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1901-05-22

House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

PETITION

Mr. Piesse presented a petition from 1,367 citizens of Tasmania, praying that the Post-office might not be used for the facilitation of gambling.

QUESTION

DISTRIBUTION OF HANSARD

Mr POYNTON

- I wish to ask the Prime Minister if, when he is making arrangements for the distribution of Hansard, he will see that a copy is forwarded to each member of the various State Parliaments.

Mr BARTON

- While the Address in Reply remains unvoted upon, it is the ordinary parliamentary usage that the Government should not indulge in any other business.

Mr Glynn

- That is not the universal usage.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- It is not the universal usage, but it is the ordinary usage. It is the practice of the House of Commons, and of the Legislatures of several of the States ; and I should be sorry to break in upon it in this Parliament unless I had a distinct authorization from Mr. Speaker to do so. While saying that, may I inform the honorable member that I shall do everything that is necessary and liberal in connexion with the distribution of Hansard.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply.

Debate resumed from May, 21st (vide page 116), upon motion by Mr. W. H. Groom -

That the following Address in Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General be now adopted : -

May it please Your Excellency -

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

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Philosophers tell us that in arriving at a judgment everything depends upon the point of view. If we view the speech which has been put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor-General as a political pronouncement, we may and should offer our heartiest congratulations to the Ministry upon it ; but, if we look to it for a fair indication of the intentions of the Government with regard to the session upon which we have just entered, it seems to me that we can characterize it only as more or less of a farce, and as not in accordance with what Governors' speeches usually are, or ought to be. The youngest member of the House yesterday claimed for the Government that it was a Government composed of all the premiers, though, he was careful to add, not of all the talents. The honorable gentleman, while saying that his side of the House monopolized all the liberalism, might have gone on to say that it also monopolized all the titular distinctions and all the political principles held within the political domain of the Commonwealth. We have in the Governor-General's speech an enumeration of the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Constitution. Whether the Government intend to carry out this programme in its entirety remains to be seen ; but before they can carry it out they will be very much older, and we, I hope, shall be very much wiser. The programme set forth in the Governor-General's speech contains everything that the most ardent politician could desire ; but the speech is disappointing because of its vagueness and indefiniteness, and because it does not tell us what it is proposed to do immediately - what are the urgent measures referred to in it. The speech is a sort of drag-net, thrown out to catch all sorts and conditions of politicians, and I have no doubt that, if the Government can maintain the vague and indefinite attitude

which they have hitherto assumed regarding their proposals, they will succeed in their object. We expected to hear something definite from the Premier last night concerning the intentions of the Government ; but he left us only as wise as we were before. We still want to know what it is proposed that we shall do immediately. We want to know what the Government propose to do, and what they will leave over for some future time. They cannot hope to delude the House into the belief that they expect to carry into effect all the reforms mentioned in the speech, and they cannot believe that they could do so.' They say that the policy which they have outlined may not be carried into effect in a single session. I should think not. But we have a right to know what are the measures which they expect to pass during this session, and what are the measures which they regard as of immediate importance.

Mr Barton

- We shall pass them all if honorable members opposite will help us.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We shall help the right honorable member to the best of our ability.

Mr Barton

- - Honorable members opposite will do what they can for themselves first.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We are bidden not to look into the verbiage of the speech, and I do not pretend to be scholar enough to criticise its language, even if I were disposed to do so. But I should like to point out that a speech which professes to be the perfection of literary accuracy-

Mr Barton

- Who says that it is 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We were told so last night by the Prime Minister.

Mr Barton

- I did not say that of it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The right honorable member at any rate suggested it very strongly.

Mr Barton

- I was told that it was not the Queen's English, and to that remark I replied that if it was not the Queen's English it was the King's English..

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is it the King's way of speaking of Australian penny postage to refer to it as universal penny postage, or are the powers, pretensions, and intentions of this Government so mighty that they are going to give us a universal penny postage system ? If they think so, I am afraid that they intend to do very much more than is within the domain of practicability. If they are going to fight for a penny postage system all over the world, they will have to give up the Monroe-like doctrine which was enunciated by the honorable member for Corio last night.

Mr Barton

- To establish universal penny postage requires only the assent of a postal conference to certain resolutions - and the money.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course, it is the simplest thing in the world. After five or six years' experience in connexion with postal matters, I know what a simple matter it is. All that you have to do is to say that it is to be done, and done it will be. The Minister of Defence knows how easy it will be to establish a penny postage all over the world. It is only one of the many things which this Government are going to do. Then, we are told in the speech that our labours will be watched with interest throughout the civilized world. I have no doubt that they will be followed with interest by a few political students here and there ; but I fear that the great bulk of the people of the civilized world will still know very little about Australia and its doings. The speech is full of beautiful rhetoric, upon which the Government may be heartily congratulated. But may I ask the Premier one question in reference to the paragraph regarding the islands of the Pacific. The speech says that the Ministers -

Have taken such steps as seem to them prudent for the protection of Australian interests in this regard.

I should like to know from the right honorable member what steps have been taken. I do not want him to go into particulars concerning delicate matters of negotiation with the Home Government, but I think that we are entitled to know what are the broad features of the political problems which relate to the South Sea Islands. I think we might have from time to time very much fuller statements regarding these problems than the bare paragraphs which we have hitherto seen in the press.

Mr Barton

- So soon as I can, without detriment to the proper consideration of the question, I shall make a full statement.

Mr SPEAKER

- I think one honorable member should be allowed to complete his speech before another honorable member replies to him.

Mr Barton

- I thought that it would be convenient to make that explanation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We know very little about these islands. We do not know nearly so much, about them as we shall know very speedily now that we have a stronger and more powerful Government than we have had before to deal with such questions. In the old country blue books are periodically published, which, while they do not enter into the minutia of the negotiations carried on in regard to foreign affairs, do indicate particularly and generally the effects of such negotiations, and set forth as fully as may be the problems which lead to them. I hope we shall have something in Australia which will indicate the broad outlines of the problems we have to face, and give us at the same time such information about them as is consistent with public safety and the public interest generally. I have already said that the speech is a very comprehensive one. There is a little bit in it for every one. All the colonies are consulted - as perhaps they ought to be - in a truly federal spirit. There are plums for every colony in the group. There is the question of old-age pensions, which was put forward during the elections in order to appeal to those smaller colonies that have not yet adopted such legislation for themselves. There is the proposal for the construction of the transcontinental line, intended, no doubt, to obtain Western Australia's sanction and approval. I have yet to learn that there has been any definite pledge to Western Australia, such as the speech would seem to indicate, that this line shall be built.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member's leader is very much in favour of it, at any rate.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is he? Since when ?

Sir John Forrest

- Yes, he is.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We are all in favour of it some time. But when? We know that it will not cost less than four or five millions of money; and we are waiting to hear tangible reasons for its construction. There are, for instance, two reasons urged in favour of the line at present. One of these is that we want the line constructed for strategical reasons, an argument that appeals very strongly to my belligerent friend, the Minister for Defence. The other reason is that we want to facilitate the passage of our mails from England. It seems to me that neither of these reasons is sufficiently urgent to induce us to rush into the expenditure of this money until the finances of the Federation are upon a much more satisfactory footing than they now appear to be.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member is going back a bit.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course I am going back; I am going back to common sense upon the matter. As to the reason regarding defence, it may be wise at some time to provide this money for the construction of the railway for strategical reasons; but that time is certainly not yet. There is no burning urgency that we know of for the construction of the line for the purpose of transporting soldiers from one end of the continent to the other. There could not be, unless there was some menace to compel us. I venture to say that there is no such menace at present, while we have the King's navy on our shores ; and I hope it will always remain

there as a sign of the solidity and indissolubility of our Empire. While we have the navy here there is no need for alarm and for rushing into the construction of a railway such as this, involving as it does so many millions of money.

Sir John Forrest

- We were induced to go into the Federation on the promise of it.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Regarding the mails, all I have to say is this : If you want your mails landed three or four days earlier than now, all you have to do is appropriate a moiety of the money required for the construction of this trans-continental railway to the quickening of the passage of the boats. For a quarter of the amount you can get your mails landed a week earlier than now. It is all a matter of payment. The line is therefore not a question of moment from the stand-point of mail communication. In fact, there is no urgent reason at all for its construction. However, it seems to be settled that the line will some day be built. It is at present being inquired into. I have no doubt the inquiry will be over such a large area that it will take a long time ; and by the time we come to the consideration of its actual construction, our finances will have finally settled themselves, and will be in a better position than they are at the present time. In one of our generous moods we shall probably authorize the construction of the line from the view point of connecting Western Australia by means of a railway with the other States. But that time is not yet. It seems to me that there is no justification for suggesting, as the speech does, that there has been any compact with Western Australia for the construction of the line as furnishing a motive for that colony entering into the political union. That is a point I take exception to. The speech commits this House to the line, unless it be modified by something that is said or done in this Chamber. This is the first we have heard of any arrangement or bargain with Western Australia that if that State came into the union this line would be constructed for it. Now, leaving the speech for a moment and coming to the criticism of it by the two honorable members who moved and seconded the Address in Reply yesterday, we know that they were respectively the oldest member, of the House and the youngest. It seems to me to be a most interesting circumstance that these two gentlemen were selected for this duty. We were treated to a very dignified, calm, and weighty utterance from the oldest member. Arching emanating from that honorable member is worthy of the gravest consideration of this House. But he made some rather strange statements in the way of buttressing up and unfolding to the House his belief in the policy of protection. For instance, he told us that the fact that a steel trust had been formed in America with £220,000,000 of capital was an argument in favour of protection. This is the first time I ever heard a man bold enough to say that.

Mr McColl

- He did not use that as an argument for protection. He used the instance as an argument in favour of the advancement of industry in the United States.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

-Under a protective Tariff. I am afraid I cannot follow the analytical mind of the honorable member for Echuca.

Mr McColl

- -The honorable member is misquoting the meaning entirely.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- If I followed the honorable member aright, his point was that the policy which would give rise to industries of this description must be a good one.

Mr McColl

- I rise to a point of order. The honorable member for Parramatta is entirely misquoting the honorable member for Darling Downs.

The SPEAKER

- A misquotation is not a point of order. If the honorable member for Echuca complains of misquotation, at the close of the speech of the honorable member for Parramatta he may explain anything he wishes to explain ; but he should not interrupt.

Mr McColl

- I want honest debate.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We have come over to Victoria to learn honest debate ! The honorable member for Darling Downs said, Mr. Speaker, that the policy which made possible these huge combinations of industry must necessarily be a good one.

Mr W H GROOM

- I never said so.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shall be glad to sit down if the honorable member will tell us what his point was. The honorable member referred to this gigantic trust as an evidence of the beneficent effects of protection. I* want to say that, in my judgment, there can be no severer condemnation of any policy than that it produces results such as we see in America to-day. What does this combination mean ? It controls under a centralized form of Government half-a-million of the workers of America. One of the baneful effects of a combination of business such as this is that whenever a workman quarrels with his immediate overseer or employer he is black-listed throughout the whole enterprise. The man who works for a steel trust of that description becomes a slave to the trust unless he is prepared and able to turn his attention to some other form of enterprise. I also want to say this : When a man makes forty millions of money he is robbing somebody else to do it. He is taking the legitimate fruits of some one else's labour and enterprise. Therefore the enunciation of that fact alone is the most damaging argument one could conceive of against the policy the honorable member supports. But I wonder why the honorable member did not look a little closer into the condition of America, and give us all the effects and advantages arising from the policy of protection to native industries. Why, for instance, did he overlook the fact, with which a study of American statistics would furnish him, that in the mines and factories of America to-day there are working half-a-million of children between the ages of ten and fourteen years? The true test of any policy is its general effect on the industrial life of the people.

Mr W H GROOM

- How many children are there working in mines and factories in England ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- None below twelve years of age. No child is allowed to go to work in that free-trade country unless he is twelve years of age, and then only half time.

Mr Mauger

- Has the honorable member read the recent report of the Committee on child labour in England ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have. No child is employed in any of the industrial enterprises of England under twelve years of age. It is a contravention of the " statute law of England if they are, and so far as I know it is not done.

Mr Barton

- Is the honorable member not quarrelling with the factory laws instead of the fiscal policy ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not know that I can separate them ; because, according to the dictum of supposed liberalism, factory laws and protection are synonymous. If that be so, you cannot quarrel with the factory laws without quarrelling with protection. It must be so, if they are synonymous ; and I cannot attack the one without attacking the other. May I point to the speech of Mr. P. T. Derham the other day 1Mr. Derham is one of those men who handed in that mysterious document to the Treasurer.

Sir George Turner

- The Treasurer has not had any document handed to him.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- So much for Victorian veracity ! It was stated the other day that, this document had been handed to the Treasurer. If that is not so, I cannot be blamed for believing what appears in your Victorian papers.

Mr Barton

- And that is a blot on Victorian veracity, is it? That remark shows what provincial feeling will do.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Then the right honorable gentleman pays no attention to the Victorian papers 1

Mr Barton

- I do not believe all that I see in the Victorian press any more than I do all that I see in the New South

Wales press.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have just had handed to me the newspaper report bearing upon what the honorable member for Darling Downs said about the American Steel Trust. The report bears out exactly what I said. It is wonderful how the press does misreported some people sometimes ! I say that no such tiling is possible in England to-day as has occurred in America. One per cent, of the people in America own 75 per cent, of the total wealth of America. So much for the distribution of the benefits arising from a protective policy in America !

Mr Mauger

- What about Great Britain ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- In Great Britain wealth is more widely diffused than in almost any other country in the world to-day.

Mr Deakin

- Except America.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Relatively to her wealth, Great Britain has fewer millionaires than any country in the world.

Mr Kingston

- Eighty per cent, of the wealth of Great Britain is held by one and a quarter per cent, of the total adult population.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Indeed it is not so. The right honorable gentleman is quite wrong in that statement.

Mr Deakin

- Absolutely correct.

Mr Barton

- Let the honorable member give us the right 'figures.

Mr Kingston

- The figures are from Mulhall.

Mr COOK

- The statements made by honorable members concerning an old country, even if they were true, though I do not admit their truth, are not nearly so damaging as when made concerning a young country. I say that 75 per cent, of the total wealth of America is in the hands of 1 per cent, of its population. I say nothing of the further facts which American statistics make clear to us, but the New York loan was mentioned as a beneficial result of protection last year, when 85,000 people were evicted from their homes because they could not pay their rates.

Mr Kingston

- Why not compare the American and British pauper figures ?

Mr Deakin

- There are 2,000,000 paupers in England.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Where do honorable members get their figures from ?

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Mr Deakin

- From official publications with which the honorable member is evidently not familiar.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have no doubt these figures have till been published in the Melbourne Age, which this morning makes the astounding statement that the poor workers in New South Wales are taxed £2 15s. 6d. per head more than are the workers in the State of "Victoria.

Mr Barton

- Was not that statement confined to certain occupations ?

Mr Kingston

- To farmers and miners.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Supposing the statement were confined to certain occupations ?

Mr Barton

- Then your statement would not be the whole truth.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the right honorable member believe the statement is true ? He told us last night that the taxation is about 25s. per head. Which of these statements is the truth ?

Mr Kingston

- One refers to farmers and miners, and the other to the whole lot.

Mr Barton. - And one is quite compatible with the other.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not think so. Certainly the statement that the workers in New South Wales pay £2 15s. 6d. per head more than the workers in Victoria cannot possibly be true. To begin with, the workers in New South Wales do not pay anything like that total amount, let alone paying that amount in excess of the taxation paid by similar workers in Victoria. We were told by the honorable member for Darling Downs that Canada is another example of the benefits of a protective policy, and Sir John McDonald was praised as the author of the policy creating the great commercial prosperity of the Canadian dominion. I was always under the belief, and I think Canadians will admit, that Sir John McDonald's Tariff resulted in commercial stagnation in Canada, and that some years ago the Canadian people set themselves to undo that Tariff and liberalize it in the direction of freer trade, and in proportion as they made trade freer so did their industries take a bound, and increased threefold.

Mr Barton

- Has the honorable member ever seen that Tariff?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Tes.

Mr Barton. - Then why does not the honorable member state the fact that it is a higher tariff than is in force in any other of the Australian States? . I mean Sir Wilfred Laurier's Tariff.

Mr Reid

- It is not his Tariff at all.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I cannot tell whether it is a protective Tariff from the Prime Minister's point of view.

Mr Kingston

- But from the honorable member's point of view ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am waiting to hear what the Ministry's protective Tariff is. For instance, we are waiting to hear whether the view of the member for the Swan as to a protective Tariff, or the view of the member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, is similar to the view of the Treasurer. I am waiting to hear whether the Tariff is to be the Tariff spoken of by the member for Hume, when he said that all that could be hoped for was a Tariff of 10 or 15 per cent.

Sir William Lyne

- I wish the honorable member would quote me correctly. I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am afraid it is impossible to quote Ministers correctly.

Mr Reid

- The member for Hume said that, if possible, it would be 5- per cent.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Then the youngest member of the House made some remarks.

Mr MCCOLL

- I object to the manner in which " the youngest member " is continually being referred to.

Mr SPEAKER

- Does the honorable member rise to a point of order ?

Mr McColl

- Yes. The point of order is that no honorable member has a right to continually refer to another honorable member as "the youngest member." The honorable member referred to is the member for Corio. If we are going to refer to members' peculiarities, we may have to speak of the baldest member of the House.

Mr SPEAKER

- I would suggest that the honorable member for Parramatta refer to the honorable member for Corio by that title. If the honorable member pleases to use the phrase, which I think the member for Corio himself used, " the youngest member," the member for Corio will, I am sure, not feel it a reflection on him.

Mr Crouch

- I do not object.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member for Echuca had better be still. We shall begin to think he is the rudest member of the House, if he makes such observations as he did just now.

Mr McColl

- We shall begin to think the member for Parramatta is the shallowest member if he speaks much longer.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I hope Mr. Speaker will protect me from these rude interruptions. We were told that liberalism and protection must necessarily go together, and the member for Corio said he could not conceive of a liberal not being a protectionist.

Mr Crouch

- In Australia.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Oh, in Australia ?

Mr.Crouch. - Certainly; the qualification was there.

Mr.J. COOK. - I see ; I have to give it up again. Here is another interpolation of which we hear for the first time.

Mr Crouch

- The honorable member is deaf.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This interpolation takes away the whole force of the remark of the honorable member. If, however, such be the case in Australia, why not in other countries of the world where they have protective Tariffs?

Mr Crouch

- Because we have a Factories Act here which does not exist in other parts of the world.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And, according to the " boss " protectionist in Victoria, the Factories Act is killing all the benefits which are supposed to accrue from a protective policy.

Mr.Crouch. - The honorable member is misquoting somebody again. No "boss" protectionist ever said that.

Mr Reid

- The honorable member does not know all the " bosses."

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is Mr. Derham one of the honorable member's protectionists ?

An Honorable Member. - He is not our " boss " protectionist.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Mr. Derham, referring to the beneficial influence of the Factories Act, said--

An Honorable Member. - What is the honorable member quoting from?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- From a speech before the Chamber of Commerce the other day, when Mr. Derham said he had been struck by the fact that those trades which had been sufficiently long under the influence of the Factories Act felt the effect of the new legislation, and showed that progress had been checked, and that the number of hands employed had fallen off. Protection, according to this gentleman, is all right so long as it is not associated with those liberal measures spoken of by the honorable member for Corio. According to the dictum or statement of Mr. Derham, which is not my statement, protection is all right in Victoria so long as it is the protection of the " boss " manufacturer and the capitalist.

Mr Mauger

- Mr. Derham does not belong to our party.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The moment protection is applied to the worker, it seems to Mr. Derham to be a complete and unqualified failure.

Mr Tudor

- Is Mr. Derham a protectionist 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not know.

Mr Tudor

- The honorable member evidently does not know, or he would not quote him.

Mr Mauger

- He belongs to the honorable member's party ; the laissezfaire party.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Oh, no !

Mr Reid

- We never knew him.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We always understood Mr. Derham professed to be a protectionist.

Mr Mauger

- We never understood so.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- He always professed to be a protectionist.

Mr Mauger

- Do not quote him any more as a protectionist.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I will not quote him any more if the honorable member says he is not a protectionist. He has always passed as a protectionist in New South Wales, at any rate ; and certainly he had a good deal to do with the drafting of the Tariff supposed to be protective, and supposed to be the first instalment we have had in Australia of a scientific protective Tariff. But, if liberalism and protection go together in Australia, why do they not go together in other countries of the world? And why in other countries, where protection has had time to work itself out in a definite, permanent, realized commercial policy - why there is it not associated with liberals? Nay, why there is it associated with perhaps a backward state of development, so far as the workers are concerned.

Mr Barton

- What is a backward state of development? A railway train coming backward would be a precise parallel, would it not?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I do not pretend to discuss metaphysics with the honorable member.

Mr Barton

- Metaphysics ! I thought it was English.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am trying to criticise the speech, and I will ask honorable members not to interrupt.

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Mr Barton

- If it offends the honorable member to be reminded of these things, I I most f ulsomely withdraw.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It does not offend me. It only interrupts me. As the question of the Tariff seems to raise the bile of honorable members so much, I will leave it altogether. I wish to refer for a moment to the honorable member's enunciation of the necessity of a Monroe doctrine for Australia within a recognised zone of 1,000 miles from our coast, and to his declaration that, with this Monroe doctrine, we are to have Imperial federation. How he can make the two statements consistent I have yet to learn. I have always been taught that Imperial Federation means Imperial burden-bearing as well as sharing in Imperial benefits. I have always learnt that Imperial Federation meant that, if necessary, we were to be with the Empire in all that relates to its all-conquering dominating policy. That is what Imperial Federation means, if it means

anything at all.

Mr Crouch

- It means that to the honorable member.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We cannot have federation which has to do only with the Australian coast line ; and I am afraid that if the honorable member is going to insist on a Monroe doctrine as applicable to Australia, he must cease talking about the necessity of our " being great," and of showing our greatness in a scheme of Imperial Federation, because the two things seem to be contradictory. Then, in connexion with the question of the Australian squadron, and the question of Imperial Federation, I believe that an Empire which is good enough to fight for, is also good enough to trade with, and good enough to trade with in an unrestricted way. We have heard a good deal lately about the benefits arising from our Imperial connexion, and we have deemed the Imperial connexion to be so dear a thing to us that we have been ready to shed our blood and spend our money in its defence. ' Our soldiers in South Africa are standing shoulder to shoulder with soldiers from other parts of our mighty Empire. We have treated them as equals in every respect, as being good enough to fight with and good enough to die with. But the moment we leave them in South Africa, and the British soldier goes home to follow his daily avocation, while our soldiers return here to take up their more peaceful occupations, a distinction is made so far as the trading relations are concerned, and the Australian - that is to say the protectionist Australian - says to his English brother - " You shall not trade with me unless you pay toll for the privilege of doing so." A condition of things such as that is, to use the language of the late Right Hon. W. B. Dalley, " a defective loyalty." I make the statement boldly, because I believe a fettered trade is a defective loyalty, and we cannot too vigorously emphasize that fact.

Mr Barton

- rAre we to understand that the soldiers of the other States are less loyal than those of New South Wales, when they meet in South Africa 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am afraid I am using the word " loyalty " in a different sense to that in which it is being used by the Premier.

Mr Barton

- I dare say.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I use the word " loyalty " as meaning more than our readiness to fight, if need be, for the defence of the Empire.

Mr Barton

- But that is the great point.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am using the word "loyalty" as indicating a community of interests between the various members of the Empire, and a readiness to hold relations in trade as well as in war with every part of it. But when we leave South Africa and come here, we say to the English people - "You shall not trade with us unless you pay toll." That, I say, is only one-sided loyalty. It is an inadequate expression if the word as it ought to exist and be understood throughout great portions of this mighty Empire.

Mr Barton

- We ought to hear something about "disloyal " Canada.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No such thing. I do not see that that follows at all. I am not going to emphasize Canada's disloyalty. My loyalty to the Empire would prevent me from doing that. It does not follow that, because I think other portions of the Empire are not doing exactly as they should, I should go upon the housetops and cry " wolf." I repeat the words of the late Right Hon. W. B. Dalley- " a fettered trade is a defective loyalty." The Prime Minister last night followed the leader of the Opposition in a criticism which was a very brief one, but which dealt with several very important matters. He referred to Mr. Fegan's appointment, and I propose to say one or two words in reference to that. In my judgment, no shabbier treatment was ever meted out to a man by another set of men, than the treatment meted out to Mr.

Fegan by this Government, and particularly by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Home Affairs. No appointment was made, we are told, by the Prime Minister. Surely that is the veriest of quibbles. What constitutes an appointment? Surely not a mere technical executive act. The honour of the Prime Minister and his colleague were bound up in that appointment. Their word was given to Mr. Fegan that he was to have the position of Under-Secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs, and on the faith of their word, and believing in their honour, he sacrificed his Ministerial portfolio to take the position which was definitely offered to him by the Commonwealth Minister. Having led him to make this sacrifice of his immediate prospects and emoluments-, they " turned him out," practically speaking.

