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1901-10-23

House of Representatives.

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

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

- My attention has been drawn by the honorable member for Perth to the report in this morning's Age. of the opening words of my speech yesterday, when I referred to the honorable member's change from a protectionist to a free-trader. I find that the report in the Age may be understood in a sense disadvantageous to the honorable member, and contrary to my intention. It is not what I really said. The report is as follows : -

The Minister of Defence would like to ask the honorable member (Mr. Fowler) whether his avowed change of views from protection to freetrade was due to his change of residence from East to West of Australia ? There was no real principle about a change of this kind - it was a question of pounds, shillings, and pence, and what would pay the best.

Those words might be read as referring directly to the honorable member as one who has changed his views for reasons of pounds, shillings, and pence. Of course, I said and meant nothing of the kind. I should be very sorry to say such a thing of an honorable member from whom I have always received the greatest courtesy. I would not think of attributing any such motives to him.

Mr Kirwan

- The reflection is merely a general one upon the people of Western Australia.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- There is no reflection at all on any one. I have said before, and I said again yesterday, that in my opinion there is no principle in regard to the fiscal question; that it is merely a question of pounds, shillings, and pence - which policy would pay the best. I asked the question yesterday because a large number of persons who were protectionists in Eastern Australia became free-traders when they went to Western Australia, because in their opinion that policy suited them best in their altered conditions ; but I in no way attributed to the honorable member for Perth, that he had changed his views for any other reason than because he thought that the policy of free-trade was best for Western Australia. My authority for saying that he was a protectionist before he went to Western Australia was his own statement ; for I had no other knowledge of the views which he held previously to going there. I am glad to be able to make this explanation, because I should be very sorry to let it be thought that I in any way desire to misrepresent the honorable member. I notice also that I am reported to have said that the importing class is as a rule composed of protectionists. What I said was the opposite - that the members of the importing class were as a rule free-traders.

MOTION OF CENSURE

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Debate resumed (from 22nd October, vide page 6301) on motion by Mr. Reid -

That this House cannot accept the Financial and Tariff proposals submitted by the Government -

Because they would place the finances of the Commonwealth and the States upon an unsound and extravagant basis.

Because they fail to adjust the burdens of taxation and the advantages of the free list in an equitable manner, revealing a marked tendency, which this House regrets to observe, to press upon necessities of life and appliances used in our farming, mining, and pastoral industries more heavily than they do upon many articles of luxury.

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

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

Mr. RONALD(Southern Melbourne).Let me say, by way of preface - and as much for my own guidance as in reflection upon others - that it will serve no good purpose to enter into this debate in the spirit of

controversy, where men fight for victory and not for truth. We are here as a body of men selected to search out the best policy for the country which we represent, and in that search we ought to use all our social, political, and educational information to discover a policy which will bring about the best results in the financial and commercial relations of Australia. We ought to be altogether indifferent as to who finds the truth - whether it is found on this side or that - so long as it is found ; and we should, once and for all, refuse to allow this matter to be submitted to the arbitrament of what I would call federal fisticuffs. Let us hear what is to be said on both sides, seeking honestly to get the truth, and rejoicing when it is found, regardless as to who discovers it ; let not our differences sink to the level of a row in the street. Before judging the Tariff proposals which have been put before us, I must state briefly what my fiscal faith is. My fiscal faith, briefly stated, is this : That if we leave the affairs of the country in the bands of the free-traders, they will bleed the body politic white by a ring of importers ; while, if we leave them in the hands' of the protectionists, they will bleed it white by a ring of manufacturers. Therefore, I say we can have nothing to do with either. The proper compromise between these two extremes is, not the golden mean which some think they have discovered in a revenue Tariff, but rather a combination of the best of both policies. I would have absolute free-trade in regard to all things which we cannot produce ourselves - raw material, tools of trade, and everything that would make for the development and activity of our industries, and I would have absolutely protective duties upon all things that we can produce. Honorable members see the difficulty which the adoption of such a policy would create ; it would give no revenue, and both free-traders and protectionists require revenue. In my opinion, the necessities of the State should be served by direct taxation, which, to my thinking, is the only just and legitimate method of obtaining revenue - direct and immediate taxation, not upon the earnings, but upon the surplus wealth of the people, whether that surplus wealth be derived from land, commerce, banking, or any other source. We must ultimately resort to that form of taxation ; but we cannot have it in the financial proposals of the Government, because the Government have been fettered by the Constitution. Strangely enough, an honorable gentleman whose name is stamped upon the bookkeeping and other provisions of the Constitution which bind the Government so that they have no alternative in this matter, has been one of the strongest in denouncing their fiscal policy. That honorable gentleman is the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, though another honorable gentleman who is held in high esteem by us all is really credited with being the author of them. But whether that be so or not, the honorable member for Tasmania has gained an immortality, and it is very hard indeed that the very man who is responsible for fettering the Government so that they can not do what they will, but have to bring in this Tariff with all its faults, should be the first and loudest in denunciation of it.

Sir George Turner

- He is not liable for the bookkeeping clauses.

Mr RONALD

- It is section 87 I am referring to.

Sir George Turner

- He is liable for only the section which restricts the expenditure.

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Mr RONALD

- It seems to me much like throwing a man into the water after having carefully bound him hand and foot, and finding fault with him for not being able to swim. It has been said that the Tariff proposals are the worst possible. There is a grain of truth in that, but it might with equal truth be said that they are the best possible, for they are the only ones that could be brought before the House, if the Government were to keep their promises to the country and the pledges which they induced those who intended to follow them to make to their constituents. With these introductory remarks, I shall proceed to show that, though we cannot have a compromise between free-trade and protection, the motion insists upon thrusting upon us the alternative policy - free-trade. I shall proceed to inquire into the merits of that policy, to ascertain whether by its history and its principles it is fitted to become the policy we should adopt in starting our national life. I want to look at the question from an economical stand-point, and to shift the point of view away from Victoria and New South Wales - for we have had enough of that - to Great Britain, where free-trade is seen in working order, and to judge of it by its results as seen there. I propose to test the policy economically in the first place, rather than socially and morally, in regard to what it has done for

Great Britain. We have been pointed to her by the admiring finger of those who say - "Look at Great Britain, or, as they generally call it, England - and see the marvellous prosperity - see the marvellous increase of wealth - see the great things which free-trade has done for the mother country." Well, here are some of them : I take a comparison of the exports of home products between Germany and Britain. In 1883 the value of the exports of home produce for Germany was £164,000,000, and in 1898, £200,000,000, being an increase of £36,000,000. Taking the corresponding period for Great Britain, in 1883 the value of the exports of home produce was £240,000,000 ; and in 1898 £233,000,000, being a loss of £7,000,000. Then if one goes to the value of the exported manufactures : In Germany, in 1883, it was £98,000,000, and in 1896, £115,000,000 ; in England, in 1883, it was £215,000,000, and in 1896, £208,000,000, showing a decrease of £7,000,000. The book I am quoting from has been in circulation for the last four years, and certainly the advocates of free-trade have never made any attempt to answer the statements, or to show where they are fallacious.. I go on to make a comparison between America and Great Britain, in regard to what protection has done for America. Between 1880 and 1898, America had enjoyed an unbroken policy of protection, and here is the result : The export trade in 1880 amounted to £3,031,000 ; and the import trade to £16,087,000. In 1898, eighteen years afterwards, we have a strange phenomenon - the positions are exactly reversed. The exports amounted to £16,000,000, and the imports had fallen to £2,000,000. That at once explodes two free-trade theories ; the one, that exports balance imports, and the other that when a nation is importing it is .wealthy, and, when it is exporting, it is depleting itself of its wealth. That is utterly absurd, because America, during those eighteen years, has been going on apace and prospering, and it is utterly impossible that an import trade could be transmuted into an export trade of £16,000,000 without it being felt in great disturbance of the financial world and depressions in the industrial world. We find that there has been no such thing, but rather the opposites. There has been an increase in prosperity during those eighteen years in America, notwithstanding this great displacement and difference between imports and exports.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Does the honorable member say that America imported only £2,000,000 worth in 1898?

Mr RONALD

- Yes.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I think there is something wrong with the honorable member's book.

Mr RONALD

- These statements the honorable member can have and verify, but there is the fact that the position was reversed from £16,000,000 of imports to £2,000,000, and that the exports rose from £3,000,000 to £16,000,000. I want to say a word or two about the influences of freetrade on the agricultural industry in Great Britain, and here I speak of a thing of which I have personal knowledge. I have no hesitation in saying, as one who was born and brought up on the land, that freetrade has absolutely destroyed agricultural pursuits in Great Britain.

Mr Fowler

- How does the honorable member account for the fact that there is competition for every farm in Scotland ?

Mr RONALD

- Publicans and sinners, and men who know nothing about farming generally, are always ready to rush into farming, and that is why.

Mr Fowler

- I know as much about farming as the honorable member does.

Mr RONALD

- I wish to state facts. After the advent of free-trade, Great Britain could produce nearly all her food supply, her corn amounting to 21,000,000 quarters ; but in 1875 her production of wheat had been reduced to 15,000,000 quarters. That is one solid fact. Here is a bit of personal experience. I had a letter last week from a kinsman who has a large farm in the Lothians, and all writers on physical geography will tell you that the Lothian farms of Scotland are the best in the world. This gentleman had three farms, and he used to grow the finest wheat in the country. He wrote to me only a week ago that he does not now grow a bushel ; and that he has turned his farms into grazing land.

Mr Fowler

- Hear, hear ; the other pays better.

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Mr RONALD

- It pays better, but what has become of the production of wheat so far as Great Britain is concerned 1 The serious aspect of the problem is that we are dependent on the foreign world for our food supply, for we have only three months' breadstuff's in Great Britain. ' That is the utmost limit of our store, and Great Britain to her danger, it may be to her ruin, will one day waken up to find that being dependent on the foreign world for her breadstuff's, the waterway being stopped, a very vulnerable point is discovered in our great Empire. It is suicidal for Great Britain to destroy her own agricultural industry, as even the most blind devotees of free-trade will admit that she has done. Thompson, a contemporary of Bright and Cobden, said that it would not be "physically impossible to do without the home agriculturist altogether," and his prophecy has been fulfilled. I now wish to direct attention to the bearings of the alternative policies of free-trade and protection upon the labour question, for that is a matter also of momentous importance. Honorable members on the other side have directed their admiring gaze to Great Britain, and would have us look upon it as the paradise of the working man. They have pointed to what free-trade has done for the working man in Great Britain. Now, let me tell honorable members calmly a few of the things that free-trade has done. Let me tell them of the actual state of the industrial world of Great Britain to-day. Two years ago a grave scandal- was brought to light in connexion with a manufactory in Glasgow. The owner of the works was a personal friend of mine, and I do not wish to mention his name. In certain chemical works in Glasgow there were found men working in connexion with the chrome industry - with turkey-red and other dyes - twelve hours a day for seven days a week, at the rate of 33/4d per hour. That in itself is sufficiently startling, and the fact that there were only a few hundred of these workmen does not affect the question. What a deplorable state the industrial world must be in if even a few hundred men could be induced to work at such a calling for such a pittance. Men engaged in this calling do not live more than about three years. The first thing that happens to them is that the cartilage of the nose becomes destroyed. I have seen a man put a lead pencil in one nostril and bring it out of the other. The chrome perforates their bodies, and I have seen men wearing wire cages round their bodies to keep their shirts from touching their skins. When even some hundreds of men can be obtained to work in such an industry for a pittance, what a terrible state the industrial world must be in.

Mr Fowler

- Does not the honorable member know that the same state of things exists in Germany?

Mr RONALD

- That does not affect my argument at all, as the honorable member will see when I deal with that later on. An Honorable Member. - The same thing exists within a few hundred yards of this House, in Little Bourke-street.

