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1901-10-18

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at 10.30 a.m., and read prayers.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr POYNTON

- I notice from the

Adelaide telegrams in this morning's newspapers that the Premier of South Australia denies a statement made by me in the House on Wednesday night. I do not wish to do any person an injustice ; at the same time I must justify, if possible, my statement, and I shall proceed to show that wherever the fault lies it is not with myself. The telegram in the Argus is as follows : -

In the House of Assembly the Premier denied that he had suggested holding a meeting to protest against the Federal Tariff as stated by Mr. Poynton in the House of Representatives. He merely advised that if such meetings were held resolutions should be sent direct to Federal members instead of being mentioned in the local Legislature.

In the Age this telegram appears -

In the Assembly to-day the Premier denied that he had suggested a meeting to protest against the Federal Tariff as alleged by Mr. Poynton in the Federal House of Representatives. He had merely advised that if such meetings were held the resolutions should be sent direct to the Federal members instead of being mentioned in the local Legislature.

The telegrams are practically the same. Now for my authorities for making the statement. In the Argus of Wednesday last the following telegram appeared, under the heading of South Australian Parliament : -

The Premier, in response to a request, declined to set apart a day for the discussion of the Federal Tariff. He stated that personally he was opposed to increasing the cost of living, but he recognised the impossibility of framing a Tariff to satisfy everybody. He advised that meetings be held to protest against the new duties, and send the resolutions direct to the Federal representatives, who would bring them before the Government.

The telegram in Wednesday's Age was as follows : -

The Premier declined to set apart a day for the discussion of the Federal Tariff. He stated personally that he is opposed to increasing the cost of living, but recognises the impossibility of framing a Tariff to satisfy everybody. He advised people holding meetings protesting against the incidence of the new duties to send the resolutions direct to the Federal representatives, who would bring them before the notice of the Government.

In the face of those telegrams I think I was perfectly justified in the statement I made here on Wednesday night. I am not responsible for the error. I do not wish to do the Premier of South Australia or any one else an injustice. At the same time, I feel that it was only due to myself that I should make this explanation.

MOTION OF CENSURE

Debate resumed (from 17th October, vide page 6196) on motion by Mr. Reid -

) That this House cannot accept the Financial and Tariff proposals submitted by the Government - Because they would place the finances of the Commonwealth and the States; upon an unsound and extravagant basis. (b) Because they fail to adjust the burdens -. of taxation and the advantages of the free list in an equitable manner, revealing a marked tendency, which this House regrets to observe, to press . upon necessities of life and appliances -. used in our farming, mining, and pastoral industries more heavily than they do upon many articles of " luxury.

And because they would in their operation destroy the stability of the revenue by making imposts for national purposes a source of undue profit to a few individuals, and a few favoured industries, at the expense of the whole community.

That the foregoing resolutions be conveyed, by address, to His Excellency the Governor-General.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The remarks of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat serve to indicate, if that were requisite, the widespread feeling of anxiety, disappointment, and alarm which exists over the whole of this continent regarding the proposals of the Government in relation to the requirements and needs of the

State. There can be no doubt that there is a great deal of feverish anxiety all over the continent concerning the Tariff. There is a great deal of anxiety as to how it is to operate, both from a revenue point of view, and in its effect on the industries of the States. There is a feeling of intense disappointment throughout the whole of my own State at the proposals of the Government. They amount - not in my judgment alone, for I am glad to say that there is complete concurrence on this point - to the political deception of the people of New

South Wales on the part of some of her leading men.

Mr Thomas

- They' were told by those who opposed the Commonwealth Bill that they would have a Tariff like this.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Had the Prime Minister told the people of this country that he would impose duties ranging from 15 to 100 per cent, on many of the main lines of consumption in New South Wales, he would not be here to-da}' to tell the tale.

Mr Thomas

- What did the honorable member tell the people of New South Wales at the first referendum ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is the honorable member a protectionist ? Have I to fight him this morning as a protectionist 1

Mr Thomas

- The honorable member does not know what I am. I am talking about what he said.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is only doing this for the purpose of interrupting. He knows there is no sense in it. I shall be glad to hear him justify the Prime Minister after I have finished.

Mr Thomas

- I do not think he wants my defence.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I repeat that if the Prime Minister had told the people of "New South Wales that he would impose duties ranging from 15 to 100 per cent., he would not be here to tell the tale, let alone to impose the Tariff. At that time the people of New South Wales took as much notice of the Minister for Home Affairs as of the Prime Minister, and the former repeated the statement wherever he spoke that the duties this Government would introduce would be similar to the duties which would have to be imposed by the leader of the Opposition if he came into power - 10 or 15 per cent. That statement was repeated throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales. Strange to Say, the moment the honorable gentleman is ensconced in his office he turns round and complains that the duties are not high enough for him, although, at that time, he was strong in his statements that they would not be more than 15 or 20 per cent.

Mr Watson

- Has he said that they are not high enough ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

-Yes. When interviewed the other day, he complained that they are not sufficiently protective for him.

Mr Watson

- That, as I understand, was a complaint against the revenue duties.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The complaint was that the duties are not high enough for him. Had the two Ministers made these statements on the hustings in New South Wales neither of them could possibly have been returned for a seat in this Legislature. I am not narrow-minded enough to believe that it would be a good thing if these two honorable gentlemen remained out of public life, but I think they ought to have been more frank than 'they were with their own people when they were seeking their suffrages from the hustings. They ought to have told the people what they meant when they were advocating moderate protection. Surely the Prime Minister does not attempt to say that the duties which are imposed under the Tariff are moderately protective, as that term is understood in New South Wales ? There can be only one opinion there, namely, that the duties are stiff in the extreme, and if the Tariff introduced by the Government is a moderate Tariff in the eyes of the rest of Australia, all I have to say is that there is a great difference of opinion among the States. We, in New South Wales, think that the Tariff is absolutely oppressive and

destructive, and it is a pity that Ministers did not tell the people more frankly what they intended, after they had succeeded to power and office.

Sir William Lyne

- Do I understand that the honorable member accused me of saying that the duties are not high enough ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes.

Sir William Lyne

- I never said anything of the kind.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member is reported in the Age as having stated in a recent interview that the duties were not high enough.

Sir William Lyne

- I never said anything of the sort.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Then the honorable gentleman is misreported. Will he deny, however, that he told the people in his own State at the last election that he would propose a Tariff with duties ranging from 10 per cent, to 15 percent., and that if the leader of the Opposition had 'the arrangement of matters he could not manage with any smaller duties ?

Sir William Lyne

- What I said was that the average, taking out narcotics and stimulants, with no free list, would not exceed 15 per cent. or 20 per cent.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable gentleman attacked the leader of the Opposition when he proposed a purely revenue Tariff, and said that it was impossible to derive the necessary amount of revenue with a Tariff of less than 10 per cent. or 15 per cent.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable member has no right to misquote what I stated.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am sure there is no mistake about the matter.

Sir William Lyne

-I am sure there is.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The question arises as to whether these high duties are necessary - whether we require to pile the duties up in order to get sufficient revenue to make ends meet, so far as the different States are concerned. The Treasurer in his opening remarks made a very sensible observation, and it is a great pity that his subsequent statements did not support it. He said we had a grave responsibility at this particular time, and should take the utmost care to prevent extravagant expenditure. But not many minutes later he told us that he had to deal with inflated Estimates - Estimates which had been piled up and sent over to the Federal Government, and which under the ordinary State Parliaments would not have been allowed to mount up as high as they are to-day. He stated that he had been perfectly bewildered, and that he was going to see if he could cut the Estimates down. As a matter of fact we have the Treasurer promising retrenchment after the Tariff has been framed, but I contend that his duty was to cut down his estimates of expenditure before any attempt was made to impose duties in order to produce the revenue necessary to meet the Government obligations. The Treasurer pointed out that, in the Defence department alone, from 1896 to 1901 there had been an increase in the expenditure of £360,000. He knows this is due to extravagance, and he told us of the ruthless way in which he used to cut down defence expenditure in times gone by. Now he says that he will not touch the expenditure until the military commandant comes out. Yet he had been telling us just previously in a most emphatic way of the trouble he had had with these Imperial commandants before. It is these Imperial officers who keep piling up expenses, who will not look with sympathy upon our colonial lines of defence, but who increase their own emoluments, and cut down the purely volunteer forces. What possible chance, therefore, is there of an Imperial

commandant vigorously enforcing the stern necessity for retrenchment? He will probably begin to revolutionize our forces to bring them into accord with Imperial notions and ideas, and the Estimates will very likely be swollen rather than curtailed. The Treasurer knows this himself as well as I do, and there will be a feeling of intense disappointment that the Treasurer should have taken up such a feeble attitude with regard to the necessity for retrenchment at the present time. The Prime Minister told the people of New South Wales - "I give you the name of Sir George Turner as a guarantee of sound and careful finance," and yet here we have this same Sir George Turner submitting Estimates which he knows are inflated - which are 50 per cent. higher than they ought to be - and telling us that he does not feel any obligation to cut them down until the new commandant arrives. What is the result of all this? He proposes to pile up the revenue to an amount which will represent an increase of £1,200,000 over the revenue for the year 1899. I will not believe that this continent cannot be governed upon the 1899 basis, if a vigorous attempt at retrenchment is made. My belief is founded upon my own experience as a member of the Government of New South Wales for five years. I know that the Commonwealth can easily be governed upon the 1899 basis if we set ourselves strongly and resolutely to do it. If the Treasurer took in hand my own State of New South Wales and kept down the expenses there a little he could not do a better thing for the people of that State. What is happening over there? They are piling up the expenditure at the rate of nearly £1,000,000 a year. They are spending £2,000,000 a year more to govern that country than was necessary three years ago. Will the Treasurer tell me that there is no room for retrenchment there? He could not have done better service than to set himself resolutely to cut down these swollen Estimates. Two or three years ago New South Wales was governed on £9,500,000 a year; out today the Estimates involve an expenditure of £12,000,000, in addition to the expenditure of £3,000,000 of loan moneys this year. If the members of the Government will tell me that it is absolutely necessary in order to keep New South Wales solvent that there should be £15,000,000 of money provided for her, I will concede that the Tariff is justified. Surely the Treasurer knows what is going on in New South Wales. He is aware that it is revelling in perhaps the most fruitful revenue it has had for very many years past - a revenue which has come in under a free-trade Tariff, which is ample for all purposes, and which could readily be curtailed without the slightest injury to that State. To say, therefore, that the Treasurer is under an obligation to find the States of the union as much revenue as they have hitherto been receiving is to absolutely shut his eyes to what is going on. We were promised by all the advocates of federation that the first effect of its accomplishment would be to bring about cheaper and more economical government. Yet there is not the slightest sign of anything approaching economy up to the present moment. Whether it will result in effectiveness in administration remains to be seen. But, so far, the only result of the amalgamation of the various departments has been to bring about a less effective administration. That, of course, is susceptible to remedy, and I am not putting it as an inherent defect of federation. I am merely speaking of the actual result of federal union up to the present moment. The amalgamation of these departments has made the transaction of ordinary business almost impossible. On the top of all this we are piling up the cost at an alarming rate - a rate which the people of the Commonwealth will not tolerate very long. In New South Wales we are supposed to get back over £1,000,000 of the surplus from the Federal Treasury. The Estimates for next year have been already submitted, and, strange to say, every penny of that amount is mopped up by the ordinary services of the year. The Treasurer told us that we might do many things in New South Wales. For example, he said that we might cut down railway fares and freights by the application of the surplus, when, as a matter of fact, that surplus is already absorbed in the Estimates for the year. With all these facts patent to him, will the Treasurer tell me that there is no room for retrenchment in regard to those items which belong peculiarly to his own domain, and that there is therefore the necessity, which he affirms, of raising this huge amount of revenue? He tells us that it is necessary to raise £9,000,000. The honorable member for North Sydney informed the House yesterday that £8,000,000 would be sufficient. That is my firm belief, although I do not pretend to be a financier. I want to know why, since £7,500,000 was sufficient in 1899, and there has been piled up so far as federation is concerned less than £300,000 additional expenditure, £9,000,000 is required to meet the obligations of the States to-day?

Mr Piesse

- The balance of the transferred departments has to be made up.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The estimates of the transferred departments have been loaded up and handed to the Federal Government in an inflated condition. The Treasurer knows that those estimates are extravagant.

Mr Ewing

- Does the honorable member admit that £8,000,000 are required?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I should say that £8,000,000 ought to be sufficient with rigid economy, but it will not be adequate if we allow the States to make the demands which they would like to make, or if they are going to spend money in the way that many of them are spending it. Surely this is the Parliament of all others that ought to inaugurate an era of stern retrenchment, both in the finances of its own administration and in those of the States. I wish to quote a statement from an authority which I do not think will be questioned. I refer to an excellent article written by the Speaker of this House as late as April last, upon the subject of the Tariff, and the best means of raising the necessary revenue. The writer points out that £8,500,000 can be raised with 15 per cent, duties, allowing for a free list of £8,500,000. That statement was made by the Speaker of this House when he was Treasurer of South Australia, when he had access to all the figures of the continent, and after an experience in finance ranging over at least nine or ten years in his own State. It was written after a special study of the finances of the Federation, as was evidenced by the careful statements which he made in the Convention from time to time.

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Mr Mauger

- That was pretty close to the amount now proposed to be raised.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Getting pretty dose to it ! I was under the impression that there were duties in the Tariff under discussion ranging up to 100 per cent, and over. If the basis adopted by Mr. Speaker had been adhered to, and a free list of £5,000,000 had been allowed for, I venture to say that the Tariff would have shown a reduction to 12-1 per cent, at least. We have it from the writer of the article in question, who is one of the best financial authorities in Australia, that a Tariff of 12-1 per cent., with a £5,000,000 free list, would give us ample revenue with which to run the States and the Commonwealth. It is idle for the Treasurer to get up and feebly declare that he is bound to give the States all the revenue which they have hitherto been receiving, when he knows full well that there is gross extravagance going on in connexion with the transferred departments. He tells us that he will not touch them until the new commandant arrives from England. That is a very poor beginning for a man with the political reputation of the Treasurer. What is the motive of it all ? I fear that the motive is to increase the cost of government, so that the Ministry may pile up the Tariff. All the authorities who have investigated this financial problem are agreed that these extravagant sums are not required to govern the country. Therefore, there is no need to raise them. What did Sir George Dibbs say in New South Wales when he introduced his protectionist Tariff? He said that he wanted to raise the customs duties in order that the money derived from them might be expended upon public works. Similarly we are told by the Government that they must have this money, because it is needed by the States. I repeat that it is not needed by the States. In my judgment all these estimates could be cut down with infinite advantage to the States, and without the slightest risk of impairing their efficiency in the matter of government. This matter must be met, and how do the Government propose to meet it ? That is the main question which this Parliament has to face. The Minister for Trade and Customs swept away all considerations of finance, and left them to be dealt with by the Treasurer. He said in a straightout, clear, ringing, militant tone - " We believe in protecting our industries, and we are going to do it. We challenge the Opposition to fight us upon this question."

That was the attitude of the right honorable gentleman, and immediately he went on to give reasons for the imposition of many of these duties. For instance, he told us that in regard to apparel there were three protections desirable : one to the maker of yarn here, one to the maker of the cloth, and another to the maker of the clothing. I am told that the manufacture of yarn here is represented by the large number of one maker, and that he is out of work just at present. I am told also that there is no such thing as a yarn industry in Victoria. There was one, but there is not one now. The manufacturer, we are informed, has gone home to secure new plant on the strength of the promise of this duty by the Minister for Trade and Customs.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member is importing some very fine yarns from New South Wales.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This is what the Minister went on to say -

Looking at our pastoral industry, is it not preposterous that the wool which we grow should be sent away to the other side of the world, for the purpose of being turned first into cloth, and afterwards into garments to be sent back across the seas ?

Does he not know that this is precisely what is being done with American cotton ? Is it not preposterous that they should do that in America in spite of their Tariff! Everything which the right honorable and learned gentleman said in regard to our woollens would apply with equal force to American cotton. Yet, in spite of her scientific protectionist policy, America sends to England every year £66,000,000 worth of raw cotton to be made up there. What should we do with the clothes if we made up all our wool here? We could not wear them all ourselves ?