Mr Barton

- That is totally opposed to the facts.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I know it is opposed to the facts as the honorable gentleman views them, but I am stating the broad facts of the case.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member is stating what he believes ; we are stating what we know.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the Prime Minister say that his colleague did not offer Mr. Fegan this position at a salary of £800 per annum, and that Mr. Fegan did not accept it, believing in the Minister's faith and his honour? Let the right honorable gentleman deny these facts if he can. Before accepting, Mr. . Fegan even interviewed the Prime Minister, and asked him if the appointment would be agreeable to him. The Prime Minister was mixed up in this matter just as much as was his colleague. When two members of a Government give their word to a man that he is to have a certain position, no political contingencies should make them go back upon their promise..

Mr Barton

- May I be permitted to say that I held out the whole time. I did not go back on my word that this appointment would be supported by me in Cabinet, and I had no hand whatever in Mr. Fegan's withdrawal. I will go so far as to say that I was prepared even .to sacrifice my office rather than break my word.

Mr Reid

- Poor Fegan !

Mr Barton

- It seems a very laughable thing to those who would not do anything, of the kind.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Mr. Fegan held on to his office as long as he thought there was any chance of the Government hanging on to him, and if I had been Mr. Fegan I should certainly have held on to that billet.

Sir William Lyne

- Knowing the honorable member as well as I do I can quite understand that.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable gentleman never knew me to seek a billet. But I do say that when the Government deliberately invited a man to surrender one position in order to take another, they ought to have made sure that that position would pass into his keeping. Other appointments will call for attention later on, but I content myself at this stage with protesting as emphatically as I can, against the treatment which the Ministry have dealt out to Mr. Fegan. They sacrificed that gentleman. Having made a mistake they made him pay the full penalty. Regarding the question of kanaka labour in Queensland, I regret that the opening speech does not tell us what the Ministerial intentions really are. We are merely informed that at some time or other the Government will begin to deal with this question of the abolition of the introduction of kanaka labour into Queensland. The language of the paragraph relating to it is peculiar, to begin with. It seems to have been purposely put in the vaguest possible way. We are told that -

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

When asked last night what the Prime Minister's policy in this regard was to be, the honorable gentleman's reply was the quoting of the title of a Bill, and I venture to say that when we read that title we

are just as far forward as we were before. The word " prohibition " would require to be in the title if the Bill were to provide for prohibition twenty years hence on a graduated- scale as indicating its final scope. We do not want to know that this labour is to cease ten or twenty years hence, but we want a plain, straightforward statement as to whether it is to cease immediately or as soon as a Bill can be passed and become effective. The House, knowing the facts surrounding that class of labour in Queensland, ought not to delay asking for a definite pronouncement on the subject. The Prime Minister says we must let the planters in Queensland turn round. But they have been turning round for the last eight years. They were told ten years ago that they were to have kanaka labour only for- another ten years. Eight of those ten years have expired, and how much more time for turning round do these planters want I should like to know. Meantime, they have been steadily entrenching themselves. Their interests have been developing and expanding, based on this employment of kanaka labour, and therefore, it seems to me that the longer we give them to turn round and the longer make the process of getting rid of kanakas there, the more strongly entrenched will the sugar industry become in the north of Queensland. And whilst the people in the north of Queensland are turning round, what about the sugar-growers On the Tweed in New South Wales - they are to have no time to turn round. It seems to me that if we are to consider the interests of black labour in the north of Queensland, we should at the same time consider the interests of the white sugar-growers on the Tweed. The sugar is grown there by the aid of white labour. In my judgment, we ought certainly to put an effective stop, and that speedily, to the introduction of kanaka labour into the north of Queensland. The Prime Minister has said that our policy of reducing the duties on sugar has been injurious to the sugar-growers of New South Wales. I dissent entirely from that view. The sugar industry in New South Wales is still doing well, as reference to the Colonial Sugar Company's balance-sheet will show. It is true that the area under cane cultivation is not increasing on the Tweed, but honorable members ought to know that that is the best dairying country in New South Wales, and the people are betaking themselves to dairying rather than to sugar-growing. It is because the people are turning to an industry which they believe will eventually pay them very much better that the area under cane cultivation in that particular locality is diminishing. May I invite those who believe in a protective policy to a view of the sugar question in the north of Queensland. We are told that protection gives work and wages. There we have an industry, protected to the extent of £5 or £6 per ton, and it seems that all we can get out of that protection is 2s. 6d. per week for the kanakas. That is a very poor result of a protective policy as applied to the sugar-growers, and,, if such a policy can show no better results, the sooner it is destroyed the better.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is because of freetrade in kanakas.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is it ? Really I did not know. I thought that the reason these honorable members wanted protection was to save themselves.

Mr Mauger

- But protection does not stop at the Customs house - it only begins there.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And beginning at the Customs house it can produce no better result than kanaka labour.

Mr Kingston

- This is free-trade in cheap labour.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Very well then, stop cheap labour, and stop it at once j do not palter, as the Government propose to do. Do not provide for a gradual diminution.

Mr Mauger

- Is' there any industry that pays wages so low as 2s. 6d. per week 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I understand so; that is the statement made to me. I am told that the wages of the kanakas vary from £6 to £12 per annum, with their keep. The only question we have to consider in connexion with this matter is, whether it is a desirable thing that this kanaka labour should continue, and whether the sugar industry can thrive if its importation is stopped. I base my attitude on the remarks made yesterday by Mr. Groom, than whom there is no more competent authority, I understand, on this question, and he gave the House his

assurance that white labour could grow sugar in Queensland, and could grow it profitably, and that therefore there was no need for the introduction of kanaka labour. If that be so, the sooner w&put an end to the importation of kanakas the better. We should put an end to their importation upon sanitary amongst other grounds. I have here a statement which appears in a newspaper called Progress, and for which, I understand, the Postmaster-General is editorially responsible. Speaking of the facts concerning the condition of the kanakas in Queensland, the article to which I refer, says : -

The mean death-rate among the kanaka population in Queensland, from 1888 to 1897 - the only data at present available - was a little less than 47 per 1,000 per annum.

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Mr Barton

- A little under 5 per cent.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It seems that these men are being imported into Queensland to die off like rats the moment they get there.

Mr Mauger

- That is free-trade.

Mr Kingston

- The last statistics show the death-rate to be between 39 and 40 per 1,000.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The article continues -

The Registrar-General, in his report in 1891, said on this point : - " This noticeable high death rate of Polynesians may be accounted for in several ways, some of which causes, no doubt, lead to consumption, the disease most prevalent amongst people of this race. The in-breeding for long periods of certain tribes on the islands produces a race which seems peculiarly liable to contract phthisis, so that the change of climate from the humid atmosphere prevailing in the islands in the South Seas to the drier air of this continent, and the great difference in diet, &c., all tend to predispose a naturally weak constitution to a disease most fatal among them."

Mr Kingston

- What is the date of the newspaper from which the honorable member is quoting ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is dated 11th May, 1901, so that it is one of the latest issues. It seems to me that that article reveals a sorry and sad condition of things in regard to the employment of kanakas in North Queensland. We have going on there a ghastly holocaust, to which we should put an end as soon as possible, if for no other reason, in the interest of the health of our own race. Apart altogether from the social aspect of the question, the tremendous need for preserving the public health should urge us to put an end to the kanaka traffic at the earliest moment possible. Yet, notwithstanding the statements before us, as to the bad effect of employing this labour in North Queensland, and the opinion of most reliable authorities that the employment of black labour is not necessary to the development of the sugar industry, we have the Government coming forward with a paltering policy which aims at giving the planters, to use the language of the Premier last night, further time to turn round in. If this House does its duty, as I hope and believe it will, it will not tolerate for an instant further traffic in kanaka labour, except for the period that is required for the passing of legislation to put an end to it.

Mr McColl

- There are not only the Kanaka labourers ; there are also the Chinese.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I agree with the honorable member. The honorable member for Darling Downs told me that not fewer than 10,000 kanakas have been buried in the north of Queensland since this traffic began.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - Many more white men have been buried there.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- In the same space of time ?

Mr Macdonald-Paterson

- Yes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is the death-rate amongst whites proportionately so great as it is amongst the kanakas.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - The construction of railways cut down white men faster than any scourge has cut down the kanakas.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I should be very glad to hear the honorable member get up and defend this traffic.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - I am not defending it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The death of 10,000 kanakas in a short space of time is, considering the comparatively small number of kanakas in Queensland, a very sorry commentary upon the development of the sugar industry there. We are told by most reliable authorities that the kanakas come to Queensland with enfeebled constitutions, so that they are not able to do the work for which they are required, and die off like rats.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - They are examined first, and they are not admitted if they are not able to do the work.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I presume that the fact that the kanakas are black men makes us less attentive to this sorry condition of things than we should be if they were of our own kith and kin. My idea is that kanaka labour should be abolished at the earliest moment possible. It is not a question of fiscal policy, of free-trade and protection ; it is a matter of absolute justice between the sugar-growers of the Tweed and those of North Queensland. That is the immediate practical aspect of the question which should present itself to us, and the moment the intercolonial duties are taken off the importation of kanakas should cease. With a view to testing the feeling of the House on this subject, and because the Prime Minister will not give us any definite information concerning the intentions of the Government in regard to it, I intend to move an amendment upon the Address in Reply. ' I want to show the Attorney-General that there will be no shuffling no far as the members on this side of the chamber are concerned.

Mr Barton

- Does the honorable member dissent from the declaration made by his leader yesterday, that he would not attack the Government upon the address ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I cannot help what my leader is going to do in this matter. I have regard only to the pledges which I have made to my constituents. I have pledged myself very definitely to work as hard as I can for the immediate abolition of the traffic in kanaka labourers, and I am proceeding to put that statement into execution. I move -

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

Mr Barton

- I do not know if any honorable member now present represents the Opposition; but may I ask, before we go further, as between party and party, whether this amendment has the concurrence of the leader of the Opposition?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I should think not.

Mr McColl

- Then it means nothing.

Mr. RONALD(Southern Melbourne).In rising to speak upon the address I do not speak in support of the amendment, though I shall speak partly in support of it. While the speech of His Excellency is open to criticism off many points, criticism at the present time is uncalled for and out of place. The debate, so far, seems to me to have turned entirely upon the fiscal policy of the Government, but the Prime Minister has already said that it is too early to bring forward fiscal proposals, and that we cannot take what is said in

the speech as defining the fiscal proposals of the Ministry. Of course, if it is too early to blame the Government in regard to this matter, it is too early to praise them. I should like to say that, in my opinion, the House cannot, and will not, accept the statements made in the speech as defining the fiscal policy of the Ministry, but I think that most honorable members will be content to wait until their fiscal proposals are before us before attempting to criticise them. I want, however, to reply to some of the aspersions which have been thrown upon this colony, and to protest as emphatically as I can against the provincial spirit which has been introduced into the debate. Last night a most uncalled for and unfair attack was made upon the State of Victoria. It was represented that her population has emigrated as speedily as possible from 'a country which has been discredited by a bad fiscal policy. I think, however, that it is only right to say that, while the figures which have been quoted to prove this exodus are accurate, the facts which had most influence in bringing it about were carefully ignored. There were other influences than the fiscal policy at work to bring about this exodus ; indeed the fiscal policy had nothing to do with it. It would have been quite as unfair, if the exodus had happened in free-trade New South Wales, to attribute it to the fiscal policy of that State. The leader of the Opposition forget to mention the various reasons which prevented an exodus from New South Wales in the early nineties. He forgot to mention that his one-time rival, Sir George Dibbs, passed an Act making the notes of certain banking institutions legal tender, and thus gave ready money to the working man, and kept him from actual starvation, or from emigrating to Western Australia. He forgot, too, to mention that Sydney is the terminus of all steamer mail routes, the provedoring and handling of the cargoes of these vessels at that port gives permanent employment to a large number of people. Victoria contributes to the employment of those people, so that it is not altogether employment given to them by their own State. The right honorable member also forgot to mention what I may tell him now, namely, that we have never employed men in Victoria to shift sand for their rations, three days on and three days off, or we might have kept some of those who went away.

An Honorable Member. - In Victoria you put them on the mallee country instead.

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Mr RONALD

- I would remind the House that it is only men who are not stone broke who can go away. Men who are completely stranded have to remain. I would also remind honorable gentlemen that a mining population is always migratory. Miners are an enterprising race, and whenever there is a rush make off to it. When Western Australia became a mining field a very large proportion of our mining population naturally went there, and the Klondyke field, although so far off, also attracted a considerable number of our people. Those are the real facts concerning the exodus to which the leader of the Opposition referred; it is not our protective policy which has been responsible for the diminution of our population. In speaking of the fiscal question, I should like to say that, so far as the labour party in Victoria is concerned, we do not take the statements contained in the speech as an adequate representation of the intentions of the Ministry. In my opinion, they are most inadequate. It seems to me that the theory of the revenue tariffists is the one that is kept before us. I am here to protest against revenue tariffism in all its phases, because I consider it the worst and most iniquitous method of raising revenue ; and I am sure that I voice the sentiments of the party with which I am associated, when I say that. From our stand-point - and I believe that when the Ministry has time to formulate their proposals with regard to the fiscal policy they will take this view - the end, aim, and object of a fiscal policy should be to protect industries, and not to raise revenue. If it raises revenue, it should do so only incidentally. Honorable members sitting on the opposite side of the chamber contend that the protection should be only incidental ; but I am sure that the people of Victoria, and her working population in particular, will never be satisfied with any other fiscal policy than that which has for its final object the protection of the industries which have already been built up in this great Commonwealth. As regards the grounds on which the amendment is proposed, I entirely agree with the mover. We should not slow down gradually in this matter. You cannot regulate a vice in that way. If a man tells lies he cannot reform by resolving to tell one lie less per day. I agree with the mover of the amendment that we should proceed at once to fix a definite date when this kanaka labour shall cease. I have no doubt that this, too, will be among those measures upon which we shall have more information from the members of the Ministry when the time comes for them to take definite action. Undoubtedly, the vast majority of the members of this House were sent here to protest and vote against kanaka labour. The sooner it is terminated the better for all concerned. So that I expect that there will be no need for this

amendment, at least as far as the reasonable portion of the House is concerned. An assurance from the Ministry to the effect

I have indicated is all that we require. The number of measures put into a speech of this kind reminds me of the bill of fare that is sometimes put before us at dinner. The bill of fare is put into your hands, but all the viands that it contains never come to the table. We want to know if this bill of fare is to be put on the table in the shape of definite proposals. If that is so I am delighted, but I expect that we shall have to give the Government time. There is a disposition as far as the party with whom I sit are concerned to give the Government a fair trial. If they succeed in giving legislative effect to the things they have promised here - indefinite as some of the promises may be - we shall be satisfied. So far as we are concerned, as long as it remains an alternative between the Ministry and the Opposition there can be no doubt as to the position of our party. There can never be an alliance between us and the present Opposition. I have heard a good deal said to-day about limited trade meaning disloyalty. Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the phrase is parliamentary or not, but when I think of honorable members opposite the phrase "foreign trader" comes to my mind. Those who are the advocates of unlimited competition and of trading with the cheap sweated slave labour of other portions of the world are, it seems to me, in a position approaching disloyalty to their own kith and kin and country. If that is not so I have something yet to learn as to what disloyalty means. The term foreign trader is a real term of connotation to me. It means a man who is 'willing to trade in the glutted markets of the world, and derive profits from cheap labour, rather than trade in the products of his own country produced by workmen who are properly paid for their industry. That is buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest. There is another matter in which I am seriously and vitally interested. That is adult suffrage. That has been put down as an item in the Governor-General's speech. I rejoice to see it, and hope it will be one of the measures first presented to Parliament. It is an anomaly at present that in some of the States our women folk should be deemed worthy of the high privilege of the franchise, whilst in other States they are not permitted to vote. I am perfectly sure that the vast majority of the members of this House have come here pledged to support that reform, and eager to see removed an anomaly and a monopoly from the franchise of the Federation. We know that it is utterly impossible for all the work foreshadowed in the Governor-General's speech to be overtaken in a single session; and here is one weak point in the speech. It is obvious to all that the speech is not definite as to those measures which are urgent and those which can afford to wait. I hope there will be some pronouncement from the Ministry on that point. So far as the fiscal policy is concerned it is utterly absurd to waste the time of the House in discussing it at this stage. It is also absurd to discuss in detail those Bills which are mentioned in the speech. This document is only a forecast, and the intentions are so far good. We shall have to wait patiently and see what the details of the proposals of the Government are, and then will be the time to reiterate over and over again the cut-and-dried arguments in favour of such a radical change in our fiscal policy as the adoption of freetrade would be. I hope the necessity for moving the amendment will be removed by an announcement of the intention of the Ministry to take immediate action as to the important question of kanaka labour. The Prime Minister said last night, that the intention was to regulate and prohibit the traffic. Well, now, you may as well do away with all regulation. The best way to kill a dog is to cut his tail off two inches behind his ear, and the best way to regulate the kanaka labour traffic is to stop it. If the Government will fix a date for the stoppage of the traffic, we will patiently await the result. This is a measure which cannot afford to wait, and I sincerely hope that the Ministry will assure us that speedy action will be taken to put a stop to kanaka labour.

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Mr WATSON

- It is the usual thing, it seems to me, from my short experience of parliamentary life, to find fault with every Governor's speech, on the ground that it is altogether too nebulous. But I think it must be admitted that it is a fault, if it exists at all, that is common to all Ministries. I seem to have some recollection of the same fault in the speeches of His Excellency the Governor in our State of New South Wales, that were really an emanation of the Cabinet to which the leader of the Opposition belonged. Therefore, the mere fact that the Ministry on this occasion have not seen fit to put the whole of their proposals in detail into the Governor-General's speech is not a thing that there is any reason to complain of more than we have been accustomed to complain of it in other similar documents from our local or State Governments. The point so far as I am concerned, and that which mainly interests those members who are associated with me in

one section of the House, is as to what the various Bills are going to contain. A programme in itself is nothing, especially nowadays, when we find those who only a few years ago were looked upon as the most conservative men in Australia practically stealing the clothes of the labour party in regard to legislative proposals. Leaving aside for the moment the fiscal question, on which I will touch later on, I dare say that the extreme radicalism of the proposals of the Government is a great disappointment indeed to a number of gentlemen who certainly were not only of a conservative caste, but have remained in that condition till the present day. Their hope was, when they first brought forward the federal idea or decided to support it, that the creation of the Federal Parliament would lead to the elimination of those democratic proposals which we have been enabled to make a necessary part of the programmes of Governments in all the States. It must be most mortifying to those gentlemen to find that even though the constituencies have been enlarged, and even though the people have been appealed to on those "rare and higher grounds" of which we have heard, yet they persist not only in returning members of the labour party, but also a vast majority of members who are in favour of the proposals that the labour party have advocated for years past. However, I do not quarrel with that position of affairs. All I can do is to sympathize with those gentlemen, who must be deeply disappointed at the result of their efforts in this regard. So far as the fiscal question is concerned, I can at least congratulate the Government on their decision to have that subject dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity. I do not know but that, in some respects, it might be better to consent to a Tariff that we do not approve of rather than have it delayed, and commerce cast indefinitely into a stagnant condition while we haggle over the difference between 5, 10, or 15 per cent. Therefore, I welcome the possibility of an early disposal of this question, so that those interested in the establishment of industries, and in the pursuit of commerce may know the conditions under which their business is to be ordered. Speaking for myself, I have never taken that view of the fiscal question which seems to have commended itself to fanatics on either side. I certainly have always inclined to the view that it is possible in a young country - particularly in a country of large possibilities such as Australia is - with a minimum of discomfort to secure the successful establishment of industries by a protective Tariff. I do not believe, on the other hand, that the imposition of a protective Tariff will achieve all or nearly all that is required in the interests of the people. Therefore, I can only say that comparisons between the conditions of protectionist Victoria and free-trade New South Wales, or between the conditions obtaining in England and in America, seem to me to receive from fanatics on each side altogether unfair treatment. That is, there is left out of the account altogether, in nearly every instance, the vast difference in the circumstances that must and always will exist, and the variety in the conditions that surround the problems in the various countries compared. When the leader of the Opposition speaks of the exodus from Victoria, perhaps we who believe even in a modified degree in the imposition of a Tariff with a protective incidence, might with equal justice point to the accession of population in New Zealand during the last few years. There is a protectionist country, apart from any possibility of competition such as we have in the States of the continent. New Zealand has progressed in a remarkable degree under a protective Tariff - but supplemented by radical and liberal legislation. That legislation has no doubt had a great deal to do with the progress of that country.

Mr Hughes

- May not that legislation be entirely responsible for the progress?

Mr WATSON

- I will not admit that it is entirely responsible for it, but it is largely responsible ; because I deny that you can, by a protective/Tariff merely, secure proper conditions for the workers, unless the men themselves are also protected. You cannot have protection in respect of goods and at the same time free-trade in respect of labour with satisfactory results. I therefore contend that you should take the whole circumstance into consideration if you desire to arrive at a fair conclusion. Certainly, we now have a great opportunity in

Australia, with the vast, or at any rate comparatively large, markets that will be available to manufacturers and workers in the future, and the great possibilities of development that we have to-day. Those possibilities particularly exist in the State from which I come. Indeed, we have possibilities there that justify us in the hope and expectation that with reasonable encouragement a great extension of industry will shortly occur. Therefore, so far as free-trade and protection are concerned, I do not take the same ground that a number of other honorable members take. I am desirous of achieving a modified Tariff.

Now, I desire to say a word upon the statement put forward last evening by the leader of the Opposition. To hear his condemnation of the protectionist ideal as it affects the living of the great mass of the people, and as he said it was likely to affect their expansion in regard to industry, one would imagine that what he was proposing was free-trade. One would imagine that as against the awful calamity which is going to follow the adoption of the Ministerial programme, he would be prepared to give the people the ideal Tariff he himself believes in ; but, as a matter of fact, the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition, as well as every sensible man in the House knows, you can have neither freetrade or protection under the circumstances by which we are surrounded. That is absolutely impossible unless we are prepared for direct taxation for federal purposes.

An Honorable Member. - Why not go in for direct taxation ? It is a good idea.

Mr WATSON

- If the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition is prepared to take up the burden of fighting for direct taxation for federal purposes, we can understand the logic of the position he is entering upon ; but no such proposition comes from him.

Mr Deakin

- He expressly disavowed it.

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Mr WATSON

- The right honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition has expressly disavowed any intention of resorting to direct taxation for the purposes of Commonwealth finance, and, consequently, having to rely on the Customs for his revenue, he would be compelled, if he were in the position of the Federal Treasurer tomorrow, to place just as great shackles on the people, and just as great burdens on their livelihood, as would be placed upon them 'by any Tariff which the Ministry can make practicable to-day.

Mr Reid

- Oh, no.

Mr WATSON

- If the right honorable gentleman carries out the programme which I have read as attributed to him, of putting customs duty on those things which cannot be produced within the borders of Australia, I ask which proposal is more likely to affect the position of the really poor man in the community? A tax on tea would undoubtedly very largely affect the poor man, and yet, to put a tax on this item would be quite in consonance with the programme which was outlined. I do not say that programme was filled in with very great detail, because the weakness of abstaining from detail is one possessed by the right honorable gentleman in common with many leading politicians, including the Premier, and I do not blame him, because it is perhaps necessary that he should not give himself away too much when he occupies a high and responsible position. At the same time, the fact remains that we were given to understand a tax on tea would be quite in consonance with the general revenue Tariff ideal, as would also a tax on cotton goods. Do not cotton goods enter very largely into the household economy of the poorest people of Australia ? Surely any man who has any knowledge whatever of commerce knows and I daresay the member for Wentworth could give us some information on this head - that the consumption of -cotton goods in lieu of woollen goods has during the past ten or twenty years increased wonderfully'. Many warehousemen now find that three parts of their stock, which was formerly made up of woollen goods is now composed of goods either wholly or very largely of cotton.

Mr Glynn

- Because woollens are overtaxed.