Mr RONALD

- No, it does not. We were told by honorable members on the opposition side that the workmen in Great Britain had only to strike and they would win every time, and this was one of the statements made by the leader of the Opposition when he was attempting to show that Great Britain was a paradise for the working men. They struck on the occasion to which I have referred, and they did not win, and that was a very tame case in comparison with numbers of which I have particulars.

Mr McDonald

- They did not win when they struck in Victoria, either.

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Mr RONALD

- In this book which I have here particulars are given of the condition of the alkali workers, chain makers, slipper makers, and the tailors and tailoresses. I know of the state of the industrial world for the last two or three thousand years - from the Helots in the days of Athens. I know the conditions under which slavery was carried on in Rome, and I have read of the horrors connected with the employment of slave labour in America, and I am perfectly safe in taking my oath before this Chamber that I know of nothing in the history of civilization equal to the horrors that are described in this book. I know of nothing like them. We are told that we must not mention these things, because we should be traitors to our country, forsooth !

but we are in the place where we are required of conscience to speak the truth, and it is with shame we tell it. The revelations in this book are enough to make a man ashamed to belong to the genus homo, and far more ashamed to belong to the English race. But I will tell the truth, be the shame what it may. Another book I have is called the "Cry of the Children," and the revelations in it are also of a terrible character. The man I envy not who cannot be touched by the little children crying for bread ; the man I envy not who would not feel in his heart for their little fingers toiling for a pittance. There is no language that can adequately describe the horrible contents of these books, and if they do not appeal to those honorable members who call themselves labour members, all I have to say is that their hearts must be as hard as their brains must be soft. I have still further evidence here in the shape of the official report of the Inspector of Factories to the Royal commission appointed by the House of Lords, and I can best put what I have to say in their own words -

And such having been the scope of our inquiry, and ample evidence having been brought before us on every matter comprised within its scope, we are of opinion that, although we cannot assign an exact meaning to " sweating," the evils known by that name are shown in the foregoing pages of the report to be - (1) An unduly low rate of wages. (2) Excessive hours of labour. (3) The insanitary state of the houses in which the work is carried on.

These evils can hardly be exaggerated. The earnings of the lowest classes of workers are barely sufficient to sustain existence.

The hours of labour are such as to make the lives of the workers periods of almost ceaseless toil, hard and unlovely to the last degree.

The sanitary conditions under which the work is conducted are not only injurious to the health of the persons employed, but are dangerous to the public, especially in the case of the trades concerned in making clothes, as infectious diseases are spread by the sale of garments made in rooms inhabited by persons suffering from small-pox and other diseases.

We make the above statements on evidence of the truth of which we are fully satisfied, and we feel bound to express our admiration of the courage with which the sufferers endure their lot, of the absence of any desire to excite pity by exaggeration, of the almost unbounded charity they display towards each other in endeavouring by gifts of food and other kindnesses to alleviate any distress for the time being greater than their own.

That is Great Britain as she is to-day, and not as she has been painted by the other side. Anything more awful than the facts disclosed by this cold official report could not well be imagined. The tu quoque argument will be used, of course, and honorable members on the other side will doubtless point to America, and say that things are as bad there, but that does not affect my argument. My argument is this : Here we have revelations as to the condition of affairs in Great Britain which should absolutely prevent us from having any dealings with the sweater, wherever he may be found. Some honorable members would make us partners with, and abettors of, the sweater, by opening up our ports and compelling us to buy his products.

Mr Fowler

- Are there no sweaters in Victoria ?

Mr RONALD

- That does not matter. We can deal with the sweaters whom we have here, but we cannot deal with those in Great Britain. We want to deal with the sweaters in the Commonwealth, and under protection we can and shall deal with them, but under free-trade we could not control them. If people knew of the horrors which are described in these reports they would be thunder-struck. I am sure they would rather go with bare feet and unclothed bodies than wear garments stained by blood. I called at the office of Mr. Ord, the Inspector of Factories of Victoria, to ascertain if he had since received any report later than the one I have quoted, but I find that there has been no change. They have a Factories Act in operation in Great Britain, but the competition in the industrial world is so strong that they cannot under free-trade exercise much control through that statute. The great depression and all the evils which accompany it are traced, not to free-trade, because the writer of the work from which I am quoting is a free-trader, but to the influx of alien Jews into London. There are Ghettos in London, as in ancient Rome - places where Jews live, herded together; free-traders tell us that it is because of free-trade and the better conditions of life, but it is due to the greater religious liberty they enjoy, that these aliens go to England. In London these people

repay us for our tolerance, kindnesses, and forbearance by beating down wages to starvation point - to a point where even a bare subsistence can scarcely be earned. The free-traders of Great Britain have admitted these aliens and pauper Jews to work amongst them, and to depress the industrial world, but here free-trade democrats are loud in calling for a "white Australia." Where, however, is the consistency of the man who would admit the productions of black labour and exclude the black labourer? Such a position I regard as the absurdest of all absurdities. If we advocate a "white Australia," we should exclude the productions of black labour as well as the black labourer, and exclude also pauper Jews, who, by their cheap labour, depress the industrial market. From an economical aspect of the question, we see the extraordinary decrease in the volume of trade in Great Britain. Another thing that free-trade has done has been to drive people away from their homes. I picked up the other day from Sir Henry Wrixon's book, *Socialism in Many Lands*, the fact that in 1815 the total number of emigrants from Great Britain was 2,081, while in 1852 the number had increased to 368,000, or over 1,000 per day. We have been told that because population has left Victoria, it is a proof that protection is a failure ; but we see that in Great Britain, six years after the advent of free-trade, in spite of the fact that at that time millions on millions of pounds were being spent on the construction of railways, and in spite of the great mechanical and industrial activity that was everywhere present, the population was leaving home at the rate of over 1,000 a day. It would be just as reasonable to argue that it was the fiscal policy of Great Britain that was driving these men from their homes. It must be remembered that these people were not going of their own accord.

Mr Fowler

- They were driven off the land.

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Mr RONALD

- They were driven off the land lamenting -

Lochaber no more ! Lochaber no more !

We'll maybe return to Lochaber no more.

These people were being torn up by the roots - their heart strings were lacerated at leaving their homes, but go they must. The statistics of America show that the period from 1846 to 1852 was that of the great outburst of mechanical activity in that country, and America reaped the advantage of the British mechanics who had been driven from their homes. People left by the thousand for America ; and it might just as well be said that this exodus was entirely due to the adoption of free-trade as that the exodus from Victoria has been due to protection. Of course, the discoveries of gold in Australia and California, together with the Irish famine, were all factors, but notwithstanding there is still a large margin to account for.

Honorable members opposite traduce Victoria by saying that it is the protectionist policy which has depleted the State of population ; but they should read the annals of Great Britain between 1846 and 1852, and explain what it was that drove the people from homes where they had been for generations. I am speaking more particularly now to the labour members, and I ask them if they have considered that, under free-trade, provision is made for a chronic state of glut in the labour market? It is patent that if the ports all over the world were thrown open, and a strike occurred here or in Great Britain, all that the manufacturers would need to do would be to shut down and send to America for the articles that were required, and vice versa. If there was industrial trouble in any part of the world, employers under absolute free-trade would be able to come to the assistance of their own class anywhere. Instead of making this country a paradise for the working man, and enabling him to obtain his rights by the brutal method of strikes, which is the method suggested by the Opposition, we should find that plutocrats in other parts of the world would always be ready to come to the assistance of wealth against labour. Under universal free-trade it would be utterly impossible to conduct anything like a fair battle between capital and labour ; and I ask labour representatives to consider the fact that industrial disputes are, from the working man's point of view, conducted with greater advantage in protectionist countries. What is the object of our existence as a labour party ? It is to see that the people we represent get something like a fair share of the profits of their labour. On this we are all agreed, and we have to consider whether that end can be obtained under free-trade. I hold in my hand a pocket knife for which I paid 6s. in the Mutual Store, Melbourne, and I want to know what the original maker of this knife got for his work. I shall very likely be giving a liberal estimate if I say that the cost of the labour was 6d., and that the cost of the raw material

amounted to another 6d. Where has the other 5s. gone? It has gone to the middlemen and in exchange. As I say, we are here professedly to put a fair share of the results of his industry into the pocket of the workman ; but how can we, under free-trade, guarantee that he will get anything like a fair share ?Free-trade multiplies the middlemen, whom it is our object to do away with, in order to deal as directly with the workers as possible. The middlemen who are permissible, and whom we can understand, are producers of the raw material, the owners of factories, and the retail dealers. We desire to get as near as possible to the actual workman, and the only way in which that can be done is by producing ourselves. If we depend on a foreign market we depend on an endless chain of middle-men, whom we multiply instead of eliminating. I have dealt with the social and economical aspect, and now I wish to deal with the educational aspect of this great question. Henry George, who was one of the ablest as he was also the only consistent free-trader I ever met, said that we should not manufacture ourselves, but should get others to manufacture for us. The honorable member for Wentworth last night asked why should we go into industries - why should we not let the Germans, Japanese and Chinese do our manufacturing for us, and buy their productions with our exports 1 My answer is that we should cultivate and develop industries, because industries are an educational institution in any country. Thomas Carlyle tells us that education teaches a man to do something, and we all know that no man who uses tools is anything but an educated man. He may not be a learned man, but an educated man he always is. Therefore, as an end in itself and an object to aim at, we ought to have our own industries in order that we may educate our youth, teach them to adapt means to ends, and make educated men of them. If we do not do that, our young men will grow up "hewers of wood and drawers of water," instead of being dexterous workers as they ought to be. Because, after all, man is a tool-using animal. His strength lies in the tools he uses ; and if we have industries we shall have means whereby men may become dexterous in the use of tools. If, on the other hand, we obtain all our manufactured goods from foreign countries, the power to use tools will fall into decay, or at least be valueless. These are the great objections I have to the free-trade policy which honorable members opposite seek to impose upon Australia. I could understand such an argument coming seriously from honorable members opposite as that our protected industries are something like children whom we sometimes see in the streets, who are over-clothed, and who in consequence are liable to suffer from pulmonary and other complaints. I could understand some statesmen saying, with regard to certain industries, what a physician might say in respect of over-clothed children - "Make them healthy by stripping off the superfluous garments." But what would honorable members think - of a physician who insisted on stripping from an over-clothed child every garment it wore, throwing it into a cold bath, and letting it take its chance ? Where is the statesmanship in taking off every garment of protection that our industries have had 1 If any statesman came forward seriously with such an idea as I have mentioned, I might be inclined to listen to him, but it is a very different thing when a politician adopts the attitude of a grotesque buffoon, and talks about throwing whelps into the water and letting them swim or go under. No serious statesman would ever entertain such a proposal as that, and no serious politician would ever accept it. I want to say a few words now as to the position I occupy upon this question. I owe no obligation to any party or any organ in respect to my presence in this Chamber. I am absolutely a free man in regard to that. Being in that position, I make an offer to honorable members opposite. It is this. If they will convince me that during the 50 .years free-trade has been in existence it has increased the volume of trade, and the wealth of the only country where it has been seen in operation ; if they will prove to me that the lot of the working man has been better under such conditions, and that it is not infinitely worse now than previously ; if they will prove to me that from free-trade the workmen get a fair share of the results of their industry, and that under that policy when we are manufacturers of raw material, and enhance the value of an article as we do, we shall obtain a fair return ; if they will assure me that by adopting free-trade we shall not be admitting into our country the bloodstained products of the sweated labour world of London, of Germany, of America, and of Japan ; if they will assure me that all the goods that will come into our markets under free-trade will be honestly come by - I will go over to them and vote with them. Now I want to say one word in connexion with the maxim in which the policy of free-trade is summed up. Free-trade theorists tell us that their policy is summed up in the single maxim : " Buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest." Now, I must say that to my mind that maxim means, that wherever one meets a simpleton, one should take advantage of him. Let me give an illustration of the working of this maxim. Some months ago I wanted to purchase a bicycle. I advertised for one, and a man

came along in answer to my advertisement, and offered me a bicycle for a ridiculously low price, for which I knew he could not have bought it, and at which, I thought, he could not afford to sell it. I said to him, in a half jocular, half serious way, " I wonder whether that is a bicycle which has been reported to the police as missing." The man at once jumped upon the " bike " and rode off. If I had bought in the cheapest market I should not have asked a single question as to how the man had come by the bicycle. That maxim, " Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," means taking advantage of one's fellow man on every occasion. It is the maxim of church bazaars, in connexion with which people run to beg, borrow, or steal in order to obtain goods cheaply and sell them at the dearest rate.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Steal?

