursday Island. Let us find out if we can where Dr. Maxwell got his figures from. I must say that when I saw his argument and his statement that only 1,912 kanakas were employed in all the districts south of Mackay, I wondered how he arrived at that estimate.

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Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- He says " employed in sugar-cane culture."

Senator HIGGS

- Does any one contend seriously that the balance, numbering nearly -2,000 kanakas, is employed in other occupations ?

Senator O'Keefe

- They cannot be employed in other occupations according to law.

Senator HIGGS

- I have been trying to ascertain where Dr. Maxwell obtained his figures.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- From the Registrar-General's office, he says.

Senator HIGGS

- Honorable senators will remember that recently they received a' return to an order of the House of Representatives, dated 21st June, showing the number of aliens in Queensland, the nationalities to which they belong, the localities in. which they are employed, the vocations they follow, and so on. That return gives the total number of kanakas as 9,327.

Senator Fraser

- Women are included in that return.

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Senator HIGGS

- That is so. I will give the places named in the return in order that honorable senators may verify the facts for themselves. I find- that the figures, as to the number of kanakas in Queensland, are as follow : -

Aramac, 1 male; Blackall, 11 males, 4 females, total 15; Bowen, 277 males, *21 females, total 298 ; Brisbane, 47 males, 2 females, total 49 ; Bundaberg, 1,804 males, 108 females, total 1,912 ; Burke, 2 males ; Caboolture, 105 males, 25 females, total 130 ; Cairns, 1,084 males, 46 females, total 1,130; Cardwell, 1,155 males, 78 females, total 1,233 ; Charleville, 4 males ; Clermont, 7 males, 2 females, total 9 ; Cloncurry, 4 males ; Cook, 341 males, 19 females, total 360 : Cunnamulla, 1 male ; Darling Downs Central, 2 males ; Darling Downs East, 1 male ; Enoggera, 3 males ; Etheridge, 6 males ; Gladstone, 20 males, 2 females, total 22 ; Herberton, 21. males ; Ipswich, 3 males ; Kennedy, 14 males, 6 females, total 20; Leichardt, 2 males; Logan, 37 males; Mackay, 1,361 males, 114 females, total 1,475 ; Maranoa, 2 males ; Marathon, 2 males ; Maryborough, 37 males, 11 females, total 48 ; Moreton East, 89 males, 11 females, total 100; Moreton West, 8 males, 1 female, total 9; Nundah, 16 males; Oxley, 8 males; Palmer, 1 male; Peak Downs, 1 male; Rockhampton, 8 males, 1 female, total 9 ; Somerset, 591 males, 81 females, total 672;

Springsure, 12 males, 2 females, total 14; Stanley, 1 male ; St. Lawrence, 1 male ; Taroom, ' 2 males ; Tiaro, 109 males, 4 females, total 113; Toowong, 5 males;

Townsville* 508 males, 27 females, total, 535 ; Westwood, 152 males, 58 females, total 210; Wide Bay, 786 males, 48 females, total. 834 ; making a total of .8,656 males and 671 females - a grand total of 9,327. I wonder where Dr. Maxwell got his total of 8,656 ? He told us that he obtained the figures from the Registrar-General, who appears to have given him the total -number of male kanakas in Queensland: ' I could not understand at first where he obtained the total of 1,912, but on looking through this census table I found that the figures given him, or which he has taken for the Bundaberg district, embracing all south of Mackay, represent the total of males and females placed opposite the Bundaberg census district. Then when we come to Mackay, we find that he has taken the total males and females, namely, 1,475, which represents the number in the Mackay census district only.

But how does Dr. Maxwell build up the total for the Cairns district, which embraces all north of Mackay? Had he followed out the plan adopted in' the cases of Bundaberg and Mackay, he would have gone to the census returns and taken the number of kanakas given opposite the Cairns census district, where we find the total of 1,130 named.- But for the purposes of the people who are at the bottom of this great agitation to secure an extension of time, or the continuance of black labour, it was necessary to build up the figures, and they appear to have been built up in this way : Bowen, 298 males and females; Cairns, 1,130 ; Cardwell, 1,233 ; Cook, 360; Somerset, 672 ; and Townsville, 535 ; making a total of 4,228. These

figures correspond with those which appear in the census table opposite the census districts I have named. What value then can we place upon Dr. Maxwell's testimony as to what is the condition of the sugar industry? What reliance can we place upon the elaborate tables in the report submitted by him to the Prime Minister? Either Dr. Maxwell has done this thing with full knowledge, or he has done it at the instance of some people in Queensland who ought to have known better. Surely the Registrar-General is not knave enough to supply figures in this "cooked" and distorted way.

Senator Clemons

- How great is the discrepancy?

Senator HIGGS

- There is a discrepancy of over 1,000, and the means by which these figures have been adopted point to something which is positively scandalous. I do not like to say anything calculated to bring any man into discredit, especially a gentleman of the attainments which Dr. Maxwell appears to possess. But when an important matter like this is at stake, we are entitled to have the facts of the case presented to us. We should not have a garbled statement presented to us, and when I can prove, as I believe I have proved here, that Dr. Maxwell is wrong in his premises, then surely I can claim, just as Senator Fraser has claimed on the other side, that the whole case, as presented by Dr. Maxwell, must fall to the ground.

Senator Keating

- Does the honorable senator say that there is a discrepancy in the figures relating to each of these districts of Bundaberg, Mackay and Cairns?

Senator HIGGS

- I do not say there is a discrepancy there. I say there may be a discrepancy of a few figures, because they have left out sub-districts. The chief discrepancy is at Bundaberg. Honorable senators will remember that Dr. Maxwell's whole appeal as made to honorable members of the Senate, was in the interests of the north as against the south. He said there were only 1,912 kanakas there, when really there are 4,000 odd. Of course he makes out tables on these figures, which, I submit, are absolutely wrong.

Senator Macfarlane

- They were furnished by the Registrar-General.

Senator HIGGS

- Then it remains for the Registrar-General or Dr. Maxwell to get out of the position in which one or the other has placed himself. If Dr. Maxwell could explain this matter right away, I am sure the leading press of the States would place their columns at his disposal, and would be willing to give him two columns or more to-morrow morning to enable him to deal with the case.

Senator Dobson

- The discrepancy in numbers surely cannot alter all his evidence 1

Senator HIGGS

- No. But does it not show that unless Dr. Maxwell can offer an explanation of the distortion of these figures, we cannot look upon him as an impartial observer, and as- one who is setting the case impartially before this Parliament and the people of Australia.

Senator Pearce

- Does he offer any explanation in his pamphlet of the way in which he has put these figures 1

Senator Sir Josiah SYMON

- He says that they are right.

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Senator HIGGS

- He says in his statement that it shows -

The total number of male kanakas in Queensland at this time, -according to the figures furnished to me personally by Registrar-General Hughes.

The explanation must come from one of these gentlemen. Dr. Maxwell says the figures furnished show the total number of kanakas to be 8,656, of which number 7,615 are known to be engaged in sugar culture. That is a peculiar fact in his argument. When he was confronted with the figures relating to the total kanakas employed in Bundaberg, Mackay, and Cairns, namely, 1,912, 1,475, and 4,228 respectively, making a grand total of 7,615, he seems to have thought this -was the easiest way to account for the discrepancies between that total and the 8,656 furnished him by the Registrar-General.

There is a difference altogether of about 1,041. He evidently thought they could not be engaged in sugar culture, so he said, " we will put it down at 7,615." Let us come to another phase of the question, the Pacific Island Immigration Aliens' Report, which sets forth that the following is a list of the number of employers of kanaka labour registered in each district in Queensland in 1900 : - Brisbane - 20, Beenleigh 23, Maryborough 43, Childers 251, Bundaberg 177, Rockhampton 7, Mackay 335, Bowen 5, Ayr 28, Townsville 11, Ingham 104, Geraldton 62, Cairns 59, Port Douglas 52. Total, 1,177. I should like the consideration of the Senate while I read the number of employers for the year 1899, in order to show that there has been a decrease of 87 employers in the twelve months. Brisbane 20, Beenleigh 28, Maryborough 54, Childers 169, Bundaberg 252, Rockhampton 12, Mackay 439, Bowen 1, Ayr 38, Townsville 11, Ingham 96, Geraldton 38, Cairns 60, Port Douglas 46 ; or a total of 1,264 for 1899.. Now, it will be noticed that the number of employers has decreased, whilst the number of kanakas has increased by 529 on the total of the previous year. It will be noticed that in Childers, in the Bundaberg district, where it is admitted on all sides that white men can do the work, the increase in the number of employers was 82, and in the Mackay district there was a decrease in the number of employers of kanakas of 104 during the year. It is important to notice that while we are told that there are' 2,610 farmers growing cane in Queensland, there are only 1,177 persons who employ kanaka labour, proving what we have claimed all along, that white men can do the work, and that white men do do the work. Coming back for a moment to Dr. Maxwell. When he was questioned at the meeting the other day as to whether white men could do and were doing the work in the Bundaberg district, his answer was - " Yes." When asked the reason, he said it was because a man would do for himself what he would not do for an employer, and because a man who owned his cane area had control of the situation. He could get up at four o'clock in the morning and work until eight o'clock ; he could start work again at five o'clock in the afternoon and work on until eight o'clock.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- I think he referred to the Cairns district, not to Bundaberg.

Senator HIGGS

- As far as I can recollect, he was asked whether a cane farmer who owned his land could do the work, and he said - " Yes," and he was referring to the Bundaberg district at the time. He added that he had control of the situation, and could work in the morning or in the evening as he liked, indicating that when men were under the rule of syndicates or other employers they were compelled to work throughout the heat of the day, and could not, therefore, do the work as well. We claim that white men can do the work also in the northern districts. It may be necessary to refer to the matter in committee, but I shall not now bother the Senate with particulars as to the number of horses, sheep, and cattle produced in the northern district of Queensland. I observe that some senators seem to be under the impression that if we do away with the kanaka the sugar industry will have to be abandoned in the north, and a large tract of country will, therefore, be left lying idle. Nothing is further from the facts. There are some 37,000 acres under cane in the north, and that only amounts to some 50 odd square miles in extent, but honorable senators must not lose sight of the fact that there are other things produced in the north besides sugar, and the land will not lie fallow.

In the first place, we claim that white men will be found able to do the work as soon as ever the wages rise. But if it should happen that the sugar industry has to go, the north will be able to produce wealth of a varied character. Gold-mining is an important industry of northern Queensland, and so' is the pastoral industry,' as Senator Fraser must know. I say it would be far better if the sugar industry of the north had to go a dozen times than that this kanaka traffic should be continued for any length of time. For myself, I think five years is ample time to allow.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Does the honorable senator think that the sugar industry will have to go in the north]

Senator HIGGS

- No, I do not. I think that as soon as wages rise, as they will rise, white men will be found to do the work. People talk of the necessity for an inquiry, but we have had an inquiry, and every honorable senator has had a copy of the report and evidence. Let any honorable senator go through the evidence given at that inquiry, and he will learn the reason why white men do not stick to the cane-fields. They have gone to the cane-fields, but as soon as ever a bit of a rush to a gold-field has taken place the men have gone away.

That has been the experience throughout every gold-mining district in Australia, and that kind of thing will always happen.

Senator Pearce

- That has happened in South Australia, where the farmers could not get labourers to take their crops off the land.

Senator HIGGS

- We cannot expect men to do work like that required to be done in the cane-fields for £1 a week and rations, or for 30s. a week and rations.

Senator Dobson

- Will the honorable senator state what he thinks would be a failwage 1

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Senator HIGGS

- My own opinion is that if the work is as hard as some people have described it, £3 per week would not be too little to pay the men. I know there are certain economic laws which govern the rate of wages. I know that. at the present time, the most undesirable and the most despicable work, if any work can be called despicable, is the poorest paid. There seems to be a consensus of opinion that the dirty work of the community should be poorly paid. I know that there are certain rules or laws regulating rates of wages, and I know there is competition", and that where two men-offer themselves for one billet wages are sure to go down.

Senator Pearce

- To what a man. can live on.

Senator HIGGS

- Unfortunately, as a rule, to what a man can live on. I do not expect that the rate of wages on the cane-fields will go up very high unless those employed to take the place of the kanakas form themselves into a sugar- workers union, and keep up the rate of their wages.