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Mr WATSON

- The honorable member cannot say that in New South Wales there has been any over taxing of woollens, for there, even at the worst period, from the honorable member's point of view, there was never more than a tax of 15 per cent, on woollens, and that tax was only in existence a very few years. I am assured by those competent to speak, that the great increase in the consumption of cotton goods in New South Wales has taken place since the tax was taken off by the leader of the Opposition, and, so far as I can learn, the increase has not anything to do with the Tariff, but is merely a natural consequence of the higher price of wool in the open market, and of the better methods of treating cotton which have been

opened to manufacturers of recent years. I do not mean to take up a great deal of time in discussing free-trade and protection. Although a protectionist, I regard a protective Tariff as only one amongst many other things required in order to safeguard the interests of the community as a whole. I, for one, am rather tired of the constant repetition of arguments which we have had ad nauseam in New South Wales for the last fifteen or twenty years, and I am content with the declaration put forward by the Government that they will be guided by the circumstances in which they find themselves. The time for fighting for free-trade or protection is, to my mind, when the operation of the clause facetiously alluded to as the "Braddon blot" has ceased. There will then be an opportunity for both sides to go to the country and declare their desire for a complete protectionist or a complete free-trade Tariff. In the meantime we must be governed very largely indeed by revenue considerations) and I think that the man who attempts to get his whole ideas carried through, either on the protectionist or free-trade side, would be posing before the people in regard to a matter he knows it is impossible to secure. Of, perhaps, more moment to the party I am associated with are a number of other matters mentioned in the Governor's speech. First, amongst these I, at any rate, place the question of what the Government are going to do with coloured immigration. Stress seems to have been laid to a great extent on the employment of kanaka labour; but I regard this as only one part of a very large question. While I agree absolutely with the honorable member who submitted the amendment, that the matter of kanaka immigration should be dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity, and that the result of our deliberations should be to insure that no further immigration of kanakas should be allowed, I ask, further, that the same treatment should be meted out to those coloured people who may be imported into Australia, and that employers of Japanese, Chinese, Javanese, Hindoos, Afghans, and the multifarious peoples who go to make up the piebald north we have at the present time, whether on the eastern coast or on the western coast, shall be compelled to employ -white labour. In the northern portion of the continent, east or west, we have this influx of coloured people. We have this cancer spot, so far as the racial condition of Australia is concerned, and the law which deals with kanakas will have to take into consideration -also the position occupied by coloured labourers imported under contract in connexion with every industry with which they are associated. For myself, I have only recently learned from other members of the party to which I belong of the extent to which the introduction and employment of coloured people in the northern districts of Western Australia is carried on. There immense numbers, comparatively speaking, of those people are imported under contract, and under conditions set out by the State Government, of which the member for Swan was the head a little while ago. No measure that does not effectively deal with all descriptions of coloured labour can be satisfactory to the people of Australia who have declared so emphatically in favour of keeping this a white man's land. I am reminded in speaking of the declaration of the people that the attitude of the right honorable gentlemen who are at the head of the two great parties, just before the general election, seems to have been very different indeed from the attitude of one of them, at any rate, at the present time. Before the election, while the result of the Queensland polling was quite unknown, each gentleman seemed to be hesitating, not as to how far it was right to go, but how far it was safe to go. I dare say if they had been blessed with some degree of prophesy, and able to see what was going to occur in Queensland, we would have had a much clearer declaration from each of them with respect to the kanaka and other coloured labour. One thing that amused me very much during the election campaign was that the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition complained in the various speeches he made in New South Wales, and I think properly complained, of the lack of information contained in the speech of the Premier made at West Maitland on this particular question. The leader of the Opposition said we were entitled to know - that the people, as a whole, were entitled to know - exactly what was the proposal of the Government in reference to kanaka labour. That was a very proper demand, but the leader of the Opposition himself was as close as the proverbial oyster in regard to his own attitude, except, of course, saying in a general way that he was, as all of us are, in a general way, against coloured labour.

Mr Reid

- The honorable member seems more concerned about the policy of the leader of the Opposition than about the policy of the leader of the Government.

Mr WATSON

- I am concerned about the policy of the leader of the Opposition for this reason-

Mr Reid

- Am I to unfold a Ministerial policy 1

Mr WATSON

- No, sir ; but we have been asked by a lieutenant of the honorable member to in trust the whole of the business to the leader of the Opposition, and to trust him in the dark.

Mr Reid

- I do not ask honorable members to do it.

Mr WATSON

- We are asked to do so by the honorable gentleman's lieutenant, and I am sufficiently familiar with parliamentary tactics under the able tuition of the honorable member, to know that that is the most convenient way for a leader of the Opposition to turn a Government out, because if the attempt is not successful nothing can hurt him, while if it be successful he is not pledged to anything in particular.

Mr Barton

- If the table is provided, he will sit at the head of it.

Mr Reid

- May I suggest to the honorable member, that the member for Parramatta moved the amendment without my knowledge and without consulting me in any way.

An Honorable Member. - We have all " been there " before.

Mr WATSON

- If the right honorable gentleman makes that statement-

Mr Reid

- I make the statement absolutely.

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Mr WATSON

- I accept the statement, and I must say that I have never had reason to doubt any serious statement made by the honorable and learned member. But it certainly shows an amount of guile on the part of the honorable member for Parramatta that I had not anticipated under the circumstances. In any case, the fact remains that we are now asked to vote for an amendment which, if it means anything at all, and is carried, must mean the displacement of the Government on the question of kanaka labour ; and, under the circumstances, we have a right to look at what is to follow the carrying of such an amendment. I do not say for a moment - and perhaps the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Opposition will follow me in this sentence - I do not say for a moment that I am satisfied with what has appeared in the Governor-General's speech on this question. I trust to see the Bill made more emphatic and definite on the question of the cessation of the introduction of coloured labour than seems to be implied by the present interpretation of it. I know it is a weakness of the head of the Government to indulge in language which is rather involved. I remember some one writing a monograph on the right honorable gentleman some time ago, before he took his present position, and the writer said that ,he could see so many sides of different questions that he rather mixed himself up on occasions as to which side he was going to support in the meantime.

Mr Barton

- He is too judicial altogether to be a politician.

Mr WATSON

- I am not at all satisfied with the rather open language that is used in respect to this particular question of black labour in the Governor-General's speech, and I therefore do not bind myself in the slightest degree to accept the Bill which the Government may bring in, but I say that we who are anxious to have this question dealt with at the earliest possible opportunity, who desire that effective measures should be taken, have the right at least to give the Ministry now in office an opportunity of bringing in the Bill of which notice is on the business-paper. We have no right to put off the consideration of this question by the delay that would necessarily occur through a change of Government, especially as we do not know what a new Ministry would do in respect of the same subject. We have no guarantee as to what the probabilities of improvement would be in a Ministry composed of the leading gentlemen on the Opposition side. In the absence of an assurance that it would be anything better, I think the proper course to pursue is to give this Ministry the fair trial that they have asked for at the hands of the constituencies, and to

which appeal a majority of the constituencies seem to have lent a responsive ear. Therefore I cannot support the amendment moved by the honorable member for Parramatta, which it seems has been disavowed even by the leader of the Opposition.

An Honorable Member. - The mover did not ask for an avowal.

Mr WATSON

- Quite so ; but when the honorable member was found to be in distress one would expect that his leader would have stood by him.

Mr Reid

- I do not allow any one to act for me without my knowledge and consent.

Mr WATSON

- There is one point upon which I would like to offer some advice to the honorable member for Parramatta. In view of his anxiety to ascertain the definite intentions of the Government with reference to this question of black labour, I would suggest that he should pay the same compliment to the leader of his own party and find out what that gentleman's intentions are. We find the honorable member deploring that we can get nothing definite from the Government in respect of this matter. It would have been only appropriate if he had told the House what the intentions of the leader of the Opposition were.

Mr REID

-Does not the honorable member think he might use his influence in trying to get some information on the subject 1

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Mr WATSON

- I am endeavouring to get it, and I hope that in reply Ministers will give us something of a more definite character. There is another matter upon which I can agree with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition last night, and that is in respect of a Bill to deal with adult suffrage. I agree with every word uttered by the right honorable gentleman as to the immediate necessity of introducing a measure to deal with the suffrage and electoral matters generally. There is a grave necessity, as any one can see who comes from New South Wales, where perhaps matters electoral are not quite so bad as in some of the other States - although even there they are bad enough - for the rearrangement of constituencies. In some of the other States there is a further necessity for insuring that not only shall one person have not more than one vote, but that every person shall have one vote. One of the gravest difficulties we have had to face in the past has been the fact that large numbers of the population of every State in Australia have been disfranchised when the elections came on, and it is a standing disgrace to those States which call themselves progressive, that they have permitted this condition of things to continue so long. We should deal with this matter: early and effectively, and insure that every person who desires to register a vote will have an opportunity of doing so without too much expense, either in time or money. I do not think there is any need to say much in regard to adult suffrage itself, because every one seems to have been converted to the idea that women should exercise the franchise. I have been of that opinion for years, and it is one of the proposals embodied in the programme of every labour party throughout Australia. We are glad to find there is now an opportunity of dealing with the question in a complete way, and with some degree of expedition. I should like also to advert to the question of defence, upon which the Governor's speech is as vague as it is in respect of some other matters. Although the consensus of opinion seems to be in favour of a civilian army receiving every possible encouragement, yet I learn that the conference of commandants which was recently intrusted with the drafting of suggestions in this connexion proposes to perpetuate the militia system as at present in existence in a number of the States. I dissent altogether from the proposition that it is necessary to pay men for defending Australia in time of emergency, other than those experts needed to look after the large guns and to take charge of our forts. I do not believe in a partially paid force. The contention amongst those who support that system is that unless you pay a man you cannot secure discipline, but my experience as a volunteer, who received nothing but arms and accoutrements from the Government-

Mr Wilks

- -And the ridicule of the public.

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Mr WATSON

- I do not know that we got that. I belonged to a corps that made itself so efficient that it was never ridiculed. But I never found amongst the volunteers with whom I was associated any trouble regarding discipline, and, more than that, I can say that they were always prepared to turn out and undergo the necessary drill, and to qualify themselves in rifle shooting. I might point out that in New South Wales, Colonel Mackay, who has distinguished himself in South Africa, raised a regiment of volunteer horse, totalling some 500 or 600 men, without any trouble whatever. From my own district there were 200 men who wanted to join, and for whom room could not be found, and Colonel Mackay received applications from more than double the number required under the conditions laid down by the Government. These men found their own horses, and drilled during their own time, and when you can find men who are prepared to undergo the necessary number of mounted and- dismounted drills without payment, surely you can find men prepared to qualify themselves in shots, and possessed of a sufficient elementary knowledge of drill to know what to do in time of trouble, without our having to resort to the partially-paid system at present operative in the various States. If we are to depend on a partially-paid force to any large extent, it must necessarily decrease the amount that we can allocate for the encouragement of the volunteer system. Therefore, we would be minus a considerable number of men whom we otherwise might have had sufficiently qualified to take an efficient part in the defence of Australia in time of need. I trust that when the measure comes on the House will see the necessity of depending more upon our own citizens in respect of the defence of the continent. Another question I would like to say a word upon has reference to the civil service. I welcome the announcement in the speech that we are to have a measure submitted for the non-political control of the public service. I was one who, in another State, fought, in the face of a great deal of opposition, for the principle of non-political control. I had grown tired of the evident fact that men who had friends at court were able not only to secure appointments to the civil service without justification, but were able to continue there though they did little to warrant their existence. In New South Wales, prior to the passing of the Public Service Act, the position practically amounted to a scandal so far as a number of public officers were concerned. It is true that the Public Service Act there did not give unmixed satisfaction, but, at the same time, I contend that it ought to be possible to get men competent to govern the civil service and to insure that the conditions are such that opportunity is- given to those without influence behind them equally with those who possess it. In this connexion, I regret very much indeed the position taken up by the Government in respect to the filling of the office of Under-Secretary for Home Affairs. Honorable members were informed that Mr. Fegan had been appointed. He is not a gentleman I would have selected - if I may say so without any appearance of presumption - not because I doubted his intelligence, his bona fides, or his desire to do his best, but simply because he did not possess the experience in clerical work that, I think, should have been possessed by any person appointed to such a position. But, having been appointed, I do not think that any difficulty should have been placed in his way by the Government. Having invited him to resign his position, and having encouraged his belief that he was to get the appointment, they should have continued to support him in face of any opposition that might have been raised. At this stage I should like to ask the Attorney-General if it is a fact, as was stated last night in another place, that Mr. Atlee Hunt has been appointed Principal Under-Secretary to the Federal Government. I do not wish to say anything about that gentleman if he has not been so appointed. Unfortunately, the degree of secrecy which is observed with respect to these matters puts some of us in a rather peculiar position.

Mr Deakin

- The Prime Minister stated last night that no appointments had yet been made, and that no new appointments would be made until the conclusion of this debate.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Except provisional appointments.

Mr Deakin

- Except provisional appointments, and the appointment of members of the Hansard staff and the clerks at the table.

Mr WATSON

- Then I shall say nothing about Mr. Atlee Hunt at the present time, though I should like to remark generally that the only way for this or any other Government to avoid the suspicion of personal patronage and jobbery is to appoint every person who is put into the public service of the Commonwealth from

amongst the public servants of the various States. In my opinion, it is only in that way that it can be made plain to the people outside that the Government are not influenced by personal considerations. I am willing to admit that it will not always follow that, because a man has been employed in the public service of a State, he will prove the best man who could be obtained for the position ; but it has been the invariable experience of all the States that when Ministers have had an opportunity to fill these high positions they have very seldom filled them with the best men, and have very often filled them with men whose only claim to recognition was that they had rendered some personal service for which it was desirable to compensate them. though it might be to the detriment of the service of the State. While I do not pretend that we shall necessarily get the best men by relying entirely upon the public servants of the various States, I think that that practice will at least offer a large guarantee to the public that considerations of merit, and not any personal feeling between a Minister and the person appointed, will prevail. I trust that Ministers will see that, like Caesar's wife, they are in this matter above suspicion, and I hope that the Bill to control the public service of the Commonwealth, and to place that control upon a non-political basis, will not be forestalled by the appointment of gentlemen who have no claims on the ground of experience, no matter what their merits maybe, to the important and highly onerous offices in the Commonwealth service which yet remain to be filled. There are, of course, a number of other matters in which I, in common with other honorable members, am interested, and I hope to see many of them dealt with a little later on. There is, however, one other point to which I should like to refer now, because no one else has mentioned it, and it may not prove so serious as I consider it to be. I think that a mistake was made by the Prune Minister in allotting the portfolio of the Postmaster-General to a member of the Senate. I contend that as this House is the body which is the more closely in touch with the detailed life of the people, our constituencies being smaller, and we therefore being more likely to be approached in regard to matters of communication and postal convenience, the Minister who has the control of the large commercial department of the Post Office should be a member of this House. The Post-office, in my opinion, is to be one of the most important departments of the Federal Public Service, inasmuch as its administration will have a very large influence upon the progress of settlement in the far-back, districts of Australia, and, as this House has control of the purse, the Minister who is in charge of the Post Office should be a gentleman having a seat in this Assembly.

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Sir William Lyne

- Which portfolio would the honorable member allot to the Senate?

Mr WATSON

- That is a matter for the Ministry to arrange ; but I think that it is more important that the Postmaster-General should sit in this Chamber than that the Attorney-General should do so. Of course, in saying that, I am not making any personal allusion, because I have the highest regard for the honorable and learned member who holds the portfolio of Attorney-General. I have in view merely the relative importance of the two offices, and the necessity of enabling honorable members of this House to get speedy information in regard to postal matters, and to criticise the administration of the Post Office in the manner in which the tax-levying House should be able to criticise it. The honorable member for Paramatta will remember that, while he was Postmaster-General in the State of New South Wales, he took some action with regard to the prevention of the employment of coloured labour upon mail steamers to which we pay a subsidy, and I think that the Commonwealth Government should take steps in that direction. In my opinion, the Government should, some time before the present contracts expire, consider the desirableness of insuring that every steamer to the up-keep of which we contribute by paying a mail subsidy should be manned only by white men. If this Parliament presses home this matter, and brings all its influence to bear upon the Imperial Government, I think it will be possible to insure that a company like the Orient Company, which, although it employs white men, is able to take its boats through the Suez canal in the very height of summer, in spite of the climatic severity, shall not have to enter into competition with steamers to which' an equal subsidy is paid, and which employ coloured labour. I hope that the Federal Government will see that that matter is taken into consideration at the earliest opportunity. I have nothing further to say at this stage, except to express the hope that the House, having disposed of the amendment of the honorable member for Parramatta as I anticipate it will dispose of it, will settle down, with no unnecessary delay, to the work which, has been intrusted to us by the people of Australia. . I have

no doubt as to the efficiency of this Parliament to carry out the will of the people, and I believe that we now have an opportunity which will be largely taken advantage of to show that the confidence which has been placed in us is in no way misplaced, and will be justified in every respect.

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Mr A McLEAN

- I had no intention of joining in the debate to-day because I thought, from all the indications, that it was likely to continue for a day or two, and that I should have an opportunity later on to say a few words before it concluded. However, as it appears likely to close soon, I desire to say a word or two now. The first few remarks which I have to utter I must utter with some regret, because they have to do with the composition of the Ministry. I may say at once, however, that I take no personal exception to any member of the Ministry ; indeed, I think there is no man in the Government who is not in every way worthy, on his own individual merits, to occupy a seat in the Cabinet. But I think that the Government are not fairly representative of the Commonwealth and of the great interests on which its future welfare depends, and I should not be acting fairly unless I said so at this stage. When I first knew what the composition of the Government was to be, I was reminded of a story which I read when a little boy, and to which I may be pardoned for referring. A sailor was promised the gratification of his three dearest wishes. His first wish was that he should be made the possessor of all the tobacco in the world ; his second wish was that he should be given all the rum in the world ; and, when he was asked what his third wish was, he was very much exercised in his mind as to how to reply ; but at last he said - " Oh, hang it all, let me have more tobacco." Honorable members are aware that the Government, as at first constituted, contained five members of the legal profession and two members to represent all the other interests in the Commonwealth ; and the Prime Minister, when he considered it desirable to strengthen his Ministry, having, I presume, given full consideration to its composition, said, like the sailor - " Let me have more lawyers," and added two more lawyers to his Cabinet as honorary Ministers. So far as I know the members of this Government, personally- or by repute, I have a great respect for them, and I agree with their policy, so far as it has been announced. Therefore, I need hardly say that it is my intention to give them a fair trial. But, comprehensive as the Governor-General's speech is, there has been an omission from it which I attribute to the composition of the Ministry. Honorable members will bear in mind that the Constitution takes from the State Parliaments and the State Governments a very important power, and transfers it to the federal Government. It takes from the State Parliament the right to give any State aid to any State interests upon which the future prosperity of the State may depend, and transfers that power to the Federal Government. I did expect, seeing that the gentlemen occupying the Treasury benches had an important hand in the framing of the Constitution, that having transferred that power to the Federal Government, they would have foreshadowed their intentions in regard to the exercise of it. In Victoria, we have not allowed such matters to drift. We have assisted industries which have now become some of the most important industries in the State. They have been assisted from small beginnings entirely by the aid of the State. I think it is rather a serious omission from the Governor-General's speech that there should be no indication whatever of the intentions of the Government in regard to so important a matter. They have not foreshadowed whether they intend to exercise the power they have taken from the State Parliaments to assist new industries, or even existing industries where they require assistance. If they take the interest which I believe they do in the future of the Commonwealth, they should declare their intentions in this regard.

Mr Higgins

- It would be bribing certain interests by the offer of bonuses.

Mr A McLEAN

- It would not be offering bribes. There might, for example, be an indication that the Government intended to assist industries that have an important bearing upon the future of the Commonwealth. I regard this as a serious omission.

Mr Barton

- The difficulty is only a financial one. It cannot be done yet, although it may be done hereafter, because of the necessity there is for making a fair return to the States without too extravagant a Tariff.

Mr A McLEAN

- If it is not intended to exercise this power, the Government should give some indication of their intention

to permit the State Parliaments to do so. At the present time the State Parliaments have no power in the matter. As soon as the Inter-State Commission is appointed, I have no doubt it will prevent our Agricultural department, and similar departments in the other States, from giving any special assistance to local industries, which assistance is not accorded by other States. Therefore, I think the Government should do one of two things - either indicate their intention to deal with this important matter themselves, it being of the utmost consequence to the future welfare of the Commonwealth, or indicate their intention to permit the State Governments to do it themselves.

Sir William McMillan

- They can only act under the Constitution ; they cannot go beyond that.

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Mr A McLEAN

- The Constitution provides that the State Parliaments may do this with the sanction of the Federal Parliament, but it requires a resolution of both Houses to permit them to do it. I wished to obtain some indication of the views of the Government. They need have no fear that I have any ulterior motive behind my request. As I stated at the commencement of my remarks, it is my intention to give them a fair start, and until they forfeit their title to our confidence - which I believe they will not do for many a day - they will find me amongst their consistent supporters. But if I see an omission of this kind from the projected policy of the Government I think I am justified in referring to it in the plainest and simplest manner I can. The point affects more especially the rural industries throughout the Commonwealth. While I am on my feet I should like to say that I heard with great pleasure last night the speech of my right honorable friend the leader of the Opposition. While listening to the vigorous and powerful manner in which he dealt with his various points, I was not so much surprised as I had previously been, that he had succeeded in convincing the labourers of New South Wales that it would pay them better to send their work abroad to be executed, than to do it at home. He handled the subject with consummate skill and tact; but he made what appeared to be a rather damaging reference to Victoria. He referred to the exodus of population from Victoria, which he attributed to the protective policy of this State, and he alluded to the acquisition of population by the other States. Perhaps it might interest the right honorable gentleman to know that a very large proportion of the people who left Victoria left it with their pockets very well lined with Victorian gold to take up cheap land in the adjacent States.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Where they could live more cheaply.

Mr A McLEAN

- The right honorable gentleman himself, or his Minister of Lands, a few years ago appointed a commission to inquire into the value of property on each side of the border. The report of that commission was to the effect that along the border land on the Victorian side was worth from 30 to 50 per cent, more than similar land on the New South Wales side. That discrepancy in the value of land accounted to a large extent for the Victorian people who had saved a little money going to New South Wales and taking up cheaper land than they could get in their own State. The same thing took place in regard to Queensland. I, have no doubt my honorable friends from that State will bear me out in saying that a considerable portion of the territory of Queensland was developed and settled by Victorians. The same may be said with regard to the West Australian gold-fields. They were largely developed by Victorian capital. So that it is scarcely fair to attribute to protection an exodus of population from Victoria, more especially when we consider the case of Western Australia, which also has a highly protective Tariff.

Mr Glynn

- They have only a 10 per cent. Tariff whereas that of Victoria is 35 per cent.

Mr McCay

- The Western Australian Tariff has a higher average than the Victorian Tariff.

Mr A McLEAN

- New Zealand also has a highly protective Tariff, and that colony and other States in a similar position have had a large acquisition of population. There was also another matter which was not replied to by the Premier last night. The leader of the Opposition spoke of the shackles which the Victorian Tariff had placed upon our natural industries. I take it that our natural industries are fairly represented by the products of the farm, the orchard, and the dairy. How have the industries of the two States, Victoria and

New South Wales, been affected by the fiscal policy, if the fiscal policy is accountable for their condition ? I obtained from the Victorian Government Statist a short time ago a return for the -hist three years. The year 1890 is not included because the statist had not the complete returns for that year ; but I find that for the years 1887-8-9 New South Wales had to import £3,340,000 worth of the commodities of the farm, the orchard,' and the dairy more than she exported.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- She could not have done it if she had not the money to buy them.

Mr A McLEAN

- In other words, in New South Wales with all her magnificent territory, which is nearly four times the size of Victoria, the products of the orchard, the farm, and the dairy fell short of supplying local consumption during those years to the extent of £3,340,000.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- How did she get the money to buy them ?

Mr A McLEAN

- A good deal of it was derived from the sale of land.

Mr Deakin

- And from the mines.

Mr A McLEAN

- For the same three years in Victoria that State, after supplying the whole of her requirements from those three sources, exported to the extent of £4,550,000.

Mr Thomson

- Then what benefit did the people get from protection ?

Mr A McLEAN

- This was done under a protectionist policy.

Mr Thomson

- What benefit did the producers get from protection if they had to export 1

Mr A McLEAN

- If it had not paid them to export their produce they would not have done it. Protection in the first instance assisted them to develop their industries.

Sir William McMillan

- Would you expect our coal miners to grow cabbages ?

Mr A McLEAN

- I would not; but coal is a product for which no policy advocated by my honorable friend is responsible. If he will eliminate these natural advantages, such as coal, and then compare New South Wales with Victoria, he will find that, in -spite of the large territory of New South Wales, Victoria will bear very favorable comparison with any other State in the matter of progress and devolment

Mr Wilks

- Calculate the Victorian gold production for a number of years.