Mr RONALD

- Well, I withdraw that word.

Mr Wilks

- Not steal, commandeer !

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Mr RONALD

- Yes, commandeer; the honorable member is up to date. That is the moral aspect of free-trade - one must not ask any questions as to how the goods have been come by, but must endeavour to obtain them at the cheapest rate. What is all this cry for cheapness ? Is it not degrading to us as a nation that we should pursue that thing which is working so much sorrow in the world ? How is the sweating that exists amongst us caused ? It is caused by bargain hunters, who are hunting for cheapness all over the city, beating down prices, not willing to pay a fair price for a good article, but always wanting to get it cheaper, no matter who suffers. This craze for cheapness is something of which we ought to be ashamed.

Mr Fowler

- Do I understand the honorable member to say that there are no bargain hunters in Victoria?

Mr RONALD

- I am not altogether unaccustomed to public speaking, but I am altogether unaccustomed to interruption.

Where I have been accustomed to speak,

I am Sir Oracle,

And, when I open my lips, let no dog bark.

But I must put up with interruption ; it is one of the things which one has to take in the rough and tumble of political life. I am not saying that there is no bargain-hunting in protectionist countries. Men are pretty much the same no matter under what rule. But we, as a nation, ought not to become bargain hunters. It is one thing for the individual, or for one's wife, to be hunting bargains, but quite another thing for a nation to do it. We need not degrade the nation by hunting bargains in that way, and I will be no party to it. Let us not, then, adopt this maxim, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," for it is an immoral maxim. It is the maxim of the commercial world, and the only guide of that world, but history has taught us something better than that. As a nation we ought to be above it. We are our brother's keepers, and we have a right to know how the goods are come by. The only way in which we can do that, is by producing those goods within our own borders. If there is sweating going on we can correct it. I should like to ask honorable members of the Labour party how a demand for a Compulsory Arbitration Bill and for freetrade can be made at one and the same time. There would be no need for compulsory arbitration under free-trade. If our manufactures were produced abroad, what need could there be for such a measure ?

Mr Thomas

- Would there be no mining going on ?

Mr RONALD

- Certainly ; but would the honorable member call into existence a cumbersome measure to regulate mining ?

Mr Thomas

- I do not see why mining as well as umbrella-making, for example, should not be regulated by such a measure.

Mr RONALD

- A very small portion of the community would be affected by such a measure.

Mr Thomas

- Does the honorable member call the mining community a small section? Do we not want compulsory arbitration for shearers ?

Mr RONALD

- Finally, I would point out that protection is homogeneous with the genius of politics in Australia. We believe in State socialism. That marks the political genius of Australia, and protection is homogeneous with that policy. It is bound up in it. Free-trade, on the other hand, belongs to a kind of privileged class legislation, and the result of that is that free traders are conservatives. It is declared by Lecky, in his great book on democracy which I would recommend honorable members of the Opposition to read, that democratic communities are frankly protectionists, and the converse holds true - that conservative communities adhere to freetrade. Why these gentlemen elect to be liberals is that they have had some noble-' names associated with their faith and creed the names of such men as Adam Smith, Cobden, Bright, Peel, Gladstone, and Villiers. The names of such men keep the theory alive. It is wonderful what men will sacrifice in the interests of theory and a bundle of unverified hypotheses. The only parallel to this devotion to a theory, in the face of facts and damning evidence against its utility, so far as I know, is the belief which was held in regard to witchcraft. Many years ago kind, saintly, learned men believed in witchcraft, because they had formed a theory, and no amount of evidence that could be brought to bear on them would shake their faith. No matter what was said to disprove their faith, they remained steadfast in it. I do not want to offend honorable members on the Opposition side of the House. I want to give them all credit for honesty of purpose in their support of free - trade, and I believe that they are honest searchers after truth. But this is a fine example of man's devotion to a theory that the world may indeed note and mark. In the face of the most startling, astounding contradictions of the utility of the free-trade policy, they still persevere in their contention and insist upon our adopting it, even though we demonstrate to them again and again that its adoption would mean national suicide.

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Mr KIRWAN

- To my mind the honorable member for Southern Melbourne occupies a rather peculiar position. His earnestness and enthusiasm in the cause of the working people of Australia I am sure no one in this House doubts. He belongs to a party in this House that has won universal respect. But it seems a very strange thing indeed to one who knows how the question of protection and free-trade is viewed elsewhere throughout the world to find that there are members of the labour party in this Parliament and in the State Parliaments who are adherents to protection. Wherever the cause has been taken up in other parts of the world it is different. It is the democrats of America who are fighting for free-trade continuously. It was the advanced liberals of Great Britain who won the cause of free-trade there, and its operation has proved so successful that there is now no party in Great Britain that favours the policy of protection. On the continent of Europe, in the same way, it is the advanced thinkers, the democrats, who favour the cause of free-trade ; and it seems a most singular thing that one has to come to Australia to find men who are professing an interest - and who, I believe, have a very deep interest - in the cause of the workers, but who at the same time are so mistaken in their opinions that they consider protection will advance the interests of the labouring classes. Whilst the honorable member was speaking, some one was good enough to hand me certain figures relating to imports into the United States. The honorable member for Southern Melbourne said, I think, that the value of the United States imports was something like £2,000,000. He did not state the year.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable member gave the figures for the year 1898.

Mr KIRWAN

- I have a great many figures here showing the imports of that country, and I am sure that at this stage the House must be yearning for a new set of figures. Honorable members must be consumed with a desire to hear some more statistics, but I hope they will bear up under the disappointment when I inform them that I am not going to pour forth all the figures I have received. They merely go to show that the imports of the United States in 1850 amounted to £36,000,000 ; in 1889 to £154,000,000, and in 1897 to £159,000,000. That shows what reliance can be placed on the statements of an honorable member who makes such an extraordinary assertion.

Mr Ronald

- Will the honorable member allow me to explain ?

Mr SPEAKER

- Order ; the honorable member cannot do so at this stage.

Mr KIRWAN

- The honorable member made some reference to the state of things that existed in England. It is, indeed, a very deplorable condition of affairs ; but I should like to quote for the honorable member's benefit, the opinion of a gentleman whom, I am sure, he will not in any way discredit. I have here a newspaper paragraph referring to a speech made by Mr. John Burns, in which he compared the state of things in Great Britain, with the position of affairs in that protectionist country, the United States. The paragraph is as follows : -

Mr. John Burns, M.P. for Battersea, made some candid remarks on the condition of the poorer classes in New York, when addressing a meeting in that city yesterday.

Mr Mauger

- What is the honorable member quoting from?

Mr KIRWAN

- I am quoting from a newspaper which the honorable member regards as a very important journal. If I wished to be nasty, I might say it was a paper which almost owned a large number of honorable members of this House. I refer to the Age, of December 6th, 1894. The paragraph continues -

In the course of his address, Mr. Burns told his hearers that his observations in New York had shown him that the houses in Whitechapel itself - the poorest quarter in London - were clean, wholesome, and luxurious, compared with the horrible tenements in which lived the workers of the chief city of the United States.

Mr Tudor

- How long was John Burns there?

Mr SPEAKER

- Will the honorable member resume his seat ? It is impossible for the honorable member to proceed if honorable members so constantly interject. I must ask honorable members to refrain from doing so in this way.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I think that the opinion of the member for Battersea in the House of Commons, Mr. John Burns, upon a question of this kind ought to be taken in preference to the opinion of the honorable member for Melbourne South, or of my honorable friend who sits in the corner. Some honorable members seem to doubt the opinion of Mr. John Burns. I should like, therefore, to give them the opinion of another prominent English labour leader - Mr. Keir Hardie. I take this quotation from the Sydney Worker. Mr. Keir Hardie makes a vigorous protest against the term " English pauper labour," which is so frequently used in America as well as in Victoria. He said recently to an official of the American Federation of Labour - English labour to-day is not nearly so pauperised as is the labour of America.

Further on he says -

I have had an opportunity of studying the condition of the American workman on the spot, and I unhesitatingly declare that in spite of his protection - perhaps because of it - his condition is immeasurably worse than that of the British worker. The position of the workers of this country has improved considerably since the inauguration of a free-trade policy.

That is the opinion of Mr. Keir Hardie. But I wish to come nearer home. It is not so very long ago that the Melbourne Trades and Labour Council formed a committee to inquire into the condition of certain trades, and the wages paid in those trades. I will read one or two extracts from the report of that committee, which was published in the daily newspapers on 2 1st March last. The report of the evidence appeared in both newspapers during February.

Mr HUME COOK

- What committee is that?

Mr KIRWAN

- The committee formed by the Melbourne Trades Hall. I should like to read the following extract from the

committee's report : -

The committee discovered, much to their surprise, from the representatives of industries that were well protected by tariff and bonuses, that it in no sense necessarily followed that the employees were enjoying any better conditions, working less hours, or receiving more pay than previously existed. In protected industries there was a great reluctance on the part of employers to comply with the clause of the new protection doctrine - that of a fair wage for reasonable hours. The wicker workers and millers, the brewers and maltsters, brass-workers, farriers, brush-makers, bedstead and fender makers, soap and candle makers, bone-dust and glue makers, and tallow men, hair-dressers and wig-makers, waterproof factory employees, and cycle builders - in all these trades sweating is rampant.

This state of affairs exists in protectionist Victoria. When the honorable member for Southern Melbourne talks so much about sweating in the old country I think he should look nearer home, and realize that in such a highly protected country as Victoria, according to the Trades Hall sweating is rampant in the very trades that were supposed to be most protected.

Mr Kennedy

- Protective duties alone will never prevent sweating.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I did not intend to discuss the abstract question of protection versus free-trade, but I have been led into making these observations by the remarks of the honorable member for Southern Melbourne. I merely rose to place before the House some facts as to how this Tariff has actually affected, and is going to affect, some of the industries which, in my opinion, are most worthy of encouragement throughout the Commonwealth. I have absolute evidence in support of what I am about to say, and if any honorable member is dissatisfied with my statements, I am in a position to convince him of their accuracy. Before giving these facts, however, I may mention that the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, and, I think, the Treasurer also, laid much emphasis upon the necessities of the smaller States. They seem to think that the revenue which will be derived under this Tariff is absolutely necessary in order to enable the smaller States to discharge their financial obligations. It seems to me that that is merely an endeavour to conceal the injustice which is being done to those States. I ask any of those right honorable gentlemen to mention the industries in Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, or Queensland, which will be benefited to the slightest extent by the adoption of this Tariff. It seems to me that the Tariff is an endeavour to exploit the smaller States in the interests of a few manufacturers in the big centres of the East. Whilst those States are suffering, the only return which Ministers can urge they are getting is summed up in the statement - "Oh, we are saving you from financial trouble." I shall presently show how absurd is that cry, at any rate as regards the State of which I have most knowledge. The Minister for Defence, in a speech last night, to which I listened with close attention, dealt in a very casual way with a number of these matters, and studiously avoided the very questions upon which we most desired to hear him speak. Personally, I wanted to hear what he had to say - in view of the strong objections of the people of Western Australia to this Tariff - concerning the imposts which it levies upon the mining industry. In reply to an interjection, he said - "I shall come to the mining industry presently," but he did not come to it. His speech, in my opinion, bears its own condemnation. Like several other deliverances from the front Ministerial bench, it consisted largely in a strong condemnation of the action of the Opposition in bringing forward this motion. But the Minister prefaced his remarks by the statement that if he were in the position of the leader of the Opposition, he would adopt exactly the same course that has been adopted even in regard to the same Tariff. When the right honorable gentleman makes a declaration of that kind, I think honorable members may fairly gauge the value which is to be placed upon his utterances. It was a peculiar commentary upon his speech that at the moment he was delivering it I received a telegram from a very important body, indeed, expressing its opinion in regard to this Tariff. The right honorable gentleman is supposed to be the representative of Western Australia in the Ministry. I say "supposed" because I think that a better term would be the "misrepresentative" of Western Australia, at any rate, so far as this Tariff is concerned. Whilst he was speaking, the following wire from the Fremantle Chamber of Commerce was handed to me: -

The following resolution was carried at a special meeting of the Chamber by a large majority: - This Chamber considers the proposed Federal Tariff oppressive. It will, if passed in its present form, severely

harass trade and commerce in this State. It will unduly tax the consumers in this State. It will retard the mining, agricultural, pastoral, and timber industries. Chamber is of opinion that the revenue required can be raised by levying duties on a revenue producing basis, and urges Parliament to modify that Bill to that end.