Senator Dobson

- Does the honorable senator advocate that the wages should be £3 per week and rations 1

Senator HIGGS

- The honorable and learned senator is not going to get me into a corner. I am not here now dealing with the rate of wages which should be paid- to men working on the cane-fields. But if the caneworkers ask me at some time to go up to assist them to get good wages, I shall go most willingly. The question of their wages is not under discussion just now.

Senator Dobson

- The honorable senator is shirking it.

Senator HIGGS

- The honorable and learned senator wants me to say that the workers on the cane-fields should have £3 per week and rations.

Senator Dobson

- In my speech I asked honorable senators to say what the wages should be.

Senator HIGGS

- I say that in all probability if the cane -growers of Queensland would offer 6s. 6d'. a day they would get any number of men to go and work in the cane-fields. Why, the labour bureau in Queensland at the present time in many cases can only offer men 12s. a week and rations to go to work on farms in the south of Queensland, where it is hot enough sometimes. If ever it happens that owing to the kanaka being done away with, there is such a scarcity of labourers on canefields that wages shall go up, -we shall find hundreds of men going there, even from Victoria, Tasmania, and New Zealand, just as they go now to the stations owned by Senator Fraser and others to do shearing and labouring work. Senator Fraser knows that the shearers through their union are able to keep up the rate of wages to something like what they consider a fair thing - £1 a 100 - and he knows that for those wages men will travel from New Zealand up to the Gulf in the shearing season.

Senator Ferguson

- For £6 a week, for that is what some of them make.

Senator HIGGS

- Senator Ferguson talks of. £6 a week as though it were an exorbitant sum, but the honorable senator would not be in his present position if he had only got £6 a week. He had to get six times £6 a week very often to get his bank balance ; and I remind him that the shearer who earns £6 a week has to graft for it, in a tropical country, and that he can only earn that wage during a very brief period of the year. What I desire to point out is that when the station-owners of Queensland can offer £1 a 100, they have hundreds of men waiting on the banks of the creeks in order to get the chance to earn the money.

Senator Fraser

- I can tell the honorable senator that it was impossible to get them this year.

Senator HIGGS

- Why ?

Senator Fraser

- Because they were not there.

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Senator HIGGS

- There was a scarcity of men owing to the fact that we sent some 10,000 to South Africa, most of whom were drawn from the bush and from amongst the unemployed. Mr. George T. Barber has been quoted during the debate as having expressed himself in favour of a seven years' term. This morning I received from him the following letter, dated Brisbane, the 22nd of November -

In the Courier of even date I note that from its Melbourne correspondent the Kanaka Bill was under debate in your Chamber last evening. -In the course of the address by the Honorable J. Ferguson he is reported to have stated that Mr. Glassey's successor for Bundaberg had advocated the recruiting of kanakas for a further term of seven years. This, sir, I wish to state is false, as I have pointed out already in the columns of the Worker, which paper seemed to have fallen into the same error. In case you have not a copy of Hansard No. 5, page 191, I will give the words I used : - " If the Government and the sugargrowers are not satisfied with the result of the federal elections, and are not prepared to accept the verdict given in favour of a 'white Australia,' we are prepared at the next general election to take a referendum on the subject whether the importation of kanakas shall cease on the 1st January, 1903, or on the 1st January, 1906. So you see' we are prepared to give the gentlemen engaged in the sugar industry time from 1903 to 1906, a period of three years, and I am positive that, if a referendum was taken, a most decisive verdict would be given to prevent any further importation after one of these dates." You will see that, by basing my calculations on the latter date, that it would mean 1909 before the boys' three years' agreement expired and seeing that we cannot take the referendum till 1902, over seven years would elapse from this date till their time expires. Further on in the course of a speech by Mr. Cowley, I interjected - "I would give them seven 3'ears," and Cowley at once twisted it to mean seven years' further recruiting, which is a most deliberate misrepresentation.

That letter reminds me that Mr. Philp, Senator Ferguson, and Senator Fraser claim that the fact that the Government won three by-elections is part proof that the feeling of Queensland has changed. At the by-election - in Fortitude Valley - which is really part of Brisbane proper - the question was not once mooted by either of the candidates to my knowledge, and I was there at the time. The fact that Mr. McMaster defeated by about 200 votes Mr. Seymour, the labour candidate, is no criterion as to the voice of Queensland on this question. At the Gympie election, which honorable senators have said was won by the labour party by only four votes, Mr. Reid was just as much against kanaka labour as was, and is, Mr. Mulcahy, the successful candidate. How can it be claimed that, because that election was won by only four votes, there has been a revulsion of feeling in the State since the federal election 1 At the Toowoomba election, Mr. Tolmey, the Ministerial supporter, was as much against kanaka labour as any one could be, and has been so for years. Yet these elections are claimed by honorable senators as showing that Queensland is in favour of a continuance of black labour. With regard to Rockhampton North, where a public meeting was held, and Mr. Linnett won his election by only one vote, after the elections tribunal had succeeded by various methods in upsetting the return of Mr. Turner, Senator Stewart, who was present, informs me that the topic of kanaka labour was not mentioned in the contest. Yet these contests are pointed to by honorable senators to show that Mr Philp has the country at his back. This agitation is an extremely selfish one on the part of those who would benefit from an extension. The Royal commission of 1889 took a great deal pf evidence, and then they asked for only a period of

five years. Sir Samuel Griffith and his followers, for reasons best known to themselves, fixed no limit.
Senator Walker

- Five years for recruiting, I suppose. That means eight years.

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Senator HIGGS

- I do not remember whether it was for recruiting, but Senator Glassey has kindly handed .to hie - the Queensland Hansard for the 6th June, 1889, in which Mr. Cowley made this statement, at page 162 - An extension of five years would answer all present requirements, and would not pledge the country to anything very great. Before the five years are over in all probability the bonus system now existing among the Continental nations of Europe will have been abolished.

The Royal commission was composed of! Mr. Cowley, Mr. King, and Mr. W. H.. Groom. Mr. Cowley and Mr. King recommended an extension of kanaka labour, but Mr. Groom did not. Mr. Groom in his report said -

The remedies suggested by the various witnesses for the amelioration of the condition of the sugar industry, briefly summarized, are as follows: -

The repeal of the 11th section of the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1885, and its extension for a further period of five years.

A reciprocity treaty to be entered into with the Australian colonies for the admission of Queensland-grown sugar duty free upon certain, conditions to be arranged between the contracting parties.

The adoption of a comprehensive irrigation scheme ; and

That the Government should take the introduction of Polynesians into their own hands, and establish depôts at the various islands, to be managed by Government agents, and that on the arrival of Islanders in Queensland they should be conveyed to the immigration barracks and there be open to engagement in the same way as ordinary white immigrants, the planters to be responsible for the total cost of the scheme.

The reason why I describe this agitation as a selfish one is because the sugar-growers have obtained almost everything they asked, for in that year, notwithstanding the report of the commission. They have secured a free Australian market, have had the five years' term, are getting assistance in the form of central mills, and possess a very great natural advantage in their ability to grow sugar more cheaply than can any other cane-growers in Australia. What is to be: the position of the New South Wales canegrowers in competition with the Queenslanders even with white labour ? Twenty-two-thousand acres of land are under cane in the northern part of New South Wales. Mr. Knox, the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company, who ought to know, made this statement in a letter which he wrote against federation in the campaign, of 1899-

No flowers of fancy about central mills or protective duties, &c, can alter this hard fact, and the extinction of the sugar industry in New South Wales will soon follow the imposition of uniform duties of excise, for sugar can be made more cheaply in Queensland than from cane grown in New South Wales, and with any protective duty operating to increase the profits of the growers or manufacturers there would be no difficulty in meeting any increased consumption by a corresponding increase in the output of the northern colony.

To his mind the cane-growers on the Tweed and the Richmond Rivers would have to do what many of them, I believe, did commence to do as soon as federation was established, and that was to turn their attention to maize-growing and dairying.

Senator Fraser

- That will not do in the north.

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Senator HIGGS

- Senator Styles has replied to statements of that kind in his comprehensive collation of old stories regarding "Victoria not being able to grow a cabbage. Dr. Maxwell said that dairying was impossible in Cairns, but certain gentlemen who have given their attention to the subject went through the dairying districts of New South Wales, and on their return told some people in Queensland, who hitherto were not aware of the fact, that parts of that State, and tropical parts too, were very suitable for dairying purposes provided that the dairymen got the proper breed of cattle. He stated that the very fact that the country was

tropical was in favour of the dairy cattle, because it was not necessary to go to much expenditure in feeding the cattle, during winter. We know from Senator Pulsford what the sugar industry is likely to derive from a protective duty. In a very interesting letter which he sent to the Herald some time ago he estimated that about £800,000 would go into the pockets of the producers of sugar. Interested gentlemen know very well that, if kanaka labour is abolished, they will get the benefit of the duty, and I suppose they know that they can make up any loss they may suffer out of the pockets of the consumers of sugar in Australia. To my mind a more important question than the mere question of economics is the moral aspect of this traffic. I am surprised that the ethical side has not appealed with greater force to men like Senator Walker. I cannot understand why he looks only at the pounds, shillings, and pence. I am satisfied that if a representative of a missionary society, doing work in the South Sea Islands, were to ask him for a subscription, his three guineas- perhaps five or even ten guineas - would be given. Why is it that he allows the work which the missionaries are doing in the South Seas at the present time to be spoilt ? The honorable senator believes in Christianizing the kanaka. Though a few of the semi-savages who come to Queensland may be educated, I believe that in most cases the kanaka is " ten times more the child of hell" after he comes to that State than he was in his native island. I have here two letters which I should like to read to the Senate. One is from the Rev. Dr. Paton, who was for many years a missionary in the South Sea Islands, and who has fought against the kanaka traffic right "from the jump." He has never, ceased publishing pamphlets and writing to the press in order to put a stop to what he . considers to be semi-slavery. The Rev. Dr. Paton, as far as I know, has no particular sympathy for the labour party. I am not aware that he ever belonged to a labour union in his life, or has ever been found encouraging strikes or disturbing the peace in any way. In fact the reverend gentleman takes no part in industrial matters of that kind. But what does he say on this subject? I wrote to him to ask him if he would give me a letter which I might read to the Senate in the course of this debate, and this is what he sent to me -

Dear Sir, - Thanks for your kind letter, which I much appreciate. I praise the Lord for leading the Right Hon. Edmund Barton, Premier, and the representatives of our Australian Commonwealth in the Senate and House who sympathize with him to resolve, if possible, to close the Queensland kanaka labour traffic five years from this, and I pray that now no power nor combination of powers will be able to prevent its complete suppression at that period and for ever to Australia. By laws and regulations Britain and Queensland have done all possible short of suppression to prevent the crimes so common in this traffic as recorded in their ' statute-books, but when their labour ships are collecting the natives on the islands, and on their voyages to the islands and from them to Queensland, they are entirely under the power of their merciless captors, and. even with their Government agents in Queensland, . they are very much at the mercy of their employers. Once I spent some months in Queensland, visiting the planters and the kanakas on their plantations, trying to arrange evening schools and mission work among them after their day's work, and on returning to Sydney I met a Baptist minister, the Rev. C. F. Johnson, whom I sent to Miss Young of Bundaberg, who had been teaching some kanakas, and appealed for contributions for the support of a missionary for them on the plantations there. He was engaged, and wrought devotedly among them for years. On leaving the work to a friend, he sent me the following letter : - "lie labour traffic, let me say after eight years' work in the midst of the kanakas, and close study of the whole matter, it is nothing but whitewashed slavery, and the sooner it is done away with the better, &c."

Senator Major Gould

- How long ago is that ? What is the date of the letter ?

Senator HIGGS

- It is an extract from another letter, quoted in Dr. Paton's letter.

Senator Major Gould

- Is it an old one?

Senator HIGGS

- The date of Dr. Paton's letter is 18th November, 1901, and, as I have explained, it includes an extract from a letter by the Rev. C. F. Johnson to the Rev. Dr. Paton.

Senator Major Gould

- The date of which the honorable senator has not got.

Senator HIGGS

- No ; I have not got it.

Senator Clemons

- While the honorable senator is dealing with the clergy, why not quote from the Bishop of Carpentaria ?

Senator HIGGS

- I do not quote him, because the other side has done so. The right reverend bishop is like a good many other clergymen who have gone to the sugar plantations at the invitation of the planters, at a time when they could see everything at its very best. Then they have been appealed to by the planters to describe what they have seen.

Senator Major Gould

- The Bishop of Carpentaria is not a man who would form his opinions in that way.