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Mr A McLEAN

- The mineral production of New South Wales, owing largely to the silver and coal mines, is far in excess of that of Victoria; and owing to her large territory and her number of sheep, the State is fortunate enough to have a very large export trade in wool. But if you deduct these, items, and then compare the condition of that country with that of Victoria, you will see whether protection has been a benefit or a scourge to us. Speaking of the natural productions of the two colonies, and comparing them, I think, if I remember. rightly, that I have seen a return bearing upon the subject. I cannot find my authority just now, but if I had known I was going to speak to-night I would have looked it up. I saw the return lately. It was from a reliable quarter, and it showed that from four sources alone - wool, the mines, borrowed money, and the profits of land sales - New South Wales during the last ten years spent something like £100,000,000 more than Victoria from the same sources. That will account to a very large extent for the retention of the population in the adjoining colony. I sincerely hope that my reference, to these matters, which is only in reply to some strictures made by my right honorable friend, will not be regarded as any indication that I intend to carp or cavil at the policy of the adjacent State.. I feel very proud of the great mother State and

of her population. At the same time, I believe that some of her statesmen have made mistakes, as statesmen in other States do sometimes. I believe, if we compare like with like, the free-trade policy of New South Wales will certainly not bear such favorable comparison with the policy of Victoria as my right honorable friend wished us to believe when he spoke so vigorously and forcibly last night. Victoria, small as her land revenue is, does not treat the whole of that revenue as income, but puts aside the proceeds of the sale of mallee lands, which are practically the only Crown lands left now in the possession of the State, to a sinking fund for the reduction of the national debt. That is treating land proceeds in the manner in which they should be treated, because they cannot be -legitimately regarded as income, but should be regarded and treated as capital. Victoria has taken that step, small as her returns are.

Mr Higgins

- It is locking the stable door after the steed is stolen.

Mr A McLEAN

- I admit that Victoria made the same mistake in her early land policy as was made in other States ; but if you deduct from .the revenue of the adjoining State of New South Wales the £2,000,000 per annum received from this source,, the balance of revenue will not compare very favorably .with that of Victoria. However, I trust we will have none of these recriminative comparisons. Certainly nothing was further from my thoughts than to refer to the matter at all, but, if I or some other member did- not do so, it might be imagined by a great many people outside that we were silent because there was no answer to be given. It is quite right, as invidious comparisons were drawn by the right honorable gentleman, that they should be replied to, even in the hurried, disjointed, and disconnected manner in which I have been able to reply to them on the spur of the moment. Before sitting down, as this is the first occasion on which I have arisen since you, sir, were appointed to your present high and honorable office, I desire to tender you my very sincere congratulations. I believe your election was a wise step by the House, and, from my present knowledge of. you, I feel sure you will conduct our business in a dignified, firm, and thoroughly impartial manner. The privileges of the House will be safe in your hands, and if you have the assistance you are entitled to expect from honorable members, you will, I am sure, uphold the best traditions, of the great mother of Parliaments. I sincerely trust that all other important appointments in the gift of the Commonwealth will be equally well bestowed. I do not wish to detain the House any longer. I rose, as members are aware, without any premeditation, just to refer to these two or three matters before the debate closed.

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Mr FOWLER

- I do not intend to tax the patience of honorable members by traversing ground that has already been crossed by better speakers than myself ; but I wish, as a representative of Western Australia, to call the attention of honorable members in general, and of the Ministry in particular, to the somewhat invidious way in which Western Australia is singled out for distinction in the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General. We are told in the speech -

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

I feel I am voicing the opinions of the majority of the people of Western Australia, who pledged themselves to federation,- when I say they not only had. a hope of closer connexion with the rest of the continent, but they felt they were on absolutely safe ground in assuming that whatever measures were necessary to the completion of federation for any portion of the continent, such measures would be cheerfully and promptly undertaken. I take particular exception to one expression which might, indeed, have been used by some ambitious junior reporter, but which seems somewhat out of place in a document of this kind. We are told that we risked " the threatened perils of that political union." I am satisfied that the majority of the Western Australians, to whom I have already referred, saw no "threatened peril" in the union at all. We certainly recognised that there would be a few temporary disadvantages, chiefly of a financial kind, but we were also fully convinced that the advantages of federation would immensely outweigh those minor disadvantages. It may be argued that that expression refers only to a minority of the population of my State ; but I would ask if it is not a fact that there was a similar minority in all of the States of the Commonwealth, who saw, or professed to see, perils of the kind. I would ask, therefore, how it is that

Western Australia is made responsible for the opinion expressed by its minority in regard to those alleged perils. An expression of that kind in the speech constitutes a reflection on the intelligence and on the federal spirit of the people of Western Australia, and I protest against the people of my State being branded in a document of this importance in the way they have been by the Ministry of the day.

Mr GLYNN

- Mr. Speaker, it is difficult, even for one whose sensibilities have been somewhat hardened by political debate not to feel a little trepidation in catching your eye for the first time. I only hope I may find it as easy to catch your approbation. At all events, I will endeavour to merit it, by yielding a willing obedience to what I know will be your impartial rule. The occasion is indeed an impressive one. It is the opening of the first parliament of a continent that ever met, a continent which is itself but a part of a great Imperial system, whose limits are co-extensive with the paths of the vasty deep. What a splendid subject for contemplation is it that here, 13,000 miles from the seat of the Empire, we have founded a political system, which, while complete in itself, is yet but one of several co-ordinate parts that constitute through the connecting link of the Crown, a world-wide Imperial whole. I do not make any reference to the tie of blood, for I regard blood as by no means the strongest thread which enters into the texture of our alliance. Blood contains the principle of repulsion as well as of attraction ; we have too often found latterly that our brotherly solitudes are tempered by the spirit of Cain. Besides Australians must be regarded as a composite race ; a race through whose veins flow the blending bloods of Saxon, Celt, and Teuton - a race whose capabilities, perhaps, are all the finer, whose capacity for sustained energy, whose dash, vigour and imagination, may be all the greater, from the mixture of many stocks. I believe that the true principles of our alliance are interest and respect - the interest that springs from the consciousness that we are the sharers in a common heritage and destiny, and the respect that arises from a sense that into our connexion or alliance there now enters no principle of subordination, a sense that the greatness of the whole is due to the play of the unfettered energies of each. I hope - though perhaps the opinion may not be altogether a popular one - referring to the statement made last night by the member for Corio, that we will never attempt a policy which may succeed in weakening the strength of the Imperial links, namely, the policy of substituting political bonds for the ties of affection, interest, and respect. My opinion is that, the moment the politician takes the place of the patriot, the ties of the Empire will begin to strain. In connexion with that, I may be allowed to refer to the policy set forth at Maitland by the Prime Minister, a policy of reciprocal preference within the empire, and a beginning of a Customs union based, not as in Canada, on an advance towards freetrade, but on the inception of Imperial protection.

Mr Higgins

- They are getting sick of it in Canada already.

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Mr GLYNN

- The honorable member's reading has not been comprehensive enough. So far from being sick of it in Canada their position is really this : the member for Darling Downs, whom I speak of as the father of the House with the very greatest respect, referred to Canada last night, and it struck me at the time what a wonderful coincidence of policy and almost coincidence of expression existed between the resolution which Sir John McDonald put into the hands of Mr. Tilley, when he moved the Tariff of 1879, and the present proposals. The people of Canada were then told that there was necessity for a national policy, and we are told by the Attorney-General that we are to have an Australian policy in the matter of the Tariff. That is practically the same thing. The people of Canada were then told that in order to prevent an exodus of their population, and to stimulate the manufacturing, mining, and particularly agricultural, industries, a national policy of protection should be brought about. As a matter of fact, we find the editor of the Toronto Globe, on some date in October last year, stating that the results of twenty years' experience of the policy which was to develop agriculture, was that owing to the burden on their energies, due to the Tariff, the exports of the natural produce at the end of the period were no greater than at the beginning. The honorable member for Northern Melbourne has mentioned that the people in Canada are getting sick of it already ; it is an extraordinary case of a sickness which develops an appetite. They began with the remission of 12[^] per cent, in the duties in 1897, and that was increased to 25 per cent, in 1898, the remission now being 33[^] per cent, rebate on the duties in connexion with English imports. That is an instalment of free-trade. It is so because there is no condition of reciprocity in the matter; it being

simply stated that throughout the empire where free-trade exists, where Canadian imports flow in unrestricted, Canada grants a reduction of duty, on the ground that the policy of such places is entitled to encouragement.

Mr Deakin

- Then it is not reciprocal.

Mr GLYNN

- It is an advance towards free-trade, they having asked for no condition on the remission of the duties.

Now let me deal with the Ministerial policy, from which I have been led aside by interruptions.

Mr Isaacs

- It is not protection, -so far as English goods are concerned ?

Mr GLYNN

- A remission of 33¹/₃ per cent, is not protection. Does the honorable member think the diminution of protection is an advance towards protection ? The rates on imports in Canada were approaching an average of 30 per cent, but since the Laurier Government have taken the Tariff in hand they are proceeding towards free-trade gradually, and have gone down to 19 per cent., which I acknowledge is pretty high.

Mr Mauger

- It is an average of 19 per cent. ?

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Mr GLYNN

- That is the comparative test applied by Mulhall, and I think it represents taxation equal to an average on imports of 19 per cent. The Prime Minister, in explaining the Ministerial policy at Maitland, said : -

Where reciprocity is possible we shall be only too happy to adopt it.

That is protection of course, straight out. Then he proceeded -

As for preferential treatment, apart from reciprocity, we strongly favour it, but that is a subject which demands much careful consideration, and whilst we would be very much happier to see our way to adopt it, we should have to give consideration to it before final action could be taken.

I really cannot understand the attitude of the Prime Minister. He first says that he favours reciprocity, and he afterwards says he favours preferential treatment apart from reciprocity. It seems to me he possesses the nebulous clearness of the Frenchman who said exactly what he wanted to say, and that was nothing. If, however, his statement means anything it hints at the beginning of free-trade within the empire, with protection against the world. An Imperial Zollverein, based upon preferences against the foreigner, would be the beginning of the end of British commercial supremacy. Let honorable members by glancing at the statistics see what this policy - and it is only the beginning of a Customs union of the Empire - would really land us in. I find that the trade of England last year to the extent of 75 per cent, was with foreign countries. The British trade with Australia was only 8 per cent, of its total, and the trade with Canada only 4 per cent, of its total. Not only is this so, but the foreign trade of England is an increasing one, whilst the trade with British possessions is proportionately declining. With America, notwithstanding its vicious system of exclusion in the matter of trade, England still has an increasing trade. Within the last 30 years the increase of English trade with America has amounted to 146 per cent., whilst the increase with British possessions has been less than 60 per cent. Take Australia also, and we find that during a period of twenty years the Australian trade with foreign countries has gone up from being one-ninth of the total of her trade to being now one fourth of its total. We export proportionately more to, and import less from, the United Kingdom than we did ten years ago. As a matter of fact, our trade with England is one we cannot beneficially touch by any dabbling with the Tariff. The bulk of our export trade goes to England. Out of every £58 worth of our trade, £43 value of it goes to England, because it goes along the line of the people's necessities. No wonder that we find Mulhall and others stating that any attempt at an Imperial customs union would mean ruin to the colonies, and practically involve the disintegration of the Empire. I would point out also that this idea of Imperial federation, which is becoming a little in the air again - it was a good deal in the air in 1891 - is closely bound up with an attempt on the part of English politicians to drag us into the net of Imperial defence. Sir John McDonald was, I think; the father of it, so far as colonial statesmen are concerned. His idea was that we must begin a system of protection within the Empire and that the consequent return should be applied towards defraying the cost of naval expenditure. But an

Imperial customs union would strike at the foreign trade of England, upon which its commercial supremacy, so hard in these times to maintain, is based. it not an extraordinary thing that all the attempts to interfere with the splendid fiscal policy of England have come from the conservatives ? Salisbury was the idol of Sir John McDonald, who, himself, in local politics, was a conservative. He was opposed to the extension of the franchise for instance.

Mr Mauger

- So was John Bright.

Mr GLYNN

- I do not think so.

Mr Mauger

- Was not Cobden opposed to factory legislation ?

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Mr GLYNN

- I am not going to be led into the ancient history of the speech of John Bright on the 10 hours' question. I know what the facts are, but they are not relevant to my speech. The failure of protection is marked by the necessity for factory legislation in these States. The very need for such legislation is an evidence that the working classes have not got what then statesmen told them they would get from the policy of restricting trade. On this question of defence the figures are these In 1891, when I wrote a pamphlet on this very question, the navy expenditure of the empire was £14,000,000 sterling. In 1898, it was £26,000,000; in 1900, £29,000,000; and in 1901-2, £32,000,000 sterling. The naval estimates now are equal to the sum of the naval estimates of four naval powers of Europe. Is there any likelihood of these naval estimates diminishing? We hear a good deal about international ethics, but I am afraid that the relations of the States of Europe at the present time could scarcely be carried on without the continual suspension of the standing orders of Christianity. The spectacle presented to us of their mutual greed and aggression, commercial and military, especially in connexion with their attempts to raise the level of the yellow man's civilization, almost justifies the cynicism of Voltaire in sending his compliments to the devil as the apparent ruler of humanity. The Times, on February 8, 1901, thinking, I suppose, . as Pitt did, that - Modest doubt is . . . the beacon of the wise, The tent that searches to the bottom of the worst. put the position thus -

It is abundantly evident that we must relax none of our efforts, and must shrink from no expenditure which may be required now or hereafter to place and maintain our supremacy at sea beyond all reasonable possibility of doubt.

Then some of the members of the House of Commons on 21st March last, in the debate on the budget and the naval estimates, asked that the colonies should be made to contribute an adequate share of the naval expenditure. Do honorable members ever seriously consider what that means ? I find from the Board of Trade returns that the total contributions of India and the colonies towards the navy was in 1898 and 1899 £523,422, or about one-sixtieth of the contribution of the United Kingdom. Let us suppose we were pledged to contribute on some proportional basis such as would have to be struck if we entered this union, say on the basis of population, or wealth, or capacity to pay. Let us take a rate, for example, based upon population and trade combined, and immediately the States entered this union their contribution with India and the other self governing British possessions, instead of being one-sixtieth, would be something like one-sixth of the total. Our contribution - I speak subject to correction as regards a few thousands - is, I believe, something like £160,000. On the basis of trade and population, our contribution instead of being £160,000 a year, would have become three and a-half millions sterling, or have been multiplied 22 times. We ought, therefore, to be very careful not to allow ourselves to be deluded by wide and fetching general ties of an Imperial character. And, instead of being desirous of taking a hand, which must be a weak one, in the game of foreign politics, or basing our commercial policy upon reciprocal preferences - the method of the political sceptic who has lost faith in protection without having the courage to abandon it - we ought to look seriously to our position, and give greater scope to the principle of freedom by widening the area of its application. The leader of the Opposition has effectually dealt with the composition of the Ministry. At Maitland the Prime Minister said he was buoyed up with the consciousness that, whilst he might have some personal deficiencies, still he had brought together a body of colleagues who, for their administrative capacity and their ability, are such as have never been before

brought together in Australia, certainly agree with the latter portion of that statement. They are a body of colleagues such as have never been brought together in Australia. When we consider their previous differences of opinion, not only on vital matters of State policy, but also as regards the expediency and the character of the federation, their union seems a unique instance of the subordination of personal conviction to the exigencies of office. Is it not something to strike us with wonder that that arch protectionist and advocate of a form of union which we cannot describe as federal - the Minister for Home Affairs - is now wedded to the protagonist of federal union and the preacher of neutrality in fiscal matters, the Prime Minister % Is it not a manifestation of new-born sympathy to find a gentleman who qualified for the position of Federal Minister of Defence, by displaying during the fight for federation in Western Australia a Boer-like mobility of attitude now in the same ranks with that longstanding advocate of federation, the Attorney-General. I remember a little monograph by Lord Rosebery upon Sir Robert Peel, in which he mentions that the duty of a Prime Minister is to masticate the pledges of his colleagues given before he joined them. He has to fuse their public utterances, and to blend them to the policy of the Ministry, so that their various records may be glossed over, or reconciled or obliterated. If that has to be done by the Prime Minister, he has a somewhat large task, and I must extend to him my personal sympathy. I remember what conflicting utterances upon vital matters of federal policy we had during the elections from the various Ministers. We had the Treasurer stating, on February 18, that the fight was between free-trade and protection. The Vice-President of the Executive Council told us that the politicians were raising this wretched fiscal issue which divides our parties, and we had the Attorney-General telling us that, if we never had protection before, now that the union of the colonies was consummated it was time for protection to begin.

Mr Watkins

- Even the leader of the Opposition said that.

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Mr GLYNN

- I do not think I can remember a speech of his in which he said it, although I have read a good many of his speeches. It is a peculiarity of protection that it is always about to commence. In 1789 protection commenced in America under a somewhat similar pretext. It commenced there with rates of duty which varied from 5 to 7£, and 10 and 15 per cent. At the time it was stated by Madison that the duties were imposed simply to give a start to industries which would afterwards approach such perfection that they would no longer require adventitious aid - I am quoting almost his exact words. At the end of 21 years - the period upon the expiration of which most people, except women, attain their majority - that is, in 1812, they asked for an increased dose of protection, and they got an increase of 100 per cent. In 1816, instead of a diminution of the duties there was a still further increase; but a promise was given that rates would be imposed on a declining scale, to take effect during a number of years. Was that promise kept 1 Between 1816 and 1824 the rates of duties in America were lower than they were between 1824 and 1828, and in 1828, after a fight on the fiscal question which almost rent the Union, and nearly caused the loss of the allegiance of South Carolina; and Virginia,' the duties were enormously increased. In 1870, nearly a century after the introduction of so-called temporary protection into America, the rates averaged 40 per cent, ad valorem, and to-day the average rate of duties imposed upon goods imported into America, that is the total taxation through the Customs, expressed in terms of ad valorem duties, is equal to 33 per cent.

Mr Higgins

- Does the honorable member include the free list ?

Mr GLYNN

- No, I do not ; but that does not matter much, because the rates are comparative.. It is a fallacy to think that, because you may have a bigger free list in Victoria than you have in some other protective State, Victoria is therefore less protected than that State. As a matter of fact, you give incidental protection sometimes to your already over-protected manufacturing industries by putting certain articles on the free list. In Victoria, while you will not allow a general free list, sticking for revenue purely to revenue lines, and have heavy import duties, you put on the free list, wherever you can, such articles as enter into the manufacture of protected commodities.

Mr Higgins

- Then the honorable member argues that we protect by taking off duties?

Mr GLYNN

- - Decidedly.

Mr Higgins

- - In that case New South Wales is a very heavily protected State 1

Mr GLYNN

- You give protection when you take off duties from the raw materials which enter into the manufacture of protected articles, while you impose import duties upon the manufactured article.

Mr McMillan

- It is the discrimination which protects.

Mr GLYNN

- Yes. It is incidental protection, and in this way Victoria may be able to claim a larger free list than perhaps South Australia has. But what does the historical analogy which I have drawn point to? However much the people of Australia may be duped now by the statement that the proposed protection is only temporary, or that it is only going to begin, the fact remains that it is not likely to come to an end. I do not think that a period will ever be reached when the remission of protective duties is likely to be asked for by the manufacturers. Coming now to the question of Ministerial inconsistency, I wonder what the position of the Prime Minister is in regard to the proposed Western Australia railway. In one of his Speeches he pointed out that he would support the construction of that railway on the ground of national defence and of revenue production, if it was likely to pay; but it must be a paying concern before he would support it.

Sir John Forrest

- When did the right honorable member say that?

Mr GLYNN

- In a speech delivered at Maitland he said -

The proposal will receive close consideration as to its financial bearing upon the States of the Commonwealth, and will not, of course, be adopted unless we see that the returns will outweigh the expenditure to be incurred.

Mr GLYNN

- Does the Minister of Defence think that the returns from the proposed line are likely for some years after its construction to exceed the expenditure incurred in making it ?

Sir John Forrest

- Yes.

Mr GLYNN

- Then the honorable member must be more hopeful than many other honorable members are.

Sir John Forrest

- I know more about the matter perhaps.

Mr GLYNN

- I think that the right honorable member may know more about it, but there is not much chance of the revenue from that line outstripping or even catching up to the expenditure for many years after its construction. The only reason for the construction of the line is on the ground of national advantage. I admit that the federalists of Western Australia relied upon the substantial sympathy of the representatives from the other States for the construction of a line to connect South Australia with Kalgoorlie. I had a good deal to do with the fight against the Premier in that state, and I know that strong encouragement was given by members of Parliament in some of the smaller states to the idea of connecting the capitals of Western Australia and South Australia by railway. But if we have to wait, as the Prime Minister says we must wait, until the line is likely to be a paying line-

Sir John Forrest

- The right honorable member did not mean that.

Mr GLYNN

- Then what did he mean ? He said, in a recent speech, that, like the project of taking over the Northern Territory of South Australia, the construction of the proposed West Australian railway was a matter which could be shelved, that is, consideration of it might be postponed as not being of immediate necessity. The project, in his opinion, was too nebulous to be looked at at the present time.

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Sir William Lyne

- We scarcely ever, in any of the States, build a railway that will pay from the start.

Mr GLYNN

- I advocate the construction of the proposed railway ; but the Maitland policy was not to construct it until the Ministry first saw that its revenue would outstrip its cost. If that is the encouragement which has been held out to the representatives of Western Australia, they will have to wait for half a generation before the line is constructed.

Sir John Forrest

- I do not think so.

Mr GLYNN

- We shall see. Perhaps the stimulus to expedition may be supplied from this side of the House. With regard to the question of customs, I remember that the Minister of Customs stated in one of the speeches which he delivered in Adelaide that, although not a rabid protectionist, he was a fair and reasonable protectionist, but that he would not pay too much for his whistle. In Hobart, however, when pressed for a clear statement on the point, he said that he meant that he leaned towards the Victorian Tariff. How can one reconcile those utterances ?

Mr Kingston

- I did not say anything of the sort, although I know that the honorable member has repeatedly attributed the statement to me.

Mr GLYNN

- I have not repeatedly attributed the statement to the right honorable member.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member, during the late electoral campaign, repeatedly attributed the statement to me, but it is not a fact that I made it.

Mr GLYNN

- Even one who can bluff as much as the Minister of Customs, sometimes does occasionally takes too big a risk, and the right honorable member has done so on this occasion. He will not find any report of a speech in which I attribute that statement to him,

Mr Kingston

- It was published in some country rag.

Sir Edward Braddon

- Was it prepared by one of the right honorable member's reporters ?

Mr Kingston

- Is that what the right honorable member does in Tasmania?

Mr GLYNN

- What I said was said in a speech which was not reported.

Mr Kingston

- But the honorable member did attribute the statement to me. He kept his speech out of the principal newspapers, but it appeared in a country rag.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member's speech is being somewhat interfered with by these frequent interjections.

Mr GLYNN

- Personally I do not mind, though I do not want to trespass too far on the good nature of the House in replying to them. If the report to which I allude is correct, the Minister of Customs has expressed his preference for the Victorian Tariff.

Mr Kingston

- I never did so.

Mr GLYNN

- Then I must leave it to the right honorable member to reconcile his remarks with the report which appeared in the press. We have heard from the honorable member for Gippsland that there was a wonderful exodus of people from Victoria to become farmers in other states ; but how could there be an exodus of manufacturers from Victoria to become farmers elsewhere ? Between 1889 and 1893, 18,000

persons left the factories of Victoria ; but did they go to the other States to become farmers ?

Mr A McLEAN

- -There are many farmers in Victoria who commenced their career by working in factories.

Mr GLYNN

- Are we to believe that the 18,000 persons who left the factories of Victoria were not sufficiently protected by the policy of this State, and therefore gave up manufacturing in order to become farmers ? As a matter of fact, 18,000 persons left the factories of Victoria within a period of four years, and of them 17,000 were men. I defy honorable members to reconcile that fact with the success of the policy of protection. I do not think that one would be justified, on the general discussion upon the Address in Reply, in going elaborately into the question of the Tariff ; but when Ministers talk of the financial exigencies of the States being bound up with protection, they ignore what has happened in England, and what has happened in New South Wales. England has not six leading lines upon its Tariff list. It gets £55,000,000 from customs and excise on about five lines, and £50,000,000 of this from two lines. In New South Wales there are no ad valorem rates, and I believe that there are only fifteen - certainly less than twenty - lines upon the list of specific duties.

An Honorable Member. - And they have had six years' experience of that Tariff.