That is only one of a number of telegrams which the Western Australian representatives have received since this Tariff was brought forward. They come from every class of people in Western Australia. The workers on the goldfields, through the medium of the Goldfields Trades and Labour Council, have telegraphed a protest, and the Chamber of Mines - a body which represents an immense amount of British capital, and which is worthy of a considerable amount of attention by reason of what that money has done to open up the backblocks of Western Australia - has also put forward a strong protest. We have, therefore, the mining classes, the commercial classes, and the wage-earning classes all in a state of righteous indignation at the proposals contained in this Tariff, which will press very harshly upon the people of Western Australia. The Prime Minister and his colleagues are very anxious about the financial position of the smaller States. So far as Western Australia is concerned, I should like to point out that the position in that State has changed considerably within the last year or so. The Government which is at present in power is one that does not waste money in extravagances. It does not waste money in building railways from places of no importance to places where there is no population. Neither does it squander money in building harbors and breakwaters where there is no need for them, nor in erecting public buildings in order to satisfy pocket boroughs, and thus retain a certain party in power. The Government which is now ruling Western Australia is doing a great deal of good for the country. It is spending considerably less than did its predecessors in office, and is spending it to more advantage. The Minister for Defence said last night that Western Australia would be very grateful for the position which it occupied. But the present Premier of the State, Mr. Leake, does not view the matter in that light. That gentleman - and I think he ought to know something about the financial obligations of the State - has strongly condemned this Tariff. Indeed, he is addressing public meetings in Western Australia, and doing everything that he possibly can, to show this Parliament how indignant are the people of that State with the Tariff which has been submitted, and how severely it will operate there. Surely if Mr. Leake is not troubled regarding the financial obligations of Western Australia this Parliament ought not to be very much concerned about that particular matter. I represent an exclusively mining population. The mining population of Western Australia, and those who are actually dependent upon the mining industry, number roughly about 100,000. Of that number, there is not a single individual who will benefit by this Tariff to the extent of one penny piece, whereas there is not a man, woman, or child in that community who will not be injured to the extent that the cost of living will be increased. I shall show that the cost of mining on the Western Australian goldfields - apart altogether from the tax upon machinery - will be increased by 1s. 6d. per ton, and the cost of living there, which is already high enough, will be increased by very nearly 20 per cent. These calculations have been made on the spot, and have been sent to me. I should like to make one remark in connexion with Victoria. We have heard a good deal in the way of comparison between Victoria and New South Wales. As a stranger to both States, I am bound to say that the difference between their conditions is very marked. I visited New South Wales some time ago, before the introduction of this Tariff, and although the impressions which were conveyed to me were perhaps those of the man in the street, I found there general evidences of prosperity. No one growled at the badness of the times, while every one was hopeful of the future, and the number of unemployed in Sydney seemed trifling compared with what is to be seen in Melbourne. In Victoria, however, there has been nothing but grumbling and growling at the depression. I am one of those who accepted the invitations of a number of the manufacturers of Melbourne and its suburbs to inspect their factories. I was glad to do so. I quite understand the position of those connected with those factories. They naturally dislike the idea of duties which have strengthened their industries being taken off, and they are very anxious to put their case prominently before us. I visited several of the factories, though not so many as I should have liked to visit, and the effect created in my mind was very different from what was intended. I have nothing to say against the way in which the factories are managed, or against their ventilation and general arrangements; but the impression created in my mind was that in the best regulated factories, where the ventilation and the sanitary conditions are good, and there is nothing to object to about the arrangements generally, the persons employed are not such as one would wish to see the parents of the future Australian race. In

many of the factories - and the honorable member for Melbourne Ports was with me - the employees were chiefly girls. We thought that many of these were under the age of fifteen years.

Mr Mauger

- Thirteen years.

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Mr KIRWAN

- Although they told the honorable member for Melbourne Ports that they were over that age, they did not convince us that they were so, and it seemed to us that they were resorting to subterfuge in order to secure employment. Those who had recently begun to work in the factories were healthy and rosy-cheeked, but those who had been there any length of time were pale-faced and attenuated - certainly not the specimens of humanity one would expect to produce the great nation of the future that we all expect the people of this Commonwealth to be. It is not to the city factories, or to the sweating dens that we can look to create a great race of the Australians; it is by developing the natural resources of the country that the bone, muscle, and sinew of Australians will be best developed. I am here to speak more particularly for the mining classes of the community. The miner, from a fiscal point of view, is a consumer pure and simple, and cannot be assisted by a protective Tariff. He has to pay duties, but he receives no protection. No less an authority than the Attorney-General has admitted, in a speech which I have by me, that the miners never had anything to gain from protection, and other honorable members have made the same admission. I sincerely trust that these honorable members, even if they do not vote for the motion before the House, will not forget, when we come to consider the Tariff in committee, what the miners have done and are doing for the Commonwealth. With regard to the Western Australian gold-fields, I would remind the House that an immense number of people went from the eastern States into what was practically a desert, and they have endured there all kinds of hardship, including scarcity of water and scarcity of supplies ; but by their energy and hard work they have added almost a new province to Australia. The Tariff, so far from assisting and encouraging these people, will discourage them, and will greatly retard the development of the mining industry. It will tend to prevent the introduction of foreign capital for the development of the mines, and to discourage mining companies from introducing machinery, and thus will lessen the amount of money in circulation, and decrease the amount of employment, while it will also increase the cost of living to people who cannot well afford to pay more for the necessities of life than they are now paying. We have heard a great deal about the harm that may be done to the sugar industry of Queensland by suddenly discontinuing the employment of black labour there, and I desire to show how much greater is the importance to the Commonwealth of the mining industry of Western Australia than that of the sugar industry of Queensland. We have been told that 22,000 individuals are concerned in the Queensland sugar industry, but no fewer than 100,000 people are directly or indirectly interested in the mining industry of Western Australia. The employees in the mines are all white men, and have received a reasonable wage. The output of the sugar industry means roughly from £1,000,000 to £1,500,000.. The output of the mines of Western Australia in 1899 amounted to 1,643,000 ozs., valued at over £6,246,000. During 1900, the output was 1,580,000 ozs., valued at £6,007,000. During the first half of this year, the output was 858,112 ozs., valued at £3,303,731. I mention that simply to impress on the House the importance of this industry to the Commonwealth. What affects this industry affects most of the industries of the back blocks. It affects the mining industries elsewhere in Australia, though, perhaps, not to quite so severe an extent. What I say about mining generally has application to the pioneer industries of Australia. I shall give a few instances of how the tax upon mining machinery will operate. There is a mine, the name of which, perhaps, is . very well known. For the Golden Horseshoe Mine a new sulphide plant was ordered some time ago at a cost of about .£25,000. It will be landed at Fremantle within the next week or two. The impost which this Tariff will exact from these people who are bringing £25,000 worth of machinery into the Commonwealth will be £5,000. Under the former Tariff with the 5 per cent, duty - the amount would have been £1,250. So that the total sum which the people who are opening up this mine and giving employment to an immense number of men will have to pay will be £6,250. Were this arrangement not made prior to the introduction of the Tariff I am told that the mine would have done without the sulphide plant. There is another instance which affects a gentleman well known in mining circles in Western Australia - Mr. A. E. Morgans - who has been the representative of a considerable number of mining companies. During the last fifteen months he

introduced machinery valued at £1 10,000 on which he paid £5,250 duty. If the Federal Tariff had been in existence he would have had to pay £30,000 duty. He states that if it had been in existence he would not have faced the extra expenditure, and probably the mines which are now working would have been shut down. I might mention another instance in connexion with three well-known mines in the West, where the Tariff has thrown - for virtually it amounts to that - 400 men out of employment, though the Government say that they are going to encourage industries. The Associated Northern, the Oroya, and the Golden Link had everything ready to instal plants to the value of £200,000. But as soon as they found that they would have to pay this enormous duty - £40,000 - they abandoned the idea. These plants, if they had been working, would have employed 400 men - not women- or children, but men getting a fair wage - and where one breadwinner is quite sufficient to pay for the expense of a whole family. The daughters of these men have not to go and work in factories. That is a specific instance of where the Tariff has prevented the employment of 400 men in the Commonwealth.

Mr Kennedy

- In stating that proposition, will the honorable member say whether the proportion of females and children to the adult population is as great in Western Australia as in any of the other States 1

Mr KIRWAN

- No ; but women and children are not employed in the mines.

Mr Kennedy

- Western Australia has not got them.

Mr KIRWAN

- We never hear of women and children being employed in the mines. The miners over there - and, if the honorable member looks up the statistics, he will see that it is a fact - have been keeping their wives and families in Victoria for years. These men could not get employment here, and so they had to go west, and have kept their wives and families here.

Mr Kennedy

- Not one third of those who left the colony were married.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I would like to know how the honorable member explains away the fact that £30,000 a month has been sent out of Western Australia to Victoria. What does that go for 1 It is sent in small amounts to Victoria to keep the wives and children of emigrants. I might mention smother instance of a mine that contemplated erecting a new plant. They found that it would cost £5,000 additional duty, and the consequence is that they have completely abandoned the idea. There is a number of instances of that kind. The honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, has just handed me a letter which concerns the mining industry, and which is addressed to him from Strahan on the 1.9th October -

I have been instructed to write you the following : - Tins chamber views with alarm the protective Tariff introduced by the Federal Ministry, and considers if carried into effect will prove disastrous to the mining industry of this centre : and we also find the numerous complications will render the Tariff unworkable.