Senator HIGGS

- But if a bishop is visiting a plantation in the Mossman district - and that is where the Bishop of Carpentaria went - and happens to strike a place where the kanakas are well treated while he is there - if he sees them receiving cake and afternoon tea, and apparently well fed and looked after - and if the planter appeals to him and points out to him that he ought to write and say what he has seen, it can be well understood that he will find great difficulty in refusing, more especially if he has been a guest at the house of the planter upon whose property he saw these things.

Senator Charleston

- Has the bishop ever lived on the islands from which the kanakas come?

Senator HIGGS

- So far as my knowledge goes, he has not - I am quoting the opinion of missionaries who have lived on the islands, and have devoted their lives to the work. They ought to know, if any one knows, the evils which the kanaka traffic brings about. The letter continues -

The kanaka traffic has been, and is now a great evil, and only an evil to the kanakas. All along its line it has had an appalling history, though only now and again its crimes and murders in recruiting on the islands and at sea have been brought to light in the Queensland Law Courts, as in the cases of Dr. Murray, the Ceara, the Lizzie, the Hopeful, the Sybil, and the Forest King, who, by a Royal commission in Queensland, were all proved to have kidnapped, and deceived the natives -

Senator Sir William Zeal

- That is nearly 40 years ago.

Senator HIGGS

- The honorable senator's interjection is like a good many of the statements which have come from that side of the chamber. I am afraid that Senator Zeal must have rubbed shoulders with the romantic Senator Fraser, who spoke of 48,000 white people being directly concerned in the sugar industry, whereas, according to the close friends of the industry, there are only 20,000 whites who are directly and indirectly interested in it.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- I know some of the cases the honorable senator has been quoting from personal experience.

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Senator HIGGS

- I admit the honorable senator's long experience, but as a matter of fact these cases did not take place more than fifteen years ago. The letter continues - they got away ; see page 11 and following pages of accompanying pamphlets, Slavery under the British Flag. The commission in its reports says - " The History of the Cruise of the Hopeful, of which the foregoing is an outline drawn from the evidence submitted to us, is one long record of deceit, cruel treachery, deliberate kidnapping, and cold-blooded murders. . The number of human beings whose lives are sacrificed during the recruiting can never be accurately known," &c. See page 13 of the pamphlet, and 23 of the Royal commission's report. These things were done by each labour ship's company examined by the commission, and what of the whole fleet even under the most improved regulations, in which they boast that no such crimes can now be committed. A traffic so closely allied to slavery in the persons of men and women cannot be regulated by Queensland laws. Surely it should be suppressed. It is evil root and branch in its very nature, a disgrace to Australia, and I trust our Australian Commonwealth will have the power and honour of blotting it and its crimes for ever out of our Australian Commonwealth, and of pleading with France to do the same

out of New Caledonia. Last letters inform us that at North Santo two lads were got on board a French labour ship. The missionary went off to plead for them, but the captain clung to his prey as is usual. When the missionary and his party got into the canoe to go on shore the two lads leapt overboard and swam for the shore. A man from the ship sprang into the missionary's canoe and sank it, but all in it managed to get on board the ship alive. The ship's boat was after the two lads, and when it overtook them one of the lads dived ; the boat waited until he came up, caught and dragged him into the boat by the hair of his head. A man from the boat swam after the other lad, who was also dragged into the boat, and both before the missionary's eyes were so taken away to New Caledonia. English and French collectors act in the same way. in procuring the kanaka on the islands. Our son, a missionary placed on Tanna, had to visit Sydney for medical advice, and hurried back by next ship for fear of his work being upset by the kanaka labour ships. On landing at his station he found that by some means 50 had been got away to Queensland and 30 to New Caledonia, causing much grief and greatly retarding the work of christianizing and civilizing the savages, among whom he was placed five years ago.

We oppose this traffic because of its many evils.

Because it breaks up all family relations among the natives.

Because it causes great want, misery and ruin among those left dependent for support on those taken away.

Because it takes away husbands from wives, and wives from husbands, parents from children, and children from parents, causing much destitution among the aged, the mothers and children who remain unprovided for on the islands.

Because even the savage cannibals on the islands must industriously cultivate the land as they depend on its products for their support, and there, if a man won't work, he cannot eat.

Because of the dreadful mortality among the kanakas in Queensland, which should have long ago led to its suppression by Britain, which has done so much to free the slaves in other lands.

Because this traffic in its every branch has been, and is even now, steeped in deception and cruelty and vice.

Because the Divine blessing cannot rest on any industry so wrought, or on any colony or country sanctioning it, and by its great money gain blinded to its cruel oppressions and crimes, condoning all if they only get this labour, as if the kanakas were mere chattels, or animals for their use, having no claims in common with white men. O that our Commonwealth may have the honour of blotting out for ever this shocking traffic from Australia's honour. The arguments for its continuance are just what were used by the slave-holders in South America for the continuance of slavery, but it was, notwithstanding, suppressed, and the slave States were not ruined thereby, but, by the Divine blessing, prospered more than ever ; and we doubt not it will be the same in Queensland by the suppression of this traffic. Had I, in my pamphlet, used recent incidents in pleading for the suppression of this traffic, its collectors, employers, and advocates would, as usual, have denied or excused all.

The reverend gentleman goes on to say -

In the interests of humanity, of Queensland, and Australia, we hope the Commonwealth will suppress this blood-stained traffic. - Yours faithfully,

John G. Paton.

I shall make only a passing reference to one point in this letter, namely, that the removal of the male kanakas from the islands leaves the wives, mothers, and children without support. As a rule, the kanaka traders do not take the women. They are objected to by the planters, in most cases, because they may have families. The men and youths are taken away, and when they die at the rate of something like 300 a year in Queensland, honorable senators must realize the state of desolation in the islands which follows the introduction of kanakas into Queensland. The Rev. D. Macdonald, whose letter I shall read presently, stated at the meeting the other day, that, as showing the way in which these islands are being depopulated, on the island where he was stationed there were some 12,000 kanakas 50 years ago, while now there are but 1,200. He described the appearance of the island as being very much like that of a deserted mining field. He only came from the islands about two months ago, and he writes as follows : -

"The Pines," Middle Crescent, North Brighton, 22nd November, 1901. Senator Higgs,

Dear Sir, - With respect to the kanaka labour traffic, or rather to its general effect upon the people in the islands, of which alone I here speak, I may say that there is no doubt that, however well the kanakas are

treated now while in Queensland - however humanely the Queensland regulations are framed, and however comparatively well the recruiting vessels now act according to the regulations - yet the general effect of the traffic upon the island people is ruinous. A sufficient proof of this is that the islands 'are rapidly becoming depopulated, and the race seriously threatened, with extermination. It cannot be otherwise with such a traffic as this among such a people - or rather in such a people as these - no more capable than children of protecting themselves, and utterly without any government in the islands to protect them, and safeguard their interests as families and communities and a race. Two typical cases recently came under my own observation, and may here be mentioned. A youth ran away to a Queensland labour recruiting vessel from his aged and decrepit father, who was chief of the village, and from his young wife, who was near her confinement. The chief and father wrote, through me, to the captain and Government agent, asking them in the name of the community not to take away the youth. No notice was taken of his request. The youth was taken away, and is now in Queensland. His father died shortly after the vessel left. In these circumstances, his wife was delivered of a child, which died in a few days, and now, while his three years service in Queensland are not yet ended, his wife has taken to evil courses, and become a moral leper. Of what avail is it to say in the case of such a tragedy to the nation, family, and community, that this youth was, perhaps, well treated, and had his ideas expanded in Queensland. If he hear of what has been caused by his going away he may never return to his ruined home. If only on returning home he learn the state of things, he may by first opportunity go back to Queensland, and may be then triumphantly pointed to as a proof of how well the kanakas are treated there, because he has come "back of his own accord.

In the other case, a youth, newly married, ran away to a Queensland recruiting vessel, leaving his young wife. Shortly after - in March last - she died, apparently from grief.

Thus, however innocent in intention may be the Queensland planters, Government, and recruiters, the kanaka labour traffic must be described as in reality a draining away of the life-blood of the island race to fertilize the sugar, industries, and of the staining of the young life of our Australian nation with the blood of a race of men who have offered no provocation but their helplessness. Adopting a well-known expression of the great African missionary - Livingstone - to the present matter, I conclude by saying : - May heaven's richest blessing be upon the Australian Commonwealth Parliament that will heal this open sore of the island world. - With much respect, I am dear sir, yours very truly,
Macdonald.

I wish to read another missionary statement which is not a very lengthy one - given by the Rev. William Gray, who states his position and opinions in this way in the first paragraph of a pamphlet regarding the kanaka traffic, published by him in 1895-

For twelve years I was a missionary on Tanna, an island of the New Hebrides Group. I went there with a mind perfectly open, so far as the kanaka labour traffic was concerned. For the first ten years of my life in the New Hebrides, I was a silent observer of all forms of the kanaka labour traffic. And probably my voice would never have been heard on the matter had Queensland not renewed the traffic in 1892. Having suffered and seen the evils of the traffic in the past, I was constrained to speak when the Queensland Government renewed the traffic in the year just named. An intimate knowledge of what the traffic is in the islands would have been sufficient warrant for speaking on the subject. But in order to have a more perfect knowledge, when the opportunity was given me of visiting Queensland, I laid myself out to acquire all possible knowledge in the time at my disposal. Though convinced that however good the traffic might be in Queensland, the goodness claimed for it there could not compensate for the evils inseparable from it in the islands, yet, I went to Queensland determined to keep my mind open to every possible fact in favour of the traffic. And having been to Queensland, I would say now what I would not have said before I went to Queensland, namely, that the kanaka labour is veiled shivery.

Are honorable senators going to ignore the evidence of men who can surely claim to be disinterested in this matter? They have no profits to derive in the way of dividends from colonial sugar refining companies. They have nothing whatever to gain, so far as I can see, by writing in this way. I can well believe that they have something to lose from the point of view of subscriptions to the missionary cause.

Senator Barrett

- And they give- up their lives to the work.

Senator HIGGS

- Tes, they give up their lives to a work which some of us, I am satisfied, would hesitate to undertake. I am sure I would not care to undertake the work of these gentlemen, even if I thought I was fit for it. I am satisfied that the man who goes down to these islands sacrifices a great deal of the comforts of this world. I regard" these gentlemen as perfectly disinterested witnesses, and I would ask whether we are going to ignore their opinions and evidence, and to accept the testimony even of experts ? Are we to ignore the evidence of these missionaries, and to accept that of men who, it must be admitted, are largely interested in the industry, and who say that if we take away kanaka labour the industry will be ruined ? We challenge that statement. We say that the industry will not be ruined, and we cannot regard the evidence of interested parties as not being of an impartial character compared with that put forward by missionaries who have been or are stationed on the islands.

Senator Dobson

- The Bishop of Carpentaria is a disinterested witness.

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Senator HIGGS

- I hope I have dealt with that matter satisfactorily already. If I have not, then there are other honorable senators to follow who can satisfy such a reasonable man as Senator Dobson that our side has the preponderance of evidence. A gentleman who was a Government agent on board kanaka recruiting vessels has written to me recently, and pointed out that it is impossible for the Government agent to see that the regulations are carried out. He remains on the recruiting vessel while a boat is sent ashore, with men armed to the teeth. Those on the recruiting vessel cover the men in the boat with their guns in case they should be attacked.

Senator Charleston

- If the kanakas are such savages on their own islands, they cannot know what they are going to Queensland for.

Senator HIGGS

- Honorable senators must have read in the press of recent date of the tribal wars now taking place in Tanna. The islands from which these kanakas come are in a state of continual ferment. Many of the tribes on the islands are cannibals, and if they could get hold of a white man they would very soon eat him. "We have to face the" plain fact that the Government agent on board a recruiting vessel does not go ashore, and he cannot always see what is taking place. With regard to the treatment of the kanaka when he is in Queensland, I do not intend to go into that matter at this stage, although, if necessary, I shall do so in committee. There are other honorable senators who wish to speak, and I am not going into all the facts that I could produce regarding the treatment of kanakas in Queensland. Although some employers there treat the kanakas humanely, many use them infamously. It is only occasionally, however, that the public of Queensland hear of it.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- What ! At the present time 1

Senator HIGGS

- Yes. How do the Young Bros, treat their kanakas in the Bundaberg district ?

Senator Walker

- Splendidly, I believe.