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member's wits are now going wool-gathering.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am taking the statement made by the right honorable and learned member, and I may well be pardoned if I may seem to be wool-gathering when I quote his remarks. They are so extraordinary and so absurd, that no one could repeat them without being suspected of woolgathering.

Mr Kingston

- I never made such a statement.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This statement appears in Hansard. Does the right honorable and learned gentleman deny it 1

Sir William McMillan

- We might as well be told that we ought to eat all our. own meat.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- There is no equivocation about the statement that we should turn all our wool into garments.

Mr Kingston

- It is absolute nonsense to say that.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I agree with the right honorable and. learned gentleman, but here is his own statement that it is preposterous that we should send our wool away instead of making it up ourselves. Of course, it may be said that we could export the garments if we made them up. I understand that protectionists believe in exporting their surplus stock to other countries, no matter how poor those countries may be.

Mr Barton

- If they are rich enough to pay for the goods we send them, we do not object.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- But the right honorable and learned gentleman is constantly telling us that we cannot compete with these people abroad. How then can we export our goods and compete with them in their own markets. Why does America send over her cotton to England 1 Simply because England can make it up better than she can. While England is making up cotton for America, America is growing corn for England. Each specializes in that industry for which it is best adapted. The result of this exchange is in the aggregate an advantageous bargain for the people. There are woollen mills existing in the Commonwealth, and paying dividends without the assistance of a duty. In my electorate there are two. One of them is conducted by a proprietary and another by a company. The company pays 6 per cent. dividends. It has just doubled its plant, and it. is making cloth which, of its kind, is equal to anything produced anywhere. The Minister of Trade and Customs will not say that that industry is decrepit, and cannot get along without assistance. Then, the right honorable and learned gentleman has made certain statements as to the iron industry. So far as I am aware, the only place in which iron is being made up within the Commonwealth is in my own electorate. Here again I pretend to know a little of what I am. speaking about. When Minister of Mines in New South Wales, I despatched a special officer from the geological survey branch to inquire into and to prepare a memorandum on the iron ores of the State and the possibilities of iron production in New South. Wales. He made an investigation which is admitted to be a very faithful and full one. And what

does he say ?

Mr Kingston

- Who was the officer ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Mr. Jaquet. He makes it plain in his report that at Lithgow, in New South Wales, iron can be produced from the ores of the State at a cost below that at which it can be produced at Middlesborough at the present time.

Mr Kennedy

- Are they producing any iron at Lithgow at the present time?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They are not making up native ores. They are simply rolling iron, but they employ about 300 men in the works. The industry has done well, altogether.

Mr Kennedy

- Are they using imported iron ?

Sir William McMillan

- Scrap iron.

Mr Barton

- Under special concessions made by the Railway department.

Mr Mauger

- Under railway protection.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Even if they had no railway protection they could continue as at present. I know the proprietor better than the honorable member does, and. I know that the better he does the harder he grumbles. If anyone deserves to get on, however, that man does. He has fought a hard battle, and he has succeeded admirably. To day he is comparatively a rich man, and he has succeeded without any Tariff.

Mr Kingston

- But he obtains railway concessions.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The railway concessions are a matter of business between the Commissioners and the proprietor of the mill.

Mr Mauger

- What else is protection?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The proprietor pays the Commissioners for the scrap iron which they send up to him, and they give him certain reduced rates of carriage.

Mr Barton

- He gets relatively lower rates than those allowed to any other person.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If he was not allowed those lower rates he could get on just the same.

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Mr Kingston

- Then why are the reductions made?. It is squandering money.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The rates have been in existence for 20 or 30 years.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member was in the State Government during some portion of that time. Why did he not do away with them ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The right honorable and learned gentleman must be very ignorant of our method of dealing with these matters.

Mr Kingston

- I am. I understand, however, that the proprietor is in the honorable member's electorate ? He need not answer the question.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course he is. I have to fight him at every election. He spent £4,000 over the election for the Federal Parliament in his opposition to myself. But he did not succeed.

Mr Kingston

- I wish he had succeeded.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have no doubt the right honorable gentleman does wish that my opponent had succeeded, but he did not, in spite of the Prime Minister promising that there should be jam factories, canning factories, and I do not know what industries besides, established there.

Mr Barton

- I do not conduct elections in that way.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is what the Prime Minister stud, at all events.

Mr Barton

-i never promised anything.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Prime Minister told the people that they had only to put him in power in order to have jam factories and canning factories established at once. However, that is by the way. Here we have hard figures, which show that iron could be produced in Lithgow for 12s. a ton less than in Middlesborough, in England, at the present time.

Mr Kingston

- Why does some one not do it?

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The right honorable gentleman knows, or ought to know, if he has any acquaintance with the subject at all, that to produce iron in a modern up-to-date fashion requires the expenditure of huge capital. If an up-to-date plant were put down at Lithgow, as much iron could be produced in a month as the State of New South Wales would consume in twelve months. There was no demand for the output of a modern mill of that description; but now that federation has opened the markets of the whole of Australia, those interested in the industry in Lithgow are taking steps, and have been doing so for some time past, to extend their operations. Irrespective of any duty - because no duty is proposed - there will very soon be a plant in New South Wales capable of supplying the continent with iron. In this connexion I should like to refer to a remark made by the honorable member for Gippsland, who, in speaking of England, declared that it is a country of unrivalled natural resources in the way of raw materials. The honorable member cannot know very much about England, or he would not talk such stuff. As a matter of fact, England to-day is severely handicapped in the matter of the raw materials she requires for her manufacturing industries. The honorable member ought to be aware, when he starts out to discuss England, that coal there is more difficult to get than it is almost anywhere else in the world. The mines in England are deeper and more dangerous, and, therefore, more expensive to work, than elsewhere, and the cost of producing a ton of coal is much greater than in America. The coal in England has to be worked in many places at a depth of 3,000 feet, under the most dangerous circumstances it is possible to imagine, and the expense of winning raw materials in England is increasing. Does the honorable member know that in Cornwall tin ores are being brought from 3,000 feet below the surface, and that men are working under conditions almost impossible to conceive, all in order to win the raw materials which he imagines are lying about over the surface ? Does the honorable member not know that every pound of raw cotton has to be imported from America before there can be any manufacture of that commodity in England? He ought to know that, on some of the larger estates in England to-day, more is. being paid in the shape of royalties on coal and other minerals than is paid in the aggregate in wages ? Yet, with all these drawbacks, England, owing to her free ports, which enable her to get her raw materials wherever she can under the most favorable conditions, keeps the nation going at a pitch of happiness and comfort not equalled anywhere else in the world. To say that England is privileged by the possession of raw materials is quite beside the mark; the very contrary is the case. It is a well-known fact that the production of coal per head in England is less than in New South Wales, America, or Germany ; and this argues the severity of the

conditions under which coal has to be won there.

Mr Kingston

- And the profits are so great that an export duty is put on it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes ; the profits are so great that, notwithstanding the "fact that coal is so much harder to win than in Germany, the average wage of the miner in England to-day is £2 per week, as against less than £1 in some of the continental countries. I hope the Minister for Trade and Customs will look into these figures when he discusses iron, coal, and similar products. But why, if the Minister is going to protect iron, has he not the pluck to put a duty on it ? It is said that the manufacture of iron ought to be encouraged ; and yet the Government have not the pluck to put a specific, percentage, or some kind of continuing duty on it, instead of a bonus. The reason is very simple. Iron is the raw material of so many other manufactures throughout the continent, that it is undesirable to impose a duty' on it. Yet iron is the finished product so far as the ironmaker is concerned. Mr. Sandford, in Lithgow, is turning out angle and bar iron in great quantities, and he regards that as his finished " product ; but the Minister has not the pluck to give him a duty, for the simple reason that even protectionists in the other States are opposed to such an imposition on what they regard as raw material. This brings to view one of the difficulties in discussing the Tariff - the difficulty of deciding at what point the raw material becomes a finished product. I should now like to say word or two in regard to the condition of things in America. Only about 5 per cent, of the raw cotton produced there is manufactured. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports gave us some harrowing descriptions of life in London.

Mr Mauger

- I gave the honorable member's own description. .

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I will come to that in a moment. The honorable member ought to be the last to emphasize any one else's inconsistencies, in view of the manner in which he has " jumped Jim Crow " in the space of two days. But the honorable member is just fitted to do that.

Mr Mauger

- That is too stale, and it is untrue.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member for Melbourne Ports must withdraw that statement.

Mr Mauger

- I withdraw it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is recorded in the pages of Hansard that the honorable member declared his intention of voting one way, and voted another.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member for Parramatta must not refer to a debate on another matter.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It was, I think, in this debate.

Mr SPEAKER

- I understand the honorable member to refer to an occasion when, he says, the honorable member for Melbourne Ports spoke one way and voted another. That has certainly nothing to do with this question.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I thought it was in this debate. The recent experience of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports ought to make him the last to point out anybody else's inconsistency ; and I hope he will listen to a description of life in America which is of much more recent date than the musty, ancient statistics he cited. I propose to read a quotation from a New York newspaper called The People, and not something that a great dead cardinal said years ago. This is written by a man who investigated the industrial condition of the town of Birmingham, in Alabama ; and he says -

The miners and railroad boys of Birmingham, Alabama, entertained me one evening some months ago with a graphic description of the conditions among the slaves of the Southern cotton mills. While I imagined that these must be something of a modern Siberia, I concluded that the boys were overdrawing

the picture, and made up my mind to see for myself the conditions described. Accordingly I got a job and mingled with the workers in the mill and in their homes.

He did not get his information from a book, but went into the mill, and into the homes of these people. He goes on -

I found that children of six and seven years of age were dragged out of bed at half -past four in the morning when the task-master's whistle blew. They eat their scanty meal of black coffee and corn bread, mixed with cotton-seed oil in place of butter, and then off trots the whole army of serfs, big and little. By 5.30 they are all behind the factory walls, where, amid the whirr of machinery, they grind their young lives out for fourteen long hours each day.

That is taking place in America at this moment.

We stopped at twelve for a scanty lunch and a half-hour's rest. Half-past twelve we were at it again, with never a stop until seven. Then a dreary march home, where Ave swallowed our scanty supper, talked for a few minutes of our misery, and then dropped down upon a pallet of straw, to lie until the whistle should once more awaken us, summoning babes and all alike to another round of toil and misery. I have seen mothers take their babes and slap cold water in their faces to wake the poor little things.

Mr Chapman

- Oh !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member for Eden-Monaro laughs. It is just an honorable member like the Government whip whom we might expect to laugh at human misery of this description - not taking place in ancient days, before civilization and science had attained their present position, but taking place in America today.

Mr Kennedy

- Does the honorable member seriously accept that as a statement of the true condition of the workers in America generally ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No, I do not. In that respect I am infinitely more fair than honorable members opposite. They are constantly representing extreme conditions as the ordinary conditions of the British workman. I am putting a case parallel to anything they can show as happening in England.

There was once a law on the statute-books of Alabama prohibiting the employment of children under twelve years of age more than eight hours each day. The Gadston Company would not "build their mill until they were promised that this law should be repealed. When the repeal came up for final reading, I find by an examination' of the records of the House, that there were CO members present. Of these, 57 voted for the repeal, and but 3 against. To the everlasting credit of young Manning, who was a member of that House, let it be stated that he both spoke and voted against the repeal. I asked one member of the House why he voted to murder the children ; and he replied, that he did not think they could earn enough to support themselves if they' only worked eight hours.

Mr Kingston

- Who gives that account?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- A writer in a paper called The People, published in New York.

Mr Kingston

- Does he sign his name 1Mr. JOSEPH COOK.- I have not the name here, but I will tell the right honorable gentleman who has given me this authority. I have it from the editor of an eminent labour paper published in New South Wales.

Mr Kingston

- Then the writer is anonymous ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He writes under the nomde plume, "Mother Jones." He is a constant writer who signs himself by that name. A great deal has been said about America, and American progress is always attributed to protection. Here, however, is a statement to the contrary. I hope honorable members will pay attention to this statement, because it goes right to the core of the matter, so far as American industry is concerned - Any one familiar with conditions in American mines, mills, factories and workshops, and with the statistics

of production in this country, must admit that the British workman is' quite right. The American workmen produce more profits for the employer in proportion to the wages they receive than the workmen of any other country. They do this by tending more machines, running them at a higher speed, working harder and faster and more unremittingly. As a consequence, they work themselves to death, or to a condition of premature old age earlier than their British fellow workmen. As a further result, they set the standard of employment higher, make it harder to "hold a job," throw a larger proportion into the ranks of the "outofworks" or "casuals." And finally, they enable the American capitalists to invade and conquer the foreign markets in competition with those of Europe, and thus to build up ' ' America's economic supremacy," of which we now hear so much.

Mr Kingston

- Who writes that ?

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is a leaderette of the same paper, so that I cannot tell the right honorable and learned gentleman the name of the writer. But let me tell honorable members this, on the authority of a man who is in Australia at the present moment. Although I cannot give his name, I can get it for the Minister if he desires to have it. Some time ago, the representative of certain pneumatic tube works in America - I believe it is a huge monopoly - was travelling from Hobart in the company of myself and Mr. Sandford, who will bear out my statement. He told- us that in connexion with the contracts of his firm sold in Australia, he had to figure on a basis 20 per cent, higher than the basis upon which he had to figure in New York. When asked why that was so, he replied - " Because the American workmen " bustle so much more than the workmen anywhere else." In other words, he said - " They do not work only eight hours a day ; they do not stop for lunch, except for just a snack ; they work all the week, week in and week out ; and they work at a tension and strain that no workmen any where else approach." It is possible, as the history of the world proves, to build up a condition of wealth and comparative civilization upon a basis of slavery. Some of the most magnificent countries in the world have been built up upon such a basis. But rather than that we should build up our States upon a condition of economic wage slavery, such as obtains in America at the present moment, I would prefer that our nation should be a little less rich, and that the great bulk of its workers should be a little more comfortable in their home lives. Honorable members may talk of national prosperity as much as they like, but it is not on the amount of the wealth possessed by a nation, but on the distribution of that wealth, that the prosperity of the people depends. All the statistics that can be produced, and all the writers of note who have observed things in America, are emphatic on this point : that the worker there does not get nearly so much comfort and happiness out of his existence as does the worker in any other part of the world. I tell honorable members again that it is possible to produce iron in Australia without the help of protection, by means of the natural resources which we possess in an almost unrivalled degree. We have the cheapest coal in the world in New South Wales. That may seem to be a big statement to make, but I repeat that in the western district of that State we have the cheapest coal in the world. The cost of the coal which goes into the production of iron at the present moment is 2s. 6d. per ton delivered at the works. The right honorable gentleman cannot find coal as cheaply wrought as that anywhere else in the world. The honorable member for Gippsland talked about the raw materials of England. Is the honorable member aware that for the manufacture of iron and steel alone England has to pay to foreign countries £10,000,000 a year for fluxing? Her limestone bill comes to £10,000,000 a. year, and all that money is sent out of the the country at the present moment. We have our limestone, and our coal and iron all in proximity to each other, and therefore have conditions for manufacture which cannot be surpassed anywhere else. All that we have wanted has been a market, and now, with the opening up of the Inter-State markets by federation, iron can be produced, and will be produced whether there be a Tariff imposed or not. I should like to say one other word about these duties. I notice in the list that the right honorable gentleman has provided for duties on cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry. Do we import many of these to Australia ? I always believed that we were exporting cattle largely.

Mr Poynton

- We only import prize cattle, and they are exempt.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes, they are exempt. It does seem to me to be a magnificent piece of bluff to put duties upon

something which we never hope or expect to import.