This letter is signed by the secretary to the Strahan Chamber of Commerce. I might here quote an authority who is very much respected by mining people, throughout the world, and that is Mr. Richard Hamilton, the manager of the Great Boulder, who never takes an exaggerated view of any subject on which he speaks. He states that the additional cost of working the mines by reason of this Tariff - that is apart from the tax on machinery - will be 1s. fid. per ton. He works it out so far as it affects the very small district of Kalgoorlie, the technical name of which is East Coolgardie. He states that there is not a single industry or a single individual who will be assisted by the Tariff. He estimates what the Commonwealth will get from that district alone. He says there are 60,000 tons treated per month, and on that the increased expenditure in the working of the mines will be £4,500 a month, or £54,000 u year. That is a nice way in which to encourage industry, and to meet those who are desirous of giving employment to the workers of the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister, when he was speaking of the mining industry of Western Australia, quoted a number of figures with reference to the importation of mining machinery, with that air of smug satisfaction that he sometimes assumes, as if they had proved conclusively what he wanted them to prove, whereas they did not do that at all. He evidently tried to show that the raining companies could get all the machinery they wanted in the Eastern States, and that a large amount of

machinery was at present being imported from that part of the Commonwealth. He showed, however, that a considerably larger amount - at any rate that a great deal more - of the machinery imported into Western Australia came from Great Britain ; and I may tell the right honorable gentleman that the mines of Western Australia have obtained all the machinery they possibly could from the Eastern States, because the carriage was cheaper. There are also other reasons why they should patronize the Eastern States, but there is a good deal of the machinery they use that cannot be obtained within the Commonwealth except at extraordinary cost. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo, when he addressed the House last ; week, stated that all the machinery that was needed in Western Australia could be obtained from this portion of the Commonwealth. I telegraphed to the Chamber of Mines at Kalgoorlie to get their exact opinion upon this subject. I wanted to know whether they could get from the Eastern States all the machinery that was required by the Western Australian mines. I have received the following reply : - We admit all machinery can be made in Australia, if cost be no object ; but when quality is considered, high-class steam engines, electrical plant, and crushing mills can be imported 15 per cent, cheaper under old Tariff. Higher quality is required, for the greater is the saving. Owing to natural conditions here, only best quality should be used.

The honorable and learned member for Bendigo seemed to know a great deal about the mining industry of Western Australia, because when certain authorities like Mr. Morgan and others said that the Tariff would do a great deal of harm to the industry, the honorable and learned member for Bendigo calmly said that he did not think it would. Where he got his knowledge with regard to Western Australia I do not know ; but one statement he made was almost as serious an indictment of the Tariff as anything that could be said. He stated that mining machinery could be obtained in the Commonwealth as good and efficient and as cheaply as in any other part of the world. If that be the case, which it is not, according to those people who know most about it, why are the machinery manufacturers crying out so loudly for protection ? Why do they need protection if they can produce as good an article as can be obtained elsewhere and at as cheap a rate ? Those who want mining machinery in Western Australia will act similarly to other people, and they will go where they can get the best value for their money. They are not likely to go to the old country for their mining machinery if they can procure it as cheaply and as good in the eastern States of the Commonwealth. For one thing the carriage would be ever so much lower. I think the honorable and learned member for Bendigo said that machinery could be obtained more cheaply in the Commonwealth than in Great Britain, and that statement shows the absurdity of attempting to protect the machinery industries. There is one thing which might be impressed upon this House, and that is the very serious difficulties attendant upon mining in Western Australia, even under present circumstances. There are all kinds of troubles to be contended with there, such as the absence of water - sometimes the water they do get contains 15 to 20 per cent, of salt- and the absence of fuel, and of timber suitable for mining purposes, which has to be brought very considerable distances. Then the cost of carriage of machinery and commodities, even by rail, is very considerable ; but there are many mining centres which have not yet been tapped by the rail way, and to which the carriage of goods sometimes costs £30 and £40 a ton. I know of a case in the northern country where the cartage of a single poppet leg to a mine cost £50. In another instance a friend of mine, who got machinery worth £850, entered into a contract for its cartage to the mine where it was to be used and erected, and had to pay £3,000. All these things severely handicap the mining industry, and but for the fact that the mines are phenomenally rich, they would have been abandoned long ago. When I was telling an honorable member some facts relating to mining machinery in Western Australia, he asked me whether I thought the mines would go without machinery. I certainly think that a large number of the mines will go without machinery if the cost is to be increased to the extent of 25 per cent. As is well known, mines are often worked at a loss or at a bare margin of profit, in the hope of something good turning up at some time or other, and the slightest thing will turn the scale and cause a stoppage of work and the abandonment of certain mines. There is another point, and that is that all this additional expense will tend to frighten British and foreign capitalists from investing in our mines. There is a number of places throughout the world where good mines, which need capital for their development, exist. There is British Columbia, for instance, and the West Coast of Africa, and, now that things are becoming more settled in South Africa, the mines in the neighbourhood of Johannesburg will probably be started again. All these mines will offer fair inducements to British capitalists, and once we frighten capital away from Australia it will be very difficult to get it back. A duty of 25 per cent, on mining machinery,

together with the other imposts that are provided for under this Tariff, will tend to lessen the inflow of capital, which is badly needed to assist in the development of the natural wealth of Western Australia. Serious as the position may be, as far as the mining companies are concerned, it is a still more serious one for the working population. They have expressed themselves very strongly on the matter. The Goldfields Trades and Labour Council passed a resolution the other day in which they expressed the opinion that the Tariff presses unjustly on the workers, and urged that necessities which cannot be produced in the Commonwealth should be placed on the free list. The additional cost to the workers in Western Australia by reason of this Tariff will be, as I have said, something like 20 per cent. In Western Australia there were on the free list a number of articles which are absolutely necessary in that part of Australia, but nearly all of these are now taxed to a very considerable extent. With the fairness that characterizes some honorable members on the other side, the honorable and learned member for Bendigo referred to the one particular line of candles, and simply gave that half truth which is the hardest of all to fight. According to the report of his speech, he seems to have made a great discovery, because he quoted the case of candles on which he pointed out that there was originally a duty in Western Australia. There was a duty placed on candles at a certain rate, but there were three descriptions of the article which were admitted free into Western Australia. These latter are candles specially used by the working classes of the community, and under the Commonwealth Tariff they will be taxed. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo quoted one line of candles on which the duty is 1 -id. per lb., and pointed out that in Western Australia there was a duty of 2d. per lb. On this the honorable and learned member made out an apparently great case, contending that, so far from the duty on candles having been increased in the western State it had been decreased by 4d. But had the honorable and learned member turned over the page of the Tariff, he would have seen that the particular item to which he drew attention referred to candles which were not otherwise specified. On the next page there are six descriptions of candles mentioned - stearine, paraffine wax, beeswax, lard, and refined animal fat, three of which were admitted free into Western Australia. Another duty which will bear particularly hard on the people in Western Australia, and, in fact, on the people of the whole of the backblocks, is that on kerosene. These people have not the advantages of civilization, and cannot turn on the gas or the electric light. They have nothing with which to illuminate their homes except candles or kerosene, and the proposed duties on these commodities seem to me to be very unfair. There are quite a number of articles of the same kind, all of which were formerly free, but which are now taxed, such as cocoa, coffee, cornflour, rice, sago, tea, and blankets. I think I have a strong argument which ought to appeal to the members of the Government, in support of the reduction of the duty on rice. We have heard a great deal, perhaps too much, about starch lately, but a paragraph which appeared in to-day's Age in regard to rice is almost too good to be missed. The employees engaged in the manufacture of starch held a meeting, it appears, and carried a resolution in which they "view with alarm" the action of the Federal Government in imposing a duty of 6s. 3d. per cwt. on rice. It must be observed that the alarm is not occasioned by the fact that thousands of people all over the Commonwealth use rice as food, but is occasioned because rice is one of the commodities used in the manufacture of starch. The resolution passed by these employees goes on to state -

We consider that the duty will be detrimental to the best interests of the industry, inasmuch as it will lessen the output and create loss of employment, thereby causing the burden to fall on those least able to bear it.

That may be an argument in favour of a reduction of the duty; but I suppose it would be no argument to say that there are thousands, scattered all over the Commonwealth to whom rice is a necessary article of food. The latter consideration will probably have no effect on the Government, but if I say that there are half-a-dozen, or twenty, or a hundred people engaged in the manufacture of starch, who may be injured by the duty on rice, that may be an argument sufficiently strong to induce the Government to abolish the impost. This Tariff to me is strongly objectionable, because it will press so hardly on those industries which are the life and soul of the Commonwealth. Mining, agriculture, pastoral pursuits - all those industries to which we look to make the future of the Commonwealth - there is a tendency 'to sacrifice for the sake of a few factories at Footscray or Yarra Bend. The object of the Government, in my opinion, ought rather to be to encourage these great natural industries. If they are encouraged, we shall get a population in Australia which will cause a natural demand for certain other industries; and in that way the

energies of the people will be put to the very best advantage. The resources of this Commonwealth are limitless. Australia is not a small patch of country, but a huge area of the world's surface ; and the mere handful of people we have here will be best employed, not in the factories of the cities, but in clearing the forests, working the mines, and developing the pastoral and agricultural and other natural resources of this great continent. It ' seems to me that those who put forward the protectionist policy have very little faith in the future of Australia. But I believe that Australia can stand alone without any protection of the kind. We are naturally protected by our great distance from the great manufacturing centres of the old world ; and it is not by encouraging a policy which will create monopolies and tend to promote sweating that we can make the Commonwealth what we always wish it to be. The line of advancement of the Commonwealth should be in the direction of assisting and furthering the development of its natural wealth.

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Mr SAWERS

- In the early part of the session we had a debate extending over two or three weeks, in which the question of protection or free-trade, and the question of fiscalism in a general sense, was pretty well threshed out. I did not venture to take part in that debate, but I feel that I cannot remain silent upon this occasion, although probably honorable members rightly think that the present discussion has lasted long enough. I feel some difficulty in addressing myself to a subject which covers such a wide field and opens up so many issues, and in compressing my remarks into the brief compass of time, during which I hope to claim the attention of honorable members. By striving in that direction I shall avoid dealing with many figures, or wandering amid the mists of political economy, which one eminent Englishman, D'Israeli, called the "dismal science." But I have never been able to discover that political economy was entitled to the name of a science, because scarcely one authority or schoolman agrees with another, and they are constantly laying down fresh dogmas or qualifications of dogmas. There seems to be no solid ground in this field where one can place his foot.

Mr Reid

- If the honorable member were in New South Wales he would feel that very much.

Mr SAWERS

- I should like to say, to begin with, that no man in this country has a higher admiration for the talents of the right honorable member who interrupts me than I have, and no one listens to his speeches on any set occasion with more admiration than I do. Each time that I listen to my right honorable friend, on any great occasion, however, I always feel extreme regret that talents so great and eloquence so admirable should be devoted to what I consider a dying and hopeless cause.

Mr Reid

- It was never so much alive in New South Wales as to-day.

Mr SAWERS

- The right honorable member says that the free-trade cause is very much alive in New South Wales, and we have been repeatedly told in this Chamber that New South Wales is a free-trade State. But though it is never too late to learn, I have never heard any proof that New South Wales has pronounced definitely for a free-trade policy.

Mr Reid

- What! What about the State elections?

Mr SAWERS

- It may seem extraordinary to honorable members that I should make that statement in spite of the fact that New South Wales has during the last few years had what may be described as the most rabid free-trade policy in the world. But how was the policy of New South Wales changed from one of revenue tariffism or moderate protection to free-trade? The right honorable member never had a mandate from the people of New South Wales to bring in his free-trade policy.

Mr.F. E. McLean. - He had two mandates.

Mr SAWERS

- When the general election of 1894 took place, the then Premier, Sir George Dibbs, was defeated at the polls. He not only suffered a personal defeat, but one or two of his Ministers were also beaten. When Parliament met, the right honorable the leader of the Opposition, who was then the leader of the

free-trade party, managed to secure the reins of office, and became Premier of the country. He had not a party in the New South Wales Parliament strong enough to enable him to bring in a free-trade policy, but he made a compact with a third party in that House. He came to an understanding with them - not written of course, but implied - that for some concessions which he would make to them, he should secure the entire vote of the labour party. He never could have changed the fiscal policy of New South Wales without the help of that very labour party, a majority of whom were notoriously pronounced protectionists. The very leader of the New South Wales labour party was a protectionist, and the honorable member who leads the same party in this House was a pronounced protectionist. The fault I find with the right honorable member is this - that by securing the support of the labour party, for some hoped for concessions which they never got, he, without a mandate from the country, had the audacity to change the fiscal policy of New South Wales.

Mr Reid

- Does the honorable member recollect the election of 1895 ?