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Senator HIGGS

- The honorable senator should read the report of a few months ago setting forth the condition of the hospital on their plantation. The Senate may be interested to learn that in 1896, or 1897, an inquiry was held into the conduct of an inspector, named Caulfield, who was stationed at Bundaberg. Inspector Caulfield appears to be a man who insists upon seeing that the kanakas are properly treated. The planters at Bundaberg raised an agitation, and petitioned the Government to hold an inquiry, with a view to his removal from the district. They did not want an inspector there who would demand that the kanaka should receive his full rations. They wanted some spineless fellow, who would be afraid to say anything lest he should lose his billet, in view of the fact that the Government was so much in favour of kanaka labour. The inquiry showed that even on Mr. Angus Gibson's plantation the rations were sometimes short. Mr. Gibson is a member of the Legislative Council of Queensland, and a well-known gentleman. Even on

his plantation the inspector found that the rations given to the kanakas were short on several occasions. I remember Mr. Gibson objecting to Mr. Caulfield, because he thought that gentleman took a wrong view of his position. He gave this example of Mr. Caulfield's wrong headedness, that on one occasion the inspector lined up some 250 kanakas on Mr. Gibson's plantation, and addressing them said - " Boys, if the cook does not give you full rations, you tell Mr. Gibson, and if Mr. Gibson does not see that you get them, you tell me." Mr. Gibson said he thought that was an extraordinary thing for an inspector to say to the kanakas. These facts are on record, and if it is desired I can give the Senate three or four columns of the inquiry as published in the Brisbane Courier in 1896 or 1897. It is impossible for the inspector to see that the kanakas are properly treated, because there are only a few of them throughout the country. At Brisbane there is one assistant inspector and two clerks, besides the immigration agent. At Bundaberg there is one inspector and an assistant inspector, and one clerk ; at Childers one inspector and one assistant; at Mackay one inspector and one assistant ; and at Maryborough, Townsville, Ayr, Beenleigh, and Ingham one inspector. Honorable senators will see that there are under a dozen inspectors to deal with the 9,327 kanakas in the State of Queensland, and extending over a vast territory. Here is another instance to show how the kanaka is treated in Queensland. This is a clipping from the Trinity Times of the 15th September of this year, printed in Cairns, and this is how they deal with kanakas there -

At the Cairns Police Court, on Tuesday, September 10, before the police magistrate, five kanakas were charged with absenting themselves from hired service for three days without leave. The prosecutor was the manager of the Mulgrave mill. The Inspector of Pacific Islanders watched the case for the boys. The Mulgrave mill was represented by a solicitor, who stated he was instructed to press for heavy penalties. Three of the boys had been before the court previously for refusing to come to work. They had gone up town and got drunk. The Inspector of Pacific Islanders asked each boy if he had. "worked alonga Monday last week." The boys said, "No bin work." This concluded the case. The police magistrate fined two boys £5. each, with ±1 ls. professional costs, and 4s. (id. costs of court each. "No goods, your worship," said the Inspector of Pacific Islanders. "Two months' gaol, then." The other three boys were fined £20 and costs each, and upon confessing no goods, got four months gaol.

Senator PEARCE

- And yet it is not slavery.

Senator HIGGS

- That is what took place in September of this year. These kanakas were fined £20 or three years' wages each, for absenting themselves for three days. This paper further states -

The boys alleged privately that their boss had made them work at night loading cane trucks, and had promised that they should have a holiday to make it up, as of course no overtime is paid to kanakas. They did not, however, advance this in court, but agreed to let Mr. Shepherd plead guilty for them.

How can the kanakas secure proper treatment when as the missionaries tell us there are some twenty different dialects spoken in the islands, and no Queensland agents or inspectors can expect to. know enough of their language to be able to teach them ? How can we expect them to be well treated when we know they cannot plead their own case, and we must know that if they had a solicitor, it is probable that in a small place like Cairns, he would not find it in his interest to do his best for them. If a solicitor was boycotted in Cairns it would not be the first time in Queensland that a member of the legal profession had been boycotted for holding opinions adverse to those who usually supply litigation. I know of cases in which men in the profession would have starved if they had had to depend for briefs upon a certain class in Queensland. It must be apparent to honorable senators that these cannibals who come from the South Sea Islands cannot be educated sufficiently to get justice for themselves throughout Queensland. Many of the kanaka employers look upon them as a dying race, as men who are bound to die anyhow, and disappear from the face of the earth, and they do not give them the treatment that ought to be given to human beings. From all aspects of the case this Parliament, in my opinion, ought to deem it an honour to have the opportunity to get rid of this kanaka traffic, at any rate, within five years.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I am in very much the same position as, perhaps, the majority of members of the Senate in dealing with this matter. Personally I know nothing whatever about it, neither have I had any opportunity of ascertaining the facts, of the case, except in so far as I have paid the closest attention to the discussion

that has taken place in the Senate - and a very interesting discussion it has been - and also have read so far as I could all the information placed before us. One thing has to my mind been proved pretty conclusively, and that is that the legislation in Queensland during the past 30 years, with one break, has been in the direction of promoting the importation and regulation of the employment of kanakas in Queensland. The break took place in 1885, when a strong wave of feeling seems to have swept over Queensland, and it was then decided to abolish the kanaka, that policy being, however, subsequently reversed, by the same Minister, Sir Samuel Griffith, in 1892. There can be no doubt that a large number of the present settlers cultivating sugarcane in Queensland have been induced to enter into the industry in consequence of having been led to believe that kanaka labour would be continued, at all events for a reasonable time. Bearing this in mind, I am somewhat at a loss to understand how the Postmaster-General can claim for this Bill that it is a continuation of the settled policy of Queensland. I think the honorable and learned senator would have been perfectly justified in saying that the Bill is an endeavour to carry out the mandate which was undoubtedly given at the time of the Commonwealth elections, that the kanakas were to go. I believe we are all in harmony on that point, and I think I may also say that if we were able to go back 30 years the kanaka would never be allowed to land in Queensland. Those of us who can recollect the early days of the "black-birding," as it was called, can remember stories and tales of fearful cruelty; tales of murder and slavery, and I do not at all wonder at the indignant language quoted by Senator Higgs from Dr. Paton and others with regard to the effect of this veiled slavery upon the islands. But what we have to do now is to see that the mandate of the Commonwealth is carried out with the minimum of friction, injustice, and loss to all parties interested. It is a difficult question, and will require very grave and careful consideration by all who pay attention to the subject. We have also to bear in mind that practically Queensland is the only State interested in this so far,

I mean, as the labour itself is concerned. The whole of the Commonwealth will be directly interested in the payment of the £2 bonus in the form of the rebate upon the excise, but so far as the direct inconvenience is concerned, it will fall, of course, upon the planters of Queensland, and we must, as I have said, do justice, and inflict as little loss as possible upon those who have embarked their capital and labour for many years in this industry in a perfectly legal manner and in accordance with the law of the land. So far as the discussion has gone, there cannot be much doubt that a large number of persons in Queensland, and especially those interested in the industry, misunderstood the exact position of affairs at the time of the Commonwealth elections.

Senator Glassey

- Not at all. There was not the slightest misunderstanding.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Can the honorable senator say for one moment that there was in Queensland any knowledge as to what the contents of this Bill would be, as to whether the time allowed would be five years or seven years, or as to the mode in which the abolition of the kanaka traffic was to be brought about? There was no misunderstanding in Queensland that the kanaka had to go, but I think it is to be regretted that those interested did not ascertain a little more definitely what method was to be proposed for removing them. I do not know that I can blame the Government for that. The Government could not at that time have disclosed their hand, but I think those interested might probably have quietly ascertained a little more definitely than apparently they did what the views of the Prime Minister were upon the matter. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is a strong feeling in Queensland on the subject. I may frankly say in passing, that, so far as the Senate is concerned, I do not share the opinion of those who think that we ought to ignore the views of the representatives of the State in the Senate. They undoubtedly have been returned as representatives of Queensland to this Senate, and we recognise them only as the representatives of Queensland, and it would never do for the Commonwealth to allow any of the States to dictate or attempt to dictate directly or indirectly in connexion with any piece of legislation the Commonwealth may think it necessary to undertake. I mention that in passing, but at the same time, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there is undoubtedly friction in Queensland upon this matter. That is certainly borne out by the voluminous papers sent to us during the last month or so from harbor boards, chambers of commerce, various agricultural societies - I think some 22 of them - from a large number of farmers, engaged in the industry, and from others directly interested in the passage of this Bill.

Senator McGregor

- Has the honorable senator received any from the kanakas 1

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- If the honorable senator has received any from the kanakas and has not passed them on for the benefit of his brother senators I very much regret it, because I have been anxious to get all the information I could from both sides. We have also recently received the letter from the Premier of Queensland. Of course, it is not a letter from the Parliament of Queensland, but we cannot ignore the fact that the Premier is the political head of the State, and the only one who has the right to speak for the Cabinet and for Queensland in such matters. I cannot conceive for one moment that any Premier would send such a letter without having first of all submitted it to, and obtained the consent, of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Are we to suppose that the whole of these parties, necessarily interested in this Bill, do not know anything about the subject, or that they are advocating an extension of time, or an amendment of the Bill, purely from selfish motives ?

Senator Styles

- Unconscious bias may influence them.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- May there not be unconscious bias on the other side? Is it unfair to say there may be unconscious bias in the case of those who have taken up the cry adverse to black labour? I frankly acknowledge that I am consciously biased. I wish to see black men removed as quickly as it can be done with justice to all concerned. I desire to let my position be clearly understood, and it is the position I took up during my election tour. I had to speak on the question very many times, and I said the whole matter was not as to the kanakas going, but within what time they should go, bearing in mind that there are very large interests involved. It is a question that requires to be dealt with calmly and judiciously. It involves the; deportation in the long run of 9,000- kanakas, the question of the employment directly of 20,000 white men, and indirectly of 28,000 white' men, who more or less depend on the sugar industry, which has a crop worth - annually about £1,500,000 and involves private investments to the extent of £6,000,000, and public expenditure on central mills of, roughly, £500,000. There is to be in connexion with this Bill taxation that certainly will run into another £500,000, at the very least. That taxation, in order to enable this Bill to be carried out, will continue for about five years, and that represents a tax on the Commonwealth of at least £2,500,000. Does not that seem, on the face of it, a very large amount to pay for the sake of getting rid of 9,000 kanakas 1 I do not say absolutely that the money may not be well spent under the circumstances ; but I venture to say that at the time of the elections the electors had not the slightest idea, when they called out for the deportation of the kanakas, that they would have to pay from £2,500,000 to £3,000,000 for that purpose. This is an industry, as Senator Drake very properly pointed out, which is too important to be dealt with in a sudden and inconsiderate manner. That appears to me to be the key to the whole of this discussion - not as to whether the kanaka" is or is not to go, because that, to my mind, is absolutely settled, but that it should be done in such a manner as not to be sudden or inconsiderate. Senator Higgs pointed out that, even if the northern portion of the sugar industry were killed, it would affect only 3-7,000 acres, and that in lieu of that other industries might be established. Put in that way, it does not seem a very serious matter ; but then that acreage represents millions of money invested, as well as the value of all the labour expended during 30 years in bringing the land from a state of waste.

Senator McGregor

- A lot of that land was put to other uses.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- At all events a very large portion of the money spent must necessarily be wasted. "Senator Higgs also referred to the figures given by Dr. Maxwell, and I think that on reconsideration he will regret the terms in which he spoke of that gentleman, and which I think, with all due deference, were not worthy of him. I am sure that they were not just towards Dr. "Maxwell ; he may have been mistaken, as we all are very often' in dealing with figures. Mistakes are made in copying down figures, and naturally if the figures are incorrect the deduction therefrom must also be incorrect. That I am sure would be the greatest charge which could be made against Dr. Maxwell.

Senator Higgs

- Is that the explanation - that they were wrongly copied down ?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- No, I am saying " if " they were. Charity might have led the honorable senator to assume that it was a mistake rather than make use of the words he did, because we are not to suppose that the Registrar-General would purposely mislead Dr. Maxwell, nor can we for one moment suppose that Dr. Maxwell would misrepresent the -facts intentionally.

Senator De Largie

- Senator Higgs only said that one of the two must be wrong.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- He did more than that, if the honorable senator will recall the terms which were used.

Senator Higgs

- I stick to them until I see an explanation, and then I shall apologize.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I should hope. that the honorable senator would apologize without seeing an explanation.