Sir William McMillan

- The honorable member will see a good many such items on the Tariff.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes. I should have thought that in the arrangement of a scientific Tariff such as this the right honorable gentleman would have known better than to play this game of bluff upon the unsuspecting people. What is the good of a 20 percent. duty upon cattle when we are sending them away to the value of millions of pounds every year ? What is the good of an import duty upon sheep, when we can breed more than we know what to do with here ? The same remarks apply to many other items, and, therefore, I say that many of these duties constitute a piece of bluff. The duties can. have no effect upon the articles upon which they are levied. We have, of course, had the usual statement made in this debate - by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports I think more frequently than anybody else - that protective duties do not raise the price of commodities. The honorable member has repeated that statement at least half-a-dozen times. I wonder why a duty is put upon eggs. Is that intended to increase their price? If not, why has that duty been put on ? Is the intention to protect our fowls here against the pauper fowls of China 1 I wonder in what way the China fowl differs from our own. Is it in laying capacity, or what is it?

Mr Kingston

- Longer hours, perhaps.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Apart from that, the question is, who pays the duty ? would rather take the resolution put into hard cold type the other day by the manufacturers of Sydney, than the incessant statements of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports on this question. The answer to the question who pays the duty is given by Mr. J. P. Wright, boot manufacturer, when at a conference in Sydney the other day, he moved that resolution -

That in the opinion of this meeting it is advisable that the price of boots and shoes should be immediately advanced.

Now to whom are we to pay attention, the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, who tells us that protection does not increase the price of commodities, or to Mr. Wright, who moved that resolution ?

Mr Conroy

- And Mr. Wright is a protectionist manufacturer.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I travelled with the manager of a small station the other day, and here is a statement which he made to me : He told me that, anticipating the duties, and in fear of them, not knowing what they would mean, he purchased £106 worth of goods in Sydney. Since the imposition of the duties a new price list has been submitted to him, and if he had to buy those goods now, a fortnight later, he would have to pay £129 for them, an increase of £23.

Mr Kennedy

- Can the honorable member give us a list of the goods? They may come under revenue duties.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not know what they are, but we are told that the putting on of duties is not going to make things any dearer..

Mr Kennedy

- There is a clear distinction between protective and revenue duties.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shall come to that point in a moment. I should like to refer to a statement made in the train the other day. I would rather take these statements direct from the people themselves than read from books upon the question. Here is a statement made by a Victorian farmer : The honorable and learned member for Parkes can corroborate the statement, because he was present. A farmer was coming down from Wangaratta, and we were discussing the labour problem. Of course he was in favour of the Chinaman. He did not see how we could clear our land at all, unless we introduced the Chinaman to do it. I asked how that could be, and he said - "It is because of the minimum wage" I asked - " What wages do you pay ? He said: - " Well, I have paid up to as high as £1 per week, and board." I asked - "What does that mean -

about 30s. a week ? " He replied - "Yes, and you cannot pay more for your labour." I said -" Not under protection? I thought that under protection you were enabled to pay good wages and make good profits." In answer to that he made this frank statement - " The duties are no good to us ; our prices are ruled by the London market. We are exporters ; our protection is no good, and we cannot afford to pay these wages."

Mr Mauger

- I think I have heard this before;

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- A similar statement, according to the Age of 13th July, 1899, was made by the honorable member for Gippsland, who, in introducing a deputation to the Premier of Victoria, asking for a reduction of the railway freights on grain, said -

Grain values here, as well as in New South Wales, were regulated by the prices ruling in the London market, and it did not matter what expenses were piled on, all that the farmers could get was the value of the wheat in Mark-lane. They could not get a better price here than could be got by the New South Wales farmers.

Now, about these protective duties. Here is a statement for the honorable member interested in the matter. The Minister for Trade and Customs, the other day, sent round some of his officers to Bennie, Teare, and Co., who are importers in Melbourne and, in Sydney.

Mr Mauger

- A good firm.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I believe they are agents for Tangye's productions. Here are some prices which the Minister must know about, because his officials were sent out to inquire the difference between the prices, if any, in Sydney and Melbourne. This is apropos of the statements about reapers and binders. Here are some quotations sent to the Minister which he has never used: Bennie, Teare, and Co. state that the price of a vertical boiler in Sydney is £90, and in Melbourne £110.

Mr Mauger

- That is an imported article.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I presume it is an article on which there is a good stiff duty here. A vertical boiler--

Mr Mauger

- Which we could make here.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What has that to do with it?

Mr Mauger

- Everything.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is another point. I want to pin this slippery member down to the point that protection does not increase the price of goods. Here is a fact, that a boiler which costs £90 in Sydney, is priced at £110 in Melbourne. The price is 18 1/4 per cent. cheaper in Sydney, while it is 22 1/4 per cent. dearer in Melbourne.

Mr Kingston

- That is a funny way of putting it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If the Minister will look at it he will find that it is perfectly correct. Again, for another vertical engine the price in Sydney is £107 10s., and in Melbourne £129.

Mr Mauger

- Will the honorable member give us the price of a vertical engine made in the country ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I cannot ; but what has that to do with it?

Mr Mauger

- Everything.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member mean to say that the price of the Melbourne article is quoted lower in Melbourne than the price of the imported article?

Mr Mauger

- Most decidedly.

Mr Conroy

- Then what becomes of the contention that protection gives higher wages ?

Mr.F. E. McLean. - They have to import these engines and boilers in spite of the duties.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course they have ; they do not make many of this type. For a colonial engine the Sydney price is £79, and the Melbourne price £95. For another boiler the Sydney price is £165, and the Melbourne price £198. Here is the statement, which the Minister can check if he cares to. It has come to me as from that firm, and is in response to a request made by his officials as to the prices ruling in Melbourne and Sydney for specific articles. We are told that the cost of living is cheaper in Melbourne than in Sydney, a statement which the Age is constantly making, and which is backed up every day by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports. For Queensland arrowroot, on which there is a duty of 33 per cent., the price at Lassetter's, in Sydney, in May last was 4d., and the price at Moran and Cato's, in Melbourne, was 6d., a difference of 2d., the duty here being 2d. per lb.

Mr Mauger

- What about the arrowroot made here?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shall come to that directly, if the honorable member will wait. The price of milk was 5d. a tin at Lassetter's in May last, and 7 1/2d. in Melbourne. The price of corn-flour was 3d. at Lassetter's in May last, and 6d. in Melbourne. The price of sugar was 12s. 6d. in Sydney and 14s. 9d. in Melbourne.

Mr Kingston

- What is the honorable member quoting from?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The price lists of Lassetter and Co., of Sydney, and Moran and Cato, of Melbourne. According to the price lists of John Connell and Co., of Melbourne and Sydney, the price of arrowroot was 3d. in Sydney, and 5d. in Melbourne ; imported candles, 53/4 d. in Sydney, and 63/4d. in Melbourne ; rice, per cwt. 14s. 6d. in Sydney, and 21s. in Melbourne.

Mr Mauger

- There was no duty on rice.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Only 6s. 8d. per cwt. ! The price of salmon per dozen tins was 7s. in Sydney and 10s. in Melbourne ; salt, per cwt., 45s. in Sydney and 75s. in Melbourne; cornflour, Wotherspoon's brand, 21/4d. in Sydney and 41/4d. in Melbourne ; Sunlight soap, per box, 14s. 6d. in Sydney, and 24s. in Melbourne, the duty here being 8s.; Monkey soap, per box, 14s. 6d. in Sydney, and 17s. 6d. in Melbourne ; cement, on which there was a duty of 60 per cent., 15s. in Victoria, and 11s. 3d. in New South Wales. According to the commercial columns of the Age the other day, in August, 1901 the Sydney price of cement was 11s. 3d. to 12s., and the Melbourne price, 14s. 3d. to 14s. 6d. In September, 1901, the price had lowered in New South Wales by 6d. but it remained the same in Melbourne - 14s. 3d. to 14s. 6d. There are specific statements which can be proved to be either true or false, but they are taken from the pricelists of the firms who sell the goods, and that, I think, is about the best testimony we can have.

Mr Mauger

- I can give the honorable member lists that vary month by month.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have no doubt the honorable member can vary his lists.

Mr Mauger

- I did not say that.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is an easy thing to vary the lists if the honorable member wants to do so.

Mr Salmon

- The honorable member started out to prove that the cost of living is higher in Victoria than it is in New South Wales, and then he quoted the rates for imported goods--

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Mr SPEAKER

- Order.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I started to quote the rates at which these goods are sold

Mr Salmon

- Imported articles.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable member suppose that the firms keep these goods here without selling them ? Do they keep their houses open merely to look at "Victorians selling goods made here? The honorable member cannot put that nonsense into our minds.

Mr Salmon

- The honorable member ought to know that the prices are quoted of many things which are not sold.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Are all these things that are quoted not sold ? Here is a list which embraces nearly everything used in every man's home. The honorable member knows that there are importations into Victoria, just as there are into New South Wales - not perhaps to the same extent, but sufficient to show that there is a great difference in the cost of articles brought about by reason of the duties. The honorable member for Gippsland made special reference to England and its relations to the other nations of Europe, and he gave us some statistics from Mulhall to show that England was the most prosperous nation in the world prior to the year 1840, but that since then she had fallen behind in the race for supremacy. I think it was Macaulay who said that if the law of gravitation infringed some people's interests numerous arguments would soon be found against it, and it seems to me that the honorable member for Gippsland was attempting to bolster up his arguments in favour of protection by doing his best to prove that England is in a state of decay. That is a libel upon England, and it is very far from being correct. But the honorable member only quoted just such figures as would suit him. Now, I want to quote a few facts from Mulhall which will show a very different state of things. When the honorable member for Gippsland was referring to the condition of things in England in 1840 the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Cameron, asked what was the condition of the workers in England in 1840. I ask what was the general condition of England then - why did they introduce freetrade ? The honorable member for Gippsland told us that it was because they were ready to compete with the whole world, but surely the honorable member must have known that it was the grinding misery of the people that compelled the Parliament to abandon protection. However, upon this point I prefer to rely on the statements of those who lived at that time, and among those moving scenes.

Sir William McMillan

- 1840 was only a few years after the Reform Bill.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Here is a statement by Mr. Gladstone, who lived through that epoch, and whose powers of observation were at least equal to those of the honorable member for Gippsland. He says. -

That word "protection" is a miserable misnomer ; call it oppression, call it delusion, call it fraud. I wish I could supplant that name " protection," and find some name for it that is nearer the truth.

That is the statement of a man who was in England in 1840, and who had seen all the supposed benefits of protection.

Mr Kingston

- And who at that time was a protectionist ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

--But Mr. Gladstone changed his mind - the logic of facts compelled him to. No one upheld these duties more than Sir Robert Peel, but the logic of facts compelled him to change his mind, too* Sir Robert Peel lost his position over this matter, and it could not therefore have been the logic of the majority which forced him to take the step he did. He paid the penalty of his life for it, and he went to his grave sooner than he otherwise would have done by reason of it.

Mr Kingston

- What nonsense the honorable member talks. He was killed by an accident.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I can quite understand the indignation of the right honorable gentleman, who appears to be utterly ignorant of the history of those times. What I am stating can be found in any school history at home or abroad. The historian says so ; it is not my statement. Here is what Sir Robert Peel says : Will the honorable member listen to this ?

Mr Kingston

- It is not worth it, but I will listen since the honorable member asks me.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I suppose the honorable member thinks Sir Robert Peel was rather a fool.

Mr Kingston

- No, I do not think Sir Robert Peel was a fool.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The right honorable gentleman will be a very fortunate man if he finds as high a niche in the temple of fame, even with the aid of protection, as Sir Robert Peel did. Sir Robert Peel says -

So far from thinking the principle of protection is a salutary 'principle, I maintain the more widely you extend it the greater injury you will inflict on the national wealth, and the more you will cripple the national industry. I boldly maintain that the principle of protection to a domestic industry - meaning thereby legislative encouragement for the purpose of protection - duties on import imposed for that purpose, and not for revenue, is a vicious principle.

Now, here is an American - Sir Benjamin Franklin - who, no doubt, had seen a good deal of what he speaks about. He says -

I have seen so much embarrassment and so little advantage in all restraining and compulsive systems, that I feel myself strongly inclined to believe that that country which leaves all her ports open to all the world on equal terms, will by that means have foreign commodities cheaper, sell its own productions dearer, and be, on the whole, the most prosperous.

The honorable member for Gippsland has spoken about the splendid conditions that existed anterior to 1840, but in preference to the random statements he may make offhand, I prefer to take the testimony of eye-witnesses. They are not my statements, but those of the brainiest men of our race. Now, the honorable member for Gippsland quoted Mulhall to show how England has been distanced in the race for supremacy by such countries as France and Germany. As a matter of fact, those countries had not begun to manufacture in Germany in 1840. Their manufacturing industries were at their lowest ebb. They had not awakened to the necessity of competing in the world's markets ; neither had the other nations. England was manufacturing for the whole world.

Mr Sawers

- That is why she went for free-trade.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It does not necessarily follow that England was injured because those nations awoke. Was that anything for her to feel jealous or alarmed about? Does it follow that England is any worse off because they are better off?

Mr Sawers

- Would they have developed if they had not adopted protection ?

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- England maintains her position under free-trade, and I am going to give the honorable member the evidence of that. I am not going to quote the national wealth in the aggregate, although that would support my position ; I prefer a better test. We were told about the sweated labour of the old country, and I propose to compare the conditions in England, France, and Germany. In both France and Germany, the educational equipment of the people is better than those of the workers of Great Britain, and yet with the vigour and virility of the Germans, and the ingenuity of the French, and with all the splendid training and education of both, here is the result. These are the figures which the honorable member did not quote.

Mr. Nash, the financial editor of the Daily Telegraph in Sydney says -

The conditions of the people of three old world countries may be taken to illustrate the point. How do the people of the United Kingdom under free-trade fare in the matter of food consumption in comparison with those of France and Germany under protectionist systems? Mulhall in his statistics gives the following figures' as the cost of food supply to the people of each -

Here follows a very peculiar thing. It is a strange coincidence. The other night we were told that the consumption of potatoes in Victoria was very much in excess of the consumption in New South Wales. Strange to say, in both Germany and France the consumption of potatoes bears pretty much the same ratio to that of England as does the consumption in Victoria to that of New South Wales. It is an exceedingly strange coincidence, and one which I do not pretend to explain. In Germany there are 1,020 lbs. of potatoes consumed per head of the population, and in France, 520 lbs. as against 380 lbs. in the United Kingdom. But while this is so, there are 109 lbs. of meat per head consumed in the United Kingdom as against 77 lbs. in France and 64 lbs. in Germany. More potatoes are, therefore, consumed in Germany and France than in England, but those countries consume far less meat than does England. Altogether these figures show that, whether England is in a state of decadence or not, her workmen live better and expend less effort in the production of their living than do the workmen in the protected countries of the Continent. Here is another statement from Mulhall. In England the average wealth production for a family of five is £168 per annum, but in France it is only £139, whilst in Germany it is £111. All that is claimed for a protective system, so far as I can gather, is that it will increase production. But have we to face the problem of production anywhere in Australia? In New South Wales the production per family of five is £250 per annum. I suppose that the production in Victoria is not quite so much, but it is very nearly so. Why should we be straining every nerve to invent some artificial means to produce more wealth, when, as a matter of fact, we are the richest country in the world at the present time? Our problem is mainly one of distribution, and not one of production. If the distribution problem could be better solved by a protective system there would be some profit in adopting it, but all the statistics in the world upon this point go to show that the producers of wealth obtain more of it for themselves in free-trade countries than they do in protectionist countries of which we have any knowledge.

Mr Sawers

- Turkey, for example, is a free-trade country.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Why does the honorable member rush away to Turkey? I have just been telling him about France and Germany? Let us confine our attention to countries which are similar and whose people live under like conditions. That was the point upon which the honorable member was so strong the other night. The people of Turkey do not live under conditions similar to ours any more than do other aliens. I am not comparing ourselves with aliens. Why does the honorable member wish me to do that? I am comparing people who live under like conditions. But even if the other nations of the world have increased their productiveness, how can it harm a country to trade with a rich consumer in preference to a small one? Let us apply that principle to our own business concerns. Will honorable members tell me that they would prefer to have a small or poor customer to a large and rich one? The thing is preposterous! If what I say be true of the individual, surely it is equally true of a nation! Mutual trade with a powerful ally can only lead to mutually good results. Some honorable members suppose that Germany is beating England out of her own market. They never made a bigger mistake. The figures for last year show that the exports from England to Germany are in greater ratio than are the exports from Germany to England.