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Mr GLYNN

- About fifteen items were taxed in the specific list, and producing about £1,726,194 per year. Victoria, with its 400 specific lines and ad valorem rates, equal to about 36 per cent, on half its imports, less narcotics and stimulants, has only a little over £2,200,000. So that it ought to be plain that a slight re-adjustment of the New South Wales Tariff will satisfy all the financial needs of the Commonwealth and its States. We are sometimes told, as indicated by the leader of the labour party to-day, that there is nothing to fight about, and that there is after all very little distinction between free-trade and protection one way or the other. Well, look at France. Is there no distinction between the system of France and the system of England ? You have 720 lines taxed in France. If we did what they do in England, countervail the import duties on revenue lines with a corresponding excise, there need not be the slightest fear of adequate returns not being obtained. Our excise on the whole does not amount to a third of the excise of the United Kingdom. It is less in Victoria on some lines than in New South Wales, and I believe with a slight re-adjustment of duties the needs of the States and of the Commonwealth can easily be met. I am not at present going to labour this point of protection and free-trade. As regards the appointment of Executive Councillors, I wish to say that I can hardly understand how, with a population of 4,000,000 and seven Ministers of State, the Prime Minister should have thought it necessary to add to the number of advisers of the Governor-General, and make a total of nine Ministers. In England, with 40,000,000 of people, whose local affairs are under the authority of the Imperial Parliament, with vast Imperial responsibilities extending almost throughout the civilized globe, there are only sixteen or seventeen Ministers. But here, at the start of our Australian government, we must have nine Ministers. I take it that the extension of the number was owing to an inability to conciliate Tasmania by giving that State a Minister with a department. That led to the appointment of a Minister in the person of Mr. Lewis. Now, is it expedient that we should add to the Ministry men who are not responsible to the House ? There is no obligation upon them with regard to their relations to this House. There is no constitutional obligation for an Executive Councillor to have a seat in the House. He need not go out if the Ministry goes out. Yet he is capable under the Constitution of advising the Governor-General as to the appointment of officers to the Commonwealth equally with the Ministers of State. I strongly believe that if you look strictly into the Constitution, you will find that it was illegal to appoint these additional Ministers. I believe that the opinion given in the commentary of Messrs. Quick and Garran on the Constitution, that there were to be seven Ministers of State and no Executive Councillors, is the correct one. And I am sorry that at the beginning of our federal life the Ministry should have made an appointment which seems to savour too much of the old party method of getting majorities. The Government ought to have set an example to the members of the House in the matter of singleness of purpose. In regard to the Supreme Court, I believe that the suggestion I made at the Convention, that in the beginning we should study economy, by manning that court with local judges, was the correct one. What does the Ministry expect will be the business of the Supreme Court at the beginning? We have not, as honorable members know, abolished the power of

appeal to the Privy Council. We have left that appeal open and free. The experience in Canada is that about two-thirds of the appeals go direct from the State courts to the Privy Council. What likelihood is there, then, considering that for the last 50 years the total appeals to the Privy Council from the States in the Union _ did not amount to more than an average of one, or one and a half from each State per annum, that there will be adequate business to occupy the Supreme Court of Australia? The jurisdiction of the court is to be appellate and original. I have dealt with the appellate powers. Is there any likelihood of the original jurisdiction of the court giving it business ? It can only be given by an encroachment on the powers of the State courts. The Constitution gives an original jurisdiction in a few matters which are not likely to give much business. There is power also in four other matters to vest original jurisdiction in the High Court. But if honorable members look at those matters they will see that very little legislation in regard to them can result for a generation or two.

Mr Higgins

- I think the appeals average about 20 a year from all the States.

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Mr GLYNN

- Not from the Australian States alone, I think. I have endeavoured to give the correct figures and according to the list given by Tarrant in his book on the colonies, the appeals in 50 years to 1893 have not averaged more than one for each State.

Mr Higgins

- Each Australian State ?

Mr GLYNN

- Yes ; but I do not speak with absolute certainty on that point. I speak subject to the correction of the honorable and learned member as to the proportions since 1893, which, nevertheless, cannot bring the average much beyond one and a half. It would be a mistake by investing the original jurisdiction in the High Court to centralize justice. Why should you take away the jurisdiction of the States? Would it not be a better system to appoint, say, the Judges of the Supreme Court from the Chief Justices of the various States ? They would be easily accessible, in many of the difficult matters preliminary to the hearing of a case their services would be quickly and cheaply availed of, and we should not have the ridiculous exhibition of five Judges probably sitting until people gave them work to do. In America, in the beginning there was very little work for the High Court. There were only nine cases on the list in 1801, and for years afterwards the cases did not average fifteen per annum. If there is much more business now it is largely owing to the fact that jurisdiction in many federal matters has been taken from the State Courts by Act of Parliament. I speak on the authority of Willoughby, in his book on the United States' Courts. Then, again, the Inter-State relations of the 70,000,000 of people of 46 States, crossed as they are by telegraph lines and private railways, give rise to a tremendous amount of litigation. Further, the patent and copyright laws in America also involve an enormous quantity of litigation. Besides that, in the last twenty years there have been many actions arising out of the Court of Claims, actions which cannot affect these Australian States, which are only six in number, whereas in America the Court has the rights of 46 States, with somewhat aggressive and complex interests, to conserve. I recommend that at the beginning the Supreme Court should be manned by the Judges of the State Courts. Power is given to do that, and there is no obligation to make any outside appointments. I hope that the Attorney-General will consider this suggestion, and I believe that in making it I have the sympathy of the Minister for Trade and Customs. On the ground of economy, we should remember that the total indebtedness of the States is about £200,000,000, equal to about £54 per head of the population, and involving interest claims to the amount of £8,000,000 per annum. What hope is there for the working people of these States if we indulge in extravagance ? We are told by the Ministry that they do not intend to impose direct taxation. That means that extravagance will add to the Customs duties. Are we to rely upon the most disproportionate method of levying taxation, a system that respects the full purse, but preys on the empty stomach - Customs taxation - for the necessary requirements of the Commonwealth? I would urge care in this matter. I venture to say that it will be many years before the population will develop sufficiently to find work for a Supreme Court. Of course, the Customs houses will have to make such returns as will justify some of the projects of the Ministry. Old-age pensions have been mentioned simply for the purpose of knocking the proposal on the head. The honorable member for Darling Downs recommended a contributory scheme! I

do not think that is possible under the Constitution. It is not possible under the implied powers which are relied upon, because federal State insurance, which would be involved, is negated by the terms of the Constitution. This proposal will, I fear, if we rush into it, mean an expenditure of over £1,000,000 per annum. I am sorry that the Ministry have omitted all reference to the Northern Territory. Surely the heroic self-denial of South Australia in respect to the Northern Territory should be considered. It is due to South Australian management of that territory that we to some extent have kept Australia white, or free from a large influx of foreign races.

Sir John FORREST

- There are Chinamen there.

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Mr GLYNN

- They are all over Australia. But if South Australia managed the Northern Territory in order to make it a payable asset, it might and certainly could be done by the importation of some cheap coloured labour. We have an annual loss of £70,000 a year on the Northern Territory. But it is a well-known fact, Mr. Speaker, as you have stated from your former place in the Parliament Of South Australia, that offers were made to the Government in connexion with the Northern Territory which, if accepted, would have wiped out the whole of the Northern Territory debt, and have left over a considerable sum. But recognising the desire and expediency of keeping

South Australia white we have exercised the virtue of self-denial in this matter. About five or six millions of the loan expenditure of South Australia has been either directly or indirectly incurred in connexion with the Northern Territory. Our telegraph line ; part of the line running north ; the railway in the Northern Territory ; the accumulated annual deficits in the Territorial accounts - these have all been built as part of or are due to an Australian policy Under the circumstances it is to be regretted that the Federal Ministry should, perhaps, force the State of South Australia to consider the policy of asking the Imperial Government to relieve them of some of the expense incurred. I did not advocate that policy myself, but if the Federation does not care to assume an actual as well as a moral responsibility, the power of petitioning the Imperial Government to take over the Northern Territory may at least be considered.

Mr O'malley

- The Federal Government will have to take it up.

Mr GLYNN

- I do not wish to further trespass on the patience of the House. If I have spoken at greater length than I intended it may perhaps be that a preliminary reference to some measures of policy will facilitate rather than retard the work of specific legislation. We have a great responsibility before us, the responsibility of justifying the union. The surrender of a portion of the legislative independence of the States was a serious step, taken with reluctance by some, and if with final confidence by many, yet only after half a century of hesitancy and diminishing doubt. It now rests with us to prove by the character of our legislation that the step taken was a wise one. If, as the guardians of administrative purity and popular rights, we fail to set a splendid example of honour and competence to our successors, the union will have to await its justification from men more worthy of unique opportunities; but if, on the other hand, by the display of a delicate sense for the reputation, and a generous solicitude for the welfare, of the people of this young nation, we raise a lofty standard for those who come after us, the union will soon be by all accepted for its promise and welcomed for its beneficence.

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Mr THOMSON

- I do not desire, after the fulness with which the Governor's speech has been criticised, to enter into all the questions that have been dealt with by the speakers who have gone before me. I regret somewhat that there has been a certain vein of provincialism in the speeches on both sides. Probably we are yet too young in this Federal House to altogether forget that we are here largely as representatives of Australia, no matter from what individual State each of us may come. I have no doubt that I myself will make just the mistake others have made until such times as we get accustomed to our new conditions, and while we recognise that the rights of each colony have very properly to be maintained by its representatives, we should try as far as possible, however much we may see the effects of a policy in particular States, not to reflect either on the press or the people of those States. The Prime Minister objected to the criticism of the

leader of the Opposition, saying that the latter had stated there were mistakes of omission and commission here and there in the speech, and that if certain matters had been mentioned, - the absence of which was objected to, he would have objected to their presence in the same way. I am sure the Prime Minister did not realize the effectiveness of some part of the criticism of the leader of the Opposition, or he would not have replied to a large portion of it simply by a remark of that nature. The leader or members of an Opposition can only criticise where there are mistakes of commission or omission in the Governor's speech ; and this particular speech, at any rate, has given opportunity for criticism as to omissions. The Ministry have given us a speech which, according to the admission of the Prime Minister, promises something that cannot be brought into effect for five years, and something which, in my opinion, cannot be brought into effect for ten years, namely, an old-age pension scheme. If this is a speech which professes to provide a policy for a five or a ten years' period, exception could be taken in regard to many other things which have been omitted ; but the fact seems to be that the old-age pension scheme, being a somewhat popular measure at the present time, could not be omitted. The Prime Minister has said that the difficulty or impossibility which now exists of providing funds necessary for this scheme may disappear, and probably will disappear at the end of the five years bookkeeping period ; but I fail to see, and I should like the Prime Minister or his colleagues to point out how this stoppage of the bookkeeping period will have a favorable effect as to the possibility of financing an old-age pensions scheme. The method of bookkeeping simply decides how much of the total customs receipts are to go to each of the individual States, while the Braddon clause decides what portion of those total receipts will go to the States as a whole. Therefore, it is the Braddon clause that must interfere with the financing of an old-age pension scheme, and it is not the removal of the bookkeeping conditions, which can ease the conditions of the Ministry and enable them to find the money necessary for such a scheme. As to the free-trade and protectionist question, of which we have heard a good deal in the debate, I am not going to enter largely into it. The proper opportunity to discuss that fully will be on the introduction of the Tariff by the Ministry, and I will only .reply to the remarks of the Prime Minister, and to those of the member for Bland, who said it was absolutely impossible to have a free-trade policy and to raise the revenue required. To any man that statement would seem to be wrong on the face of it. How can it be possible to raise a given revenue by a protectionist Tariff, which to the extent it is protection, must exclude? How can it be possible by a Tariff which excludes to raise as much revenue and as readily as by u Tariff which does not exclude at all ? It is true there cannot be an ideal free-trade Tariff) any more than there can be an ideal protectionist Tariff, to raise this revenue; but it is not true that you cannot raise the revenue by a Tariff based on free-trade principles. As an instance of that, I would point out that the share which would be required to be contributed by New South "Wales to a Commonwealth revenue of £8,000,000- some £2,800,000, I think is the amount - was actually raised in New South Wales by the Parkes free-trade Tariff.

Sir William Lyne

- Was it not the Dibbs Tariff?

Mr THOMSON

- No, though the amount was afterwards raised under the Dibbs tariff. It was raised by the Parkes Tariff, which I admit had some old duties that had become protective, but to the extent that these were protective they reduced the yielding power of that Tariff, and though not extensive it raised the revenue which would be required under the circumstances indicated. Surely that must be evidence, if we can see the operation of the principle in connexion with a single article, that the difficulty of raising the amount required is reduced, and not increased, by raising it on free-trade principles. If there were an article on which a duty of 3d. per lb. would raise, say £36,000, and if that 3d. absolutely excluded the article, then, viewing it as a prohibitory duty, the protectionist, who is a prohibitionist, would demand the imposition of that duty. Under such a Tariff nothing would come into the Custom house, but some portion of the 3d. would go to the manufacturer ; otherwise he would have no proper claim to have the duty imposed. If, on the other hand, a moderate protectionist came forward and said, " We do not desire a duty of 3d., because 2d. will be quite sufficient, and we can then sell on level terms as against the imported article, and do at least half the trade," then only half of the duty raised by that 2d., namely, some £12,000, would go into the Treasury, and the balance would go to the manufacturers, who said the duty was necessary to enable him to sell on level terms with the importer. If, on the other hand, a duty of 1d. were imposed, which would be a freetrade duty-

Mr Deakin

- A revenue Tariff duty.

Mr THOMSON

- It would be a freetrade duty so long as it did not restrict trade. A free-trade policy does not demand, nor in any country has the principle even been pushed to the extent of demanding, that there should be no customs duties. What is demanded is that customs duties should be imposed so as not to restrict trade.

Mr Higgins

- How is the consumer helped if you still have customs duties of that sort ?

Mr THOMSON

- I will show you how the consumer is helped. In the instance I gave £24,000 would be raised by a 2d. duty. Where the manufacturer produces half of what is consumed, requiring that full 2d. to enable him to do so, the consumer has to pay the whole £24,000, of which only £12,000 goes to the Treasury.

Mr Higgins

- That begs the question.

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Mr THOMSON

- It is a fact ; there is no begging the question, though I quite admit it is not an argument as to the virtues of either free-trade or protection. It is a fact that a free-trade duty of 1d., which would bring in £12,000 and exclude nothing, would put £12,000 into the Treasury, and the consumer would pay only that amount directly or indirectly.

Mr Higgins

- The honorable member assumes that the other £12,000 goes into the pocket of the manufacturer.

Mr THOMSON

- The moderate protectionist says - "Give me a duty which will enable me to compete." You cannot get away from competition. But if the manufacturer says he does not need the duty, why allow it to remain ? It is impossible to get away from that position. In this connexion there was an instance given by the honorable member for Gippsland, who illustrated the fact that Victorian farmers had exported about £4,000,000 worth of produce during three years, whereas the farmers of New South Wales had not produced enough for their own consumption. What need is there for protection on farm produce if the farmers of Victoria can export ?

Mr A McLEAN

- I was replying to the objection that Victoria had shackled natural industries, and I showed that the result of a protective policy had been to enable the farmers here to export largely, whereas in New South Wales, where the farmers were unshackled, they had to import.

Mr THOMSON

- New South Wales without shackles could reap her advantages from other industries.

Mr A McLEAN

- It was the natural industries that were referred to

Mr THOMSON

-When New South Wales, owing to droughts, had to import, her people were saved the outlay which added duties would have imposed, and which they could have ill-afforded to pay in such disastrous times. I remember in the sixties, in this State, listening to some of the speeches delivered in reference to what protection would do for Victoria, and I have no hesitation in saying that the farming industries of Victoria were not produced by protection, but by the great natural advantages which this territory enjoys

Sir William McMillan

- And by the necessity which, owing to the decline in her gold yield, caused her people to adopt that industry.

Mr THOMSON

- I remember the pictures painted of the results that would follow the adoption of a protective Tariff. Victoria was to be made attractive to all the able-bodied people of the colonies. The Tariff was to find employment for all the bread-winners of Victoria and the neighbouring colonies ; and after the lapse of fifteen or twenty years, having accomplished all its beneficent purposes, it was to cease to be necessary, and to disappear from the statute-book. I remember speaker after speaker whom I could name putting

that view forward from the public platform. What has been the result ? Has the Tariff found employment for the bread-winners 1 Has it done for the State of Victoria what was promised at the time of its introduction ?

Mr Mauger

- Where would she have been without it ?

Mr THOMSON

- I do not see that Victoria could have been in a much worse position seeing the rate at which she has lost her bread-winners. Why have they gone?

Mr O'Malley

- She drafted them to New South Wales.

Mr Deakin

- And they returned.

Mr THOMSON

- Now the honorable and learned member cannot say that, nor can he say that a policy has been beneficial to a country when that country has been losing its bread-winners so rapidly.

Mr Deakin

- We would have lost them without it.

Mr THOMSON

- Nonsense. Protection was supposed to be able at a crisis to retain the bread-winner, and it has not done it. Why did they go into New South Wales? '

Mr Deakin

- Cheap land.

Mr THOMSON

- They went to obtain something better. I was in Australia before the honorable member for Melbourne Ports arrived here.

Mr Mauger

- I was born here.

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Mr THOMSON

- I was here even before that. I was here before the gold discoveries of Victoria were made. The honorable member stated that protection was not complete unless it protected the worker also, and that something more was required than a mere protective Tariff. What does that mean if it is carried into effect ? It means that the farmers who can get no protection, the wool producers and miners who can get no protection, are to be made to pay higher prices in order to be able to live in the first place, and as a consequence the protectionist is to come in on their behalf to require an abnormally high rate of wages to counterbalance high prices. The result must be that the industries will become reduced in competition with the rest of the world. That is a condition that must follow.

Mr Deakin

- It does not follow. The cost of living here is not higher than in New South Wales.

Sir William McMillan

- I know we have had to pay more here for everything.

Mr Deakin

- -That is patriotic.

Mr THOMSON

- If the people in New South Wales to-day do not sell their goods cheaper than do the Victorian houses they must be robbing the public, and the public are not such fools to be robbed in that way. Every article you buy in Victoria with the added duty can be bought in bond, less the amount of duty imposed. So that it is absurd to say that in consequence of protection you can live cheaply. If so, where is the need for protection. I do not say that in some countries you cannot live cheaper than in others, but it is not on account of protection. I am not going to delay the House beyond the dinner hour. I will bring my remarks to a conclusion by a reference to the appointment of Mr. Fegan. I should have abstained from criticising that appointment if it had not been defended. If the Prime Minister had admitted that he had made an error and cancelled the appointment, and the Minister for Home Affairs had made a similar confession, I

should have said nothing about it. The defence set up was an absolutely empty one. I object altogether to this system, which would become, unless protested . against, a great danger to the Commonwealth. We wish to maintain our appointments under the Commonwealth pure, and without saying that there was anything impure in connexion with this particular appointment, I do say that we wish, if possible, to remove the appearance of any impurity in connexion with it. The Prime Minister has said that he does not agree with the opinion that all men who are required for the public service of the Commonwealth should be drawn from the public service of the States.

Sir William Lyne

- Nor any sensible man either.

Mr THOMSON

- There may be exceptional cases where it would be desirable to appoint men not in the public service, but I still think that those who have served any State for many years should get consideration when the opportunity arrives, in the same way as a man secures promotion in private employment.

Sir William Lyne

- Such services as those of Mr. Garrard, Chairman of the New South Wales Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board ?

Mr THOMSON

- I do not know what the honorable member is alluding to.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable member knows all about it.

Mr THOMSON

- The Minister for Home Affairs cannot reflect on any appointments I have made. If the State departments have been defective that is all the more reason why the Commonwealth departments should remain pure. If the appointment in question had been that of inspector of coal mines, and Mr. Fegan had been an applicant for it, and some clerk out of an office who had never seen a coal mine had been appointed, what would have been said 1Mr. Fegan would be most eligible as an inspector of coal mines, but the clerk would be entirely ineligible, and no other conclusion could be come to but that the appointment of a clerk under such circumstances would be a most improper one. Without desiring to reflect upon the Government, for the members of which individually I have the highest respect, I say that Mr. Fegan's experience was not such as justified his preferment. The way in which the appointment was cancelled-

Sir William Lyne

- It was never cancelled.

Mr THOMSON

- We know how it was done.

Sir William Lyne

- The honorable gentleman does not. AVe know about the Minister's trip across to Sydney.

Mr THOMSON

- There are authorities on that point besides the honorable member, although, of course, he knows the details.

Sir William Lyne

- I am quite sure the honorable member knows very little about it.

Mr THOMSON

- I know a good deal more about it than the honorable member thinks.

Mr Deakin

- - Why not accept the Prime Minister's word in the matter 1

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Mr THOMSON

- The Prime Minister is not the gentleman I am dealing with. I am dealing with the Minister for Home Affairs, and he has not denied anything. I merely say that we know how the matter was arranged. I would have liked to allude to the South Sea Islands, because I think there were some steps that ought to have been taken in respect to the New Hebrides. .1! quite agree with the Prime Minister that we must be careful not to place any embarrassment in the way of the British Government. However, I shall have another opportunity of dealing with the matter, and I will therefore content myself with saying that, having

had some years of experience in connexion with these islands, I am well aware of the importance, from the point of view of British interests, of looking after the islands, especially as there is a movement in France which otherwise might result in their annexation. My objection to protection being imposed in this newly-federated Australia, I may say, in conclusion, is that once the shackles are imposed there is great difficulty in their removal. I hope, therefore, that the Tariff which the Ministry will submit will not be one that will rivet the shackles of protection on this young Commonwealth.

Mr MAUGER

- I have no desire at this stage of the debate to address the House at any unnecessary length, but I feel that one or two remarks which have fallen from honorable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House are worthy of reply, and notably, some of those which fell from the honorable member for Parramatta. I quite recognise, with the honorable gentleman who last addressed the House, that to go into details in this debate would be a great waste of time. When the great fiscal question comes to be seriously and earnestly debated, we shall have to repeat a number of things which have already been said, so at this juncture I propose to avoid details. I should, however, like to say that the honorable member for Parramatta appears to me to have entirely misrepresented the remarks of the honorable member who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. That honorable member alluded to the great industrial development of America, and, as an illustration of that development, cited the fact that in America it was so great that there had come into existence trusts, such as the iron trust to which he referred.

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member had already quoted Cobden to the effect that England could always command the iron trade.

Mr MAUGER

- The honorable member did not deal with either the good or the evil aspects of these trusts, though at this juncture I may be permitted, while congratulating the leader of the labour party upon his excellent address, to remind him that a number of the labour leaders in America are strongly of opinion that trusts do not always make for evil. It was pointed out at a labour congress held in America last year that, under these large " combines " or trusts, wages are often higher and more constant, and the conditions of employment better than they are in outside manufactories ; and that eminent woman, Miss Frances Willard, who is intimately acquainted with the social life and the labour problems of America, has pointed out that these trusts operate in the direction of securing the reforms which labour leaders are so anxious to bring about. I should like to remind the honorable member for Parramatta that the trusts, even if they do make for evil, are not by any means the creation of protectionist America alone. I hold in my hand a little pamphlet by Henry W. Macrosty, published by the Fabian Society in England, which is entitled "The Growth of Monopoly in English Industry," and I would commend its perusal to my honorable friend. I find there that trusts and combines are making enormous strides in England, particularly in connexion with the cotton, textile, and coal industries. It is stated that -

The Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers Association Limited was registered on 31st March, 1898, with a share capital of £4,000,000, and £2,000,000 additional in debentures.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- £4,000,000, as compared with £220,000,000 !

Mr MAUGER

- I can give the honorable member other illustrations which will show him that the magnitude of these trusts is as great in England as it is in America.

Mr Cook

- No.

Mr MAUGER

- Denial is not proof . My contention is that if you want a remedy against these combines you must look for it apart from the fiscal question. The honorable member for Parramatta spoke of the fearful condition of child labour in America, and held up that country as being the worst place on the face of the earth for child labour.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No, I did not.

Mr MAUGER

- Then I must have misunderstood the honorable member. He said, I thought, that America was in an infinitely worse condition with respect to child labour than was England.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Hear, hear.

Mr MAUGER

- I ask the honorable member if he has read the report on the subject of child labour which was recently presented to the British Parliament ? That document is said to be painful and sickening in the extreme, and contains the names of 147,000 children of school age who are regularly employed in factories, shops, or warehouses either before school, at midday, or after school. The honorable member said that no children under, the age of ten years were connected with the industrial life of England ; but the returns to which I refer show that of the 147,000 children whom I have mentioned 1,120 are under the age of seven years, 8,421 are under the age of nine years, and 11,027 are under the age of ten years. I have not time to read the whole of the report, but I would commend it to the earnest consideration of my honorable friend.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does that report mention that those children are employed in violation of the statute ?

Mr MAUGER

- No; because the statute does not affect them. They are employed in home industries, and therefore factory legislation does not reach them.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They are employed at home?

Mr MAUGER

- Yes, and do a great deal of work in the way of making umbrella tassels, matches, and fancy paper boxes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is surely better that they should be employed at home than that they should be dragged into the mines.