Senator Higgs

- No fear.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I am sorry to hear that.

Senator Higgs

- It is too important a matter to allow a thing like that to go - distorting figures on which a big argument is based.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I am not questioning the honorable senator for quoting figures or pointing out that they are incorrect, but I do regret the very strong language ' in which he spoke of Dr. Maxwell. There is a difference of about " 1,000 in the figures as quoted by Senator Higgs from the census and the figures quoted by Dr. Maxwell on page 3, where he points out that- there are 7,615 kanakas known as engaged in the sugarcane culture. If Senator Higgs had looked at page 8 he would have seen that that 1,000 is accounted for. Dr. Maxwell points out that over 1,100 kanakas are not engaged in sugar work.

Senator McGregor

- And that is wrong according to his own figures.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- It is within twenty or 30.. I think the explanation, which I hope Senator Higgs will get from Dr. Maxwell, will satisfy him that he has discovered a "mare's nest."

Senator Higgs

- Will the honorable senator tell us the explanation he has received regarding these figures t

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I have given it to the honorable senator.

Senator Higgs

- What about the 1,912 kanakas in the Bundaberg district, all south of Mackay 1

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I say that these figures were given by the Registrar-General.

Senator Higgs

- If that is so, Dr. Maxwell has only been duped by the Registrar-General.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I believe it will turn out that Senator Higgs is wrong. I have not looked into that matter yet. I want to get at the truth. It certainly is strange that this 1,912 comes out in that way. I was startled when I saw the figures, but I have known enough of figures to know that sometimes very startling results do come out when one least expects them.

Senator De Largie

- The honorable senator would rather see Senator Higgs wrong than Dr. Maxwell.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- What is the use of charging a public officer with intentional deceit, when we know perfectly well that he is

incapable of such a thing 1 The sugar-growers of northern New South Wales would benefit by this measure, as they employ almost entirely white labour, and they would get a bonus for doing what they now do. Bundaberg would also benefit, because to a large extent white labour is employed there now, and they will get the bonus on the substitution of white labour for black. And at Maryborough there is no question that white men can do this work. The extra cost of white labour at Bundaberg will be about £67,000, and the sugar-growers will get a bonus of about £218,000, a year, or a clear profit of about £151,000. Bundaberg will be in clover, and certainly have nothing much to complain of. The extra cost of white labour at Mackay will also be about £67,000, and the sugar-growers there will receive a bonus of £94,000 a year, or an annual gain of £27,000, so that they will not have much cause to complain. At Cairns, where the extra cost of white labour will be £235,000, the bonus will be only £227,000. The bonus falls £8,000 a year short of what would be required to supply white labour for the black. Cairns will be £8,000 a year to the bad ; while Mackay and Bundaberg will be very much to credit. It has been suggested, I think by Senator Higgs, that the State or the Commonwealth Government might make up that sum, but Senator Playford very properly pointed out that no difference can be made in the case of one district of a State to the disadvantage of another.

Senator Styles

- The honorable senator is assuming that it will require as many white men as black men, but that point has not been cleared up.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- That is an unknown quantity. So far as the temperate zone is concerned, I think we are right in assuming that a white man can do more labour than a black man. But when you go into the tropical territory, so far as I have been able to ascertain in 'connexion not only with this matter, but others, the black labour has an advantage over the white. Therefore, there would not be anything like the same advantage to the growers in the tropical regions as there would be to those at Bundaberg or Mackay. In other words, we can practically say that if this went on for any time, Cairns would be ruined, while Mackay and Bundaberg would gain yearly a large sum.

Senator Charleston

- That seems -to be the fate of Cairns in any arrangement we may make.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- In any arrangement under this Bill. Even supposing that we give extra time, undoubtedly so long as this bonus is given Cairns will be at a disadvantage compared with Bundaberg and Mackay. I do not see how we can get over that under the Constitution Act. The whole point, so far as I can ascertain, is whether the whites work in these tropical regions. We know that they can work in Mackay and Bundaberg.

Senator McGregor

- It is not so long since the same people said they could not.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I have been endeavouring to obtain all the information possible. I have never been interested a cent in Queensland, and I bring to this subject a perfectly open mind, save to this extent, that I do feel, and have long felt, that it 22 r was a mistake ever to have had a kanaka there, and that the sooner we can get rid of them, in fact, of all the coloured labour, the better it will be. The evidence undoubtedly is conflicting. We have heard from Senator Millen that there is no difficulty in finding a sufficiency of white labour providing that the whites can and will do the work. That struck me as being a very important proviso, because it gives away the whole position. When I was addressing meetings during the last general election, I met not a few men who had worked in the tropical regions of Queensland. I pointed out to the meetings that, from the information I had been able to obtain, the trashing in the cane-brakes was not work which white men could do ; and on every occasion after the meeting broke up, men came to me and said - "I entirely agree with you ; I have been up there, and found the work such that I was unable to carry it out." Two or three of them made use of a very strong Anglo-Saxon expression, describing the work as "simply hell." That was their idea as working men. Senators Glassey, Higgs, and Dawson practically indorse what was said by Senator Millen. Senator Higgs has said that, in his opinion, an abundance of labour could be obtained at the rate of 6s. 6d. a day. I was agreeably surprised to hear that statement. I should have thought that 6s. 6d. a day would certainly not be a wage too high for that class of labour. Senator Glassey

and Senator Styles both read extracts from evidence given by Mr. Swayne, who had in the first instance been quoted by Senator Glassey, and whose testimony was further read by Senator Eraser.

Senator GLASSEY

- Senator Fraser said he was quoting from the same interview as I had quoted, but it not was the same ; the interviews were on different dates altogether.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I think that the evidence read by Senator Styles to-night was not by any means in favour of the opinion of Mr. Swayne that white men could profitably be employed in the tropical parts of Queensland. In moving the second reading of the Bill the Postmaster-General quoted from page 15 of Dr. Maxwell's report, but I noticed that he sedulously avoided calling attention to page 12.

Senator Drake

- I did not avoid it, but I could not read the whole report.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- It was strange that the honorable and learned, senator should pick out the particular part that entirely supported his view, and should ignore that part in which, on page 12, Dr. Maxwell distinctly states that white labour could not do the work in North Queensland. Further, the Postmaster-General ignored the special report of 5th October, which was certainly most crushing. If the Government had paid the slightest attention to that report, they could not have brought in this Bill.

Senator Glassey

- How does that report correspond with the report of the labour bureau as to the scarcity of white labour in North Queensland 1

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I am speaking of whether white labour can do the work in the cane-fields.

Senator Glassey

- The report of the labour bureau said that they can do it.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- Then there is a great difference- of opinion. Indeed, in spite of all that we have heard from the various societies interested, we have had very little evidence bearing upon the question. We have heard to-night a most interesting letter from Dr. Paton, whom I know and respect. Every one who knows Dr. Paton must respect him highly. His evidence as to the effect of this traffic upon the Islanders cannot be gainsaid. But "what he has described is more the result of past years of brutality and slavery than of what has been going on during the last few years. Queensland very wisely took the matter up and legislated so as to control the traffic as far as possible. Not that I suppose that even now the traffic is perfect. Such a traffic never can be perfect. There will be iniquities perpetrated under it however carefully the laws may be drawn, and however stringently they may be administered. So that upon that ground I am heartily with the views adopted in this Bill. The question is, seeing the differences of opinion expressed : what is best to be done 1 There are two courses open. One is to appoint a Royal commission. The Government have absolutely refused to- do that. Another course is for this House to appoint a select committee1. That course has frequently been followed where there has been a lack of information ; and certainly if there ever was a Bill concerning which there was a lack of information, this is one.

Senator Clemons

- Certainly there is -not a lack of information, but there is a conflict of testimony.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- All the information there is upon the subject is very conflicting. Therefore it appears to me that the proper course would be to appoint a select committee to take evidence. It need not delay the passage of the Bill much, although the question of delay for a few weeks in a matter of this kind is neither here nor there. After about a dozen meetings the select committee would be able to obtain from the witnesses examined in Queensland all the information they required. Then as to how the matter shall be dealt with, suppose the Bill passes its second reading, as it will do - personally, I shall vote for it - when it gets into committee, I see no reason what ever why we should not, in all fairness meet the very reasonable request of the people in Queensland who are interested in the sugar industry. They ask that a little more time shall be given to them. To do what 1 A little more time to change from the existing state of affairs in which they

were induced to embark by the Legislature of the State to the new conditions of affairs, and to gradually get out without loss. We know perfectly well that if this change is suddenly brought about, or even if it is brought about within the shorter time that the Bill provides, a large number of planters will necessarily get out, and the effect will be that there will be a great slaughtering of these properties.

Senator Charleston

- Ought we to consider the planters, or the interests of the kanaka himself 1

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I would point out to the honorable senator that on the 31st of March last there were engaged in the sugar industry 8,710 kanakas. Of those 4,416 have resided continuously in Queensland for over six years. What would the honorable senator propose to do with them ? Would he think it fair to deport the whole of them to their islands, after their having been on an average six years - some of them as much as ten and sixteen years - in Queensland 1 As far as the new importations go, I would stop them at once ; or, at any rate, I would reduce the importations and would extend the time for about two years. If it is only for the sake of removing the friction that 22 r 2 undoubtedly exists in Queensland and satisfying our co-subjects in that State it is worth the while of this Senate and the Government to stretch a point. I venture to say that if the Senate agrees to the two years extension, another place will also agree to it. Is it worth our while to continue the feeling of irritation and ill-will that has undoubtedly been caused for the sake of two years? It cannot do any harm. The deportations will go on, and instead of many planters being ruined they will be given an opportunity of getting out without loss. I was pleased to hear Senator Glassey state that the kanakas were the least objectionable of the dark races in Queensland. That statement entirely agrees with the information I have obtained from persons who have been for years on the plantations. I was agreeably surprised, also, to hear the high terms in which the kanakas were spoken of as being, as a whole, very truthful, very industrious, and trustworthy. I observe that during the year 1900 there was an average attendance at the mission schools in Queensland of 4,009 out of a total of 9,000 kanakas. That, to my mind, is a wonderful fact, and speaks well, not only for the ministers and laymen, who are taking an interest in the kanakas, but also for the kanakas themselves. I also see that they are very thrifty. Taking the returns for five years, out of an average of 8,000 kanakas, something like 3,800 have deposits in the savings banks. The total deposits run from £20,000 to £28,000, and the average deposit is £8 ls. 6d. each. I also find that during last year, 1900, the number of new overseas engagements entered into by new arrivals was 231, representing 1,700 kanakas ; whilst the agreements for the re-engagement of kanakas already in Queensland amounted to 2,356, representing 4,131 kanakas. So I do not think that, on the whole, we are justified in saying that they are very badly treated if, after serving for a number of years, they are prepared to make new engagements. Fifty per cent, of the kanakas apparently re-engage themselves.. I do not want to weary the Senate with other figures, but I would point out that the number of farmers growing sugar-cane employing white labour only, is no more than 152 out of 2,610, and further, I would point out that in the tropical regions there is not a single farmer who employs white men only. These facts I take from the returns of the Registrar-General.

Senator Glassey

- The honorable senator should take that statement for what it is worth.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- That is exactly what I have done.

Senator Glassey

- It is not worth much.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- The figures are, at all events, those given by the Registrar-General, and I imagine that his authority is even better than that of the honorable senator.

Senator Glassey

- I have visited the sugar-fields of Queensland fifty times more often than the Registrar-General has done.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I am speaking of the plantations north of Cairns, and I say that there is not a single farmer there employing only white people.

Senator Glassey

- The Registrar-General does not know a single thing about it.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD. Of course I am not prepared to argue with an honorable senator who is not prepared to believe anybody but himself.