Mr HUME COOK

- In all colonial markets Germany is beating England.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- From Australia at the present moment we are sending £9,000,000 worth of goods per annum to Germany and France, and we are taking only £3,000,000 worth from them. What is happening in England at the present moment? The workshops were never more crowded! The sources of employment were never more than they are at present. Why, Mr. Seddon who sent home the other day for some locomotives and rails had to tell his own people that he could not get his orders fulfilled in England, and had consequently been compelled to place them in Germany. Is that a sign of England's decadence? Is it

a sign of the decay of British trade that Germany ""gets trade which England cannot take ? At the present time, the shipping trade of England is booking orders for three years ahead. Tangye Bros, will not accept an order for a less term than two years ahead. Yet we are told that England is declining because she cannot supply the requirements of the whole world. The fact remains that she is keeping her people to-day in .greater comfort and happiness than any other country in the world except Australia.

Mr Sawers

- What did the Times say in a leading article recently ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is wonderful how the honorable member goes to an old tory paper for his statistics.

Mr Sawers

- Lord Rosebery says the same thing.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I now come to the question of exports and imports. The honorable member for Gippsland gave us a new version of the relation between exports and imports. He told us - and I think it was the first time I had heard it said - that importations had no relation to exportations, and viceversâ. He told us, for instance, that when we send our goods abroad we sell them, that when we get goods from abroad we pay for them, and that if we buy more than we sell we must be the losers. When probed upon that point, however, he had to admit that to the extent that . exports and imports balance they are paid for by each other. Over and above that he says there has to be a movement of gold to make up the difference. In reply to his assertion, I want to give the honorable member a fact which, perhaps, he will be able to get over, although I confess that it is puzzling to me. It is taken from the Bankers' Magazine for July. In that issue Mr. W. R. Lawson, who writes in a strain certainly not favorable to Great Britain, after dealing with the anomaly referred to by Sir Robert Griffin, that the imports of England are so persistently in excess of her exports, makes this statement in regard to the movements of trade between the United States of America and foreign countries : -

Our own paradox has an equally interesting counterpart in the foreign trade returns of the United States. They, too, are very lopsided, but in the opposite direction to ours. They exhibit excesses of exports over imports almost as large as our excesses of imports over exports. In the month of April last the respective totals were 120,780,000 dols. exported, and 76,751,000 dols. imported - excess of exports 44,000,000 dols. For the ten months of the current fiscal year (1900-1) the aggregate excess was 584,212,000 dols. , which by the end of the year will probably have grown to 684,000,000 dols., or £135,000,000 sterling. £135,000,000 represents the difference between the exports of America and her imports.

Mr Kennedy

- The excess of exports.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes. According to the honorable member for Gippsland, gold ought to be flowing into America from England and elsewhere in payment of the difference between her imports and exports, and as England imports annually £170,000,000 more than she exports, her gold ought to be flowing all over the world in payment for them. We find, however, that this writer continues -

Notwithstanding the enormous foreign credits which these figures, if perfectly correct, ought to give to the United States, foreign exchanges are as steadily against New York as they are in favour of London. Just now the Americans are shipping gold two or three times a week to Europe, and they seem to get very little of it back.

That is a fact which I put before the House in answer to the statements made by the honorable member for Gippsland, that if we import more than we export we have to send gold out of the country in order to pay for the balance. Here is the fact, that in one year America has sent 135,000,000 worth of goods away from her shores in excess of her imports, and that, in order to satisfy her creditors abroad, she had in addition to send out in gold many millions sterling. England, on the other hand, receives annually £170,000,000 worth of goods more than she exports, and yet other countries are sending in their gold to her.

Mr Kennedy

- Is not that explained by the respective relations of debtor and creditor 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is the point. America is becoming a rich nation? She is paying off her indebtedness very rapidly, and that accounts for her excess of exports over imports. All debtor countries are constantly sending away exports in excess of their imports. If that were not the case there would have to be an approximate balance between their imports and exports. England's wealth per head is accumulating every year of her existence, and yet she is receiving £170,000,000 worth of imports in excess of what she sends out.

Mr Kennedy

- It is simply the interest on her capital.

Mr McColl

- She is the great pawnbroker of the world.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I wonder would the honorable member like to be a pawnbroker in the same way. I should like to say a word or two about the protection of native industries. Covered up as they are by the language employed, one does not see at first sight what these duties mean. Let us take cement for instance. On that article there is a duty of 60 per cent. The cost of importing it to this country is 4s. 2 Jd. per cask.

Mr McColl

- What is the price of cement 1

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The price of cement where no duty is paid is about 5s. 6d. on the manufacturers' premises abroad per cask. I believe it is about 14s. per cask in Melbourne. The duty amounts to nearly 60 per cent., while the cost of bringing it here is equivalent to more than another 60 per cent. Clearly, therefore, the natural and proposed protection on this one article alone amounts to considerably over 100 per cent, of its value. We are supposed to require protection in order to shield our labour from the pauper labour of other countries. Will honorable members tell me that 100 per cent, does not represent more than the total cost of the labour involved in the production of the article ? It does not make up merely the difference between the cost of labour here and elsewhere; it represents more than the total cost of the labour employed in producing it. And so with many other items. In the case of glassware, the duty, roughly speaking, amounts to about 75 per cent., while the cost of importing glassware to this country is about 90 per cent. That makes 165 per cent. I venture to say that the glassblowers do not receive one-sixth of that percentage for the labour they perform in producing the finished article. It is the same in regard to furniture. The cost of importing furniture to Australia is equal to 45 per cent., and the duty is 20 per cent., making a total of 65 per cent. I wonder whether the furniture maker gets 65 per cent of the total cost of producing the article. And so with pottery. Household ware costs from 75 per cent. to 116 per cent. to import, and sanitary ware from 21 per cent. to 29 per cent. Taking pottery as a whole, we find that it costs about 331/4 per cent. to bring it out here, while a duty equal to 53 per cent. is imposed, making a total of 861/4 per cent. I venture to say that the potters who make the article do not get 25 per cent, of its final cost. What preposterous nonsense it is to say that this duty is only to make up the difference between the cost of labour in the countries where these articles are produced and the cost of labour in Australia. So I could go through the whole list, showing that the duty in nearly every case does not merely level up the difference between the wages earned here and the wages earned elsewhere, but that it amounts to more than the total cost of the entire production of the article. A complaint that may fairly be made is that only a few items of production are protected, and that whatever protection is given has to be borne and paid for by those engaged in industries which cannot be protected. According to Coghlan's last figures, the total value of our production from pastoral pursuits is £41,000,000, and from agricultural pursuits £18,000,000. Will anybody tell me that agriculture can be protected now that our State borders are free? The honorable member for Gippsland, as I have already pointed out, when on a deputation in 1899, told the Victorian Premier that our grain had to compete with the prices in Mark-lane, and that, therefore, an import duty was no good. Coghlan shows that our mining pursuits represent an annual production of £22,000,000. That is a total of £81,000,000 per annum ; while the same authority shows us that the value of our manufactures is. £28,000,000 per annum. It must be remembered that only a slight proportion of that £28,000,000 can be protected, and to protect or encourage - or, as it is said, to " stimulate " - that slight proportion, it is proposed to tax the industries producing £81,000,000. How the taxation of the people

engaged in producing £109,000,000 worth of wealth can make a country richer. I should like to have explained ? In order to put the matter in another way, I have here a statement taken from Coghlan's figures a little while ago. The census of 1891 had to be used, because the last census had not then been completed; We find that there were then in Australasia 1,614,000 bread-winners, males and females, made up of 1,295,000 males, and 318,000 females. The primary producers - those engaged in pastoral, mining, and similar industries - represented, together with our commercial classes, 1,341,000 people out of the 1,614,000, leaving only 273,000 engaged in manufacturing. Only a slight proportion of those engaged in manufacturing can be affected by duties, and yet we have 1,341,000 people, who cannot possibly benefit, forced to pay duties on all they require, in order, according to the tenets of protectionists, to "stimulate and encourage " the production of 273,000 people. How a process like that can lead to the enrichment of a nation I have yet to learn. The honorable member for Melbourne Ports referred the other day to the fact that I was once a protectionist - and, like my friend the honorable member for Gippsland, I admit the statement. I was a protectionist for about twelve months, sixteen years ago.

Mr Crouch

- A lucid interval !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I was just as simple at that time as the honorable and learned member is now. Sixteen years ago. I had not studied economics, and never dreamt that I should be in a Federal Parliament, or any other Parliament.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member gives no outward visible sign of having studied economics now.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Minister for Trade and Customs has already said to-day that Sir Robert Peel was a simpleton, and that it is nonsense to quote that statesman.

Mr Kingston

- I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No other inference could be drawn from the right honorable gentleman's remarks ; and he and the honorable member for Melbourne Ports have had nothing but sneers for the quotations which I have made from eminent statesmen who are of world-wide fame. It is only fitting that the Minister for Trade and Customs should sneer at me after what he has said this morning. When I was a protectionist, for the short space of twelve months, I was working in the coal-mines, and the coal dust must have clouded my brain, because from the moment I began to study fiscal matters, I reasoned myself into the acceptance of free-trade; and I was a free-trader for five years before I entered political life. I do not contend that free-trade is a panacea for all the ills of the globe. I do not make the same pretensions for free-trade that others do for protection ; but I say that of the two systems, that which lends itself to the greater comfort of the producer and to the better distribution of national wealth - the system which leads to the enrichment of the nation and the betterment of the individual - is unquestionably that which inclines to the freedom of exchange.

Mr O'Malley

- Average wealth is better than aggregation of wealth.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Precisely; and because the average wealth in England is greater than that of every protectionist country in the world, the honorable member ought to be a free-trader. We have heard a great deal about what other honorable members have said at one time and another on the question of protection ; let us hear what the Prime Minister said about freetrade. It may not be known that the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition were old political "pals" at one time, and used to meet on the same platform, advocating the same fiscal opinions. On one occasion, during an election for East Sydney, the Prime Minister proposed a vote of confidence in the leader of the Opposition, who was then a candidate for that constituency.

Mr Kingston

- And the leader of the Opposition returns the compliment by moving a vote of no-confidence in the Prime

Minister.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Here is just one sentence from the speech of the Prime Minister on that occasion -

I believe in Mr. Reid--

The Prime Minister does not believe in Mr. Reid now.

Mr Reid

- Yes he does, just the same !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Prime Minister said -

I believe in Mr. Reid, because he is a man who will ever strive to wreath the fair brows of New South Wales with the garlands of freetrade, and will not shackle her shapely limbs with fetters of protection.

Mr Kingston

- How long ago was that?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The speech was delivered in the eighties.

Mr Kingston

- Antediluvian history ! Good gracious !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- But my little period of aberration was equally ancient. While the right honorable gentleman was looking up these inconsistencies he might have told us about the time when the honorable member for Bourke was a most vigorous and pronounced free-trader, and, I have been told, an ardent advocate of the single-tax.

Mr Salmon

- I think the honorable member is wrong ; I have known the honorable member for Bourke for years.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not think the honorable member will deny it if he is asked about it. Of course this is all ancient history. I certainly am not ashamed of having altered my opinion 15 years ago, but I did it as the result of careful observation, and no other motive impelled me to change, as at the time I was working in a coal mine, and never expected to emerge into Parliament. My political career, I hope, has been as consistent as that of any other honorable member.

Mr Reid

- The honorable member did all his underground work before he came into Parliament !

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- There are other considerations which are high and important in connexion with this question. In connexion with England's policy I would point out that one cannot separate the fiscal policy of a country from her general relationship to ' the world at large. In my opinion there is nothing which so enters into the relationships which affect nations as this question of trade and of the Tariff. Will honorable members tell me, for instance, that England would have been allowed to stretch her hands all over the globe, as she has done, and to scoop up vast rich territories, if there had not been the feeling amongst the other nations of the earth that in consequence of her doing so they would be helped instead of hindered ? Wherever she has gone she has invited the whole world to trade with her on peaceable and amicable relations. I do not hesitate to say that, but for the attitude adopted in this respect, she would not have been able to extend her world-wide empire to the extent to which she has done. We were told the other night by the Attorney-General, while the honorable member for Gippsland was speaking, that England had had no wars while this battle of trade was going on. It is true that she had no wars like the Franco-Prussian and the Russo-Turkish wars. But why is that ? Why is not England squabbling with the other nations in the way they squabble among themselves ? Because she has motives for peace which they have not. The commercial and trade relations of the great countries to-day are keeping the peace of the world, and not the huge armaments which are being built up. We are told by some honorable members that they want freetrade between people of like conditions and like civilization. But I ask, how is it, if we want protection against the low wage countries of Europe, that American grain is beating Russian grain out of the market ? In spite of the fact that the price of labour is, I suppose, about four times as great in America as in

Russia, American grain beats Russian grain every time in the markets of the world.

Mr O'Malley

- They plough with balloons in America !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The cost of production in America to-day is less than it is in England and in many of the continental nations of Europe. Her rates of wages are higher, but her cost of production is less. Surely that fact tells against honorable members opposite. Their argument is that it is impossible to produce unless wages rates are equalized. But I point to America, where the wages rates are higher than in continental nations, and where, in spite of that fact, production is cheaper. Therefore, it cannot be the wages rates of a country which determine the cost of production.

IS .EI 2

Mr Sawers

- America has more machinery and cheap land.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Machinery, I believe, is the product of brains, not the creation of a Tariff. There is no doubt that America has a people fertile and inventive to a greater degree, perhaps, than any others in the world. She has this advantage in conjunction with her unrivalled natural resources, which have given her the leading position she occupies to-day. Let honorable members take a map of America and look at it. Can there be any question as to her advantages compared with any other place in the world? Take her great areas of virgin soil. Take her great inland seas. If America had been subject to irrigation for millions of years she could not have done this work for herself as well as nature has done it for her. These facilities for the transaction of her internal business have given her the unequalled position she occupies to-day. A comparison has been made between New South Wales and Victoria. I am not going to detain the House at length with that matter, but I want to mention one or two points, and then leave the subject. The honorable member for Gippsland spoke of the greater territory possessed by New South Wales as compared with Victoria. But I believe sincerely that the smaller territory of Victoria has been an advantage up to now. We are twitted about the cost of governing our State, and about the revenue from our land sales. Here is a fact or two which honorable members will do well to keep in mind. I say that our land revenue is more than swallowed up in the increased cost of governing our territory. To begin with, we have but a few more people in New South Wales than there are in Victoria, but we have double the amount of pay for taking our mails across our huge tracts of territory. We have a thousand more postal hands. The cost of telegraphic installation in New South Wales has been over £1,000,000, while the Victorian telegraphs have cost but £300,000. Our Lands department takes at least £200,000 a year to govern it ; the cost of the Lands department in Victoria is but little ; it is very little indeed. Public works to keep open our means of communication cost us at least double what they cost in Victoria. One could go on multiplying these instances to an extent which would make the £1,000,000 a year we get from land sales look very small, indeed, beside the added cost of governing that huge territory.

Mr Ewing

- We get £2,100,000 of land revenue.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Not from land sales. The honorable member must know that as well as myself. I am speaking of land sales, and I have yet to learn that land revenue must not be taken into account. When I leave Sydney to go to Lithgow, a place in my electorate, 100 miles distant, I have to travel over barren mountains the whole way, except for one stretch of country. No production can go on there. But one cannot find around Melbourne 100 miles of country subject to a condition of barrenness like that. We have to carry our means of communication a distance of 100 miles in almost every direction before we get into fertile country. Here the fertile country reaches right down to Melbourne. Again, with regard to minerals, we are told that we have an advantage in point of mineral production. I believe we have, and will have from this on. But here is a simple fact. The Victorian gold production represents more than the whole mineral production of the continent since it has been settled. With these facts in mind, and in view of the possibility of concentrating the system of Government and making it more economical and cheap, to tell me that we have the advantage in New South Wales over Victoria is to say something which I do not

believe squares with the facts of the case. Yet in spite of all the drawbacks we have had in New South Wales up to the present - I admit that the extent of territory will begin to tell from now on - in spite of the fact that the disadvantage, and not the advantage, as honorable members have alleged, has been with us, our production last year was £2 per head more than the total production of this protected State of Victoria. If it is not distributed as it ought to be, certainly that is due to no Tariff. I would rather take my own observations of the two States than all these statistics, and they lead me to the conclusion that the people of Victoria are not as well off as the people of New South Wales. I say that the struggle for existence in Victoria to-day is much keener than in New South Wales. I say that life in Victoria is subject to greater rush and strain than in New South Wales. That can be added up in percentages by those who care to make the calculation. The conditions in the two States are not comparable from the point of view of the happiness and comfort of those who produce their wealth.