Mr SAWERS

- I remember too much for the right honorable member. I say that the majority of the members of the last Parliament in New South Wales, in which I sat, were protectionists, but their mouths were shut because the whole of the labour party were bound by the arrangement made with the right honorable member.

Mr Reid

- Does the honorable member recollect the election of 1896, when my policy was before the country ?

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Mr SAWERS

- There is no use in going further into that question. I say again that the right honorable member never had the authority of the people of New South Wales to bring in a free-trade policy ; that the majority of the votes at every election were returned in favour of protectionist candidates ; and that the majority of the members in the Parliament were protectionists, although for purposes of their own they did not support a protectionist policy.

Mr SPEAKER

- The question before the Chair is the financial and fiscal proposals of the present Government.

Mr SAWERS

- I am afraid the debate has embraced a very wide scope. I have referred to this matter because statements have been made in this House as to the injustice that this Tariff will do to the people of New South Wales, and I think I am justified in stating that it is erroneous to suppose that New South Wales is a free-trade country. It is simply because Sydney is a great importing city with large shipping interests that she returns free-trade members. It is only the metropolitan area that is free-trade. But Sydney is not New South Wales. I should like to say, in reference to the character of this debate, which you, Mr. Speaker, have reminded me is in reference to the Tariff, that it has to a great extent taken the line of the relative merits of the policy of free-trade or protection. Although the right honorable member and those who support him know perfectly well that free-trade is absolutely impossible in a Federal Tariff, yet the whole tone and tenor of their speeches has been to show that free-trade is a sound and proper policy. I should like to put fairly before the House what free-trade is. That great Englishman and able man, Sir "Robert Giffen, who may be looked upon as the high priest of free-trade in the old country, has put it in this way : that no industry can or should exist anywhere which is not able to stand by itself against unrestricted competition. To take a New South Wales authority, the honorable member for Parkes puts it in this way - If the free-trader is asked to impose a duty on a farmer in a foreign country, he rightly replies he will be a party to no scheme which will in any way handicap such a competitor in his test of fitness for production. The great free-trade organ in Sydney, the Daily Telegraph, which is now supporting the right honorable member, states -

It is no concern of any purchaser whether the producers or makers of anything he wants to buy are black or white, or whether they receive high or low wages.

That is a statement of the free-trade standpoint. This question is very much of a social and moral one. I think it is our duty to take into consideration the question whether that which is used by a community is produced by high or cheap labour, or whether it is produced by white or coloured labour. This statement by a free-trade paper published in Sydney is simply an exhibition of absolute free-trade, naked and

unashamed.

Mr Reid

- Hear, hear. I agree with what the honorable member says when a man can afford to do that.

Mr SAWERS

- Does the right honorable and learned member applaud the statement I have read from the Daily Telegraph ?

Mr Reid

- I will applaud the honorable member, too.

Mr SAWERS

- I take the view that it is the duty of a Parliament to consider the interests of its own people-

Mr Reid

- Hear, hear. It should not bleed them too much.

Mr SAWERS

- And that any Parliament representing a community has a right - if in its wisdom it thinks fit to do so - to impose a duty upon any foreign article which is produced by cheap labour or by coloured labour, with the object of protecting the industries of its own people. That, in my opinion, is the protectionist doctrine.

Mr Reid

- It is only a lot of crawlers who want protection.

Mr SAWERS

- Any man who assents to that doctrine is a protectionist. It does not matter how moderate he may be - indeed he may be extremely moderate - but when he assents to the doctrine that a community has a right to promote the industries of its own people, either by offering a bonus or by imposing a duty, however small, on imported goods, that man is a protectionist. I have found him very often in a free-trade party.

Mr Thomson

- The right to adopt such a policy is not questioned, but the wisdom of doing so is.

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Mr SAWERS

- We have to discuss the wisdom of it in committee. I stand here as a protectionist, and admit that to be a protectionist principle; but I have heard such men as the right honorable the leader of the Opposition, the late Sir Henry Parkes, and others, denounce protection as an evil and contemptible thing.

Mr Reid

- - So it is ; a mean crawling thing.

Mr SAWERS

- If the doctrine which I have enunciated is an evil, a contemptible, and a crawling one--

Mr HUME COOK

- The same might be said of the protection to be afforded by the sugar duties.

Mr Reid

- But that is to get rid of the blackfellow.

Mr SAWERS

- I am astonished at, the type of intellect of men who can give vent to such an expression, I may be asked to state still further the principles of protection, and I should like to quote from Lord Masham. He says - The real point to be considered from the national point of view is whether the duty enhances the price to the consumer in a greater ratio than the united gains of all the producers. If not, the nation must gain. The rule should be, in all cases, to fix the duty at about what might on a liberal estimate be considered the gain and national advantage to the great army of producers.

He illustrates that point by referring to the great industries of England. After showing how many thousands of people are employed in those industries, he asks, in a pointed way, whether it is for the benefit of Great Britain that those industries should be smothered for the sake of importing articles 5 or 10 per cent, cheaper. That to me is the whole point. Wiry, even that great authority quoted by antique free traders, Adam Smith, says -

By means of regulations - which would amount to legislation - a manufacture may sometimes be acquired sooner than it could have been otherwise, and after a certain time may be made as cheap or cheaper than in the foreign countries.

Mr Reid

- Hear, hear.

Mr SAWERS

- Even the great authority, Adam Smith, has shown that protection, if properly applied, will end in goods being manufactured locally as cheap as, if not cheaper than, the imported goods.

Mr Winter Cooke

- It is the first time I have heard Adam Smith quoted as a protectionist.

Mr SAWERS

- Reference has been made to the fact that a number of honorable members of the labour party are free traders. I have been astonished at all times to find that a member of a labour party or any one imbued with the hope and aspiration of improving the conditions of the worker of his own country could declare himself a free-trader. Much has been said in regard to the Factories Acts, the raising of wages, the minimum wage, and short hours, but is it not evident to the poorest intellect in this country that if we raise wages and shorten hours, and yet keep our ports open to the products of cheap labour and long hours in other countries, the industries of our own country must go down ? It seems to me that that must be the inevitable result.

Mr Thomson

- Not at all.

Mr Kingston

- The honorable member for New England is absolutely right.

Mr SAWERS

- It seems to me to be so inevitable that it has only to be stated to be clear to a man of any intelligence.

Mr Fowler

- How does the honorable member account for the fact that wages have risen, and that the hours of labour have decreased in England under freetrade 1

Mr HUME COOK

- That has taken place also in Germany.

Mr SAWERS

- I will illustrate what appears to me to be the whole point by referring to the attitude of Mr. John Morley, a great Englishman, who formerly represented Newcastle, which is the centre of trades unionism in Great Britain, and a great mining constituency, compared with which any mining electorate in Australia pales into insignificance. That gentleman lost his seat as the representative for Newcastle in the House of Commons, because he would not vote for the eight hours principle. He opposed the movement not because he did not believe that eight hours work a day was ample, nor yet because he was imbued with Tory instincts, or anything of that kind. He opposed it because, being a statesman and a thinker, he knew perfectly well that to reduce the hours of labour in the industries of Great Britain, and to raise the minimum wage, would have the effect of throwing those industries into the lap of foreign countries. It was not as an enemy of the working man that he opposed the movement, but because he knew that the inevitable effect of it would be that the trade would be lost to Great Britain.

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Mr Spence

- They only work seven and a half hours per day in the coal mines there.

Mr SAWERS

- -The honorable member knows perfectly well that John Morley was not an enemy of the working man. To my mind the proper way to deal with the great question of the regulation of hours and wages is not for one country to move in that direction, but to have something like an international agreement on the subject. Honorable members who support the cause of free-trade are fond of talking of buying in the cheapest market. The honorable member for Southern Melbourne, in the course of his speech this afternoon, denounced cheapness. Is it not evident that if we are to buy cheaply we must sell cheaply % If the doctrine of buying in the cheapest market is to have universal application, it means that the people here must sell their labour cheaply in order to compete in the markets of the world. I should like to quote from a writer who expresses this point more forcibly than any language of mine could do. In an article dealing with the question of unrestricted competition, a writer in the Fortnightly Review sets forth that -

It leads to an international industrial warfare of the most savage intensity. This warfare if permitted to proceed to its logical issue can have but one result ; the reduction of the standard of life and comfort - in all countries - to the lowest level at which human beings, in any part of the world, are willing to exist. Under this law of unrestricted competition, of open ports, ocean tramps, and cheap freights, the inevitable result must be that the manufacturing industries of the world must go to coloured labour, with other conditions, such as the supply of coal, thrown in. It must mean the elevation and aggrandizement of the coloured races of the world, and the degradation and partial ruin of our own. We have heard a great deal about this question, but, as I have not spoken upon it before, I should like to refer to the period between 1844. and the present time, when Great Britain has been under freetrade. During that period of over fifty years, there can be no doubt, and no one denies it, that England has advanced, and has_ shown most marvellous prosperity. Her exports and imports combined have multiplied nearly three times. I do not for a moment deny that free-trade has served Great Britain well ; but is it not fair to ask how she prospered under protection previously to 1844? For twenty five years previously to 1844 she multiplied her exports and imports about two and a half times ; so that under both policies she has progressed and prospered marvellously.

Mr Glynn

-For the first half of the century her exports of home produce were constant.

Mr SAWERS

- The progress which Great Britain made under protection was made under all possible difficulties. There were no railways, no mighty steam-boats, no telegraphs, scarcely anything like modern banking, and few of the conveniences of modern times. All that goes to make life what it is now was wanting in those days. Australia was unknown, the Indian Empire was undeveloped, and England's Eastern markets had scarcely progressed at all. I am a protectionist in Australia, but I should be a free-trader in Great Britain. There is no fiscal doctrine which can be applied absolutely to every country, and under all circumstances. I am perfectly consistent in saying that England is pursuing the right course in sticking to her free-trade policy, though if I were to go into details I might suggest modifications. I think that she is a little silly in turning the other cheek by receiving the exports of countries which exclude her exports and allowing them to come into competition with the products of her own people. It has been denied that, while England has prospered under free-trade for 50 years past, she has practically reached the zenith of her industrial glory, and has almost declined during the past few years ; but I cannot understand any one denying that fact. It is notorious that the industries of Great Britain are declining, or at any rate are not expanding, which, in view of the increased population of the world, is practically the same thing.

Mr HUME COOK

- She is losing her colonial trade to Germany.

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Mr SAWERS

- It is no law of Providence that England is to continue for ever the manufacturer for the world. As one writer has put it, no law of Providence requires that Lancashire shall continue to spin cotton for the whole world. Because of her cheap labour, India has captured a great part of the cotton industry. Lancashire has lost her Eastern market, India and Japan having cut her out; and the present movement will extend until the cheap labour of those countries will cut her out in other markets, too. With regard to the jute industry, it is perfectly familiar to us in Australia that what used to be called Dundee goods are now called Calcutta goods, which is only another term for Indian goods. It is because cheap labour can be secured in India that manufacturers have built their mills there, and erected machinery, and are now able to cut out the jute trade of Dundee as they are cutting out the cotton trade of Lancashire.

Mr Fowler

- The cotton trade of Lancashire is as prosperous as any at the present day.

Mr SAWERS

- I will give the figures of an eminent Englishman - Mr. Bryce - an ex-cabinet Minister, whom we all know as the author of the American Constitution, and who is an Imperial free-trader. He said : - The United States was developing in many important lines of business in which they might have expected England to hold her own against any country. In the production of electrical plant the Americans were taking the lead, and they had recently taken large contracts for rails for the East Indies.

So that the Americans are actually cutting out England in her own possessions. I could give many statistics which show that Belgium and Germany are also cutting out England in her Eastern markets in iron manufactures. Mr. Bryce goes on to say -

They are obtaining English contracts now.

Further, he makes this melancholy admission - .

Between 1891 and 1897, Germany increased her export trade by £21,000,000; the United States by £31,000,000; and, during the same period, the export trade of Great Britain fell off by £15,000,000.