Senator Glassey

- I say that there are a number of fields north of Cairns which the Registrar-General has never visited at all.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD. In the meantime, I shall assume that the figures given by the Registrar-General are correct. I find that, in the five southern mills, 48,508 tons of sugar were turned out in 1900, of which only 9,100 tons were grown and harvested by white labour. In the eight northern mills, 206,910 tons of sugar were turned out, of which only 6,100 tons were grown and harvested by white labour. So that, taking the thirteen mills together, I find that they turned out and harvested by white labour only 15,200 tons, as against 240,218 tons grown and harvested by coloured labour. I have here also some figures which bear upon the mortality of Polynesians during the last ten years. Senator Glassey gave the death rate as 42·73, but if he had got the figures before him, surely he ought to have taken the trouble to have divided them, and shown not what the death rate was under the conditions which prevailed in bygone years, but what it is under the improved conditions. During the five years, 1891-1895, the average death rate was 42·73 per 1,000, while for the five years 1896-1900, the average death rate was 30·08 per 1,000.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD. I take the two periods of five years. The average for the ten years was 36·05 per 1,000. Senator Glassey's figures related to the condition of affairs years ago, and not to the improved circumstances, under which the average is 30 per 1,000. That, I admit, is quite high enough. The honorable senator inquired - "Is there to be no justice for the kanaka?" I doubt very much whether if we deport them very rapidly to their native islands - after they have been for years in a state of civilization, more or less, wearing better clothing, and supplied with better food than they obtain on the islands - the mortality will not be very much larger at first than it is now in Queensland.

Senator Charleston

- Then we might do them a great injustice in that way?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD. Yes, by unduly deporting them. I do not wish to say anything more about this matter save that the motion for the second reading of the Bill will receive my support. When we get into committee I hope that some one will move that the term within which this traffic is to cease shall be increased by two or three years. I hope that in justice to those who have an interest in the industry we shall deal with the matter fairly; that we shall yield to the unmistakable request made by a large body of people in Queensland who must know a good deal more of the subject than do a majority of honorable senators, and that Queensland will have cause for full satisfaction in having left the matter in the hands of the Senate.

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Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- I do not intend to take up more than a few minutes of the time of the Senate at this juncture, because I think the question has been dealt with most exhaustively - and in some cases I might say most exhaustingly - by honorable senators who have spoken. I have listened with very great care to the speeches which have been made during this debate, and especially to those delivered by honorable senators who come from Queensland, because they add a practical experience to the theoretical knowledge which we possess. But at the same time those of us who have not had the advantage of visiting Queensland and seeing this traffic for ourselves have had many opportunities of gaining a very extensive knowledge of the subject. We have had the advantage of hearing lecturers, agents, sugar-growers, and Members of Parliament who have come down here to give us every information possible and we have had a plethora of literature. We have had booklets, statements, and manifestoes, showered down upon us thick as leaves in Vallambrosa, and if we have read them and studied them we shall have had a very good opportunity of being able to give a correct vote on this very important question. We have been told by Senator Pulsford that he does not think that the representatives of Queensland in the Senate represent the opinions of the people in that State on this question. That is a very extraordinary statement to make, seeing that the elections took place only some six or eight months ago.

Senator Keating

- Perhaps the honorable senator spoke " from his own .personal experience.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- The elections in Queensland were fought on the question of kanaka or no kanaka. I have taken the trouble to read some of the election speeches made by honorable senators who have been returned to represent Queensland, and I find that the staple subject of their remarks was the question of whether the kanaka should be retained or dispensed with. The Brisbane Courier, the leading newspaper in Queensland, published the following words in a leading article which appeared in its issue on the 16th March last -

Hence we say that the main issue for Queensland is the continuance of present conditions in respect to the regulation and control of the kanaka.

Therefore, that newspaper laid it down that the main issue at . these elections was the question of the kanaka traffic.

Senator KEATING

- -And it did so in another article entitled " The Real Issue," which was published on the 27th March last.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- The. representatives of Queensland who have been returned to the Senate pledged themselves to do away with the kanaka traffic as soon as possible. The Barton Government on the other hand have, in my opinion, tempered justice with mercy. They have said that they will allow five years within which the kanakas shall leave Queensland. Senator Millen gave a very interesting return, showing the votes cast at the Senate election for and against the kanaka traffic. The return, however, is not so conclusive as it might have been, because plumping was allowed in Queensland. He alleges also that many of those who were against the. kanakas, voted only for three candidates. If that was the case, it is evident that we cannot judge of the opinion of the people of Queensland by the votes cast. That was not the case in the election for the House of Representatives. The electors for that House had only one vote each. I have, therefore, gone through the poll and taken out the votes cast for that. Chamber, as given in the nine electorates-" I shall not trouble the Senate by reading; the whole of the figures ; I shall simply give-, the totals. There were 23,006 votes cast... in favour of the kanaka traffic, and 39,110/- cast against it. Amongst the 23,006 of.' the minority vote, there were many in', favour of the kanaka being dispensed with., at the end of a period longer than that pro- - posed in this Bill.

Senator Stewart

- They were all in. favour of that.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- Later on the election of Mr. L. E. Groom for the representation of Darling Downs iu the; House of Representatives took place. That- election was fought purely and simply on the question of the kanaka traffic. TheState'Government appointed Mr. Bell to oppose1Mr. Groom, and the result was that Mr. Groom was elected by a very large majority.

Senator Walker

- There is not a kanaka employed on the Darling Downs.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- If " the honorable senator had read the election addresses as I have done, he would know/ that the contest was principally on the question of whether the kanaka traffic should be continued or not.

Senator Walker

- Mr. Bell was against .- the kanaka traffic.

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Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- He - was in favour of its continuance. Senator - Fraser suggested in his admirable speech, that a referendum should be taken of the whole of the people, of Australia on this question. . I should like to call the attention of the Senate to the fact that the*leader of the labour party in the Queensland Legislature recently challenged the Philp Government to take a referendum of the people of Queensland - who are the most concerned - at the elections in March next upon this question, and said that the party would be prepared to abide by the result. The Philp Government declined that challenge. I would say, also that only a few days ago a public meeting to consider this question was held at Maryborough. . It was not a

meeting to which admission could be gained only by ticket - which was the practice adopted in connexion with the pro-kanaka meetings - but a public meeting, to which members of the local chamber of commerce were invited to be present. Over 400 people attended it, and resolutions were carried affirming and supporting the policy adopted by the Barton Government. In view of all this testimony, it cannot be said by honorable senators that the feeling of Queensland is against the Government proposal in this respect. I think that nothing could be plainer, at any rate so far as the people of Queensland are concerned, than the issue we have before us. Mr. Philp, in his letter, has said that only a little more than half the electors voted at the federal elections in Queensland. That has been the experience in almost every election, and if this very Philp Government would turn to their own records, they would find that at the elections at which they were returned the total number of votes recorded represented only a little more than half of the people on the rolls. Therefore, if the senators of Queensland are not competent to vote on this question, they are not competent to criticise us.

Senator McGregor

- And there was plural voting for the State elections.

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- That is so. Another extraordinary argument put forward is that three seats in the State Legislature vacated by honorable members on their return to the Federal Parliament, were filled by gentlemen who are in favour of the kanaka traffic. The kanaka question, however, had nothing to do with those elections, because the Queensland Parliament has nothing to do with legislation on that subject. The State Legislature has no more to do with it than it has do with legislation in Timbuctoo. It is a very remarkable thing that honorable senators should have to use arguments like that in favour of the continuance of this class of labour. It only shows that a politically drowning man will catch at any straw. In spite of the figures that have been given, the sugar-growers of Queensland have never fairly and practically tested the suitability of white men for work on the sugar plantations there. We have it from Dr. Maxwell and certain honorable senators that the wages paid to white men there are 25s. per week. Is it likely that the planters will engage white men at 25s. per week when they can secure kanakas at 10s. or 12s. per week? We find that although the sugar-growers in New South Wales obtain a less yield per ton and have had a duty of £2 per ton less than that in favour of the Queensland growers they have paid, and are paying, wages ranging from £2 10s. to £3 per week for contract labour. They also give the white men a portion of their rations. In the sultry, humid climate of Queensland, the wages should be high, if the planters wish to obtain the services of a good class of white men. On the gold-fields of Kalgoorlie white men had, to put up with great hardships in the early days ; but we paid the miners there £3 and £3 10s. per week. They receive that wage to-day, and I do not think a finer body of men has been collected in any other part of Australia.

Senator McGregor

- Are they reliable?

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Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- Yes. If we offered a wage of only 25s. per week to the miners there, we should get a collection of nondescripts who would be of no use whatever. That is exactly the case in Queensland. We wish to see the white men employed on the plantations there offered a good wage, and if that good wage is forthcoming we believe that the men will be able to carry out the work required of them. The Government do not ask the planters to pay the increased wage out of their own pockets ; they propose that the people of Australia shall pay it for them. Then there is another great advantage which the planters of Queensland now enjoy, and that is, as Senator Styles pointed out, that the whole of the markets of Australia are now thrown open to them. Formerly they were met by a duty on sugar of £3 per ton in New South Wales, £6 per ton in Victoria, £5 per ton in Queensland, £3 per ton in South Australia, £6 per ton in Tasmania, and £5 per ton in the Northern Territory. Now they have the control of the whole of the. markets of Australia, and a proposal by the Government to put on a high protective duty against foreign imports of sugar. Dr. Maxwell built up a lot of figures and facts on the statement that the average yield of sugar in 1889 and 1900 was 107,921 tons. That gentleman took the two lean years of sugar production in Queensland, and built upon the estimate an inverted pyramid of figures ; but I wish to say that if his foundation is wrong the deductions he draws from the estimate must also be erroneous. He estimates the average yield at

107,921 tons, if he had gone back to the previous year he would have found that yield was 163,724 tons, and next year it is believed that the crop will be 150,000 tons. On the figures which he has stated, he points out that the loss in the Cairns district will be £5,000 a year, but if he took the average yield at 120,000 tons he would find that there would not be a loss but a surplus. Senator Fraser told us that it is admitted in legal circles, that if in cross-examination we find that a witness has made any misstatements the fact affects the credibility of the whole of the evidence he has given, and if in this case we find that Dr. Maxwell has not based his calculation upon a fair average yield there is some doubt thrown upon the accuracy of his deductions. I believe that Dr. Maxwell's one desire is to place a fair statement before us, and if his figures are wrong - and from what Senator Higgs has said I am inclined to think they are - I am certain that so far as Dr. Maxwell is concerned the error is unintentional, but honorable senators will see that it makes an important difference in the results to be deduced from the figures given. I would like now to refer to the very important point with regard to the return of the kanaka. It seems to have been generally overlooked that in the Queensland Act there is this provision -

At the expiration of the engagement of any labourer his employer shall either cause him to be returned to his native island or, if the labourer does not then desire to return, & the sum of £5 to the immigration agent, to be applied in defraying the cost of the return of such labourer when required by him.

That means that under the Queensland Act, so long as the kanaka is employed he can remain in Queensland, so that, in spite of this Federal Bill, if they do not break any of the sections of the Queensland Act, until the 31st March, 1906, the sugar-growers need not send a single kanaka out of Queensland, so long as they do not import any. Senator Fraser said, with great solemnity, that he would be agreeable to a compromise by which we would give the poor sugar-planters five years longer, and I point out that this Bill practically allows them the five years up to the 31st March, 1906. Dr. Maxwell says that in the Bundaberg and Mackay districts the work can be done by white labour, and there is plenty of white labour to fill the places of the kanakas as they are drafted away. But he says it is not so in the Cairns district. In spite of the evidence given by Senator Glassey and others that white labourers can do the work, let us suppose for a moment that it is impossible for white labour to do trashing in the Cairns district, and that trashing is absolutely necessary for the crop. I point out that there are no less than 10,500 other aliens in Queensland, men who Dr. Maxwell himself says are eminently qualified to do this work. "We know that labour is attracted to places where high wages are offered, and if the sugar growers offer good wages to these aliens they will be willing to accept work on the sugar plantations. It seems to me that these aliens must remain in Australia, as I fail to see how they can be got rid of, and I do not see why they should not be as well employed in the work of sugar plantations as in hawking around the country, and in other occupations. Senator Fraser made a great deal of the depression of 1892. He showed that there was a decrease in the yield, and that the cane-growers were injuriously affected, but he ascribed it to the effect of Queensland legislation. The honorable senator was thoroughly well aware that during that time the greatest financial depression existed over the whole of Australia, and that every industry in Australia was suffering in consequence. He was also well aware that the Queensland National Bank that had advanced money largely to the sugargrowers had failed, and that the price of sugar dropped about that time from nearly £28 per ton to £12 per ton. Yet the honorable senator told us that the cause of the depression was Queensland legislation. I do not intend to take up much more time, but I shall say a word upon the ethical side of the question. I believe that, generally speaking, the kanaka trade is humanely carried on at the present time, but I also believe that the result of the kanaka traffic is as disastrous and as cruel as the effects which followed slave trading in the old days. We find that before we started importing these kanakas from their sunny islands in the Pacific they were a happy, good-natured, and kindly race of people - a people who have for scores of years, and perhaps for centuries, been accustomed to do no hard work and to lead a lazy, indolent, and peaceful life. They were brought from that life to the steaming plantations, and we find that the mortality was between 30 and 40 per 1,000. What do we find has been the result in the islands? We are informed, on the authority of Dr. Paton and other missionaries, that the population is but one-seventh of what it was before, and that the present population of the islands is made up of old men, women, and children. The bread-winners are taken away to Queensland, and when they come back it is found that they have learnt all the vices and contracted many of the diseases of the whites, and have learned none of their good qualities. If the question, then, is looked at from the ethical point of view, we must condemn this traffic. We see that the sugar industry has

led to the depopulation of the island, and has caused directly and indirectly the death of thousands of human beings. Looked at from that point of view, as well as from the industrial and social aspect, the traffic must be condemned. I sincerely hope that the Senate will vote in favour of the proposals of the Government, and that we shall in five years' time see the end of this kanaka traffic.