Mr McColl

- A fairy tale !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member for Echuca laughs, and we shall probably hear his fairy tale directly, stretching no doubt to about three hours. I venture to say that the tale I tell is not a fairy tale. It is reducible to figures. It has been proved that the cost of living is cheaper in Sydney than in Melbourne, while the remuneration for the people as a whole is much greater than it is in Victoria. The Victorian workmen have not the same devotion to their trades organizations that ours have. The trade organizations of Victoria are not nearly so alive as ours. If I am asked for facts, here they are. Where did we get free labourers to compete with our miners at Lucknow?

Mr Kingston

- The old gag.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We got them from Victoria. Who are taking the places of the coal lumpers at Perth now? Labourers from Victoria.

Mr McColl

- More slandering of Victoria. That is all the honorable member can do.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- These are facts. I should be very sorry to reflect on the trades organizations of Victoria. Those within those trades organizations are as good as they are anywhere. They are good loyal men, and always have been ; but I am speaking of the greater amount of labour which is not organized here, and which seems ready to go to the other end of the continent to take the places of trades unionists when on strike. These are facts given to me by an honorable member of the labour party in this House. They are not my own statements, but I believe them to be true, and hence I utter them here. Therefore I say that in all that makes for the welfare of the worker of the country, in all that makes for the aggregate production of wealth, in regard to everything which enters into the home life of the people as a whole and tends to that ideal state which every man is seeking, the advantage is on the side of free exchange of commodities. We believe it makes labour more efficient and comfortable. It leads to infinitely cheaper production and greater returns, and it is the ramification of this principle through the industrial conditions of our life as well as through the domestic circle of our existence which tends to make the people of free-trade countries happier, better, and more contented than those who have to struggle under this grinding load of tyranny which protection creates.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The honorable member who has just resumed his seat has followed the example of some of his colleagues on the opposite side of the House in delivering a very lengthy speech in support of the cause of free-trade. I do not desire to say a single word against the length, and even tediousness, of the speeches which have been delivered in support of that cause, because I consider that this debate ought to be regarded as a great safety-valve for the expression and development of public opinion upon this question. I should like, however - I hope without giving any offence - to say that the length and volume of some of the speeches which we have been delighted to hear are rather significant. It appears to me that our friends of the free-trade party are really now uttering the last despairing cry of a lost cause. Honorable

members can see the hand-writing on the wall, which says that the cause which they represent has been tried in the balance, and found wanting. No wonder, therefore, that they are properly using their constitutional rights to express their views, and fight for their cause. At the same time, I should like to remind honorable members on this side, and members of the Ministry also, that it will not be at all advisable to allow the whole volume of debate to be contributed by members of the opposite side of the House. We must admit the tenacity and pertinacity with which the cause of free-trade has been fought, and I hope the cause represented by members on this side will not be lacking in debating power or argument.

Mr Wilks

- Why does the honorable and learned member want to defend a cause that is so strong 1

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I would like to invite attention to a short analysis of the motion, which is practically one of want of confidence. There is a considerable amount of padding, particularly in paragraphs (4) and (6). They are mere make-weights, and the main subject of the attack is to be found in paragraph (c), which relates to the question of free-trade or protection. In my opinion, the right honorable and learned member, in his very able and lengthy speech, failed to sustain the indictment which he submitted. He did his best, with his usual oratorical power and capacity, and he has been ably backed up, but still he has not advanced his cause substantially in the House, or in the country by any of these deliverances.

Mr Wilks

- What is the use of the honorable and learned member replying, then 1

Sir JOHN QUICK

- We are replying, because we do not wish the debate to go by default. It would be a very great mistake if it did.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That was not the decision in the first instance. The honorable and learned member did not think so the other night.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- Paragraph (a) contains the allegation that the finances of the Commonwealth are upon an unsound and extravagant basis. I listened with great interest to the speeches made, and I fail to see that any substantial ground has been alleged to support the view that there are any unsound principles in the Budget, or that it stands on any extravagant basis. So far as expenditure is outlined in the Budget, it has been based on reasonably economical and frugal lines. I have not had my attention directed to any item of expenditure which is open to attack on the ground of extravagance. Undoubtedly, I have heard claims put forward in the House for the expenditure of money in certain parts, but we have invariably found Ministers putting on the brake. I think they are to be commended for their endeavour and their expressed intention to keep the expenditure of the Government as low as it can be kept without being reduced to niggardliness. I should hope that it is not the desire of any honorable members to see our departments beggared or in any way impaired in their efficiency by a lack of enterprise, or by an undue restriction of expending power* I fail to see that any evidence has been produced or any argument advanced in support of the alleged unsound or extravagant basis of the finances. Paragraph (b) of the motion alleges that the _ burdens of taxation have been imposed to press, heavily upon the necessities of life, and upon appliances used in farming, mining, and industrial pursuits. That, of course, if reasonably sustained, and not capable of any reply, would be a very serious indictment, and no doubt it would tell heavily in the country against the Ministry. It seems to me, however, that the paragraph is directed against certain features of the Tariff with the intention to arrest attention in the constituencies, and to excite suspicion in the minds of the people without any tangible proof being brought forward in support of the indictment. Not only in that paragraph, but in the speeches made in support of it, suggestions have been made that duties should be removed and taxation abolished on the necessities of life, raw materials, metals and machinery, apparels and textiles, mining and agricultural appliances, and so forth. It seems to me that if effect were given to the whole of these complaints we should have nothing left to tax ; we should have no sources from which to derive the revenue necessary to carry on the business of the country. Complaint is made against every item in the Tariff.

Mr Reid

- Every item?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Complaint has been made, not against every item, but against every division, and allegations have been hurled at proposals of taxation under the various headings. If the necessities of life, raw materials, metals and machinery, apparels and textiles, mining and agricultural appliances were placed on the free list, where would our revenue come from ? No doubt, it may be a very undesirable thing that we should have taxation of any kind on necessities of life or raw materials, on metals or machinery, or anything of that kind. Taxation in every form is objectionable, and often injurious and calamitous to a country, but it is a necessary evil. We have honorable members embodying in motions and speeches suggestions to put this thing, that thing, and the other thing on the free list. But if the whole of these suggestions were carried out we should not have a single area of taxation left, except intoxicants and narcotics, and so on. Those articles have been taxed up to the hilt, as far as they reasonably can be taxed without absolutely destroying the sources of revenue. Honorable members who bring forward charges wholesale against the Tariff, ought to pause and consider the financial exigencies, not only of the Commonwealth, but also of the States before they make such sweeping suggestions. Whilst I shall vote against this motion and use every endeavour to defeat it, I admit that many of the details of the Tariff are open to discussion and to differences of opinion, and I reserve to myself a free hand in committee to discuss every item on its merits. At the same time, I shall join in no such denunciation as is embodied in this motion.

Mr Reid

-Bendigo expects nothing else from the honorable member.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I refer to items which are open to debate. The Treasurer admitted yesterday that anomalies have crept in, and that honorable members generally would have the opportunity of debating them, and he said that if a good case were made out against any proposal, the Government would give fair consideration to every motion which was made, as I apprehend, not only to increase a duty, but also to reduce or to abolish it.

Mr Wilks

- To make it more protective.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Before I pass to paragraph (c), as the representative of a constituency partly mining and partly agricultural, I would like to draw attention to a reference in the motion to the oppressive duties laid on appliances used in mining and agriculture.

Mr Reid

- Hear, hear ; and on mining appliances especially.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- Protectionist as I am I should be very sorry, indeed, to vote for any system of taxation that would injure the mining or agricultural industries with which my district has been closely identified for many years past. I think I can pledge not only my word, but also that of the Attorney-General, who represents Ballarat, that we would not knowingly vote in favour of imposing taxation that would injure the great industry of mining. There recently appeared in the newspapers a telegram from Mr. A. E. Morgans, M.L.A., of Perth, in which he raised a great outcry against the Tariff, on the ground that it would seriously cripple mining operations in Western Australia. The same point was, in another form, referred to by the honorable member for West Sydney, who the other evening made a comparison between the mining machinery of Victoria and that of Western Australia, and stated that the mining machinery imported into Western Australia was four or five times as efficient as that in operation at Ballarat, and impliedly in other parts of Victoria. I was very much struck by that statement, and I immediately placed myself in communication with the leading ironfounders of Bendigo, Messrs. Roberts and Sons, whose works are 'well known, and who have manufactured machinery and sent it to all parts of Australia, and also outside of Australia. I directed their attention to the statement of the honorable member, and yesterday I received the following telegraphic reply : -
Crushing batteries can be made in Victoria equal to imported ; Western Australian batteries cost considerably more, and crush 20 per cent, more stone ; but their quartz is much softer than Ours. This

mainly accounts for difference.

To-day I received a further communication in the shape of a letter from the same firm, who say - We have to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 16th instant, and in reply we have to confirm our wire of this day, as follows : - 'Crushing batteries can be made in this State equal to imported ; Western Australian batteries cost considerably more and crush 20 per cent, more stone ; but their quartz is much softer than ours. This mainly accounts for difference."

From this you will understand that we desire to state that all the engineers and ironfounders who make mining machinery as a speciality can make crushing batteries equal in every detail to the imported ones, and we ourselves have done a large export trade to Western Australia, and other parts of the Commonwealth, and have sent batteries to Singapore. We also know that other firms have done the same.

With regard to the crushing capacities of the imported battery, compared with what is at present in use on the Bendigo and Ballarat fields, we desire to state that the imported ones are capable of crushing 25 per cent, more stone in Western Australia than what we can do, but it must be borne in mind that the quartz in those parts is not so hard or so difficult to crush as it is here. With the batteries as constructed now, with all modern improvements of the local manufacturers, the average quantity of ore per stamp per 24 hours is slightly over three tons, and all the imported ones in Western Australia crush close on four tons.

With regard to the assertion, that the imported batteries will crush five times as much, this is absolutely absurd and incorrect.

There is also another point which must not be disregarded, and that is, taking the batteries in Western Australia as a whole, they have been erected in the last four or five years, and have everything modern and up-to-date in every detail, whereas the majority of batteries working in this State were built and erected some 25 or 30 years ago. When this class of machinery had not attained such a high standard, but nevertheless we desire to state that we could manufacture a battery to treat the same quantity of ore for 24 hours-as good and equal in every way to the imported, and at a cheaper cost, as the Western Australian ones cost considerably more than those manufactured in this State.

Now there is a challenge to the whole of Australia.

Mr Thomas

- They do not need any protection for their machinery.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- No, "apparently they do not, because they say they can make the same article more cheaply than it can be imported. I would remind the honorable member, however, that the present efficiency of this firm is the result of many years of protection. When the iron foundries of Bendigo, and other parts of Victoria, were started a number of years ago, the protection they first received was limited, but it was afterwards increased. I remember the outcry that was raised in some quarters against that protection, on the ground that it would be a burden upon the mining industry. It might have been a temporary burden on the mining industry, but the result is this triumphant assertion that the ironfounders of Victoria are able to compete with the whole world. That is the result of the protection they have received in the past, and of the accumulated experience they have gained on the gold-fields, where they have had special opportunities, no doubt. But what becomes of the complaints received from Western Australia? What becomes of Mr. Morgans' letter, and the assertion of the honorable member for West Sydney, that Victorian mining machinery is inferior to the imported article ? We have the authoritative evidence of a substantial firm, which, no doubt could be supported by testimony from the Phoenix foundry at Ballarat, from Thomson's foundry at Castlemaine, and from Martin's foundry in South Australia. All these would no doubt be able to say that the assertions in Mr. Morgans' letter, and also the honorable member's statements are not true. Therefore, the apprehensions of gentlemen in Western Australia, that the duty on mining machinery will crush or injure the industry, are groundless.

Mr Fowler

- Then they do not know their own business ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Apparently not.

Mr Thomas

- Where is the necessity for the duty ?

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- The duty is necessary no doubt in order to steady the market, and prevent it from being disturbed by shipments from other countries. The revenue will not be very large. This mining machinery can be procured in various parts of Australia as cheaply as it could be imported, and it will do as effective work. Therefore, there will be no necessity for the mining companies of Western Australia to talk about reducing wages. It is suggested in Mr. Morgans' letter that, on account of this increased duty on mining machinery, the miners' wages may have to be reduced, and I would ask the miners to note that this is stated in the face of the fact that mining machinery can be obtained within the limits of the Commonwealth as cheaply as it can be imported. What then becomes of Mr. Morgans' suggestion about the wages? Of course there may be a certain explanation. I am told that some of the mining companies of Western Australia have their head offices in the old country. Their highly paid mining directors, their secretaries, and the bulk of their shareholders are located there, and those managing bodies may feel a little interested in giving the orders for their mining machinery to firms in the old country. I am informed that they have given a preference to the English as against the Australian article. The old prejudice which existed for many years against colonial wines and beer exists to some extent against machinery. No doubt in time it will wear off, and we shall feel a community of interest and a common pride in patronising and supporting our local industries. I have examined the Tariff very carefully, to discover how it imposes the burdens which some allege that it imposes upon the mining industry. It has been suggested that, in its incidence, this Tariff will tell heavily against that industry, and, as a matter of fact, the motion under discussion alleges that it will do so. So far as I am able to gather, there are only three or four trivial imports upon which taxes are imposed by this Tariff which will exclusively affect the mining industry. No doubt that industry - like every other - will be indirectly affected by the general scheme of taxation; but it is hardly fair to allege that every duty upon every article is a direct burden upon that particular industry. I have seen it suggested, for instance, that the tax on matches is a burden upon the mining industry. It may be a burden upon the community generally, but it is not a burden on the mining industry in particular.

Mr Barton

- The honorable and learned member must not forget the poor swagman's milk.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- It is a wonder that honorable members opposite have not dragged in the poor swagman. I notice two or three items in the Tariff which, it may be contended, affect the mining industry. It has been pointed out that the duty upon candles in Victoria has been increased by a halfpenny per lb.. Formerly the duty was 1d. per lb. It is now proposed to increase it to 1½d. per lb. By the way, the duty upon candles in Western Australia, whence the wail comes about the contemplated ruin of the mining industry, was formerly 2d. per pound. Therefore, Mr. Morgans again lacks support. No doubt the increased duty upon candles is a matter for consideration and inquiry. I should certainly like the Minister for Trade and Customs, when we get into committee, to give some information regarding this item, and to tell honorable members why the Victorian duty has been increased, and whether the course taken has been adopted for revenue purposes or for protective purposes. The Victorian Parliament thought that 1d. per lb. was sufficient protection for candles, and I am not aware of any altered circumstances that justify the proposed increase. However, I am quite prepared to hear what the Minister has to offer in explanation of that increase. But whether the duty upon candles is 1d. or 1½d. per lb., the burden will not be very heavy, because I find that the imports of candles into Victoria last year were not very considerable. Most of the candles used are locally produced, and consequently the duty collected upon them in Victoria for the year 1900 was the magnificent sum of £1, 168 1 2s. That is not a very large amount. At the same time, I admit that this proposed increase of duty should be inquired into. No doubt the Minister will be able to give some explanation of it later on. Another item of taxation which is said to oppress the mining industry is the duty upon rails which are used for mining tramway purposes. I have been informed that that will be a tax upon mining to some extent. A duty of 15 per cent. has been imposed upon these rails, which, in most of the States, were formerly exempt from taxation. I think that the advisability of retaining this tax is open to argument. It is questionable whether the revenue to be derived from such a source would be sufficient to justify the imposition of the tax. I am not aware of any other items in connexion with the Tariff which will

press on the mining industry to any material extent.