Mr MAUGER

- Where are children dragged into the mines? The honorable member is trying to draw a herring across the trail. I am discussing the condition of child life in England, and am pointing out that, according to a report which has been presented to the House of Commons, the conditions of child life in England are infinitely worse than anything the honorable member can point to in America. The honorable member in his remarks did not refer to mines.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I beg the honorable member's pardon, but I did. I most distinctly referred to mines and to factories.

Mr MAUGER

- Then I answer his statement by saying that, according to the document from which I have just quoted, the conditions of child life in England are infinitely worse than they are in any part of America.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is it worse for children to be employed at home than to be dragged into a mine?

Mr MAUGER

- My honorable friend is shifting his premises. He finds that I have proved my case, and he wants now to go off on a side issue. Another statement made by the honorable member was that Mr. Derham represents the manufacturers of protectionist Victoria. He said, too, that these manufacturers are so dreadfully selfish that they oppose the granting of protection to the workers and operators although they require protection for themselves. But let me tell the honorable member that Mr. Derham in no sense represents the manufacturers of Victoria. He is chairman of a Chamber which does not include one-third of the manufacturers of Victoria. The honorable member for Gippsland, when Premier of Victoria, passed through the State Parliament a measure for the appointment of a large number of wages boards, and he will bear me out in the statement that the vast majority of our manufacturers in the various trades for which these wages boards were appointed have appealed to the Government to be allowed to come

under the provisions and benefits of that Act. Instead of the employers and manufacturers of Victoria¹ opposing that legislation, the majority of them have worked together with their operatives to secure the benefits which arise from it. The honorable member went on to speak about the kanaka labour question, and he pointed out that it was the duty of the Government to take steps to immediately put an end to the importation of kanakas. I would not yield to any man in my desire to see a white Australia, but I should like to remind my honorable friend that the kanaka question is only a very small part of this all-important problem. The Hindoos and the Japanese are as great, and I think a greater, menace to a white Australia than are the kanakas.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - And the Chinamen, too.

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Mr MAUGER

- And the Chinamen, too. The honorable member for Parramatta talked about it being what he called defective loyalty to England for us to impose protective duties, and thus to try to establish workshops in our own country ; but he forgot to carry out his argument to its logical conclusion. Surely, if it is defective loyalty to place duties upon goods imported from England, it is defective loyalty to prevent British subjects from entering Australia. The Hindoo is a British subject, and, if my honorable friend carried out his argument to a logical conclusion, he ought, in loyalty to England, and to the Emperor of India, to allow the Hindoos to come here in hordes to compete with our own people in the sugar and wheat-fields of the continent.

Mr Kingston

-The Hong Kong Chinaman is also a British subject.

Mr MAUGER

- Yes ; but would the honorable member and the members in the labour corner, who profess to be free-traders, advocate the free entry of Chinese into Australia ? I cannot understand how men who are working in the interests of labour can advocate the policy of free-trade. Carried to its logical issue, free-trade in goods must mean free-trade in men, and vice versa.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No.

Mr MAUGER

- The honorable member would prevent the Chinaman, the kanaka, and the Hindoo from entering Australia, and, by so doing, his loyalty would prove to be defective; but he would allow the productions of the kanaka, grown in the Solomon Islands, and the products of the labour of the Hindoo and the Chinaman to come in without restriction.

Mr Thomas

- Would the honorable member allow rice to come in without a duty?

Mr MAUGER

- If the honorable member can show me that rice can be profitably grown in Australia, I shall be willing to put an import duty upon it, but until then I shall be willing to allow it to come in free.

Mr Thomas

- Yet rice is the product of the labour of Chinamen ?

Mr MAUGER

- I would draw the attention of honorable members who would keep out alien labour, and yet admit the productions of that labour, to the April number of the Labour Prophet. That journal is one of the leading labour journals in England. It is a reputable journal, and the official organ of a number of trade unions there. It says -

We learn that the American Consul-General at Shanghai has recently tabulated the rates of pay current amongst various kinds of craftsmen coining under his notice in the large centres of China. Their return for a day's work is as follows : - Blacksmith, 61/2d. ; brassworker, 8d. ; bootmakers, 5d. ; compositors in foreign printing works, 13d. to 26d.

I should like to explain, in regard to the statement about the wages of compositors in foreign printing works, that a number of British printers, in order to take advantage of the cheap labour of Japan, have set up establishments in Japan, and are there printing illuminated scriptural texts and Bibles, and sending

them to England for sale. According to the authority from which I am quoting, the wage paid to the compositors employed in these houses is 13d. a day for 12 hours' labour. I ask my honorable friend how the people of Victoria could compete with labour of that kind. I hold in my hand a pamphlet entitled Labour in the Longest Reign, by Sydney Webb, a gentleman well known to my friends in the Opposition corner. He points out that the compositors in Edinburgh have just fixed a minimum wage at the rate for piece-work of 63/4d. per thousand ens, and a weekly wage of £1 12s. 6d. per week. This is pointed out as being the high-water mark wage for compositors in free-trade Edinburgh. We have just had a wages board completing its work in connexion with the printing trade of Victoria. This board has unanimously fixed a minimum wage for compositors of £2 15s. per week with eight hours a day. How is it possible for the Victorian printer to successfully compete if he pays £2 15s. a week minimum wage for eight hours a day, whilst 32s. 6d. per week is the wage in Edinburgh with a ten hours day ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- That covers the whole ground.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What is the cost of living in each place ?

Mr MAUGER

- If the honorable member looks into the matter, he will see that the necessities of life are cheaper in Melbourne than in Edinburgh. They are cheaper here than in New South Wales in spite of the honorable member's remarks.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member's statement does not make it so.

Mr MAUGER

- In each instance I have given my authority, while the honorable member has made his statements without any authority. The leader of the labour party seemed to regard protection as of secondary importance.

An Honorable Member. - Tenth-rate importance.

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Mr MAUGER

- The honorable member belongs to a party which is continually preaching that we are members one of another, and that we cannot improve the lot of one section of the community without benefiting the remainder. I give second place to no one in my desire to emancipate labour in every possible way. I claim to be as radical in that respect as is any honorable member in the corner opposite. I would ask the honorable member for Parramatta and the free-trade members of the labour party, after all that has been said about benighted Victoria : Can you point to a free-trade country in the world where there are 31,000 operatives, embracing 29 trades, all protected by legislative enactment and provided with a minimum wage? The workmen of New South Wales are clamouring for similar legislation. When I was speaking in Brisbane a demand was made for a similar class of legislation. But in Victoria this legislation is an accomplished fact, and hundreds of thousands of producers have benefited by its operation. Honorable members talk of free - trade England and New -South Wales. Surely you cannot point to a similar condition of things in England or New South Wales that I point out as existing in Victoria If honorable members opposite, instead of taking Mr. Derham's dictum, will investigate the circumstances for themselves, they will find that our operatives are benefited by this legislation, and that others are appealing to the Government to extend it. Not only the operatives, but the employers also are appealing for its extension. AVe have been asked what protection has ever done for Victoria, and I interjected that it had saved Victoria. I say it again deliberately. When Victoria went through her great crisis, when the building trade was brought to a standstill, when the banks and the commercial houses discharged their men - discharged them to an infinitely greater extent than the factories did - the industries established through the agency of protection were the salvation of the country. During that terrible crisis the difficulties were met by the people of Victoria with a resolute determination to overcome them. The statistics show plainly that we have now got over the worst of our troubles. The returns exhibit a decided increase for the last four or five years. I have no doubt that they will continue to do so. During that time of trial and financial disaster, to my personal knowledge, thousands of homes in Victoria were replenished week by week by means of the wages of the operatives of our factories. It was those factories that saved many a

home from disaster, and in that way saved us from national disaster. It was because we had built up industries that gave employment to our sons and daughters, and because we had this means of using up our raw material and enhancing its value to the extent of £10,000,000 a year in our factories by our own workmen that we have got through the crisis as we have done. I think that it will be admitted here, and all over the world, that the people of Victoria deserve credit for their determination to pay their way and meet their obligations to the public creditor to the last farthing. I admit candidly that protection is a variable expedient. To advocate protection for itself is what I have never done, and I do not do so to-night. But I claim that protection has been the means, not only of establishing the industrial life of Victoria, but of helping Victoria through her darkest hour of disaster. As the honorable member for Echuca points out to me, it has been of universal assistance to us.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- AVe got through without it in New South Wales.

Mr MAUGER

- Because New South Wales increased her borrowings, sold her land, and has natural resources which we in Victoria do not possess.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr O'malley

- It is quite true.

Mr MAUGER

- We in Victoria stopped all borrowings at that time, and nearly all public works. New South Wales went on with her borrowings and increased her public works. By-and-by she will have to pay for it. She has not got out of her difficulties yet. She is only beginning to face them.

Mr Thomson

- And New South Wales will do it.

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Mr MAUGER

- I have the fullest confidence that she will. She must do so because of her natural advantages. Look at the immense advantage that New South Wales has in her harbor. Look at the almost untold wealth shipping brings to that country, because Sydney is not a port of call but a port of stay. The fleet is stationed there, and that is the cause of an immense amount of money being spent in that great city. It is of no use making comparisons unless you compare like with like, and the conditions are entirely different in New South Wales and Victoria. I am prepared with figures and facts as to America when we have to discuss this question later on. I would ask, however, if any honorable member of this House can point to a federation in the history of the world that has ever made progress under any other system than that which the members of the Government propose for the Commonwealth of Australia? It is all very well talking of " shackles," but the same argument will apply to every proposed benefit for the working classes. Our factory legislation is, I suppose, a shackle. The authority of Mr. Derham has been quoted. His indictment against our factory legislation is that a number of boys have been displaced by men. But that is what we want !

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No ; that certain trades coming under its operation have been injured.

Mr MAUGER

- Mr. Derham's indictment is nothing of the kind; and if he says what the honorable member alleges, it is untrue, because, in the 29 trades affected, the number employed has increased in nearly every instance. Mr. Derham's indictment is that boy labour is displaced by man labour, and surely that is wanted. If there is any one to walk about the streets out of employment it is better that it should be the boy than the father who walks about. If the Victorian Factories Act has the result that men are taking the place of boys, it is a very good thing.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I hope the honorable member does not think that I am tilting against the Factories Act. I applaud it to the full.

Mr MAUGER

- I did think so, because it appears to me to be absolutely impossible for a logical, free-trader to be in favour of any interference with the laws of supply and demand. John Bright opposed factory legislation in England, and he was a logical free-trader, because he regarded it as an interference with supply and demand falsely so called, and as being in opposition to freetrade.

Mr Higgins

- He also opposed legislation to prevent the adulteration of food.

Mr MAUGER

- He did, and in that he was consistent. I am not going to reply thoroughly to the speech of the leader of the Opposition last night ; but I would remind honorable members opposite from the sister State that one of the last acts of their honorable leader when he was in office, was to sign an official document for- the. appointment of a board to.. inquire into the unemployed, and his words in that document were that - For many .years, and constantly since 1890, the question of the unemployed and what to do with them has been pressing itself upon public notice.

That was two years ago in free-trade New South Wales

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I rise to speak with a considerable feeling of responsibility, because I recognise the fact that the representatives of five of the States are sitting at a distance from their homes, and it ought to be the object of honorable members to conserve time as much as possible. 'Therefore it is not the desire of this side of the House to make any unnecessary or prolonged speeches. AYe may be warned by the Legislative Assemblies of the different States, where very often the early part of the session is taken up with a great deal of irrelevant rhetoric, and some of the most important measures are rushed through at a time when honorable members are anxious to get to their homes. I think on the debate upon the Governor-General's speech it is not our business to go into any technicalities or details, but rather to deal with leading principles and lines of policy But we cannot forget that we are now speaking practically engaged in the first debate in the first session of the first Australian Parliament. When I talk of principles the captious critic may say " the principles you announce are mere worn-out platitudes " ; but if the great question which must necessarily divide this House and the politics of the country - the question of the freedom or restriction of our commerce - is to be the primary question of debate, it is well that we who believe that our principles are founded upon justice, and are the principles of freedom, should enunciate them again, even although they may have been worn out years ago. There are two principles of action in the statement of which I believe' honorable members will agree with me on both sides of the House. The first is that all great national' legislation for Australasia should be founded on broad; democratic principles.. And, secondly, that in dealing with every great question of national, interest on democratic lines, much as we give consideration to the special interests of .different States' and. the. special interests -ofl different sections of society,, when- once- a great- question comes before the whole of the people, ."it. must, be decided -on Australian- lines; Although it. is irrelevant to what I am saying for the moment, I might emphasize what I mean by referring to the question of kanaka labour. I notice in the speech of the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Government the idea that, because the members of a particular State, or the majority of them, enunciate a policy particularly connected with the interests of that State, that should be taken as having proved, the position. I may have put this in rather an exaggerated form, but I want to say at once I dissent from this House, or from the Government, giving up for one moment its responsibility on such grounds. I consider that in every matter of State interests - to avoid the unpleasant expression of " State rights " - members for a particular State should speak out in the Assembly with no uncertain voice. But they should be regarded as witnesses in the case, and as men who are more or less experts and supposed to have a thorough knowledge of the question. This House, in all matters such as that of kanaka labour, must bind down the Government to its own individual responsibility, and, when the witnesses are examined, we must decide who may be interested witnesses, and have an absolutely impartial investigation on the part of the Government in the interests of all Australia. My reason for laying down these principles is that if we are going to be guided in the Government of Australia by democratic principles in this new career of nationhood on which we have entered, the first province of a statesman and of a Government is to find out what are the overwhelming interests of the people of Australia ; and in doing this we must not be guided by any provincial

considerations. The honorable gentleman at the head of the Government said - and I will take this to a certain extent as my text - "It is a pusillanimous thing to confess that you cannot frame a Tariff for all Australia." I say it is a pusillanimous thing if you cannot ; and we hold that the only Tariff that can be framed for all Australia is a Tariff that meets the wants and necessities of the great majority of the people of the continent. In dealing with this question of free-trade and protection, I do not want for a moment to be looked on as a political fanatic. I am not going to gird at any one colony or any one State of Australia. We are all proud of the growth of Australia as a whole, and whether an Australian State take upon itself the policy of free-trade or protection, I believe that State, in spite of any policy, with British energy and the spirit of British freedom, would be a successful State. "All we hold is that the policy which we enunciate for all Australia, the policy of commercial freedom, is the best, and we can prove that in the first place, from the instance of New South Wales. That State had fiscal barriers against it in the other five States - every border and every port was closed against her - and yet she stands to-day, by fair comparison, equal if not greater, and we hold she is greater, in prosperity than any other State of the group. But I want to get away from unnecessary rhetoric, and I want members of the House, perhaps for the first time, to broaden their vision a little and see what are the industries of Australia. We know well enough, especially in political life, that men are governed very much by phrases. In the State of New South Wales there was very little of a protectionist party with us about 20 years ago when protection first began to make headway. Owing partly to the influence of Victoria, we were told that it was a national policy to support natural industries, and that there were certain industries which it was necessary to support. Now, if there are any industries that are natural industries to Australia, they are the industries of the great majority of the people, and I would like to show you how the people of this continent are occupied. It is a marvellous state of affairs for scarcely 4,000,000 of people ; but the result is that in the year 1899 the total wealth produced in Australia, from every source, was £112,000,000. Let us see who produced that wealth, and the character of the people who produced it, and then, perhaps, my right honorable friend at the head of the Ministry may review his opinion with regard to who are the majority of the people of the country and what are the majority of the industries which require consideration. We have from agriculture, £17,920,000; from pastoral industries, £33,000,000 ; from dairying, £8,000,000 ; from mining, £22,000,000 - I am giving round numbers - and from forests and fisheries we have £2,366,000. Out of this £112,000,000 only £28,000,000 are raised from manufactures, and from the £28,000,000 we must deduct £9,000,000 in respect of the industries of New South Wales which have grown up without any State coddling. The result is that out of the £112,000,000 produced by the people of this country, less than £20,000,000 have been produced by manufactures, and yet we are asked under this Government to give up a purely revenue Tariff and adopt a differentiated system of duties, which, if once imposed, can probably never be removed. The people who created nearly £100,000,000 of wealth in Australia are asked by this Government and by protectionists throughout the continent, to shackle themselves for the sake of supporting people who have produced £20,000,000. When we come to this question of manufactures, you must recollect that the first great act for free-trade was made when the colonies were united. The moment a uniform Tariff is imposed in Australia every border and every port throughout the continent will be free. And what about the people who have been producing in all parts of Australia? What about people who have been protected under a system of State protection? We hear nothing at all about them ; but from these people there was collected £1,131,000 in the way of taxation in the year 1899, and that taxation was supposed to be, on the protectionist principle, a great boon to them. The moment federation is accomplished, and especially when the uniform Tariff is enacted, not one farthing of protection goes to those people. Therefore, when you talk about giving a certain amount of consideration, say particularly to the industries of Victoria - when you say it would be an act of vandalism to attempt to kill those industries which have grown up under protection - you forget altogether about those hundreds and thousands of people who have been deprived of protection by the very act of federation. But I maintain there is a natural protection on this Australian continent. The thousands of miles we are away from England and Europe are a natural protection which is quite sufficient, and enables us to dispense with any mollycoddling from the State. I had a letter before I left" Sydney from one of the principal furniture manufacturers there, and he said that in the freight and charges in that business there is an enormous protection.

Mr Mauger

- That is the most bulky business the honorable member could possibly choose.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am told that the protection in this trade, through the freight and charges, is from 17£ to 40 per cent.

Mr Mauger

- Could the honorable member have a more bulky business than the furniture business ?

Sir William Mcmillan

- I will take every business, and if you want an illustration, the whole of the manufacturers, with one or two exceptions, in New South Wales are absolutely against the imposition of ad valorem duties. Naturally they know that any State system of mollycoddle means the creation of artificial business, unreasonable and improper competition, and means very soon, by the natural order of things in such a limited market as Australia, absolute glut, and destruction to their interests.

Sir John Forrest

- New South Wales has a protective duty in her sugar industry.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Again we are told that it is absolutely necessary to protect industries in the different States. Let us think for a moment of the principle that has led to a large extension of protection in the different States. That principle has been the principle of retaliation, and those duties in neighbouring States would either have been reduced or removed if it had not been for the consistent and increasing spirit of protection in the colony in which we now reside. Therefore, if you have done away with your border duties, if we are all one people now, and under the Commonwealth no State can give preference as against another State, the very principle which created the antagonism being destroyed, one-half of the reasons for having any consideration for certain industries has been removed. We are told it will be necessary to have a large free list, and that there will have to be differential duties in order to protect the industries of Victoria. I do not think I am wrong in saying that is the policy of the Ministry, and I say most distinctly that it is not the policy of a revenue Tariff. I say that the only principle, upon which we can carry out a revenue Tariff is by uniform duties, because the more we increase our free list the greater must be the duties on the other commodities. Honorable members must recollect that if we once allow the principle of differentiation in our Tariff, we allow the principle of prohibition. Why do we put 10 per cent, on one article and 20 per cent., on another!

Simply because it takes 10 per cent, to keep out one commodity, and 20 per cent, to keep out another. Therefore, if there is any attempt to differentiate in these ad valorem duties, you accept the full spirit of protection, you get the logic of prohibition, and you cease to have your revenue.

Mr Kingston

- Is the honorable member contending for a uniform drag-net ?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am contending for a uniform rate of duties as the only mode of dealing with a revenue Tariff. Further, I will tell you why this is necessary. I think honorable members desire that when once we establish a Tariff during this session it should not be disturbed for a reasonable period. Honorable members connected with trade and commerce know that nothing can be more disastrous to the progress of a country, especially a country like ours, than tinkering with the Tariff at every possible moment. But the difference between a Tariff with uniform duties and a Tariff with differentiated duties is that when we get a uniform Tariff we come down to the lowest bedrock rate of duty possible. When you get that, and when it has no protective incidence, the Treasurer can depend on his revenue in a way in which he can never depend upon it with differential duties. If we create a system of differential duties giving an advantage to one commodity over another, then we will never know what revenue is coming in, and instead of having a Tariff fixed all round at a certain rate of duty, we will continually have to alter the Tariff to the detriment of the trade and commerce of the country.

Sir William Lyne

- Do I understand the honorable member to advocate ad valorem duties without a free list?

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I am not sure, but at the present moment I am rather inclined to think that if you do not exclude any duties from your ad valorem you get at the lowest rate of ad valorem that is possible. In other words, with

an (ad valorem duty all round, you would be able to keep it at a limit of probably 10 per cent.

Mr Kingston

- Is the honorable member including narcotics and stimulants ?

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Not at all. I know exactly what I am talking about. Take the total at £8,000,000 - and I think it was an under-estimate on the basis of the trade and commerce of the country in 1899- you would get £4,000,000 from narcotics and stimulants; you could probably get £2,000,000 from specific duties on thoroughly free-trade principles. You would not require, if these figures are right, as a basis more than 10 per cent, upon the other merchandise. That 10 per cent, would be far more expansive than differentiated duties with a large free list. It would be a purely revenue Tariff to bring in money to the State. Honorable members must recognise that there is another well-known principle in this controversy : the more we increase the rate on our ad valorem the greater will be the amount collected out of the pockets of the people which will not go into the Treasury of the State. In other words, a 10 per cent, duty which goes into the Treasury means, when the wholesale man puts his profit upon it and adds his interest and the retail man in turn adds his profit, that not less than 12 or 15 per cent., and, possibly 20 per cent., to the ultimate consumer.

Mr Barton

- Can the same thing be done with specific duties? Can the profit be charged on in the same way ?

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- The profit may be charged on in the same way. Specific duties ought, to be very restricted, because any specific duty is practically unfair in its incidence. The other night the honorable gentleman, who is the father of this House, twitted me rather unfairly with regard to a statement I made in one of my speeches during the federal election campaign. I never said what he quoted me as having said. What I said was - and I am prepared to take my stand as a free-trader to-night on my principles - that owing to the exigencies of this transition from State Government to Federal Government, owing to the effect of the provision introduced by my honorable friend Sir Edward Braddon, owing to all the conditions which surround us at the present time, and in fairness to the financial exigencies of the State of Victoria we must raise for some years to come a sum equal to £8,000,000 of money. But I said also that if out of that £8,000,000 there can be raised, say, £6,000,000 on purely free-trade lines, when the time comes, I would advocate the cutting-off of these ad valorem duties and throwing upon the States the necessary collection of that amount of revenue. In this free-trade controversy a great deal of blindness is shown with regard to the real principles upon which the prosperity of a free

State depends. Most gentlemen, especially of the oratorical class, have dealt effectively with the question of taxation. Now the question of free-trade involves two principles. It involves the principle of taxation and the principle of the freedom of our ports. Does anybody imagine ' that the shifting of £800,000 of ad valorem duties in New South Wales from one kind of taxation to another brought about the prosperity of that country ? No, it was the freedom of our open ports ; because honorable members must recollect that as long as duties are confined to stimulants and narcotics, and certain specific duties which are well known from the outside of their packages, the area of the Custom house officer is kept within very small boundaries. But once begin that vicious system of ad valorem duties and we immediately ransack the whole of the merchandise of the country, double and treble our Custom house officers, and instead of our ports being free to the world, our commerce is restricted at every point. It is to freedom of commerce, the non-restriction of our ports, that New South Wales owes very largely, notwithstanding the droughts she has experienced, and all the evils afflicting her, to which reference has been made - for she has had her calamities as well as Victoria - the prosperity which she enjoys to-day - a prosperity shown in every line of the statistics of Coghlan, in comparing the seven colonies of Australasia. Therefore, without any fear of being put down as a dreamer, I say that I shall struggle as long as I have the honour to be a member of this Australian Parliament, not merely to reduce duties, but to do away with every species of ad valorem, for the removal of every restriction on the ports of Australia.