I might cite still more astounding facts, and I ask what could be said if the position could be reversed, and our friends on the opposition benches could tell us that the export trade of Germany and the United States had fallen off by so many millions ?

Mr Glynn

- 70 per cent, of the exports of the United States are raw material - agricultural products, largely.

Mr SAWERS

- If the facts could be reversed, would not honorable members tell us that they were a triumphant evidence of the virtues and righteousness of free-trade ? But, as it is, they are dumb as dogs, and have no answer. I do not mean to say that the falling-off in England's trade is any proof that she is pursuing a wrong policy, because the reasons are not far to seek. I do not know if honorable members noticed a paragraph that was published the other day in the London Daily Telegraph, but it is so significant that I am determined to embody it in my remarks. The London Daily Telegraph is a newspaper of high standing, which has always been a supporter of the English Liberal Party, and a staunch freetrade organ. The paragraph says -

We know that America has taken the place held by ourselves for a century and a half, and has become the greatest exporting nation. From 1879 to 1895 the outward trade of the United States showed practically no expansive power force. In the latter year - 1895 - commenced one of the most astonishing movements in the records of commerce. American exports increased in the period from 1895 to 1900 from £105,000,000 to £295,000,000. This means an increase of almost 80 per cent.

Of course, some people would not be Convinced under any circumstances ; but, in my opinion, honorable members opposite, instead of arguing this question, ought to throw up the sponge in the face of proofs so convincing as these. We do not denounce free-trade, but we protest against their denunciation of protection. Is it not silly in the extreme, when we find that the countries of Europe have progressed under protection, and that the United States of America have made so great an advance under it ? If free-trade has suited England, can it be denied that protection has suited America, and that it is possible for a country to advance under that policy. I have heard honorable gentlemen denounce American duties from time to time, but it has never affected my principles as a Protectionist, because I admit that protectionists may go to ridiculous extremes, just as members of religious bodies may do. I am prepared to believe that in some cases they have gone to absurd extremes in the United States, but where would America be to-day if she had not adopted protection ? The adoption of that policy has lifted her into the proudest position in the world. If it is said that she occupies that position in spite of her protective policy, that still proves that protection cannot be so wicked and evil a thing as honorable members would have us suppose. Mr. H. W. Wilson, in the Fortnightly Review, of July, 1901, says--

Mr Wilks

- He is a croaker.

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Mr SAWERS

- It would be well for many of us to sit at his feet occasionally. Mr. Wilson was referring to certain contracts showing the advance of the American export trade in iron and steel. He says-

In the case of the Gektiok Viaduct in Burma, a structure 2,260 feet long, and 320 feet high, the lowest English tender was at a cost of £26 17s. a ton ; the work to be erected in three years. The tender of the Pennsylvania Steel Company was £.15 a ton ; the work to be erected in one year. The difference is simply astonishing. As the next instance, I will take the tenders for the Uganda railway bridges. The highest British tender was for £18 10s. a ton, delivered in 104 weeks; the lowest £15s. a ton, delivered in 60 weeks.

Sir William McMillan

- Was the cheaper one the American ? They did not guarantee how many years the work would last, or how long it would be safe.

Mr SAWERS

- That is worthy of the honorable gentleman, and it simply means that the experts who accepted the tender were such idiots as to accept rotten material.

Sir William McMillan

- To go over that bridge in ten years' time would be dangerous.

Mr SAWERS

- Mr. Wilson says, further -

The highest American tender was £145s., delivered free on board at New York in 48 weeks ; the lowest was £10 6s., delivered in any British port, and the time, 46 weeks.

An Honorable Member. - That is because they pay such low wages in America.

Mr SAWERS

- Is it not a triumphant vindication of the argument I have used this afternoon ? Mr. Wilson adds -

The above figures are an ironical comment upon Lord Playfair's remark made in 1887.

Some honorable members have a great respect for Lord Playfair, and I think he has already been quoted in the debate.

Mr Higgins

- A very good man, too.

Mr SAWERS

- A very good man, too, in his own way ; but men are not all wise. Mr. Wilson quotes Lord Playfair, and he says that in 1887 Lord Playfair, speaking of Great Britain, said -

We are a great exporting nation. The United States cannot be so, for her cost of production is raised so high by protection that her exports are of small account in the markets of the world.

Here we see the free-trade authority, Lord Playfair, at whose feet many free-traders have sat, telling an English audience that the United States could not become an exporting nation. I have already given honorable members facts in opposition to that statement. Doubtless the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney, and the honorable member for Wentworth, have often said the same thing, but, surely the stern logic of facts must make them begin to think that there is something wrong with their theories.

Mr Higgins

- It is about time.

Mr SAWERS

- Surely it is about time? Nothing is so powerful in this world as facts. I must ask attention to another quotation from the same article in the Fortnightly Review, by Mr. Wilson, more important far than any words of mine. He says -

In England we have seen the Midland Railway ordering 40 locomotives across the Atlantic. We have seen the Great Northern, Great Central, and Barry railway following the Midland's example. We have seen an order for 8,000 tons of rails and fishplates sent to the Carnegie Co. by the Great Eastern, because, in the words of the chairman . . .

And he quotes the words of the chairman of the company -

We had no option, but to go where we knew we could rely upon good material -

There is an answer to my honorable friend the member for Wentworth - and prompt delivery, and at a price below what we should have been compelled to pay in England.

Mr Wilks

- Prompt delivery was the trouble. They are working overtime in England, and cannot fill their orders.

Mr SAWERS

- One may knock until he is sick ; but some honorable members are so staunch in this matter that all the knocking in Christendom will never affect them. I travelled last week from Melbourne to Sydney, and when approaching Sydney I got a copy of the Sydney Morning Herald, and one of the first things upon which my eyes rested was a cable to this effect, dated London, October 18th -

Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, in the course of a letter to Mr. J. G. A. Baird, M.P., explained the reasons why the Indian Government placed a large order for locomotives with German

firms.

Here is the Government of India having to go to the Continent for locomotives for Government railways. Lord George Hamilton said he hoped that British firms would expand their powers of production.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear !

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Mr SAWERS

- Is not that just what I said ? Did I not state that they are not expanding, and that they are incapable of meeting the conditions of modern industry ?

Mr Wilks

- They have to turn orders away.

Mr SAWERS

- We are told they have not got the material, and that the workshops are filled up. But why do they not enlarge their shops like the United States manufacturers, and render themselves able to accept any contract or any call upon their energies ?

Mr Fowler

- They are well enough satisfied with the products of their industry.

Mr SAWERS

- They are well enough satisfied, and so are the Chinese satisfied with their system of government.

Lord George Hamilton said that he hoped the British firms would expand their powers of production. A Hanover firm had tendered for the locomotives at a price 25 per cent, lower, and a delivery in half the time of the British tenders.

Those are the words of the Secretary of State for India, given in explanation, and surely it must bring a tinge of shame to free-trade cheeks to think that the English Government had actually to go past their own industries and their own workmen to send orders for locomotives, to be used upon Government railways in India, to a German firm. I know that nothing I could say would affect the opinion of the honorable member for Parramatta, DUD he certainly should see that he must be astray, and that there must be something wrong in his fiscal belief when he reads such statements as these. I know it is useless to pile up more evidence in this matter, and my time is limited. The evidence is overwhelming and cannot be ignored even by those who shut their eyes to it. English free-traders are constantly telling the people of Great Britain that they must form colleges, must become expert, must copy German example, and so on ; but all that is only a begging of the question. In Germany they have cheaper labour than in Great Britain.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Under protection.

Mr SAWERS

- And they, have protection. I do not deny it, and I hate this doctrine of cheapness. But in the United States, upon all authority, workmen have superior wages. The honorable member for Parramatta has had some experience in these matters, and I want him to tell me whether the mighty steel furnaces in America would be in existence if it had not been for the adoption of the system of protection by that country, or that the country ever would have reached such a commanding position that, to quote the words of Mr. Carnegie, " she is able to defy the competition of the civilized world."

An Honorable Member. - Royal ties have had a lot to do with it.

Mr SAWERS

- I should like to pass now to another matter, and to refer to a criticism made by the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney. I did not hear him make the criticism in this House, but I know he has made it, time after time, on public platforms in dealing with this great fiscal question. It is a criticism intended to sneer at and cast a slur on Victoria. Speaking of Victoria, the right honorable and learned gentleman says, " You have more people employed in Victoria than in New South Wales, I admit ; but look at the poor women and helpless girls you employ." He tried to cast a slur on Victoria because women and girls are employed in its factories. If we have proper conditions, why should we not give work to helpless women and girls ?

Mr Wilks

- Under proper conditions we ought to keep them out of factories.

An Honorable Member. - It is better to do that than have a labour bureau.

Mr SAWERS

- What was the intention of the leader of the Opposition in casting slurs of that kind ? It was to show that it was the effect of protection to bring about a preponderance of females over men in the factories. I had the curiosity to turn to the statistics of Great Britain, and I found, from the Statesman's Year-Book for 1900, which may be regarded as a faithful authority, that England employs in her factories 40,558 male children under thirteen years of age, 45,941 female children, and over 610,000 women. The number of males employed was not given for that year, and so I had to go back to 1896 to get that information. In that year it says that the males employed in her factories - I do not think that children are included here - numbered 412,841, and the females 664,846. Here we have the females in English factories far in excess of the males. What, therefore, is the use of an argument of that kind ? If the honorable gentleman's sneer was directed against protection, it applies with double force to free-trade. I shall now refer to the special test which the leader of the Opposition has applied in public meetings again and again, and that is the test of the savings bank. In 1900 Victoria had £9,110,818 in the savings banks, and New South Wales £10,069,434, but the rate per head in Victoria was £7 16s. 8d., and in New South Wales £7 9s. 4d. Time after time the right honorable and learned member has told his audiences that the best test of a country's greatness and prosperity is the savings of the people. I think he stated the other night in Melbourne that in 1896 the working classes in Great Britain had £154,800,000 in the savings banks. He asked - Is not that a proof of the advantages and glory of free-trade principles ? And he urged that the advantage of a policy of free-trade is that the people of Great Britain were so prosperous that the working classes had in their savings banks over £154,800,000.

Mr Willis

- Will the honorable member give the figures for 1898 and 1899 ?

Mr SAWERS

- I do not keep the figures for each year beside me. I am dealing with the year which the leader of the Opposition selected. He said that the amount of savings in Great Britain is a proof that free-trade is a righteous and proper doctrine to apply universally. But I would remind the House that at the end of the protectionist period Great Britain had more money in her savings banks than had the combined countries of Europe in theirs. What are the facts now ? Sixty years have now passed away, and we find that, in comparison with the deposits of £154,800,000 in the savings banks of Great Britain, the people of France have saved £164,800,000, the people of Austria £178,600,000, and the people of the United States - all protectionist countries - £446,600,000.

Mr O'Malley

- Surely it must be a mistake ?

Mr SAWERS

- I wish it would occur to the intellects of honorable members opposite to think that it is a mistake and hunt up the figures for themselves.

Mr Willis

- The honorable member's own side said so.