Mr Poynton

- What about timber?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I am told that the mines of Victoria can be supplied from within the Commonwealth with all the timber which they require. No timber will have to be imported into Victoria for mining purposes, and the same remark is applicable to Western Australia. It is said that it is necessary to import Oregon into Broken Hill for the protection of the mines there ; but, probably, experiment and an honest trial of Australian timbers will lead to the discovery that they are quite as capable of protecting the mines in question as are the imported timbers of Canada. On that point, however, I shall suspend judgment until I am in receipt of further information. I repeat that the tax upon timber will not in any way affect the Victorian mines, and the Minister for Defence declares that it will not affect the mines in Western Australia. A great deal has been heard in this House and in the press of the manner in which the Tariff will oppress the agricultural industry. It has been made the subject of a special reference in the indictment which is now under consideration. The proposal to reenact the Victorian law by imposing a duty of 15 per cent. on agricultural and horticultural implements, it is said, means a tremendous pressure of taxation upon the farmer. I think that there is a sufficient number of farming representatives in this House to vindicate and protect the interests of farmers. The farmers of Victoria are as much - if not more - interested in this matter than are the farmers of any other part of Australia, because there are more of them. Hitherto the Victorian import duty on agricultural implements has been 15 per cent., that duty being imposed partly for protective and partly for revenue purposes. I think I can safely say that, so far as the protective incidence of the duty is concerned, its result has been to create a large number of local factories in which agricultural implements are produced. As the outcome of that duty, a very large quantity, in fact, the bulk of the agricultural implements used in this State are, I believe, produced in Victoria. It is true that a quantity of agricultural implements have been imported into Victoria from beyond the Commonwealth, and particularly from the United States of America. During the last twelve months, however, the imports have been comparatively limited in comparison with the number made and used here. I have obtained a return from the Customs department which shows that on the 15 per cent. basis the amount of duty collected last year upon agricultural implements imported into Victoria was only £9,206. There are 40,160 agricultural holdings in Victoria, and this sum of £9,206, spread over those holdings, represents about 4s. 6d. per holding. That is the tremendous burden which has to be borne by the Victorian farmers as the result of this duty on agricultural implements. We are asked to believe that that 4s. 6d. per head has constituted a tax under which Victorian farmers have been groaning for many years past. So far as the burden of taxation is concerned, its amount is absolutely insignificant when spread over all these holdings. Four shillings and sixpence represents the tax which the Victorian farmer has had to bear under the State Tariff, and it is the same trifling tax which he is asked to bear under this Tariff. And what does he get for it? As the result of this protective duty new factories have sprung up, and the agricultural implement makers of Victoria have been placed on their mettle. They have invented several very useful and valuable agricultural implements, of which the farmer has received the benefit. I should like to draw attention to the prices paid for some imported agricultural implements.

Mr Poynton

- Many of the implements to which the honorable and learned member refers are not used on every holding.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I refer only to agricultural holdings, not to squattages, and the information I have given in respect to those holdings I obtained yesterday from the Victorian statist. I secured yesterday from a leading Victorian firm information as to the prices ruling for some of the imported agricultural implements, in order that I might be able to draw a comparison between them and the prices paid for the local articles. I was informed that in 1900 the price of reapers and binders in Victoria was £50 each, and £52 10s. in New South Wales, although they came in free in both States. I should like honorable members from New South Wales to explain that anomaly. The sum of £2 10s. was the extra price charged by the New South Wales importers. This year the charge for imported reapers and binders in Victoria is £35, while in New

South Wales the charge is £47, although they still come in free in both States. Those are the prices current at the present time.

Mr Barton

- The price in New South Wales represents a revenue duty in the wrong pocket.

Mr Poynton

- Do those figures relate to the same machine ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- To substantially the same machine.

Mr Ewing

- Absolutely the same machine.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The merchant would not have given me these prices- if they had related to different machines. If the honorable member can obtain information to contradict my statement, let him do so.

Mr Salmon

- The Massey-Harris reaper and binder is still cheaper in Victoria than in New South Wales.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- A desperate effort is being made to capture the agriculturalists on this occasion, and I think it necessary to give some attention to this matter. The prices for other imported machinery are as follow: - Mowers, to cut hay, £18; hay-rakes, horse, £10; seed drills, grain and fertilizer drills, £32 ; ploughs, from £2. to £30; wind-mills, £25; chaff cutters, small, from £3 to £25 ; cultivators, spring tooth for tilling, £18 ; harrows, £2 to £7 ; disc harrows, £6 to £18; thrashers, from £300. That is a list of agricultural implements, which for the most part are imported. Now, I shall give a list of agricultural implements which are generally made in Victoria, and their prices. The list is as follows : - Strippers, £40; winnowers, £27 10s; combined harvesters; £80. These, I am told, are three classes of agricultural implements which have been specially developed - I will not say absolutely invented - but developed and made in Victoria, as the result of the inventive and improving faculty at work in the various agricultural implement manufactories. They are all of Australian production : none of them have been imported. They have been made here as the result of our local conditions. They are local productions pure and simple, and it cannot possibly be said that the duty has in any way affected their prices, because there are no imports whatever. In Victoria ploughs have been made a class of themselves. Two-furrow ploughs cost £18, 3-furrows £25, and 4-furrows £32. I am told that the imported article does not in any way come into serious competition with these Victorian ploughs. Disc harrows, at least 70 per cent, of which are made locally, sell at prices ranging from £5 to £35 according to the number of discs employed. The next item is that of seed and fertiliser drills, which are made here to a small extent. The prices of harrows, spiked-tooth, range from £3 to £12. I am told that 50 per cent, of these harrows are made locally. Another agricultural appliance which is locally made is the travelling chaff-cutter, at a price of £100 to £140. Portable engines, of which about 10 per cent, are locally made, are sold at £345 and upwards ; and horse-gear machines, 50 per cent, of which are locally made, are sold at from £10 to £30 each. With reference to the list which I have just read, I wish it to be distinctly understood, in order that there may be no misapprehension, that the same prices are charged in New South Wales as in Victoria, notwithstanding the fact that there is a 15 per cent, duty in the latter State, as against free importation in the former. I am told that that is an absolute fact beyond contradiction.

Mr Kennedy

- It cannot be challenged.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- It cannot be challenged ; and the gentleman who gave me the information assured me, in reply to a question, that the statement I have just made can be sustained on oath. The information I have given came from a reliable and responsible source, which I have no reason to doubt ; and as an example, my informant quoted 10-foot wind-mills, which are sold at the same price in each State, namely £25. The reason is that the competition in Victoria, caused by the local factories, which are stimulated by a Tariff preference, has had the effect of causing the price to be kept down, whereas in New South Wales the merchant and the importer have had the benefit of enormous charges. Yet we are asked to say that the particular duty which it is proposed to continue, will have a crushing, demoralizing, and injurious effect on

the farmer. But the figures I have given are sufficiently eloquent in themselves to show that the result predicted will not be in any way realized, and that the indictment of this Tariff, founded- on the expected oppression of the farmer, ought to be dismissed by this House. It is a mere sham cry - a mere party cry got up for the purpose of "gulling" the farmer. But I believe farmers are sufficiently sharp and intelligent to know the effect of the inclusion of this general allegation in the notice of motion. The farmers of Victoria have spoken with no uncertain sound on the fiscal question, both at the federal elections and at the previous State elections.

Sir William McMillan

- Why does not the honorable and learned member propose to double the tax, so that the farmers may thank him more ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The farmers and their representatives in this House know what they are about. In the honorable member for Gippsland and the honorable member for Moira we have two practical representatives, who are thoroughly conversant with the interests of the farmers, and quite capable of defending them, and the information I have given is merely to supplement that already laid before the House by those honorable members. The attempt to capture the farmers will not come off. The time is not far distant when those who speak about, and pretend to be friends of, the farmer will probably have an opportunity of showing in a practical manner in this House whether they will assist him. Not long ago there was a motion before the House for the establishment of a National Department of Agriculture, for the protection and assistance of the farmer. Where was the enthusiasm with reference to that proposal? It was quite true that the honorable member for Macquarie supported it very earnestly and enthusiastically but there was opposition from the Opposition corner.

Mr Fowler

- The honorable and learned member is a little "previous." We have not had a chance of speaking on that motion yet, and he is doing his cause no good by his present attitude.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I know that on a recent occasion hostile remarks were made from a certain part of the House.

An Honorable Member. - Which part?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- From the opposition corner, on the last occasion of the debate. Although the farmer may be called to give 4s. 6d. or 5s. a year, under this taxation, what is that in comparison with the manner in which this Federal Parliament may assist him practically and directly ? The only proposition the Opposition have put forward as a body is to take off the small duty of 4s. 6d. per holding. There are plenty of methods in which the House can at no distant date promote the interests of the farmer. If there has been any decay in farming in Victoria and Australia, as indicated by an extract from the Age, read, I think, by the leader of the Opposition the other day, I venture to say it has not been on account of any small duties which have been referred to. Those duties would not be sufficient to cause the decadence of agriculture as an art or as a science. There are other causes at work which will account for the extract read by the right honorable member.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Can the honorable and learned member show anything in this taxation of £9,000,000 to assist the farmer in the direction indicated ?

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- The farmer knows that although he may have to pay a small duty in reference to these protected manufactures, wherever factories are established and allowed to exist large clusters of population grow up and are maintained. Centres of population are created ; it may be, coastal cities like Melbourne and Sydney, or inland cities like Ballarat and Bendigo. The farmer knows that these industries attract round them groups of population and consumers of agricultural produce. Where would the farmer, orchardist, or fruit-grower be if there were no local consumers and local markets providing outlets for agricultural produce? Is this country to be converted into a heep-walk or a mere agricultural domain? Is that what is intended? What would be the position of the farmer if it were not for the great centres of population, where ready markets are found ? I would like honorable members who have been so strongly advocating

the free-trade cause to point out to the farmer what would have been his position if there had been no cities and towns where he could find a market. In addition, it is well known that where manufactories are established, skilled workmen grow up in connexion with them. The inventive faculties are developed and encouraged, and farmers and others who require mechanical appliances have the benefit of that development. New inventions are continually being brought forward where there are manufactories, and of these inventions the producer of the raw material reaps the benefit, and has the further advantage of local workshops, where machinery worn out or disabled may be repaired. Are we to have no repairing shops or no manufactories in which full scope can be given to the inventive faculties? The farmer knows the advantage of these establishments, and that is the reason protection has to some extent been supported by farmers in Victoria, and why farming constituencies have sent so many members to this House to represent and vindicate their principles. There are other causes of the backward state of agriculture, independent of the possibility of any connexion with the fiscal question. It is well known that one of the causes of the agricultural industry being so backward at the present time is that there has been over-production. What is wanted is the discovery of fresh and improved methods of cultivation. Either the Federal or the State Government should take action for the purpose of improving the education of those who are planted on the soil, and giving them the opportunity of obtaining better, more enduring, and substantial results. Another way in which the farming industry can be promoted, is by providing new markets for the produce of agriculturists. Agriculture is developed in this country, and in various parts of Australia, to such an extent that production has, to a great extent, exceeded the local powers of consumption, and what is wanted is Government action to provide for the expansion of our foreign markets. The farmer cannot be expected to go afield and look after markets in foreign countries. Therefore it is the duty of the Government to endeavour to provide markets, and to do what is done by other countries - provide facilities for the transport of his produce. What do other countries do ? Germany has recently decided to grant enormous subsidies to steamers for the carriage of German produce all over the world. Look at the vast steamers that we see periodically invading Australian waters. The GrosserKurfurst and some of the finest steamers in the world have been built to be emissaries of the German nation. They are subsidized to the extent of thousands of pounds. In the same way, the French Government, by laws recently passed, has granted enormous subsidies for the promotion of French trade and commerce, and the transportation of French produce. A sum of from £3,000 to £4,000 per annum is granted to every one of those big French steamers in the way of subsidy. That is an enormous assistance to French industry and manufactures. It is the same with Italy. I saw in a recent issue of the Board of Trade Journal, that the Government of Italy had decided to follow the example of other countries in the construction of steamers, and in granting them big bonuses for every voyage made - bonuses quite as substantial as those granted by the German and French Governments. That is the way these countries are promoting agriculture. It seems to me that the Federal Government can, by a system of bonuses and bounties, for which provision is made in the Constitution, render substantial aid to the agricultural industry, which is the backbone of Australia. I could go on with this subject, but I think it is not necessary to elaborate upon that branch of the question any further, because I do not wish to take up too much time, notwithstanding the importance of it. I come now to the third paragraph of the first clause of the motion of the leader of the Opposition ; I allude to paragraph (c). I invite the attention of honorable members to this paragraph. On the face of it, it does not appear to contain any direct allegation in favour of free-trade. Certainly the right honorable member who framed it deserves great credit for the skilful manner in which he has almost concealed the freetrade current of that paragraph. I say " almost concealed," but not quite. The light honorable member and those associated with him knew that they could not come down to this House and table a resolution in favour of absolute free-trade. They could not with any show of conscience or any show of legality or constitutionality suggest a policy of absolute free-trade - or of general free-trade if honorable members prefer that term.

Mr Poynton

- What is that ?

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I leave the honorable member to define it. It is well known what is meant by general free-trade. I direct his attention to the definition of the Constitution, which says that -

On the imposition of the uniform Tariff trade commerce and intercourse among the States . . . Shall be absolutely free.

We know what that means, and we know what absolute free-trade means according to the Constitution. It is well known, however, that general free-trade would be impossible for Australia. I find that the leader of the Opposition, in a speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, on the 21st February, 1889, said -

We all know that whatever Government is in power there must be a high Customs Tariff. I frankly admit that if I stood up before the House and said anything else, I should simply be speaking against my own knowledge. I admit it and give it for what it is worth, that there must be a high Customs Tariff under federation, and that is one of the sacrifices that some of us are prepared to make for federation.

Mr. Thomson. - He did not say a Tariff as high as this.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Then, at Launceston, on the 11th January, 1901, the right honorable member said -

He must tell them, however, that he was not pledged to a free-trade Tariff. Any Tariff adopted for the Commonwealth must be a revenue-earning Tariff.

At Hobart on 13th January, 1901, the same right honorable member said -

As I recently said in New South Wales, we cannot expect to have a free Tariff in face of the requirements of the States. I said in New South Wales "if you want to continue the Tariff now in operation you had better vote against me because such a Tariff is not possible." Therefore, I do not wish to push my free-trade opinions further than this - whatever your Tariff is, let it be a revenue Tariff.

What, then, is all the outcry? After all, then, it is not a question so much of principle as it is a question as to what items taxation should be raised from. We cannot expect free-trade, and what, then, is the use of all the arguments which have been paraded here? What is the use of the avalanche of arguments we have had during the last few days in its favour from the advocates of free-trade? What is the use of all their eloquent speeches and perorations in favour of free-trade if they are not fighting for free-trade ?

Mr Poynton

- Yet the honorable and learned member has just condemned the leader of the Opposition because he did not come down with a free-trade policy.

Sir JOHN QUICK

-I did not. I was drawing attention to the adroit manner in which this motion was framed. The right honorable gentleman confesses that he could not table a motion in favour of free-trade, but he tabled a motion which indirectly attacks the proposals of the Government, because they would make " imposts for national purposes a source of undue profit to a few individuals, and a few favoured industries, at the expense of the whole community." There is no allegation there in favour of free-trade, yet the whole of the right honorable gentleman's arguments, and the whole burden of the arguments of the Opposition, have been based upon a policy of free-trade, and not upon a revenue Tariff. If they wish to argue only in favour of a revenue Tariff, why did they not submit proposals in the direction of a revenue Tariff ?

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member for North Sydney did so.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The whole of the criticisms have been directed against certain duties, because it is alleged that those duties will result in undue profit to a few individuals and to a few favoured industries. Let us examine the nature of that allegation. It is rather to be regretted that the right honorable the leader of the Opposition has seen fit to deal with Victorian industries, Victorian assets, and Victorian vested interests in the somewhat reckless and flippant manner in which he has dealt with them. What good, I ask, is to be gained by referring to Victorian industries as "shivering mendicants" and "a few favoured industries " ? What good is to be gained by these somewhat insulting references to the vested interests of this important State - interests and industries which have grown up under the protection and encouragement of the Victorian law?