Mr Kingston

- Yet the honorable member's proposal is to tax every pennyworth of goods imported.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- If it is necessary to introduce this system at all, I do not see why the taxation should not be distributed throughout the country. I do not see why every industry should not pay. I know that the principle of the honorable gentleman opposite is not to tax the raw material, but in dealing with this question we have to deal with all the interests of Australia, and all her industries, and if by a uniform duty we reduce the taxation to the smallest possible rate, then it must bear less heavily upon the bulk of the people than any scientific system of differentiated duties. What do you do ? Under what is called a revenue Tariff you propose - and I do not think it will be contradicted - to make a large free list, and then to create duties probably of from 15 to 20 or 30 per cent. Do honorable members mean to tell me that a high scale of duties will not be reflected in the price of commodities throughout the country? We want to encourage the natural industries of the country, such as the mining and agricultural industries ; we want to help the men on the soil, the men who make nine-tenths of the wealth of this country. AU these great natural industries are now exporting, and the moment they begin to export no Ministry in all the world can help them with ad valorem duties, because they would have to deal with the commerce of the whole world. The price of coal in Melbourne may be affected by the price of coal in Singapore, the price of wheat in Sydney may be affected by the price of wheat in Chicago, and it is absolute nonsense to talk about increasing the wealth of the people under any form of protection. What have the people of this country come out here to do? Have they come here to mollycoddle a few manufacturers? Nothing of the kind. The facts I have quoted show that nine-tenths of the people of this country are engaged in its natural industries. With Inter-State free-trade,, every State being now an exporting State, not wanting to draw one from the other, except perhaps in the case of sugar - with that state of affairs in existence, you have no right to tax everything these people wear, every reaping machine, every bit of agricultural machinery they use. On principles of pure democracy, you have no right to institute a system of government by which nine-tenths of the people are taxed for the sake of one-tenth. The honorable member for Corio used another of those phrases which are very commonly employed in this great controversy. He said, " Australians want work, and wages." Well, Australians can get work and wages only in proportion to the amount of the great wages fund which is at their disposal in the country. We free-traders believe that every industry that a man undertakes - every legal occupation - is equally worthy of consideration. We believe that the man who carries goods down to the wharf in his cart is carrying on a colonial industry just as much as the man who manufactures boots. If we, by a policy of freedom, not merely unshackled the fetters of our people in the far interior, who are developing the really natural industries of the country, but also create" an external commerce which means the handling of a large quantity of goods ; if, by doing away with every tax upon industry that can be done away with we enable our people to produce and to get money for their productions, surely we give employment to them and foster commerce and industry.

Mr Mauger

- A nation was never built up on commerce alone.

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- Speaking from memory, the difference between the imports and exports of Victoria and New South Wales is about £20,000,000, and it is in favour of New South Wales. Do honorable members mean to say that that £20,000,000 worth of trade is done without the handling by individuals of the articles of commerce which it comprises ? Do they mean to say that our ports can be full of ships, and that our great metropolis could grow and continue to exist without increasing the wages fund from which the people are fed?

Mr A McLEAN

- I presume that the difference to which the honorable member refers is the difference in external commerce, and that he takes no account of internal commerce.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I thank the honorable member for the interruption. I shall analyze the commerce of Australia for him ; and I shall bring exactly the same arguments to bear in regard to it which I brought to bear in regard to the production of the continent. The commerce of Australia in 1899 was, according to Mr. Coghlan, worth £140,000,000 ; but, in dealing with these figures, we must bear in mind a fact which will very soon disappear, but which enters very largely into all statistics concerning past years - the fact that the inter-trading of the States is practically doubled by the statisticians, because they give the whole volume

of the commerce backwards and forwards. If you take from the £140,000,000 to which I refer £30,000,000, or half of the stated Inter-State trade, you have left £110,000,000, and that amount represents approximately the commerce of Australia for 1899. Let us see what that trade is : £47,000,000 is put down as the value of the export trade of the continent, and £30,000,000 as the value of the Inter-State trade.

Mr Mauger

- What does the £47,000,000 represent ?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Articles exported beyond Australia ; though I do not suppose that even Victorians will argue that this State sends her manufactures to other parts of the world. The imports from the outside world amount to £33,000,000, so that I have divided the commerce of the country into three parts - the Inter-State trade, the export trade to other countries, and the import trade from other countries.

Mr Crouch

- But the honorable member leaves out of account the internal trade of each State.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The internal trade in this case is comprised in the Inter-State trade.

Mr Mauger

- Not necessarily.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The internal trade is the trade arising from the production and manufacturing industries of each State, and there is very little difference between the two things when you take away the export trade of the States. Eliminating a certain proportion of the molly-coddled industries of the State of Victoria, there is very little difference between the internal trade of New South Wales and the internal trade of Victoria.

Mr Kingston

- If the honorable member were dealing with America, would he sweep away in the same manner the whole of the internal trade of the country ?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am trying to explain that, from every point of view, a protective policy suits the interests of only a minority of the people of Australia.

Mv. Mauger. - Yet the majority vote for it.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Out of the £110,000,000 which represents the trade of Australia, £77,000,000 practically represents the natural production of the country, and £33,000,000 represents its imports.

Mr Mauger

- What does the honorable member regard as the natural production of the country ?

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The production which comes from the soil, and from the occupations in which every large body of civilized people engage wherever they may be living. The great cry of the protectionists is that you must give employment to the people. But any system which reduces the wages fund of the people necessarily gives less employment than a free and unrestricted system, which not only opens up internal trade, but also brings about a large amount of trade and commerce with the outside world.

Mr MAUGER

- What does the honorable member mean by a wages fund ?

Mr Cook

- The honorable member is not an economic primer.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I do not intend to say very much more on the fiscal question, except to remark that we on this side of the chamber advocate a principle which the last elections throughout Australia have, to a large extent, maintained. I shall deal with the statement in regard to the fiscal views of the various members of the two Houses which the leader of the Opposition made to the House. I am quite aware that many a man who calls himself a free-trader may take a very different view of free-trade from that which I take, and I quite allow that many a man who talks about a revenue Tariff does not know what a revenue Tariff is. I have

always sympathized with the Prime Minister when his critics in New South Wales have girded at him for not being more specific in his statement of policy. I have said that he was a moderate man, and that if his own counsels prevailed, we should probably have a moderate Tariff. But I knew very well that if we allowed the free-trade flag to droop, if we did not fight for free-trade pure and simple throughout Australia, or for a Tariff for revenue purposes only, there would be nobody to watch the right honorable gentleman, and I knew perfectly well that if he had a majority of 25, instead of a possible majority of ten, those very strenuous members of the Government who have been pledged to extreme protection till their lives would have forced his hand, no matter whether it was a question of revenue or not. They would have said, "Here is our chance to impose a scientific system of protection. We can take as our example Canada, America, and almost every country in the world, with the exception of Great Britain ; and, once imposed, vested interests will arise which will make it impossible to take off these duties. " I hold most distinctly that, according to the statistics, only a very small proportion of the industries of Victoria, or of any of the States, has grown up under the policy of protection, and would not live unassisted. The fact that in New South Wales we have almost as many men employed in manufactories as are employed in Victoria in similar manufactories proves absolutely that industries can rise and prosper without any molly-coddling by the State.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We make more boots in New South Wales than they make in Victoria.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that about 60,000 men are employed in New South Wales, and about the same number in Victoria in similar industries, and that 20,000 of those employed in Victoria are employed in industries which to a large extent have been uplifted by the action of the State in imposing duties upon imports. I am not such a fool as to say that there are not in Victoria industries which would die if they had not protection, and which have been absolutely created by protection ; but when a fair statistical examination shows that there are about the same number of men employed in manufactories in New South Wales without protection as are employed in similar manufactories in Victoria with protection, it must follow that only to a small number of those industries is protection absolutely necessary. If 20,000 men are employed in such industries, they represent only 100,000 persons at the most, while the population of Victoria is about 1,100,000. Every principle of democracy requires that the majority should be considered, and this is not a small majority ; it is an overwhelming majority. On the principles of democracy, to which these honorable gentlemen appeal ad nauseam, on those pure principles of Australian government, there is no ground for a pro protectionist policy or the policy of this Government.

Mr Mauger

- Only if the majority of the people ask for it.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I say that the majority are deluded if they have asked for it, and that they are carrying into this Parliament the same provincial ideas which have been the curse of fiscalism in this country.

Mr Barton

- If the majority are deluded, the honorable member has said that that majority are for a revenue Tariff.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I say that the majority of the people of this country, and the majority of the industries, will get no protection whatever, and that on the purest principles of democracy the large majority . of the people should be those whose interests are considered. Now, there is a reference to the public service in the GovernorGeneral's speech. My right honorable friend, in referring to this particular matter, put the extreme view with regard to the liability of the Government towards the public service of the country. I say that the public service of Australia has the first claim on the appointments that have to be made. Although we are creating a new Government, we are simply taking over transferred services ; and, that being so, we are, to a large extent, taking over the machinery from the other States. It would be a bad principle for us to adopt that the public service we are creating for this purpose should have their ambition curtailed in regard to the very highest offices of the State.

Mr Barton

- I may inform my honorable friend that the civil service in the transferred services have already taken over, and are members of the civil service of the Commonwealth.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I am speaking of those higher posts in the Commonwealth - the permanent heads. The Government have a perfect right, if, having exhausted the service, they find there is no man fit for a position, to put in a stranger ; but they should see that the public service is exhausted before any stranger is included. As regards kanaka labour, I must say that I do not consider the position taken up by many honorable members - and in this I disagree with members on my own side of the House - has been one that would appeal to the instincts of true politicians. It was only on 1st January last that we became a United Australia ; and when we consider that in a majority of the constituencies very few persons understand anything whatever about this kanaka question, it is entirely premature to give any absolute and final word upon a matter affecting a great industry and thousands of human beings. I shall probably be found voting ultimately for some wise measure that may be introduced, and I believe I can trust my right honorable friend, the Prime Minister, and his Government to carefully weigh this matter before doing anything decisive. At the same time we represent 3,500,000 of the democracy of the south, and we are dealing with a tropical country, with peculiar conditions, and with an enormous industry, and the fact that a majority of members returned from this particular State representing a certain opinion should, it is said, satisfy the Government. But I hold . that there ought to be an inquiry; that we ought to be in a position to have an absolutely unprejudiced opinion from the Government upon the question ; and that we ought to stay our hands until we have that opinion before us.

Mr Fisher

- Would the honorable member not take the opinion of the people in that case 1

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I do not allow that this question was properly before the people of this country. I do not allow that when the Premier went to Queensland in the excited atmosphere of a general election it was possible for him to get at the real state of affairs. You would really think, to hear some of the talk on this subject, that within six months, or even twelve months, the whole of Queensland would be overrun with black labour. It is not a question like another question, which is much more vital, connected with Chinese or the Afghans or Hindoos. It is not a question of hordes of people coming here - very improper people for such a purpose I will allow - settling amongst us, breeding amongst us, intermixing with us possibly. It is a question of special labour for special purposes under strict administrative control. It is labour which some of the best men think absolutely necessary, not for the sake of the kanakas - although the interest of the kanakas should be looked after as human beings, and there are about 9,000 of them, I believe - but for the 20,000 white people who are engaged in the sugar industry. If you examine the question at the present time you will find in the evidence of able men on both sides absolutely contradictory opinions. I do not give an opinion at all. I say that, seeing that we were only united on 1st January - seeing that six months have not elapsed since we became a Commonwealth - it is unwise, unfair, and unstatesmanlike to proceed with a matter of this kind, affecting the industrial life of certain people, although they are only a portion of a State, until we have placed before us by the Government of Australia some evidence upon which we can act like statesmen.

An Honorable Member. - Does the honorable member support the amendment ?

Sir william mcmillan

- i have nothing to do with the amendment. It was proposed entirely and solely on the responsibility of the honorable member for Parramatta, without any consideration being given to it by other members of the party. I think that before this debate closes sufficient information will be given to allow my honorable friend to withdraw that amendment. I have understood that the paragraph in the speech is worded as it is because there were certain contracts existing with regard to the supply of kanaka labour, and that it is impossible to prohibit the labour at the present moment, or until those contracts cease.

Mr McDonald

- Tell us what contracts there are.

Sir william mcmillan

- Of course, you may be able to compensate these people. I take it that in no matter of national interest

like this would any man in this House desire to break any contract without the fullest compensation.

Mr McDonald

- No contracts exist.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- There was another question referred to in the Governor-General's speech, namely, that of industrial disputes. I believe that the Constitution forbids a law upon this subject, except one relative to disputes that reach from one State and overlap into another. I am sorry for that. I have been convinced more and more since I had the honour of a seat in the Convention that that question ought to have been relegated entirely to the Federal Parliament. I think that, just as we want equality of trade, we also want equality of conditions of industry. It would be a fatal tiling to have one State making restrictive laws, from the best intentions, and another State trying to be a little more clever in not making such restrictive laws.

Mr Higgins

- The honorable member would vote for having one factory law, would he?

Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- I have come to the conclusion that legislation as to factory laws, industrial disputes, and old-age pensions, should emanate from the Federal Parliament. But, as to industrial disputes, you do not want to create boards of conciliation by compulsion. You want to give opportunities for employers on the one side and unions of employes on the other side to come together under contract ; and you want to have a law and a judicial procedure by which that contract can be fulfilled and carried out under penalties. You do not want a system of industrial arbitration under which one man has to pay and the other man can snap his fingers. Then there is the question of banking. Many of these questions cannot be considered during the present session. 'Banking is one of the questions that might be left over. It is a question which will require a great deal of consideration and of impartial evidence. I know very well the sort of glamour felt by some honorable members and by people in this country who call themselves democrats with regard to banking - people who, if asked to define what a democrat is, could not tell you anything about it.

Mr McDonald

- The honorable member knows, I suppose ? sir william mcmillan.- i suppose the opposite to myself is a democrat. J. have often been told that I am a Tory. It was a certain satisfaction to me not very long ago, when my right honorable friend the Prime Minister was in London, that two such Tories as Sir Josiah Symon and myself were almost alone in Australia in standing out for the autonomous right of Australia to govern herself and interpret her own laws.

Mr Kingston

- Very much to the honorable member's honour, too.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I was saying that some gentlemen are very fond of certain things which are nebulous at present - such as State Banking, such as the note currency being entirely in the hands of the Government, and other matters which may seem of national concern and very right on the surface. But it requires a great deal of consideration before such matters are entered into ; and, before any step is taken to disturb or affect such enormous capital as that represented by the banks, there should be the fullest inquiry and the completest information given by those institutions and those who represent them, in order that we may know clearly and distinctly the policy of which they would approve.

Mr O'Malley

- The Canadian system is the best.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- We also have a word on the public debts. I suppose it is always a delightful thing to get rid of your debts. But in this case particularly it is a matter of great difficulty. The only reason in the minds of some people for taking over the debts is that they have a vague idea that the moment the debts are taken over and consolidated, some great advantage will ensue to the States. The idea, further, is that the conversion of the debts would mean the saving of some millions of money in interest by means of the reduction of the rates. There is no such possibility at the present time. All the debts have been accumulated under certain conditions. Unfortunately for ourselves, in one sense, our credit stands almost equal to that of any country in the world at the present time ; and the people of England are not such fools as to convert our debts for

a lesser rate of interest than they are now receiving. Now, as to the claim of the right honorable gentleman, the King of the West, with regard to a railway between Western Australia and the other States, I have to say that the whole question of the transfer of the railways to the Commonwealth is one that ought to be considered, because this question of a railway to the West, and of a national line to the North, might be better understood when moulded with the whole system of Australian railways. It is possible to create a nonpaying Hue in a large system, because the former acts as a feeder in the first place, and you can afford, with the profit of the large system, to wait for profit from the particular section. If you do not first consider the transfer of the railways, when you come to talk of transferring them, with a very large cumbersome line such as that of Western Australia, which can never pay for years and years, you may find more difficulty.

Mr Poynton

- How does the honorable member know ?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I might say to the honorable member in reply - "What are you going to bring along the line?"

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member will hear later on.

Sir John Forrest

- The member for Wentworth has not thought the matter out.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I know my right honorable friend, the member for Swan, is almost an almighty, and I believe that when this railway is constructed, he will probably have a watering cart in connexion with it, and then we shall find herbage growing and settlement taking place all the way along the route.

Sir John Forrest

- We have brought water 350 miles already.

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Sir WILLIAM MCMILLAN

- There is another question of great national importance, and that is the question of the Pacific Islands. The people of Victoria have, I think, watched more closely this question of the Pacific Islands than have the people of any other State. There was our late revered friend, Mr. James Service, who was one of the greatest of federal politicians, and whose name must go down with that of Sir Henry Parkes in everlasting memory. He was particularly anxious that as far as possible within a certain area British rule should exist absolutely. But in dealing with a question like this, we are practically intermediary and not primary movers ; because, after all, it is a question for the British Government. At the same time, the information and public feeling must come from us, and I re-echo what an honorable member said in this debate, that any attempt, such as that proposed by Mr. Seddon, to create another Federation in the Southern seas must be ultimately fatal to the integrity of the British Empire. What we have to do is to create strong areas of federated States within certain geographical limits. I believe the future of the British Empire will mean, together with the central Government, a great confederation of Canada, a great confederation of South Africa, and a great confederation of Australia. AVE can work with Great Britain because of the marvellous conciliation that has been shown by her Ministers in years gone by as the fruit of the great struggle for independence in America over 100 years ago. And it is not likely any unreasonable claims will be made on us, or that there will be any Imperial blunders. But if we create another Federation alongside ourselves in the Pacific, we create possible differences between two Federations in the same geographical area; and if there is friction between two of the outlying parts of the British Empire, it will be almost impossible for British conciliation to prevent a rupture. Therefore I do hope in the first place that a modus vivendi will be created by which New Zealand may be able to come into the Commonwealth of Australia, and that ultimately New Zealand, Fiji, Australia, and the Islands of the Pacific will be one great federated power, strong in itself and strengthening to the empire. I must apologize for being led, perhaps a little too much, into the details of the fiscal question. But I feel very strongly that that question is one which every honest protectionist will allow is of vital importance. After all, when you come to analyze the position, we have taken over two great powers, namely, defence and commerce ; and as we are an industrious people, and our industries depend upon the regulation of commerce and the laws connected with it, there can be nothing more vital to the interests of the people of Australia than this great fiscal question. I hope the

debate will continue when we have the real policy of the Government before us with the same friendly feeling and same courtesy which has animated the discussion during the last few days. Let us give each other credit for honest convictions. I can understand a man who has an honest conviction as a protectionist, and I can understand men who, like myself, believe that underlying this question of free-trade is the great principle for which the liberals of England fought for 100 years. I feel that underlying this principle of free-trade is the principle of freedom which has made us, the people in Australia, what we are, that principle of freedom which animated English statesmen, taught by the occurrences in America 100 years ago to leave us to our own natural development. That same principle has acted on us in leaving us to freedom in the development of our national manhood, and it has resulted in the great consummation of this Commonwealth to-day. I carry this principle of freedom through all my political life and through all my political thought, and I say that, in dealing with a great people like the people of Australia, and in dealing with a great continent like this, of enormous natural resources, you must be sure that you do not divert industry from natural channels, and put it into unnatural and restricted channels. An honorable member to-day twitted us because at a certain period of our life in New South Wales we had to buy some hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of produce from Victoria ; but there is one thing we have always found about Victoria, and that is, we can never get anything out of the State without paying for it. You may depend on it, that, as in the case of those men who, according to some gentlemen, went to the Western State from Victoria with their pockets well lined with gold, Victoria got the gold, and probably 20 per cent, too much, for what she gave to us on that occasion. But it is, after all, the same principle. Why did we have to buy from you?

What were our people doing at that time ? Were they idle ? Were they unemployed ? Were they getting less wages than the people who grew the cabbages ? Our people were employed in mining, in agriculture, and in every natural industry in the State - industries which had grown up from natural causes ; and, you may depend upon it, we were not going to send our coal-miners, who were earning £3 and £4 a week, to grow cabbages here at £2.

Mr Watkins

- The honorable member knows that that is not correct.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- It is absolutely correct.

Mr Watson

- I say it is not. How many hundreds went to Western Australia ?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- The liberty which we enjoy, the liberty of autonomous government in Australia, is derived from the same principle of freedom which we acknowledge throughout trade and commerce. It is the principle which has allowed us to develop in every State along our own particular line. It is the spirit of freedom given to us by England, who even allows us to put a tax on her own industry ; and I believe that when we who support commercial freedom create, as we will, even allowing we are a minority, public opinion in Australia - when all these provincialisms are not merely destroyed by law, but are destroyed by the complete fusion of a homogeneous people - I believe a national opinion and a national sentiment will arise in Australia, and that we shall ultimately look on these days of provincialism and trade restriction as days of darkness. We intend to proclaim our policy. We do not want to be obstructive. We do not want to be continually moving resolutions to alter the Tariff when it has once been created. But we want to tell you to-night - those who may be for a period in this Parliament - that as free-traders we intend to fight for that freedom of commerce, which we believe to be the real liberty at the basis of all our institutions.

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Mr WATKINS

- I have listened with some degree of attention to the various speeches delivered "on the Address in Reply, and although assertion after assertion has been made by speakers that they intended to lift the debates in the Federal Parliament far and above those which previously took place in the State Parliaments, I think it must be admitted by members generally that we have had nothing but a State parliamentary debate so far as the fiscal question is concerned. We have had gentlemen on the opposition benches, for instance, telling the Government that so long as they bring in a revenue Tariff there will be no opposition from them ; but I am at a loss to exactly understand what some of those

gentlemen mean by a revenue Tariff. For instance, the member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, has pictured to us the Tariff of England, where they have but very few items on the ad valorem, list, and almost immediately following came the speech of the member for Wentworth, who asks the Government to tax every conceivable article that comes in to Australia. Then again, we have the speech of the right honorable gentleman who has the honour to lead the Opposition, and he has led the debate by trying to fight the question of free-trade and protection on the old lines on which it has been fought all along, although he from time to time told the people of New South Wales he considered the fight was over when the Covention Bill was passed. The right honorable gentleman made a statement in his own State Parliament to the effect that when he went over to support the Bill, on the occasion of the second referendum, he admitted he was giving up the one principle of his life - the principle of freetrade - but that it was one of the sacrifices lie was prepared to make for federation. If that were true then, it is doubly true today. If it were true then that a certain amount of revenue was to be provided - and Ministers will admit they require a little more than they expected at that particular time - it is true today. As to what is termed a revenue Tariff, I think it is generally accepted that the easiest possible revenue Tariff is to tax more heavily those things which cannot be produced in the State than those which can. I admit you will get more revenue by such a system of taxation ; but if we go in for a system of taxation on these lines how is that going to affect the producers of Australia, as against producers in other parts of the world \ I would here remind my honorable friends from New South Wales who have been complaining in regard to the newspapers of Victoria that, while I know nothing so to speak of the metropolitan newspapers- of Melbourne, they should not forget that they have their own official organ, the SydneyDaily Telegraph, and the metropolitan legislators of New South Wales at any rate are somewhat afraid of their own particular press. The Sydney Daily Telegraph, only a week or two ago, published a list of duties which the editor considered should form a revenue-producing Tariff. What was that list ? An ad valorem Tariff of 1 5 per cent, on some articles, 1 2 per cent, on others, and a 10 per cent, on still others, a certain list of specific duties, and also a free list. And on that particular free list was the item of printing paper.

Mr Poynton

- The same thing applies in Victoria now.

Mr WATKINS

- Well I am not justifying it for one moment.

An Honorable Member. - Surely the honorable member believes in a free press.

Mr WATKINS

- I do not believe in a press that is always attempting to belie the position of affairs before the people.

An Honorable Member. - The honorable member must condemn the Melbourne Age then.

Mr WATKINS

- As I have said before, I have not had any experience of the Victorian press. What I have not yet heard the Ministry say is that they are prepared, at least to get a little revenue by taxing these newspaper proprietors for carrying their newspapers over various parts of the Commonwealth. I believe it will be found, at least so far as New South Wales is concerned, that the Federal Government will be asked to pay to the State Government a sum amounting to nearly £70,000 a year for the carriage of letters in the State. The biggest portion of that amount is spent in special trains, which are run for the purpose of carrying the metropolitan press of Sydney over the country lines of New South Wales. I think that constitutes a bonus in every . sense of the word. Whilst these newspaper proprietors are prepared to keep up this fiscal fight to the advantage of their own pockets, they are at all times ready to go to the Government of the country for assistance. I take it that this question and the question of the expulsion of alien labour are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them, and whilst I stand here as a direct representative of labour-

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Also as a nominee of protectionists.

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Mr WATKINS

- That is absolutely incorrect, and I think the honorable member will accept my statement.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They all supported the honorable member, anyhow.

Mr WATKINS

- I assert that I fought the battle directly on the lines I have indicated, directly in opposition to the whole of the free-trade party, backed up by the whole of their press. The more they opposed me, however, the better I got on, and the contest resulted in my getting more votes than did any other man in Australia-

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They voted for the honorable member.

Mr WATKINS

- I suppose that I am not responsible for people coming forward to vote for me. I would be a fool to tell them to do the other thing. But whilst I fought the contest on the lines I have indicated, and have always believed in excluding all the forms of cheap labour possible, I was at the same time prepared to go to the logical extreme, and refuse admission to the products of cheap labour. With regard to all the talk of setting up trusts and building up monopolies, I say that it is a mere matter of indifference to the workers whether they pay their taxes under the revenue system proposed or under a different system. They pay the same amount, but I think they will get more benefit in an indirect way by taxing the things that can be produced in the Commonwealth than they will by taxing articles which cannot be produced in the Commonwealth. While my honorable free-trade friends know that a certain amount of revenue must be raised through customs, they deliberately tell the people that they are the party who are going to give the workers of Australia a free breakfast-table. Is it not an accepted statement that taxation upon the things which cannot be produced in the Commonwealth will always make those articles so much dearer? On the other hand, if an industry is created within the borders of the Commonwealth, directly protection commences there is a regulating influence upon the price of that particular article. Do they not know that?