Senator PEARCE

- After the very many lengthy addresses we have had upon this subject, there is not much left to be said on the part, at any rate, of those who are speaking in favour of the abolition of this traffic. There appears to be a general impression among those who are opposing the Bill that, as introduced by the Government, it suits all those who are supporting it. As a matter of fact; the Bill is but a compromise, because there are senators in this Chamber who are pledged not to give the kanaka traffic five years, but are pledged to its immediate suppression. There are senators, here representing Western Australia who did not pledge themselves to give the traffic five years, and, therefore, the Government proposal is in the nature of a compromise. Moreover, we have to remember that if the Government Tariff proposals are carried, when we go back to our constituents we shall have to explain to them first of all the price they are paying for the abolition of the kanaka, and then the arrangements we have been able to make in their interests to carry out the mandate which they gave us for the immediate suppression of the traffic. I say that when we go back to our constituents and tell them that they must pay £6 per ton duty on sugar, and that the kanaka traffic must exist for five years longer, they will reply that we did not get the best of the bargain, but that the Queensland sugar-planters got it. My fear is not that we shall be condemned for being too extreme or too hasty, but on the ground that we have allowed the sugar-planters to exercise undue influence over us. When we consider the quantity of printed matter with which we have been flooded, the amount of lobbying we have had to put up with, and the influence generally that has been brought to bear upon honorable senators, I think our constituents will have some justification for saying so. I wish to reply to a statement made by Senator Sargood. If I understood the honorable senator aright, he said that there were no sugar planters employing white labour north of Cairns or in the Cairns district

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- In connexion with the central mills. I was dealing with the mills at the time. All my figures were given in connexion with the central mills.

Senator PEARCE

- I do not think the honorable senator qualified the statement in that manner. I think the statement made was that north of Cairns white labour cannot work the sugar plantations, and that as a matter of fact no sugar plantation north of Cairns was employing white labour

Senator Glassey

- That is so ; there was no qualification.

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Senator PEARCE

- If I misunderstood Senator Sargood, I am glad to have elicited the information, because Senator Glassey and other senators drew the same inference from what the honorable senator said. I have here, however, the figures supplied by the Registrar-General of Queensland, and I find from them that the number of employers of kanaka labour in the Cairns district is 321, and, according to Dr. Maxwell, in the same district there are 523 cane-growers. That means that there must be 202 cane-growers who are employing white labour. What becomes of the statement that white labour cannot do the work in the Cairns district ? Here we have information from an official report of the Queensland Registrar-General, and from the gentleman who is the Government sugar expert, and it is clear that there are 202 men growing cane themselves, or employing white labour to grow cane in the district in which we are told that it is impossible to employ white labour at this work. It has been contended by the supporters of the Government measure that Queensland has spoken unmistakably upon this question. I think they are too timid in their statement that five senators have been sent here from Queensland pledged to support the abolition of the kanaka traffic on the lines proposed by the Government. I say that there are six senators sent here from Queensland with that mission. What was the Government proposal ? What did Mr. Barton say at Maitland ? Did he not say that the Government proposed to introduce legislation which would have the effect of bringing about a white Australia ? He indicated on broad lines that that meant that there would be a Bill brought in for the restriction of the immigration of the Asiatic races, and also a Bill to do

away with the kanaka traffic, and that those two Bills would give effect to their idea of a white Australia. That created in the minds of the electors the impression, when a candidate said he was in favour of a white Australia, that he meant that he was in favour of the proposals of the Barton Government, as outlined at Maitland and elsewhere.

Senator Keating

- In favour of them at least.

Senator PEARCE

- In favour of them at least, and perhaps he might have been more rabid, and gone as far as I did on the hustings when I said that I was in favour of bringing about immediately the result which Mr. Barton proposed to bring about ultimately. What was the position put before the electors of Queensland by the various candidates? We know the proposition which the labour party put forward. We know the position which the Postmaster-General took up. The sixth senator has been conceded by my colleagues to the Opposition. I do not concede Senator Ferguson to the Opposition. I claim him as a member of the anti-kanaka fold, because, although he was absent at the time of the nominations, he is so enthusiastic an Australian that he was quite aware of what the Government proposals on this question were. I am quite sure that he would not presume to come forward as a candidate unless he knew what proposals were before the electors. What was his own statement 1 -

As it was impossible to be in Queensland for the elections I had to cable to my attorney there authorizing him to issue my address, which was very short, favouring free-trade and a white Australia.

Senator Ferguson

- I say so now.

Senator PEARCE

- I contend that Senator Ferguson makes the sixth representative of Queensland in the Senate who is pledged to a white Australia on the lines laid down by the Barton Government, because that was the only tangible proposal for a white Australia before the country at the time when that statement was made ' to the electors through the medium of the press. Every elector must have voted for the honorable senator under the impression that, if elected, he would support Mr. Barton in his policy on this question.

Senator Ferguson

- Did the honorable senator read my published manifesto 1

Senator PEARCE

- I did not.

Senator Ferguson

- I said I would not do away with the kanaka until I had made due inquiries.

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Senator PEARCE

- I took the statement which the honorable senator made to the Senate in his speech on the address in reply. A great deal has been made of the fact that a number of semi-public bodies in Queensland have sent in resolutions asking for a continuance of this traffic on certain terms. There are Victorian senators who remember that when a prominent politician outlined his policy throughout Victoria, resolutions were passed by shire councils, and by waterworks boards, and bodies similar to those passing resolutions in Queensland. He went to the electors ; but he came back with scarcely a score of followers, and was turned out of office immediately he faced Parliament. I am afraid that what took place then is taking place now - that the resolutions we are receiving are not from bodies which are representative of the people, but are from those who are directly interested in the continuance of the kanaka traffic, that is, the sugar planters themselves. Something has been said as to the treatment of the kanakas in this traffic. What has been said on the part of the missionaries is evidence that we can very well receive as unbiased. But I think I can give evidence which is equally unbiased, and which, it might be thought, would be in favour of the sugarplanter's side, if it were at all biased, and that is the evidence of His Majesty's officials in command of the various vessels that have control of the Pacific. I am sure that they would not be suspected of having any leaning towards the labour party on this question, or of being in favour of parrot cries or political cries. What do they say ?

Commodores Wilson and Goodenough both severely exposed its cruel practices in their official reports. Vice-Admiral Erskine, in the Times, 21st May, .1892, says .-" Three years' experience in the command of

the Australian station, impressed on me that, under the most stringent regulations, wrongs and abuses occurred in connexion with the labour traffic, which invariably led to bloodshed and accompanying complications and reprisals. The most carefully devised regulations for the conduct of the liquor traffic, would not prevent wrongs and evils from being¹ committed." Captain Davis, of His Majesty's ship *Royalist*, also condemned the traffic, and Sir Arthur Gordon said, on the 7th of June, 1892, in the *Times*-I fear it must be confessed that the danger, and even the probability, of abuse is enormous. The High Commissioner of the Western Pacific, Sir J. B. Thurston, of Fiji - also condemns this traffic, and from intimate personal knowledge of it, his testimony is worth more than that of all the Griffiths, Blacks, Smiths, and Garicks in Queensland. As to the depopulation of the islands, let me quote this extract : - From 1887 to 1891, an average of 477, or 55 per thousand, died annually. In 1892, the deaths fell to 315, or 38 per thousand, as given in their mortality statistics. But the following is not ancient history : - "Even under the new regulations and perfected treatment, according to the new Registrar-General of Queensland, the mortality was, in 1892, of Chinese, 10-14 ; of Polynesians, 42-74 ; and of other alien races, 21-26 per thousand. That conclusively shows a greater mortality amongst the kanakas than any other alien race. As to kidnapping, this testimony is given by Dr. Paton in a letter to Sir Samuel Griffith- Shortly before you closed the traffic one of our missionaries was requested by a number of men on his island to go with them to a labour vessel which had a considerable number of their wives on board, and had them confined to take them away : but the captain and agent refused to give one of them up and took them all away. The missionary was abused for pleading for them. Although one of the fathers held up his infant child, pleading for the mother to be given back to it or it would die, yet the slavers would not give back the mother to the infant, nor yet the child to the mother. Can pity be found among such labour collectors ? But to plead further is useless, seeing you have made up your mind and "do what conscience bids" you. That is a marvellous side light on the question of the depopulation of the islands. If wife and husband are separated in that way, and the youth are taken, we can easily believe that the depopulation of the islands must follow as a matter of course. It has been said that white labour is unreliable. Why is it unreliable ? It is not unreliable everywhere. It is sufficiently reliable to take off the great wool harvest of Australia, and to be depended upon to harvest our wheat and wine. There is no complaint that the labour for harvesting those products is unreliable. Why is it that in the sugar industry the question of the reliability of labour is brought forward ? We can with very little investigation find out how this occurs. If labour is intermittent, it brings about two results. It creates a class of men who are nomadic in their habits, and who are unreliable in this sense that you cannot always rely upon them to be in certain places when their services are required. Not only that, but the nomadic life has an effect on the morale of the men. It makes them unreliable in the sense that they cannot settle down to continuous labour for any length of time. If an apparently more profitable employment, in the shape of a gold-field, turns up hundreds of miles away, then, following the nomadic instinct which has been implanted in them by their employer and his system of work, they will rush away to it. What is the cure for that habit ? Continuity of employment. But permanency of employment can only be obtained by doing away with black labour. The black labour takes away from the white man the continuity of employment. While you have cheap labour the planter employs it during the whole year, and during the crushing and busy seasons gives the additional employment to the white man. Can we wonder that the white workers engaged in the plantations of Queensland are nomadic in their habits, or that the very system under which they work makes them unreliable? Again, we have to remember the experience of the slave traffic in the United States. In the library, any honorable senator will find an article which says that sugar is being produced in India under the primitive conditions of 100 years ago, and that although for an expenditure of a few pounds the growers could get machinery similar to that used in Queensland they will not incur the outlay'. In the Southern States of America, while cheap labour was obtainable, the planters were content to harvest the crop without the aid of mechanical inventions. It is only when labour becomes dear that the employer calls to his aid mechanism, and the inventor displaces labour. So long as there is cheap labour in Queensland, we shall have the same effect as they had in the Southern States of America before the war, and the same effect as is experienced in India, when the white planter will not call to his aid the inventor or mechanism, so long as he can rely on cheap and servile labour. It has been said that we shall ruin the planters. Out of their own mouths we shall condemn them. According to the literature which they have supplied to us, they have been by no means ruined in the past, even in the Cairns district. In a bulletin