Mr Thomson

- There has been no consideration given to New South Wales industries.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- These industries are now the assets of the whole of Australia, and it is the assets of the federal union that are being denounced as a few mendicants and a few favoured petty industries. Numerous industries have sprung up in Victoria under the fostering care of protection in times past, and a statesman of broad Australian views should be prepared to regard these industries and rights with, at any rate, a certain amount of generous and respectful consideration, instead of holding them up to obloquy and contempt. There are at present upwards of 127 separate and distinct industries, represented in 2,645 different establishments in Victoria. These are the " mendicants " referred to. At the present time there are employed in these industries 44,541 males, and 18,415 females ; the total number of persons employed in these mendicant industries being 62,956. That is the number of persons dependent for a livelihood on these industries which have been so lightly spoken of. The value of the machinery and plant invested in them is £3,531,689, the value of the land used is £2,654,722, and the value of the buildings and improvements is £2,914,851, making the total value represented by these industries which have been so much denounced is £9,101,262. The value of the work done in these various factories is estimated as follows : - In 1881 the estimate was £5,461,000, in 1891 it was £10,694,000, in 1899 the estimate was £15,000,000. These are property rights in Victoria that our friends on the other side of the House now wish to see practically confiscated, because that is what their contention amounts to. I tell my honorable friends opposite that such a view as that is regarded in Victoria with the greatest amount of disfavour and the greatest amount of indignation. Even free-traders in Victoria condemn what has been said. Mr. Robert Reid says that free-trader as he is, he will be no party to the destruction or confiscation of Victorian industries that have grown up under the protection and encouragement of Victorian law.

Mr Thomson

- Quite right, too.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Yet the honorable member advocates a free-trade policy which would have the effect of closing up a large number of these factories.

Mr.F. E. McLean. - Nine- tenths of those industries would be there if you had no Tariff.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- As a proof of that I will draw attention now to this fact. This Tariff contains a large number of reduced duties.

Mr Thomson

- And a larger number of increases.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- No; I think the reductions are in excess of the increases, and I have prepared a list of them. Honorable members, who no doubt read the papers, and see the evidence of what is going on around them in this great city, will have noticed that various agitations have already started up against the proposed reductions. In many cases already appeals are made to us by persons interested in these protected industries, who say that if these reductions are carried their industries will be ruined.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- There was the same cry 30 years ago, when they asked for protection.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I find that there have been reductions made in the following substantial items : - In the case of mantles and cloaks, articles of apparel containing silk, and velvet plush, there has been a reduction of from 35 to 25 per cent.; there have been reductions on felt hats, low-class hats, umbrellas, and dress hats.

Mr Poynton

- Do they affect the poor ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- They get reductions on these items, and yet honorable members opposite laugh. Woollen materials have been reduced, horse-shoe nails have been reduced, barbed wire has been reduced to 20 per cent. from £3 per ton, bolts and nuts have been reduced from 30 to 20 per cent., boots and shoes have been reduced in the case of the cheaper articles, the duty on hops has been reduced by 2d. per lb., the duty on casks has been reduced from 35 to 20 per cent. Isinglass, on which there was a duty of 20 per cent., has been placed on the free list. The duty on doors has been reduced from 10s. and 5s. to 7s. and 3s. 6d. The duty on wire nails has been reduced. Leather-dressing machinery is now free, and a proprietor of

leather-dressing plant is complaining about being ruined. Leather belting has been reduced from 35 per cent. to 20 per cent.

An Honorable Member. - And a duty put upon the raw material.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- On hosiery, there has been a reduction from 35 per cent. to 25 per cent., with 15 per cent. on yarn.

Glass has been reduced from 30 to 20 per cent., and soda crystals from 2s. to 1s. per cwt. The duties on a large number of other items have been reduced in connexion with protected industries. The

Government have done much in making reductions in various directions, but I am not prepared at the present time to say that they have made these reductions in ' the right direction. Undue reductions are complained against. I do not say that the Government are wrong in making these proposals, because I am not sufficiently conversant with them at present ; but I invite attention to the fact that this so-called protectionist Tariff, which is howled down by free-traders throughout Australia, contains a large number of substantial reductions in protected industries.

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Mr Cameron

- Give us a few reductions on articles of food ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- The Government have shown a considerable amount of courage in what they have done, but instead of getting the smallest grain of credit they have been denounced right and left; no consideration has been given to them for the courage they have shown in endeavouring to make reductions.

Mr Thomson

- Courage in interfering with the Victorian Tariff?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- My honorable friends are not satisfied with substantial reductions, but want the Government to launch into a crusade of reduction which will practically annihilate the bulk of the Victorian industries. They are not satisfied with this instalment, so to speak. I admit that the time may come when some of these industries may become like the manufacture of mining machinery, which has been established on such a substantial basis that it can now fight against the world--

Mr Thomson

- Still they keep the duties on.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I would not care if the duties on mining machinery were taken off to-morrow. They do not do the foundries any good ; they do not do them any harm. The only thing which may be said in their favour is that they help to steady the market, to prevent Australia being swamped, periodically, by cargoes of machinery. The duties cannot have any effect on existing prices. Free-traders are altogether too exacting. They are not content with remissions by gradation from time to time ; they want to sweep away the duties on protected articles right off the reel. I submit that is not reasonable, and that they must be content to go on step by step, to allow these industries to have a fair trial under the new conditions.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Another 30 or 40 years.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I admit that under the new conditions, with the Australian markets open to them, a large number of the industries now protected ought, in a reasonable time, to be able to stand further reductions. I wish to say a few words in favour of the principle of protection. I do not think honorable members should be satisfied to come down and indulge in platitudes, without putting forward some concrete arguments in favour of the principle for which they contend. Revenue duties, no doubt, tend to increase the price of the commodities. But as a general rule I think protective duties, when they are sufficient to promote local production, invariably cheapen the cost of goods. That has been the experience of Victoria, and it has been the experience in most countries where protection has been tried.

Mr Spence

- What do they want a Tariff for then?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- To cheapen the cost of production.

Mr HUME COOK

- To break down the importing rings.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I intend to present a piece of evidence in support of that proposition. It is not merely the opinion of what are called rabid protectionists - it is not even the opinion of the Age. I invite the attention of honorable members to an extract from the British Board of Trade Journal of 25th April, 1901. This is an up-to-date publication ; it is not ancient history. There is a surprising freshness and force in the extract which is taken from a report to the Foreign-office by His Majesty's consul at La Rochelle, in France. Referring to the gradual decline of British imports into France, and pointing out how these imports are gradually being elbowed out by protective duties, the consul says : -

This is the prevalent feature in nearly all cases where British goods are still sold. The existing duties are too high to allow them to compete with French goods, when once a native firm finds it worth while to lay down machinery and make any particular article in the country. Unless this occurs, the English do business in it ; but as soon as native manufacturing begins, the French can under-sell them from the first, owing to the Tariff, and make good profits. After that, it frequently happens that competition sets in within the country itself, and brings prices as low as they would have been if no Tariff barrier existed, because when once a maker has laid down machinery with the object of taking advantage of the protective duties, and is seen to be making money, others rush in to share in it, and then over-production ensues with the inevitable reduction in prices.

There is the protectionist whole argument boiled down into a short extract. It is not only an argument, but a demonstration. It is particularly powerful, and ought to be very influential, considering the quarter whence it comes. It does not come from any professional advocate of protection or any protectionist organ. It comes from the British consul at an important town in France, who has noticed a decline of British trade on account of protective duties, and he affirms there that, wherever protective duties are put on, the result is that local native manufactures spring up, and the competition amongst local manufacturers results in the price being reduced, even below that of the imported article. There is one of the strongest arguments in favour of protection which I have come across for many years. It is up-to-date and confirms my previous opinion in that direction. I think it ought to strengthen and give fresh courage to protectionist members of the House, seeing that our views are supported, not merely by theory but by actual experience, and the observations of influential men in the employment of the British Government in various parts of the world. The experience of France, Germany and America in the direction of protection shows that freetrade as a fiscal creed is on the down grade. The only countries in the world, that I know of, where free-trade is popular are the United Kingdom and New South Wales. All the civilized countries in the world have, within the last few years, been moving consciously, intelligently, and systematically in the direction of national protection for their national industries. They have, one might say, formed a world-wide coalition against England, and are endeavouring to cut into British commercial supremacy. The result has been that British commerce has been seriously invaded, and these countries are still pursuing their protectionist principles and their determination to have a share of the world's markets.

Mr Cameron

- At the expense of those who live at home.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- In the September number of the Board of Trade Journal I notice two extracts which show the drift of events in foreign countries, and give us the very latest examples of the national movement in the direction of protection. The first extract refers to Austria-Hungary. The United States Consul at Rotterdam calls the attention of his Government to the inducements which are now being held out by the Government of Hungary for the encouragement of the establishment of local industries in that country. This information is taken from an official and not an inspired source, and as such will, no doubt, have great weight with the House. The report in the Board of Trade Journal states -

It appears that the Hungarian Government is anxious to interest capitalists in establishing manufactories of various kinds, and will grant valuable concessions to investors in order to promote a revival of the industries and the prosperity of the business world of Hungary. Among the enterprises for which the

Government will grant subsidies are stated to be a barrel factory, an asbestos factory, an establishment for the manufacture of articles of lead, zinc, and tin by electricity, a silk factory, a cotton-spinning and weaving factory, a woollen yarn mill, and an agricultural machinery factory. The paper quoted also states that the Hungarian Government is planning to expend a considerable amount of money in the irrigation of various parts of the country, and that capitalists and manufacturers will find it to their advantage to pay attention to the present industrial and agricultural condition of affairs in Hungary.

That shows that free-trade is not very popular with the Hungarian Government, and that they are determined to utilize the full power and strength of the national Government for the promotion and encouragement of national industry. This may be accepted as another piece of evidence showing the drift of events throughout the civilized world in favor of protection. In the same volume of the Board of Trade Journal I find another extract at page 530, which gives evidence of further determined efforts on the part of the Government of the United States to promote their local industries, not merely by the imposition of protective duties at their ports, but also by direct assistance in the shape of bonuses and bounties. In a despatch dated 15th August last, received at the Foreign-office from the British Embassy at Washington, it is stated :

Under the appropriation made in the last session of Congress to assist investigation by the Pomological Bureau, the Secretary of Agriculture is making an arrangement by which the Government enters into co-operation with dealers and exporters whereby a minimum net return per package is guaranteed on all fruit shipped and sold under the direction of the Pomological Department. Under this arrangement the exporter would receive the net proceeds of the sales, that is, all proceeds after deducting freight and other charges.

This may be said to be the action of a paternal Government, but it is the action of a Government that is determined to do its very best to find new outlets and new fields for the extension of American industry - of a Government that views sympathetically American industries, and is resolved to take them by the hand and promote and encourage them in every way possible. This Government can, and I hope will, in time to come, also take in hand ' the matter of assisting the fruit-growers and agriculturists of Australia. I have noticed an undue hesitancy on the part of our newly formed Federal Government to favorably consider the question of assisting our agriculturists, and I invite them to seriously take the matter in hand, and not regard it as one that may be left to the States. I contend that the Federal Government ought to grant direct assistance to the agriculturists and the fruit-growers. They have the power, and I feel quite sure, from the manifestations of sympathy that have been given in this Chamber, I hope that when they have fully developed their policy they will proceed with the establishment of a federal organization that will give direct assistance to these branches of industry, in the same way as is done in the United States. There are other matters which might be dwelt upon, but I do not wish to follow the example of others who have wearied the House with long speeches. I view these Tariff proposals generally with favour. The Government have had a very difficult task, indeed, to perform, and it is not a matter of surprise that little anomalies have crept in here and there. Probably it would have been better for the Minister of Trade and Customs to have constituted himself a Royal Commissioner for the purpose of taking evidence in the various States regarding the possibilities of an Australian Federal Tariff before he proceeded to frame this Tariff. He would then have had a free hand to make inquiries. I would point out, however, that if any mistakes have been made through haste or want of time and want of opportunity for the preparation of a scientific Federal Tariff, the result has been largely owing to the action of the Opposition, because it was the leader of the Opposition who first suggested that the Federal Tariff should be framed in the first session of this Parliament. On the launching of our Federal Constitution I never anticipated that the Federal Tariff could be settled in the first session, but the hands of the Government have been forced by the action of the leader of the Opposition. If the Ministry had had longer time and better opportunities for investigating the various details of the Tariff, they might have avoided some of the mistakes which have admittedly been made. It has been said with regard to the mistakes and anomalies that may exist in the Tariff, that every opportunity will be given for their free discussion. I shall do all I can to assist the Government to improve the Tariff, and make it a good, consistent, and workable one, which will lay a solid and enduring foundation for Australian commerce and Australian industry.

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Mr CAMERON

- On previous occasions when I have had the pleasure of addressing this House I have invariably found that my opinions were at variance with those of a majority of honorable members. In this instance, however, I occupy a very different position. I find myself supported by a body of men whose sole desire is to secure the greatest good for the greatest number. They are opposed by honorable members who, it seems to me, entertain one wish only, and that is to confer good upon a certain class, altogether regardless of the claims of the rest of the community. As honorable members are aware, I was returned as a free-trade representative of the State of Tasmania. It may be news to some to learn that I am engaged in pastoral and farming pursuits. I was not elected, however, by the votes of the pastoralists or farmers, but by those of the working classes of Tasmania. They elected me because I told them that I honestly believed in free-trade with - I was reluctantly compelled to add - a revenue Tariff. "When the first federal referendum was taken in Tasmania, federation was carried almost entirely by the votes of the working men in the cities and the towns. If they had not believed that they were going to derive some substantial benefit from federation they would never have voted for it. But holding that they would never reap any benefit from Australian union, I opposed the movement from start to finish. When, however, federation became an accomplished fact, I had to bow to the inevitable, whether I liked it or not. In support of my statement that I was returned by the working people of Tasmania, I wish to recall what was said a few weeks ago in this House by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley. There can be no doubt that that honorable member was returned by a section of the Tasmanian workers. He asserted that I was elected by his surplus votes. As the votes which he received were cast entirely by the working classes, it follows - if his statement is to be credited - that I was returned by the working people of Tasmania. I wish to draw attention to a curious circumstance in connexion with this matter. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, is a protectionist, and a very large number of people voted for him. It seems to me that they were afflicted with the same madness that affected Queen Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream. It will be remembered that when reason returned to Titania, and she perceived that she was in love with Bottom the weaver, in the guise of a frequently mentioned quadruped, her affections returned to her former lover. So it was with the public of Tasmania. When they discovered the manner in which they had been deceived, their affections returned to the doctrine of free-trade. Upon no other hypothesis could they have voted for a protectionist first and a free-trader afterwards. I wish to impress upon honorable members that I am speaking, first of all as a free-trader, and secondly, as a man who is intimately acquainted with the farming industry in Tasmania. I trust, therefore, that honorable members will give due weight to what I have to say. Before going into the question of free-trade versus protection, I should like to call attention to certain statistics which the honorable member for Gippsland presented to us the other evening. I wish at once to acknowledge that I place no reliance upon statistics, even if they be in favour of the views which I advocate. I prefer to be guided by common sense. But if statistics must be quoted, I prefer to compare countries which are, as nearly as possible, equal in area and production. I notice that there is a great disposition on the part of honorable members opposite to compare England with America. To my mind, any such comparison is false and misleading. If we want a comparison that will carry weight, we ought to compare England with other countries of nearly the same area, the same population, and the same conditions. Then we should be able to decide under which fiscal policy countries make the most rapid progress.

Mr Watkins

- It is unfair to compare New South Wales with Victoria, then.

Mr CAMERON

-Undoubtedly. I would never dream of doing such a thing. Indeed, I should never dream of instituting a comparison between countries from a statistical stand-point unless they were equal in area and every other respect. But inasmuch as some honorable members upon the opposite side of the House have done otherwise, I ask them in fairness to compare the statistics which relate to countries that approximately resemble each other. In pursuance of that course, I intend to take the figures of Mulhall, and to compare free-trade England with protectionist France and Germany.