An Honorable Member. - Yes: the price goes up, of course.

Mr WATKINS

- The price is always up in the one case, and there is a regulating influence in the other. I desire to say a word or two in regard to the comparisons which have been instituted between the 'different States of Australasia.. I am proud of the State to which I belong; and in which I was born, but in dealing with State affairs, although my honorable friends will find me fighting for that State just as hard as any one else whenever her rights are in jeopardy, they will also discover that in national questions I shall endeavour to do what is right by every person within the Commonwealth, irrespective of where he may live. And, while it is not admitted openly, there can be no disguising the fact that the position set up here last night and to-night is an attempt to impose one particular Tariff upon the whole of the other States of Australia. But, whilst the Braddon clause remains in our Constitution, we cannot get away from the fact that a Tariff will have to be arranged which will suit the requirements of the whole of the States. I do not say that we should hold up the Tariff of one State as an example to all the others. It seems to me there must be a compromise. There must be a line so drawn that the requirements of each State may be met, and the industries of each State may receive just consideration. Concerning the comparison instituted between New South Wales and Victoria, I wish to say that I have always regarded it as an odious one. It is an unfair comparison. I say that, with four times the territory, and twice or three times the natural advantages of Victoria, New South Wales should at least have a correspondingly larger population.

An Honorable Member. - What about Queensland?

Mr WATKINS

- Queensland is still undeveloped.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- This is a new role for the honorable member.

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Mr WATKINS

- No, it is not. If I recollect aright, when the gentlemen Opposite asked the people of New South Wales to accede to the principle of equal representation in the Senate, they pointed out that in a very short time Queensland would be as great, if not a greater, State than New South Wales itself. Why do they not now compare one State with another State of the same size, and possessing the same natural advantages? Let them take New Zealand and compare it with New South Wales, and see how the comparison will work out. Something has been said about men going from one State to another. All States have their

times of industrial adversity, and, even in regard to the particular industry of coal mining, I regret to say that only a year or two ago many hundreds of our men in New South Wales were glad to get away to Western Australia to look for gold. Instead of their wages being from £3 to £4 per week, the honorable member for Parramatta knows as well as I do that it has been nothing like that amount, and it is not that amount to-day even, though the men have received a considerable increase during the past few months. They talk about the particular Tariff of the State developing a trade like that of coal-mining. Does not the ordinary school boy know that the Tariff of New South Wales did not affect that trade at all? If the Tariff did affect it, the increased output of coal in New South Wales would be consumed in New South Wales, or at least in some of the States of the group. But the fact is that the increase consists practically of coal that is going abroad. It is possibly the war, and rumours of war, during the last few months that account for the increased activity of the iron and steel industry abroad. This is the cause of the increased coal output of New South Wales. The argument has been used - "Why tax the coal miner and the gold miner to bolster up some other industry?" It is a very good argument until you examine it.

Mr Thomas

- And the silver miner.

Mr WATKINS

- My honorable friend is quite at liberty to make the argument include the silver miner if he chooses. Does the honorable member wish the silver miners to continue silver miners all their lives, and let their children be silver miners also? I am pleased to see that there is at least sufficient patriotism in the mining population of some parts of New South Wales to desire that the children of the miners shall be something better than their parents. The coal miners, for instance, desire to open up some other avenues of industry besides coal mining for the employment of their children. With regard to the amendment before the House, I desire to say that, had the party to which I belong been new to the game of politics, we might have been led into the trap laid for us by the honorable member for Parramatta to-night, and laid for the members of another Chamber last night. But had the honorable member seen how far short of the mark which it was intended to hit the amendment would fall, he would not have moved it. He brings forward an amendment calling upon the Government to deal with only one phase of the alien labour question - with kanaka labour.

Mr SPEAKER

- I notice that on several occasions to-night there has been a misconception as to the scope of the amendment which is before the Chair. The wording of that amendment does not limit its effect to kanakas; it deals with the whole question of securing a white Australia.

Mr WATKINS

- I am glad to be corrected on that point. I took the amendment to be a precise copy of that which was moved in the other Chamber last night.

An Honorable Member. - The amendment moved last night in the Senate was not good enough; but they think this is better.

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Mr WATKINS

- Nevertheless, I designate it a trap, though a very feeble one. We are prepared to deal with the question of restricting the importation of alien labour when concrete proposals in regard to it are brought before us in a Bill. That is the stage at which we shall discuss what period should be allowed to elapse before the strict exclusion of kanakas and other alien labourers should be insisted upon. But, notwithstanding the statement of the honorable member for Wentworth, we say that we know no conditions attaching to the employment of either kanakas, or any other alien labour, which should prevent the exclusion of that labour within a very short period indeed. I have learned from men who have come from the northern parts of Queensland that there are no such things as agreements there, and that all that exist are the licences which are given to the owners of vessels to go on recruiting voyages. I think that a fair arrangement to make before the stoppage of the importation of alien labourers altogether would be to prevent the issue of any more licences, and to allow those who have licences to complete their present engagements. We say, too, that the Tariff which must be imposed will give those who are engaged in the growing of sugar cane and the manufacture of sugar ample compensation for the abolition of coloured labour. It is a remarkable thing that we are asked - by a subordinate member of the Opposition - to accept an

amendment which, if indorsed by the leader of that party and carried by the House, would mean the displacement of the Government. Whether it would have been indorsed by him is- not for me to say, but I am inclined to think that if the right honorable member thought that it had the slightest chance of being accepted, he would have indorsed it.

Sir Edward Braddon

- I rise to order. Is the honorable member in order in making such an assumption in regard to the leader of the Opposition in his absence ?

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think that that is a point of order ; the honorable member is merely expressing an opinion.

Mr WATKINS

- Although we are asked to accept this amendment which, if carried, would effect the displacement of the Government, one of the members of the Opposition who would most probably be a member of the new Ministry has warned the Government that they must not be in too big a hurry to exclude alien labour. That remark seemed to me to complicate the position, and I would advise honorable members of the Opposition to have a conference before they attempt any more little games of this description. The honorable member for Wentworth, who spoke about the inadvisability of rushing on with legislation of this description, was one of those who were not slow to ask the Parliament of New South Wales to give legislative aid to the banks of that State when, in 1893, they began to totter, and were in danger of tumbling to pieces. If my memory serves me aright, the legislation which they asked for found its way on to the statute-book in the space of one sitting. While we do not ask the Government to rush headlong into the settlement of these questions without due inquiry, we say in regard to the matter of the restriction of alien immigration, and with regard to the matter of compulsory arbitration, that, when opportunity serves, no time should be lost in dealing with them. We ask the Government, in regard to the question which is perhaps of most importance to us, the question of securing a white Australia, to fulfil the words which they uttered when they called upon the people of this continent to accept the Federal Constitution. Some of those who supported that Constitution went so far as to tell the electors that it provided for a white Australia, not that it only gave to the Commonwealth Parliament power to deal with the question. No time, therefore, should be lost in dealing with this matter. There is no reason for delaying its consideration for a number of years. Only reasonable time should be allowed for dealing with it, and, having dealt with it, we shall be able to say that we have commenced federation upon a fair footing, and we can proclaim to the world that there is no room within the Commonwealth for any but a white population.

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Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

. - I have risen to address this honorable House at a somewhat late hour, but I do not propose to speak at any great length. My first duty is to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, upon your election, by the unanimous voice of the House, to your present distinguished position, and to express the hope that you may long continue to occupy your high office. I, in common with other honorable members, regret that this debate has been chiefly concerned with a discussion as to what is the best principle to adopt in framing a Tariff" for Australia - whether we should adopt free-trade, a revenue Tariff, protection, or moderate protection. We all know that that was the chief subject of discussion during the recent elections - it was, in fact, the subject to which prominence was given, almost to the exclusion of every other question. I take it that people were fairly agreed upon most of the other subjects which will engage the attention of this Parliament, and prominence was given to the fiscal question because it furnished a line of cleavage between the contending parties. Having had very little experience, or no experience at all, except at the various conventions, of the Parliaments of the eastern States, I have been somewhat surprised at the length of time honorable members have considered it their duty to occupy in their addresses to the Chair. I really think we might say what we have to say in fewer words. We need not prolong the debate to the extent we have been doing ; and I hope when I sit down I shall not be accused of doing what I complain of. We have heard from- every one who has spoken a dissertation - an essay I might say almost - on free-trade and protection. We have had reiterated the arguments we have heard before and have read about during the last few months, and which, I expect, we shall have over again later. I do not know that there is any necessity for any one to use the same arguments now. At any rate, I shall not follow that

example to any great extent. One thing honorable members opposite might do is not to raise discussions upon matters concerning which the Government have already given notice of their intention to introduce Bills. We have had a good deal of discussion as to what is meant by the Government by the paragraph as to the alien and coloured labour- questions. But notice has been given of Bills dealing with those questions, and-surely it is not unreasonable for us to ask that judgment may be deferred until those Bills are before honorable members, when they will know exactly what the proposals of the Government are. .
Mr Poynton

- Ministers should not complain. They get to know the opinions of members in that way.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- We have even had an amendment moved in regard to the language used in the Governor-General's speech upon a question on which a Bill is promised. That Bill, I have no doubt, will be on the table in a few days. I also think that the right honorable member who spoke last night might have omitted the comparisons between the various States. Now that we are standing on common ground, we may fairly expect that the old jealousies will be dropped, that the advantage of the whole of Australia may be consulted, and that the interests of individual States may as far as possible be sunk. I think we might have been spared what I may call the harangue we had last night as to whether Victoria returns so many members pledged to one form of Tariff and New South Wales so many pledged to an opposite, or something like an opposite form. The time has arrived when the jealousies that have existed between the various parts of this continent may be dropped ; or, at any rate, they need not be nurtured in this House. It is unreasonable, and certainly not just, to compare one State with another unless both States are similarly circumstanced. What is the use of comparing one fertile part of a country with a part in another which is not so fertile, or one part which is capable of supporting a large population with a part in another which is not 1 I do not see that it is anything to the credit of the State that has the most natural advantages that it is able to outrun a State that has fewer advantages. We are willing, I hope, to give credit to all the States for what they have done.

New South Wales is one of the greatest countries in the world. It has unrivalled resources. One alone - that of coal - has made it the chief coal producer for the whole Australian continent. That gives it an advantage over all the other States which it would be hard to over-estimate. Then it has vast pastoral and agricultural resources. It has great natural harbours, made without great cost. All these advantages place New South Wales in an unrivalled position by the other States. But that is no reason why we should hear the praises of New South Wales continually sung here. The members from New South Wales have no more right to sing the praises of their country than has the member who comes from the humblest State in the Commonwealth to sing the praises of his State. The sooner, therefore, we give up comparing New South Wales and Victoria the better for all of us. I do not propose to discuss the Tariff at length. I take a view of it different from that of many other persons, for I look upon it merely as a business matter ; I do not regard any particular form of Tariff as a fetish, nor do I entertain any religious feeling in regard to it. If I were in a country where I thought that one form- of fiscal policy was better than another, I certainly would vote for that form, whether it was in the form of a free-trade Tariff, a revenue Tariff, or a protective Tariff. I look upon it as a mere business matter, and I believe that most other persons do the same thing. It is a question as to what is best for the country in which we live. I know from experience that in the country I come from there are tens of thousands who, coming from Victoria, have completely changed their fiscal views. They were, for the most part, protectionists in Victoria, but being engaged in mining in Western Australia, and producing nothing but gold, they believe it is to their interest that they should be free-traders'; and they all are. So that I say to those who cry for protection and those who cry for free-trade that you may depend upon it that the commercial instinct of our race is at the bottom of all these things, and that the ordinary individual views the matter from the point of view he thinks the best for himself and the country he lives in. That, at any rate, is the view I take of the question. I may say, however, that one may fairly be influenced in a matter of this sort by the experience of other countries. We who live on this Australian continent, as the leader of the Opposition said last night, may not be so well fitted to judge in regard to this great question as are people in other lands, with larger knowledge and experience. Therefore, I think we are justified in turning our attention to finding out what other peoples and nations in other parts of the world are doing in regard to this matter. We know that, with the exception

of the dear mother country, to which we are all so proud to belong, there is not another civilized nation in the world which has not adopted the fiscal policy of protection. We have France, Germany, Canada, and the United States -in fact, all countries, with the exception of our own dear motherland, protectionist.

Mr Thomson

- Is not the motherland the greatest country in the world?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I should be sorry to say that all other countries were foolish, and not able to manage their own affairs and look after their own interests in the best way according to their views. I should be sorry to say that other nations were all wrong. I am inclined to think that, situated as we are, in a new country, endeavouring to make that country as self-contained as we can, to give employment to our people, endeavouring to work out the advancement of those people, we should consider what the people of other countries are doing. We are much more likely to be in the right in taking the example of new countries like the United States and Canada than by following the example of the comparatively small island of Great Britain.

Mr Cook

- Are they better off in Canada than we are ?

Mr Thomson

- Surely that is disloyalty.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I do not think any one would charge me with disloyalty. We all admit that in order to carry on the public business of these States we must have a certain amount of revenue. Every State in this Commonwealth looks with confidence to this Parliament to receive as much revenue as they were receiving on the 31st December last. Every one of the States has considerable obligations. There is not one of them, including even New

South Wales and Tasmania - I see my right honorable friend Sir Edward Braddon looking at me - who can do with less revenue than they were receiving on 31st December last.

Sir Edward Braddon

- Tasmania can do with £70,000 less.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I am glad that my right honorable friend has published it to the world that Tasmania does not want as much as she has been receiving. He tells us she can do with £7 0,000 less. This is good news for the Treasurer, and he will act accordingly, no doubt.

Mr O'Malley

- We want more.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I may say for the State that I come from, that, although we have the largest revenue of any people in the world in proportion to the number of our inhabitants - we had three millions for last year - we want every penny of it. We could usefully spend six millions quite as easily as three millions.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- How does the State spend it though ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I do not think that any one who goes to Western Australia will say that we have wasted any money. We must have as much revenue as we have been receiving ; and the only question, it seems to me, to men of sense, is how best to obtain that revenue. Some people think we should obtain it by pursuing a certain line of fiscal policy. I believe the Opposition have given up the idea of free-trade, just as they accuse us of giving up protection. We never hear of free-trade from them now, because they know very well that it is impracticable. So they talk of a revenue Tariff. My idea is - and I am sure I can convince every one of it in a few minutes - that a revenue Tariff in regard to the articles which are produced in this country must be to some extent a protective Tariff. Does any one, for instance, mean to tell me that a duty of 10, 15, or even 5 per cent. on something produced or made in the Commonwealth is not protective to the producer of that article in the Commonwealth?

Sir William McMillan

- We say the duty comes out of the pockets of the people.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- Does it not give the producer protection on his labour? Mr. S. Smith. - How can it do it?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I am surprised at the honorable member asking the question. I need not continue to argue the point. If the honorable member cannot see that a Tariff imposed on those goods from other countries, which can be produced here, is a protective Tariff, he must be very dense indeed.

Mr S SMITH

- My protectionist friends say that the duty does not raise the price of the article. How, therefore, can it benefit the manufacturer?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- In regard to all articles produced in the country, a Tariff is protective because it benefits the maker or the producer to the extent of the duty. AVe hear a good deal about free-trade as applied to New South Wales, and as I am not a resident there, and am not acquainted with its fiscal policy in detail, I would like to ask whether the excise and the duty on imported beer are equal.

Mr Deakin

- No, they are not.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- If not, then the difference between them is a protective Tariff to the brewer. That is not the case in free-trade England, where, if a duty is imposed on the imported article and a similar article is made in the country, the excise imposed is .equal to the duty. And that is free-trade, putting, as it does, the man outside and the ian inside on the same footing. But that is not the case in New South Wales, where the free-trade boasted of is, after all, a hybrid free-trade, and the brewer gets the benefit of protection. When I was discussing this question during the federal elections in Western Australia there were some brewers of Perth who were very eager free-traders, but when I tackled them and told them they were living on protection, they all went into, their shell, and did not say another word. If the excise duty on beer or anything else is not equal to the import duty the difference is certainly protection to the local producer. In regard to what several members have said as to alien or cheap labour, I lay it down as a principle, that if the conditions under which men work are unequal, fair competition is next to impossible. How can it be possible for a man in Australia, who pays say 1 Os. a day to a mechanic or blacksmith for eight hours work, to compete with a man in another country who pays,- perhaps, a pittance of ls. a day for ten or twelve hours' work. The position does not require any argument. Free-traders expect the people of. this country to compete. with others who live under different conditions altogether, who receive very small wages, and with whom, I say deliberately, the white man cannot compete and maintain his existing civilization.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The white man does compete with them.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- He cannot.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- But he does compete.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- An effort is being made to alter this state of things a little by excluding the coloured man from Australia. Now while' some people say they believe in free-trade,- they would exclude the coloured man' who works for low wages. We have excluded coloured labour most effectually in Western Australia, that country which some persons speak of as being under illiberal laws, whereas the laws of that State in many respects are, if not more libera], equal in liberality to any laws in Australia. However, we exclude the alien there effectively.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am told the place swarms with aliens in spite of the law.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I am very glad to have the opportunity of speaking to the honorable member on this subject. I do not know whether he is the self-constituted leader of the Opposition.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Then he has the most to say on the Opposition side of the House, arrogating to himself most of the talk. I do not know what his leader will say, but I know what I would say if I were his leader. If he were my lieutenant as he appears to be the "lieutenant of the leader of the Opposition" - -

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No, no.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- If he were my lieutenant I should take care he did not move a resolution of importance without my knowledge. The one observation I have made in regard to the impossibility of competition between persons who pay high wages for short hours, and persons who pay low wages for long hours, covers the whole ground, and there is nothing more, in my opinion, to be said about the matter. Some one made the remark just now, so far as I could gather, that the form of government in Western Australia has been of a despotic character; but, if it has been of a despotic character, we have, at any rate, passed some very good liberal measures.

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Mr KIRWAN

- What about the pocket boroughs?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- If the honorable member has anything to say of Western Australia, he may say it for himself, because I am not willing to answer interjections from a member from my own State, and I am sure the honorable member can say what there is to be said very much better than I. During the ten years I was at the head of affairs in Western Australia, we never increased the taxation on the people. It is the only State in Australia where tea and sugar are, and have been for many years, free.

Mr Kirwan

- What about the preferential railway rates?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- The honorable member for Kalgoorlie has been attacking me for the last ten years in my own State, but if he desires to continue attacking me he must do it when he is in possession of the House, and then I shall be able to reply to him if I so desire. During my ten years of office the Parliament of Western Australia passed a Compulsory Industrial Arbitration Act, Manhood and Womanhood Suffrage, an Early Closing Act, and established a land bank, with free grants of 160 acres of land to all who desired to settle in the State. I only mention these matters as preliminary to some remarks I desire to make as to a paragraph in His Excellency's speech in reference to connecting by railway the western side of Australia with the eastern side. I shall have an opportunity later on of laying this matter before the House and dealing with it in detail, and I only desire now to say one or two words in regard to it. I do not wish to ask honorable members to do anything that is unreasonable, or anything that would entail a large burden on the rest of the Commonwealth: We have not only ourselves to consider, but also the people of the adjoining State of South Australia. The distance from Kalgoorlie to the eastern border of Western Australia is only 450 miles, whereas the distance from the border to Port Augusta is 550 miles, so that the cost of the work to South Australia would be greater than it would be to Western Australia. While it is quite possible that the matter might be dealt with as a great national question, I am not prepared at the present time to ask the Commonwealth to put its hand into its pocket to any great extent, and construct a work that is going to be an everlasting burden. But it, perhaps, will astonish honorable members when I tell them that the anticipated revenue from this railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie is £330,000 a year. I do not make that statement "off my own bat," but I will be able in a few days to lay papers before the House, prepared by one of the most eminent engineers in the southern hemisphere. I refer to Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, the Engineer-in-Chief of Western Australia, who has carried out the Fremantle harbor works there, and is at present engaged on the great work of conveying 5,000,000 gallons of water per diem from Perth to the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie gold-fields. Mr. O'Connor is a man of the highest reputation - at the top of his profession - and the report which I received from him only a day or two ago makes out that there will probably be a gross revenue of £330,000 per annum from the railway from Port Augusta to

Kalgoorlie. Honorable members will see that that revenue covers a tremendous amount of interest, and that the work is not one in the wilderness, which will not pay for the axle-grease on the wheels.

Sir William McMillan

- Will there not be a loss on the other lines towards Perth ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I do not think there will be a loss to any very great extent.

Mr Solomon

- Is that estimate on a par with the estimates for the waterworks and the harbor works 1

Sir JOHN FORREST

- The honorable member speaks " without his book." The harbor works have been very much extended since they were first projected, and I suppose they will cost millions before they are finished, seeing they may reach all the way to Perth eventually. But the harbor works have been constructed within the estimate; and, so far as I know, that will also be the case in regard to the Coolgardie water scheme;

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Is it the gross revenue the honorable member mentions ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Yes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It might take more than that to run the line.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- It will take nothing like that. I believe there is a loss - I cannot remember the exact figure at the moment - of about £20,000 a year at the beginning ; but it is not a project requiring the expenditure of millions of money without any return. At the present time we are in the most unfortunate position of any of the States, on account of our isolation. Most honorable members can get to their homes in a day or two, whereas it takes the representatives of Western Australia five days, four of which are occupied in crossing the ocean, so that once we come to Melbourne it is practically impossible for us to return until the session is over. By the construction of this transcontinental railway, the transmission of the mails will of course be expedited, and the work will also be of great advantage for defence purposes. But the main advantage of the line will lie in the facilities it will afford for trade, seeing that produce from this side can by this means be carried to the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie gold-fields and Western Australia generally.

Mr Solomon

- By rail.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Yes, I am told on good authority that a bullock shipped by rail to Kalgoorlie can be landed there £6 cheaper than if shipped by sea. That alone is a very great consideration to the large number of people living there, who are doing so much to promote the prosperity not only of Western Australia but also the prosperity and advancement of Australia generally. It is not many years ago when it was thought impossible to connect the eastern and western sides of the United States by railway, and when it was regarded as a chimerical idea that the east and west sides of Canada could be connected by rail. But already we have several lines crossing the United States, and we have the Great Canadian Pacific Railway bridging the Dominion. The construction of this latter line has resulted in the consolidation and prosperity of Canada. A great deal of the country through which the railway passes is unoccupied - hundreds and hundreds of miles of it. When one gets to the Rocky Mountains one sees but little cultivation until one reaches Vancouver. The country is too hilly and inhospitable to be cultivated for many a long day, but the construction of the line has cemented the people of Canada in a bond that will never be severed, and has vastly increased the trade of the whole territory. So it will be with us. I hope there are no honorable members here who are afraid of a little expenditure when there are great aims in view. In Western Australia we are engaged at the present time in taking water from a spot 25 miles from Perth, a distance of 350 miles, through steel pipes 21/2 feet in diameter, and by this means 5,000,000 gallons of water per day will be conveyed to the gold-fields. The undertaking will cost £2,500,000 sterling, but we believe it will not only be a boon to the people on the gold-fields, but that it will largely increase the output of gold, and that it will also pay. If a small community of 184,000 people is not afraid of the expenditure of

£2,500,000, is it to be suggested that members of the Commonwealth Parliament have so little faith in the future that they will not look with favour upon a project for effectually binding together all parts of the Commonwealth? I believe that the undertaking will pay, and certainly it will cement the people of Western Australia with the people of the other States in a way that it is impossible to do otherwise. The people in Western Australia will never be contented as part of the Australian Commonwealth unless we give them means of communication by a railway. In fact, I would never be content, and would use all the constitutional means in my power even to undo this federation, rather than that such an injustice should be done to the people of the great western State of it. It is for the honorable members to think over this matter. We are not engaged in thinking of what is good for this town or that village. Great national matters have been committed to our care, and we shall be unworthy of the responsibilities cast upon us, if we do not take the opportunity of considering this railway proposal, which ought to have met with the generous sympathy and support of honorable members. The result of the careful inquiry that is now being made should be awaited with eagerness, and with a desire to do the one great thing which will finally bind together all parts of the Commonwealth. I thank honorable members for listening to me in regard to a matter which might, by some persons, be considered one affecting my own State, but which I look upon as the one great necessary and urgent work which will bind together irrevocably the eastern and western sides of the great continent of Australia.

Mr WILKS

- I suggest that at this late hour the Attorney-General might grant me the privilege of moving the adjournment of the debate.

Mr Deakin

- Very well.

Motion (by Mr. Wilks) agreed to -

That the debate be now adjourned till tomorrow.

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22:22:00

House adjourned at 10.22 p.m.