which has been issued by the Queensland Department of Agriculture on sugar-growing in that State, we read - In the north, on the cleared, scrub land of the Herbert River, the system of small farming is in full activity. -Here selectors, living upon 160-acre Government lots, are growing cane with great success for the neighbouring mills. Amongst several into whose accounts I went with some care, I found that the man who was least well off had cleared 100 acres of land, of which 70 acres were under cane, and that he was making an income of about £800 a year, with working expenses of £500. That is a clear profit of £300 a year. What wheat-grower of South Australia makes that return ? What wine-maker of Victoria can rely upon getting that return from 70 acres ? The planters can afford to suffer a certain amount of pruning. They can afford to have a small portion of that £300 paid to white labour instead of to the kanakas. Surely the difference in the cost of the labour would not be very appreciable on a 70-acre allotment ; surely, the cost of harvesting 70 acres of cane with white labour would not make a very big hole in that sum. We have heard too much of this bogey of the high cost of white labour. We know that great profits are made by the producer of sugar out of the consumer. I find that the Age of 31st October of this year contains an account of the half-yearly meeting of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, held in Sydney. The report of the company sets forth that the profits for the half-year ending 30th September, after providing for interest and all other charges, amounted to £93,927, to which sum had to be added the balance at profit and loss on the 31st March, namely, £91,698, thus making a total of £185,625. From this amount the directors proposed to appropriate, in payment of a dividend of 10 per cent., the sum of £93,610, leaving £92,015 to the credit of the profit and loss account. That was a very tidy dividend to make. It is a better dividend than is made by many of our large mining companies, and better than most of our commercial concerns are able to pay. Seeing that the Commonwealth Tariff, if carried in its present form, is going to put into the pockets of these manufacturers a great sum of money, which will enable them to raise the price of sugar, they can afford to make some concession in favour of the sugar -planters, to enable them to engage white labour. A significant statement is made in an article written by Dr. Maxwell, in which he quotes the following figures. He says that in 1855 there were 38,557 acres of cane crushed in Queensland, from which there were made 55,796 tons of sugar. At that date the number of Pacific Islanders in Queensland was 10,755. In 1899 there were 79,435 acres of cane crushed, from which 123,289 tons of sugar were made and only 8,826 Pacific Islanders were employed. These figures conclusively show that the decrease in the number of kanakas has resulted in an increased production of sugar. Surely that is a very significant statement, and is altogether opposed to the allegation that white labour cannot work in the sugar plantations. It is altogether opposed to the statement that if kanaka labour is abolished the sugar industry will be destroyed. Indeed, from these figures, the logical conclusion follows that if the whole of the kanaka labour is abolished in Queensland, the industry will have reached its highest point of development. I would also direct attention to the fact that the very arguments that are used to bolster up the kanaka traffic in Queensland are precisely the same arguments that were used in support of the slave trade in the United States of America before the war of emancipation. In a case of this kind it is just as well that we should see how other nations have fared in similar crises. Senator Walker has said that the bringing over of the kanakas has the effect of Christianizing them, by bringing them under the influence of civilization. I find that precisely the same argument was raised against the abolition of the slave trade in America. At that time not only politicians, but clergymen were prepared to stand up for the slave trade, on the ground that bringing the slaves to the southern States had the effect of Christianizing them, which object it was said would not have been attained by the missionaries being sent to Africa. Furthermore, the very arguments which we have heard to the effect that white labour could not work in the sugar-fields of Queensland, were advanced by the cotton planters in the southern States against the abolition of slave labour. Whilst the cotton planters could obtain a plentiful supply of cheap labour they neglected careful cultivation. They went in for slovenly cultivation. I have no doubt whatever that the same effect is produced by the employment of cheap labour in Queensland. What are the planters going to do if the kanaka traffic is stopped? Are they going to lose their capital ? Certainly not. The whole spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race is such that we are warranted in believing, that if the planters cannot make a profit from the cultivation of their estates in one way, they will do it in another. If coloured labour is taken away from them they will make the best of the white labour, and employ it efficiently; and if the white labour that is obtainable is not sufficient or is not efficient they will call in the aid of the inventor. Not that I expect that the inventor will be called in to do away with labour, but he will be able to find a way in which the

sugar-cane can be successfully cultivated without the need for the employment of coloured labour. It is also a significant fact, that while Dr. Maxwell says that he believes a solution of the sugar-cane question in Queensland lies in the better distribution of land, and in the ownership of it in smaller allotments and farms, in the Bundaberg district the holdings are of less acreage than in the Cairns district. We can help the Cairns grower of sugar in three ways. We can cut into the profits of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and they will bear cutting into ; we can cut into the profits of the grower himself ; and we can also help him by the State enacting such laws as will cause him to cultivate a lesser quantity of land, and cultivate it more efficiently. It has also been said that we should not allow white labour to work in the cane-fields, because this work is unhealthy. Are those honorable senators who raise that contention going to raise it also in respect of the men who have to work in the smelting works and cyanide works of Western Australia and Tasmania, which are certainly very detrimental to health 1 White men have been working for years past in the lead mines of Broken Hill. The risk to health there is very great from the men becoming "leaded." Are honorable senators who raise this cry on behalf of the white worker in Queensland prepared to raise it also on behalf of those men in 'the lead . mines of Broken Hill? It is a strange thing that the philanthropy of these honorable senators has only just broken out, and that notwithstanding that white workers have been engaged in smelting works and in lead mines in Australia for many years past, and although those senators have been in politics for a number of years, they did not . take any interest in the subject until a question was raised which touched their own pockets. Senator Macfarlane will recollect an incident which occurred while he and I were recently in Tasmania. We saw there a man going down to work at a furnace where the heat was so extremely great that they had to turn a hose on to him. He told us that he had- been doing that work for- 25 years, and certainly he looked none the worse for it. I do not think that any honorable senators who could have been with Senator Macfarlane and myself to witness that sight would have considered it impossible for white men to work in the cane-fields of Queensland. As regards the question of profits, I should like to quote a remark from the Sydney Bulletin, although I know that some honorable senators may be presumed to doubt a statement made on the authority of that journal.

Senator McGregor

- The most reliable paper in Australia.

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Senator PEARCE

- On mining affairs, at any rate, the Bulletin is one of the most reliable journals of Australia. It says that 66 sugar-growers in the Mossman district had paid all that was due to the Government out of mill profits, and had received an average of £655 per man for their season's share, while 43 Mulgrave growers received an average of £673 per man. Those facts show the result of one year's overturn, and prove that the sugar-growers are not going to be ruined by the displacement of black labour by white. Dr. Maxwell says' it will cause a loss of £7,000. The statements. I have read show that the growers can afford to lose not only £7,000, but considerably more besides. There is also another reason, in addition to those which have been given, why white labour is scarce in Queensland in connexion with the sugar-growing industry. This reason was given by Senator Millen, and I only mention it again because it has not been touched upon by other honorable senators, and appears to have been lost sight of in the debate. We know what followed in the Southern States of America in connexion with what were known as the " mean white " men. We know that in consequence of the. degradation of certain classes of labour a prejudice was created against it, with the result that white men would not engage in it. I know, from my acquaintance with working men, and from being a working man myself, how strong this prejudice is against occupations which are followed by Chinamen, Japanese, and other kinds of alien labour. It is not a prejudice with which I sympathize, because I regard all kinds of honest labour as honorable ; but it certainly exists. I believe that as soon as coloured labour is introduced into an industry like the sugar industry of Queensland, that kind of prejudice is accentuated in the minds of white workmen, with the 'result that for the most part the planters are only able to secure inferior kinds of white labour. They are only able to obtain the scum of white men - the men of nomadic habits, who are reduced to entering into competition with black labour. But let the planters pay a decent wage to their, men, and employ only white labour, and I will guarantee that in less than five years there will be no difficulty in supplying, not merely 9,000, but 19,000 able-bodied white men, if they are wanted. Take the eastern gold-fields of Western Australia. A

few years ago blackfellows had possession of them. I think it is only about nine years since the blacks had possession of Kalgoorlie. But now there are 40,000 white men there, not engaged in cultivating the soil for themselves, but working for employers under decent conditions. Where did they come from ? From Melbourne and Sydney to a great extent. Many of them came from Queensland. I know a man who came from Queensland, and I will give his testimony upon -this subject. He told me that he originally came to this country under the assisted immigration laws of Queensland. He came from Yorkshire, in England, and landed at Rockhampton.

He worked for two years in the Mackay district in all kinds of field-work. He told me that he was very glad to see that the Federal Government were introducing a measure to do away with kanaka labour. He said - " Give me as good wages as I get in Perth, and give me decent conditions, and I am prepared to go to Queensland and work in the plantations as long as you like." That is the opinion of a man who was not brought up in our climate, but who came straight from England - from an agricultural district where he had to endure cold winters. He worked continuously for one employer for two years in Queensland, which at any rate is evidence that he gave satisfaction. During all that time he was doing all kinds of field-work, and would be prepared to do it to-morrow if he was paid as good wages as he could earn in Western Australia.

Senator Dobson

- - What is he paid there?

Senator PEARCE

- He gets at present 9s. per day.

Senator Dobson

- Could planters afford to pay that wage?

Senator PEARCE

- If the planters wish to pay a good wage to their white employes let them advocate the passing of such a measure as the Industrial Arbitration Act, which is in force in New Zealand and in Western Australia. That will enable all differences between employer and employed to be settled. If such a tribunal is established, I will guarantee that there will soon be a sufficiency of white labour to carry on the sugar industry in Queensland.

Senator Dobson

- Is it not a fact that the trades unions in Queensland would not allow men to work if they were paid only 30s. a week.

Senator GLASSEY

- I say, without the slightest hesitation, that that is not a fact.

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Senator PEARCE

- My experience of trades unions is' that they have not been able in any State of Australia so far to organize unskilled labour so as to obtain for it even a fair wage. Our experience is that the unskilled labourer has to accept the worst conditions and the lowest wage - certainly a lower wage than he ought to get - simply because he does not organize in the same way as the skilled artisan does in the city. It is idle to talk of a scarcity of labour when we have the unemployed agitation going on continually in our great cities. The unemployed question is always facing us in Melbourne, and we have at Broken Hill 400 or 500 men who are practically starving, and asking the Government for relief works to enable them to live. I am satisfied that at least 200 of them would be willing to go to any of the Australian States in which they could be guaranteed fair rates of wages and fairly continuous employment. The wage question is not the only incentive which will solve the question of scarcity of labour, and also that of doing away with coloured labour. The prospect of having continuous employment has a far greater attraction than even a high wage. Unskilled labourers invariably look not merely at the rate of wages offered, but to the prospect of continuous employment. What is the use of £1 per day to the shearers, for example, when they have to wait six months in order to obtain it for the remaining portion of the year ? It is hardly a living wage, when we take into consideration the difficulty of obtaining it. The same remark applies to the labour employed in sugar-growing. If white men are offered high wages in the sugar industry for only a couple of months in the year, is it any wonder that only the unreliable labour of Australia is attracted? If they are offered the conditions that are afforded to them in the farming and pastoral industry - if they are offered employment

the whole year round, with fair treatment and a fair prospect of being able to settle down and marry and rear families where they are employed - I do not hesitate to say that no question of scarcity of labour will ever arise. The treatment I have indicated will cure any such difficulty in regard to the supply of labour for the plantations. I sincerely trust that any attempt to lengthen the period within which kanaka labour shall cease will be unsuccessful. There has never been any straight out fight on this question. Those in favour of kanaka labour have never said - "We want it to continue for ever." They have always said - "Spare it for only another five years, or for another ten years." I am sorry to hear the same old cry raised in the Senate. We have not heard any honorable senator say, "I want this traffic to continue for ever." Those who favour the traffic ask that the time within which the Government propose that kanaka labour shall cease shall be , extended for five years. To what conclusion are these honorable senators leading themselves ? Have they ever thought of what would happen at the end of the extended period for which they ask. If their contention is right, that the industry cannot be carried on by white labour, what is the use of asking for an extension of five years or for any extension ? What do they expect would occur at the end of that term ? Do they anticipate that they would be able to repeal the laws which we are placing on our statutebook - to wreck the Immigration Restriction Bill, which we hope to see become law within the next month or two, or to repeal the Pacific Island Labourers Bill? If not, what is to be gained by asking for an extension of time ? The better position for them to take up would be to agree to the abolition of the traffic at once, and then to appeal to the Government for compensation to the sugar producers. They are not merciful to the farmers and planters when they ask that they shall be allowed to continue this class of labour for another five years, with a prospect of ruin at the end of that time. If they claim to speak in the interests of these people, they should ask for the immediate cessation of the traffic, and for the compensation of the sugar-growers, so that they might be enabled to start afresh in another Australia under better conditions. If the contention is correct that in the northern parts of Australia we must have coloured labour, then we are brought face to face with the question that this continent cannot be the home of the white races ; that it must be divided into two parts ; that we must hand over northern Australia to the coloured races entirely, or else have the white races under free conditions in southern Australia and a white slave¹ owning race in northern Australia. Are honorable senators prepared to adopt that stand ? Are they prepared to say - "We shall have in the southern States of Australia a free white people, but in the northern States we shall have a white slave-owning people." That is what it comes to. Speak of this traffic as we like, defend it how we may, regulate it how we may, it is but ill-disguised and thinly veneered slavery.

Debate (on motion by Senator Macfarlane) adjourned.

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22:22:00

Senate adjourned at 10.22 p.m.