Mr Mauger

- That is not fair.

Mr CAMERON

- I think it is. If there is any argument in the honorable member's interjection, I say that the mere fact of

having in a country a number of men who consume, but do not produce, is certainly an advantage to the producers of protectionist France and Germany. Taking the latest statistics, what do we find? I may say that England and France are comparatively speaking nearly alike both in area and population. England may have a slight advantage in the shape of her coal and mineral wealth, but France possesses almost an equal advantage in the fact that she has a very fertile soil, and is able to produce wine and various other articles that are not produced in England. We find according to Mulhall that England's wealth at the present time amounts to £11,000,000,000 as against £8,500,000,000, which represents the wealth of France. Germany comes considerably lower in the scale, because her wealth is only £7,400,000,000. In round numbers the population of the United Kingdom consists of some 30,000,000 ; France has a population of 38,000,000, while Germany has a population of 48,000,000. In other words, when we take the respective size and population of these countries, we find that England under free-trade has progressed very much more rapidly than either of the other two countries has done. As regards the interjection made by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports, that conscription is in force in Germany, if any argument is to be drawn from that in favour of protection, the fact remains that these men should afford a better market and increased wealth for the rest of the population, because they are consumers and not producers.

Mr A McLEAN

- The honorable member is comparing the respective positions of these countries at the present time. He should compare them at two different periods.

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Mr CAMERON

- Objection has been taken to opinions expressed by some honorable members upon returns covering a period of years, in view of the fact that some of the countries referred to were under free-trade but have turned to protection. I do not think that has the slightest relevancy, because the conditions have altered totally since 1840. I may pass briefly on to one other point, of which a great deal has been made. Honorable members who support protection have invariably compared England with the United States. I hold that comparison to be utterly false and misleading, because, in the first place, the United States of America have nearly double the population which England possesses. In addition to that fact the United States have an area of 3,580,242 square miles as against an area of 121,112 square miles possessed by the United Kingdom. When we remember also that America has a vast area of productive virgin soil, that she has immense gold mines, and that she is able to produce various things that mankind consume, which cannot be produced in the United Kingdom, while England possesses land which has been tilled for the last 1,500, 1,600, or 1,900 years, and that she has no gold mines, does it appear to be in accordance with the principles of fair play to make a comparison between the two countries ? But, notwithstanding the disparity between the area and the population of the two countries, we find that the wealth of America amounts to a little under £13,000,000,000 while England's wealth amounts to £11,000,000,000, so that I do not think England, despite its disadvantages, comes out badly in the comparison . With regard to the question of protection and free-trade, I am going to argue, in the course of a few minutes, that protection is not for the benefit of the farmers. I have some figures here, which honorable members should consider seriously, showing that in the State of Kansas, in America, 60 per cent of the taxed acreage is under mortgage.

Mr A McLEAN

- Would the honorable member kindly read again his figures, showing the total wealth of the United States of America?

Mr CAMERON

- The wealth of the United States of America is a little under £13,000,000,000.

Mr A McLEAN

- Mulhall's latest figures show that the wealth of the United States is £16,350,000,000, and that the wealth of England is £11,806,000,000.

Mr CAMERON

- I have got the figures here. The honorable member can have them for himself.

Mr A McLEAN

- They are old statistics.

Mr CAMERON

- I have taken them from Mulhall.

Mr A McLEAN

- But not from Mulhall's latest work.

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Mr CAMERON

- There was one edition of Mulhall in the Library, but some protectionists seized it, so that the free-traders might not have any benefit from it. When I was interrupted I was pointing out that in protectionist America, in the State of Kansas, 60 per cent. of the taxed acreage is under mortgage. In the State Of Iowa, 47 per cent. is under mortgage, in Nebraska 55 per cent., and in Missouri 25 per cent. One might readily imagine that, if protection was the wonderful benefit that some honorable members are trying to persuade the people to believe, these farms would not be mortgaged up to the hilt as they appear to be. I am going to deal with this protectionist Tariff from a farmer's point of view. Let me say here that during the last twenty years I have been engaged in farming pursuits. I admit freely that if this Tariff is passed, I, with a few other farmers, will derive an undoubted advantage at the present time. The benefit may continue for a long or a short period. Everything depends upon whether New Zealand comes into the Federation, or whether an agreement is arrived at between the Commonwealth and New Zealand for a mutual interchange of products. If that agreement is arrived at then the protection which I and a few other farmers will receive under this Tariff, upon two or three items which I intend to enumerate, will fall to the ground. If reciprocity between the Commonwealth and New Zealand is established, those benefits must disappear.. Speaking as a free-trader, I am not prepared to advocate a protective policy, because I myself and a few others are going to benefit under it, when I consider that it will impose immense disadvantages upon the rest of the community. I shall be perfectly candid with honorable members, and point out two or three items under which farmers may benefit, particularly on the north-west coast of Tasmania. These items are potatoes and oats ; but, if New Zealand comes into the Federation, that benefit vanishes. New South Wales was the only free-trade market which farmers had ; and as Tasmanian oats are better, or are supposed to be better, than the oats of Victoria, and have always brought 2d. per bushel more, there has been that advantage to Tasmania. Under this Tariff, which amounts to some 6d. per bushel, the people of South Australia and the people of New South Wales will undoubtedly have to pay more for their oats, and will also have to pay a little more - £1 per ton - for potatoes. Only a few farmers on the west coast of Tasmania, and, perhaps, a good number of farmers in Victoria, will derive any benefit from the duty on potatoes, while those who will suffer are the consumers in New South Wales, Queensland, and - after five years - Western Australia. In order to benefit a few farmers - the rest of the farmers engaged in producing butter, wheat, and other articles, in larger quantities than they require for themselves, are to be taxed. Speaking from a totally unselfish view I am going to oppose the protection proposed. We have been told that protection does not increase the cost to the consumer, and we have had the statement repeated adnauseam, until at last I really think those who make the assertion believe it. I should say, however, that common sense ought to show the utter absurdity of such a contention. Why are protective duties imposed, if not to give the producer an advantage over the consumer, for which advantage the consumer must pay ? A few nights ago the Minister for Trade and Customs, amidst the cheers of Government supporters, said that reapers and binders, which were admitted free, cost in America £20, and after £5 had been paid for carriage, were sold in Sydney for £50. There was a perfect howl at that statement ; but even at the worst, what does it amount to ? Simply that the foreign trader was doing the best he could for himself by charging the highest price he could possibly get ; and, after all, I do not know that love is expected to be introduced in matters of dealing. No assertion was made that the foreign trader was acting unfairly, and I do not think any exception can be taken to his conduct, even if the statement of the Minister were correct. My contention, however, is that the statement is not quite correct. But what do the protectionists do ? They do not send their products into a foreign country and try to make a large illegitimate profit out of the unhappy buyer there ; they prefer to stop at home and rob their brothers. I never make an assertion that I cannot prove, and I shall prove the assertion I am about to make. We were told this afternoon that various articles were sold in protectionist Victoria at the same prices as in free-trade New South Wales, and that the farmer paid no more under protection than under free-trade. But what are the actual facts ? I could take more, than one article, but I think one will be sufficient to

satisfy, if not members on the Government side of the House, at least members on the Opposition side. Two factories in Victoria make binder twine, which is somewhat extensively used by the farmer ; and last summer this commodity was sold throughout Victoria at 7d. per lb. But the same quality of Victorian twine was sent over to Tasmania, and, although there had to be added freight and other charges, was sold there at 5d. per lb.

Mr McColl

- Where are the honorable member's proofs ?

Mr CAMERON

- I bought the twine.

Mr Mauger

- Was it an insolvent stock 1

Mr CAMERON

- I do not doubt for a moment that a certain class in Victoria will become insolvent if the protectionist policy is continued, and the insolvents will not be the manufacturers but the unhappy farmers. I am speaking of this Tariff as an Australian farmer as well as a Tasmanian farmer, because we are all one now so far as the Tariff is concerned ; and I object most strongly to these protective proposals. Let us consider another question. The whole of the protectionists' arguments used have, so far, been in favour of manufacturers. Until this afternoon, when the honorable and learned member for Bendigo talked on a subject of which he knows nothing - the requirements of farmers - nothing had been said on behalf of the farming industry. I am quite willing to admit that if a large number of manufactories are established, the men employed in these factories must be consumers. If we could restrict production and only produce as much as is required by the whole community, I admit that we should all be in the same boat, and it might be to our benefit to have a protective Tariff. In other words if you rob us, we should rob you.

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Mr Fowler

- The people will get rich by robbing one another. !

Mr CAMERON

- That is their idea. But here the unfortunate fact comes in, that Australia produces a very much larger quantity of goods than she can consume. I am talking now of the primary articles of production - wheat, butter, and various other goods. What is the result? She must send the surplus away. When she has a large quantity of produce to sell, nineteen times out of twenty she sends it to any place where she can get rid of it, and she has to take whatever she can get for it. What do those who buy from the Australian producer do ? Do they regulate the price they give according to the price paid by the man who uses the stuff here? No; their price is the price ruling in the markets of the world. At the present moment, flour and wheat are regulated by Mark Lane. Butter is regulated by the same market. In fact, wherever the surplus produce is sold, the market at that place regulates the price which the people living at home give for it. It must surely be patent to honorable members, if they only study the subject for a moment, that such is the case. I say, and as a producer I think credence may be placed upon my statement, that free-trade will benefit the primary producer far more than protection. I am a free-trader and a revenue tariff man, and I want honorable members to understand the platform upon which I stood when a candidate for election, so that there may be no mistake about it. I frankly recognise that we must have revenue ; but we should raise it from articles that will send the revenue into the Treasury, to be afterwards disbursed for the good of the people as a whole, and not try to raise it - for we must fail if we do - upon certain articles which are produced in the States, and the taxation of which can only result in the benefit of the individual, and not of the people as a whole. If we do that there must be a deficiency which will cause us to have increased taxation, whether we like it or not. I was very much pleased, although I cannot say I enjoyed his speech, to hear the honorable member for Bendigo read out a list of articles, which he informed the House are all much cheaper now than they were previously. I presume he alluded to articles sold in Victoria. But I did not hear him read out a single article of food - with one exception. He told us that hops would be cheaper. Hops, I believe, are used in the making of beer. I am not a teetotaler, but I do not know that to encourage people to get drunk is a very good thing for a protectionist Ministry to do. I should have thought that they would prefer to endeavour to fill the stomachs of people with food at a cheaper rate. If they had done so it would be very much better for the people as a whole. I now come to the remarks of the ornamental

member of the Ministry, Sir Philip Fysh. I am sorry that he is not here. He complained very strongly of the absence of the leader of the Opposition. After doing so, it was his bounden duty to show that it was not a case of "Satan reproving sin." He should have shown himself to be a bright example, and should have been in his place to hear what honorable members on the Opposition side of the House had to say in reply to him. He spoke about the increased cost of living. In doing so, he made use in a rather familiar way of the name of the leader of the Opposition, and was called to order by you, Mr. Speaker. He said that the leader of the Opposition, in his speech on Tuesday evening, had stated that there were 100 articles of food upon which duties had been increased. He added that he was perfectly satisfied that the right honorable member had been imposed upon.

Mr McColl

- That was not the statement. What he said was that a friend of his had put up the price of 100 articles.

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Mr CAMERON

- That is near enough for my point.' The honorable gentleman, Sir Philip Fysh, ought to have said that upon seven articles the price had been increased, but that upon thirteen articles the price would probably be reduced. Now, I hold two price-lists in my hand. One is a pricelist issued by a firm of merchants in Sydney ; the other is a price-list issued by a firm of merchants in Melbourne. One is a price-list issued on September 1, 1901 ; the other is a price-list issued on October 10, 1901. In other words, one price-list was issued before the Tariff was proposed ; the other afterwards.. From these lists I find that the assertion made by the honorable and ornamental member for Tasmania was incorrect, and that the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, as supplied to him by his friend, was practically correct. I find, in other words, that the mere fact of the proposed Tariff coming into force was sufficient to raise the prices' of articles of food to the consumer.

Mr McColl

- It does not show that, but it may show what sort of a man the tradesman was.

Mr CAMERON

- No doubt the honorable member for Echuca will be able on Tuesday next to try with all the logic at his command to persuade the House that two and two make five, but whether he will succeed or not remains to be seen. I should not have gone so strongly into this matter had it not been for the fact that statements have been made by the protectionists, and also by the protectionist organ, that prices are not going to be increased to the consumer. It is simply because I know that is not correct, and because I wish to rouse the people of Australia to a sense of what is coming upon them, that I am going to deal with this question of increased prices. I find that with respect to the following articles - black pepper, whole, ground, in boxes, and in tins ; white pepper, whole, ground, in boxes, and in tins ; mixed spices, ginger, spices of various descriptions, currie powder, and various articles of that sort - the price has been raised from 1d. to 2d. per lb.

Mr Barton

- Perhaps the honorable member has reached a convenient point now.

Mr CAMERON

- I have got to pepper in the hot dish I am preparing for the Prime Minister. I move-
That the debate be now adjourned.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I am prepared to leave the honorable member in possession of his pepper until Tuesday, but before the motion is carried I should like to know whether there is any one representing the Opposition who can join, in the public interest, in trying to arrive at some time at which the debate can be fitly and justly terminated. "We have had a week's discussion of the motion, and honorable members must see that the Government have not unduly pressed them in respect to it. It cannot be reasonably expected that all members on both sides shall make speeches of two or three hours duration. It must never be forgotten that the public business is waiting, and that there are measures of the very highest importance which cannot be reached or resumed until this debate is concluded. It must not be forgotten either that there will be further opportunity for debate upon the financial resolutions in committee before the Tariff is reached, and after that upon the Tariff Bill. If those are not opportunities enough I do not know in what way

honorable members can wish to multiply them. Before moving the adjournment of the House, I desire to ask whether anybody is prepared on behalf of the Opposition to take the onus of endeavouring to arrive at a division within a reasonable time?

Mr. SYDNEYSMITH (Macquarie). There is no desire on the part of the Opposition to continue the debate longer than is necessary for honorable members to give an honest expression of their views upon one of the most important questions that could claim the attention of the Federal Parliament.

Mr Barton

- It is very hard to define what that means.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It may be difficult to define, but honorable members are members of a free Parliament, with the right of free speech, and the right to express their views.

Mr Barton

- Hear, hear; nobody doubts it.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- So far, no one can say there has been any desire to stonewall, or to take up the time of the House unnecessarily.

Sir John Forrest

- Oh, yes, there has; the honorable member spoke too long himself.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The right honorable member may allude to the time I took up in speaking upon this question, but I did so on the first occasion to prevent the debate closing. If such a thing had taken place then it would have been a disgrace to the Federal Parliament.

Mr Chapman

- What about the effort to count the House out?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- We have spent a good deal of time in discussing the machinery Bills.

Mr Barton

- Is that any reason for unnecessary discussion now?

Mr SPEAKER

- Order; I cannot allow the honorable member to enter upon a discussion of other questions upon this one motion.

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The subject now under consideration affects the lives and home comforts of thousands of people in the Commonwealth, and the least we can do is to give every member an opportunity of speaking in their interests. Though we cannot make any pledge, we only desire to debate the matter fairly and legitimately. I understand that a number of members on the Government side desire to speak, and they are entitled to speak on this question.

Mr Barton

- Is the honorable member anxious in their interests?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- No; but the Prime Minister knows that we cannot ask an honorable member to stop speaking.

Mr Barton

- There- will be plenty of opportunities for further speeches in Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I know that; but this is a very important question, and though there is no desire to unnecessarily take up time, members on this side feel it incumbent upon them, in the interests of their constituents and of the Commonwealth, to fully discuss the question which now claims our attention.

Mr. BARTON (Hunter- Minister for External Affairs) - I wish to say now, in order that there may be no misunderstanding, that I take it that, so far, there is no indication of a desire on the part of the Opposition to prolong the debate beyond a reasonable time, and I hope it will be closed not later than Wednesday night.

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

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16:10:00

House adjourned at 4.10 p.m.