Mr SAWERS

- They said it in sarcasm ! The methods of the leader of the Opposition are disingenuous. When a public man quotes the prosperity of one country, with the intention of leading his audience to imagine that it is owing to a particular fiscal policy, it is disingenuous not to give the results in other countries. We expect something better from a public man than disingenuousness of that kind. I know that it will be said - " Look at the vast population of America. Look at her peculiar circumstances." But I shall give a little illustration, which will knock all argument of that kind sky high, from a magazine article, in which a quotation is made from Mr. Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth. In 1890 the New England and middle States, with a population of 17,300,000 persons, had 3,420,000 depositors in their savings banks. One out of every five had a banking account, and the deposits amounted to £255,000,000. A population equal to a little more than half that of Great Britain had in 1890 in their savings banks £255,000,000. Surely honorable members must begin to question their theories, and think that there is something wrong. If I could only get doubt into their minds I am sure that an investigation would settle the question. I do not intend to delay the House by going into comparisons between Victoria and New South Wales. I am not afraid to enter into

such comparisons, because they come out all right so far as Victoria is concerned. I have no wish to copy the example of the honorable member for Parramatta by detailing the trifling difference in the cost of goods sold in the shops of Sydney and Melbourne. I looked up the matter, and I found that the prices are pretty much the same. There is a slight advantage in favour of Sydney, but in some cases the price is actually cheaper in Melbourne. Many reasons might be given to explain the difference, and even if the case were slightly different it would not affect my contention. If Victoria had had the coalfields of New South Wales, I wonder what her position would have been.

Mr Kingston

- Hear, hear ; or the pastoral industry.

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Mr SAWERS

- I will leave the pastoral industry out of consideration, because the particulars as to that can be easily ascertained, but the coal industry affects, in many and insidious ways, the prosperity of a country. If Victoria had only had coalfields such as those of New South Wales - even allowing New South Wales to keep her own - what would have been the position here?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What would have been the position if New South Wales had had the gold-fields of Victoria?

Mr SAWERS

- In 1899 Victoria had 3,159,312 acres under cultivation, whilst in the same year New South Wales, with all her vast territory, had only 2,440,968 acres. I regret to say that the prosperity of New South Wales - and no man could uphold that better than the honorable member for Wentworth, if he were to speak out that which he believes to be true - is, in a great measure, a spurious prosperity, due to her excessive borrowing, and the wicked and iniquitous system of spending the proceeds of the land she has sold. During the last 50 years about £60,000,000, which has been derived from the sale of land, has been expended in New South Wales, and that amount ought to be added to her debt, when comparisons are made between her and other States. In June, 1900, the Victorian national debt amounted to £49,000,000, whilst that of New South Wales amounted to £65,000,000.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- What about the municipal debts?

Mr SAWERS

- There are municipal debts in both States, and it will be to the credit of Victoria if she has some municipal debts, because she has a municipal system which is of some value, whereas New South Wales is, in this direction, the most backward country in Christendom. In speaking of the money derived from land, I do not refer to the revenue that is legitimately derived from land under lease, but I am speaking of money received for land which has been sold. I have known of land in Riverina to the value of nearly £5,000,000 being sold in one year, and the money being shovelled into the Treasury and shovelled out again for expenditure upon public works. That is not the sort of thing which is calculated to produce real prosperity, because it is equivalent to a gambler getting rid of his property.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Has not Victoria done the same thing?

Mr SAWERS

- I should like to say a few words in reference to another matter which has been mentioned, and that is the cheap clothing trade. The cheap clothing trade, or cheap trade of any kind, is the result of the application of the free-trade doctrine of unrestricted competition. As long as there is unrestricted competition, unless there are powerful trades unions to protect the industries, the result must be low wages and hard conditions for the workers. The poor unfortunate women of the East end of London have no trades unions to limit the operation of unrestricted competition, which has been carried to its fullest extent with results which are a disgrace to civilization. Thousands and thousands of women are working in the East End of London at rates of wages so low that 6s. per week is the maximum, and the pay often falls as low as 4s. per week. This is simply the result of the doctrine of unrestricted competition as applied to any industry. It is unfair to throw all the blame upon the sweaters, and to apply all the curses to them, because they are victims alike with the sweated of this accursed doctrine of unrestricted competition. The great question of fiscalism is not a hard matter of buying and selling - it is a moral question above

everything else, and we are doing right in protecting our own citizens, and especially in protecting helpless women and children in their struggle to make a living, by refusing to allow cheap sweated goods of other countries to come here, simply because we can get them a trifle cheaper. I wonder whether the free-traders who go home and clap their wives on their shoulders asking for approval of the bargains they have made, in the way of purchasing clothing for their children, realize that those clothes were made practically with the sweat and blood of women in London. While the trades unionists are clamouring for justice for themselves, let them put their feet down upon these cheap importations.

Mr Higgins

- A great quantity of the sweated goods from the East End of London go into New South Wales.

Mr SAWERS

- Yes ; the New South Wales stores are packed with such goods. One of the most painful sights I see as I walk along the streets of Sydney, or other towns, is to see the cheap prices at which some of the commoner classes of goods are ticketed, because I realize that that cheapness has been brought about at the cost of the degradation and ruin of thousands of people in London and other places.

Mr Wilks

- They have had to legislate against sweating in Victoria.

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Mr SAWERS

- I denounce this doctrine of cheapness as a false doctrine, and contend that it is the duty of the artisans and workers of this country, while clamouring for justice for themselves - clamouring against cheapness in their own case - to think of giving fair play all round, to remember that people are sweated in other countries, and to decline to receive goods that are made at such a terrible cost in flesh and blood.

Mr Poynton

- Does the honorable member believe in the factory legislation in Victoria?

Mr SAWERS

- All honour to Victoria for the legislation she has passed. I do not know all. about the factory legislation in Victoria, and there may be absurdities in it, such as the provisions which in some cases prevent a man from employing his own son.

Mr Mauger

- That is not true.

Mr SAWERS

- Whether it be true or false, I say all honour to Victoria for having passed such legislation, for I am heart and soul with those who desire to protect the people engaged in industrial occupations.

Mr Poynton

- There is sweating in protected as well as in free-trade countries.

Mr SAWERS

- Selfishness is not confined to any particular country, and it is the duty of the Legislature to check it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Can the honorable member explain how it is that he is now so heartily in favour of Victorian factory legislation, although he was so bitterly opposed to the compulsory arbitration legislation that was introduced into the New South Wales Parliament ?

Mr SAWERS

- I am not opposed to compulsory arbitration. I know what the honorable member is referring to. Some two years ago or more a Bill was introduced into the New South Wales Legislature entitled the " Conciliation and Arbitration Bill." The measure was one to which, theoretically, I would give my support, but it contained such iniquitous, stupid, and unworkable clauses that I was compelled to oppose it. The author of that Bill, the Honorable B. R. Wise, Attorney-General of New South Wales, has now introduced another Bill of a similar character, and guided by the criticisms that were poured upon the original measure, he has so greatly improved the Bill that one would scarcely recognise it, and I say, with all my heart and soul, that I hope it will become law. I am absolutely in favour of arbitration. The honorable member for Parramatta announced himself in favour of federation, but as not in favour of the Convention Bill, and in that he was somewhat like myself in regard to the former Arbitration Bill. But I am in favour of the particular Arbitration Bill now before the Parliament of New South Wales. I would now like to say a few

words about another subject. In 1894 the right honorable member for East Sydney, who then, as now, was doing his utmost to obtain office, shrieked out - " Give me 24 hours of office, and I will put an end to the unemployed difficulty for ever."

Mr Wilks

- That was a figure of speech.

Mr SAWERS

- A good deal of the statements of the right honorable member for East Sydney are figures of speech. Shortly after 1894, the right honorable member obtained office, and two years later the unemployed difficulty in New South Wales had risen to a scandal. Over 14,000 men were registered as unemployed, and the thousands of women and children dependent upon them were going without food.

Mr Wilks

- According to the Age, there are more unemployed in Victoria.

Mr SAWERS

- When the right honorable member for East Sydney was Premier of New South Wales, the unemployed difficulty rose to be such a scandal that the free-trade press of Sydney, as represented by the Daily Telegraph, in a leading article actually advised the charitable people to put articles of food in boxes at their back doors, in order that the starving poor might get something to eat in the small hours of the morning. The Sydney Morning Herald, free-trade newspaper as it is, and with a free-trade Government in office, denounced the state of things in Sydney as a scandal and disgrace, and said that that city more resembled a city of the middle ages than one of the nineteenth century. I do not say that that condition was the result of free-trade, but I do say that it is a scandal and a shame that such comparisons should be possible. I only refer to these facts in order to show the absurdity of the contention that because there is more poverty or dearness in one place than another, that poverty and dearness are the result of any fiscal policy.

Mr Thomson

-Why did not the protectionists, when they returned to office, alter the fiscal system ?

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Mr SAWERS

- The answer to that is very plain. When the protectionist party in New South Wales got back to office, we were within " coo-ee " of federation, and it was recognised that it would be absurd to alter the fiscal policy of the country for a few months, seeing that the whole question would be dealt with by the Federal Parliament. I have, however, always deplored the fact that New South Wales did not enter the Federal Union when the Dibbs Tariff was in operation. Had that happened we should have had very little of the howl which we now hear from that State.

Mr Wilks

- The people upset the Dibbs Tariff.

Mr SAWERS

- The people were contented and prosperous under the Dibbs Tariff, and would have been quite content, in order to meet the difficulties of federation, to have borne increased duties. We have heard a great deal about pauperism. I do not place implicit reliance on returns of pauperism, because paupers are registered under different systems in different countries. From my knowledge of England, knowing the huge number of charitable institutions there, and the private charity that is otherwise dispensed, I feel that the official returns do not really indicate the amount of pauperism in that country ; and I have no doubt that the same is the case in regard to other countries. But dealing with official figures, as found in Mulhall, we find that in 1898 France, in round numbers, had 290,000 paupers ; Germany, 320,000 ; and Russia, 350,000. I suppose my free-trade friends expect that Great Britain had fewer paupers, but, unfortunately, the old country topped the list with 810,000.

Mr Thomas

- All the paupers of France and Germany go to England.

Mr SAWERS

- I am glad of that interjection. The honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, when speaking of the cheap clothing trade, and the destitution of women and children connected with it, described those people as foreigners. But I turn again to official statistics of foreigners resident in first-class European

countries, and I find that in France the number of such residents, according to Midhall, is 1,140,000; in Germany, 524,000; and in Great Britain, which is supposed to be stuffed full of poor foreigners, only 275,000. It would appear, therefore, that England is, after all, not such a favorite hunting ground for the poor foreigner. These figures simply show how careful a man in the position of the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, with all the experience gained in the high offices he has occupied, should be before he makes a statement of that kind. I am quite sure that even the honorable member for the Barrier will be satisfied with the figures I have given.

Mr Thomas

- I am easily satisfied.

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Mr SAWERS

- If the figures agreed with the contentions of the honorable member and his friends of the Opposition, what a cheer there would be from that quarter of the House. But when the figures are against their position, there is a dead silence or a sneer. I suppose there is no better authority on the question of pauperism and poverty than Charles Booth, who estimates the people living in poverty in London - he does not say registered official paupers - at fully 30 per cent, of the population. That means 30 people out of every 100 in London - "the hub of the universe;" the mighty London, which is the centre of civilization and wealth and luxury - are living in absolute poverty. Mr. Joseph Morley, who is also recognised as an authority, says that 45 per cent, of the persons who reach the age of 60 in Great Britain are or have been paupers. That means that very nearly half the people in Great Britain who reach that age, are or have been paupers. I doubt not that some honorable members on the Opposition side of the House have taken a keen interest in the discussions which have been going on in the House of Commons and elsewhere in Great Britain, in reference to the old-age pension scheme. We have been able to deal with old-age pensions out here, though somewhat extravagantly, as I think will be found out later on, especially in New South Wales. But the difficulties of the problem are so tremendous at home that British statesmen stand absolutely appalled. Nothing has been done yet, but there has been earnest discussion as to how the difficulty is to be met, and even on a scale not one-half of the present old age pension system of New South Wales, it will cost the English tax-payers at least £10,000,000 to pay old-age pensions. I mention that to show the difficulties of the case, and the destitution and misery which we are always told are least in the richest and best and most prosperous country in the world. I do not wish to say anything that will lead any one to suppose that I desire to disparage Great Britain. I am a Britisher, and love my country. But we are entitled to say, in answer to honorable members on the opposite side, that "All is not gold that glitters" in England, but that there is much misery and poverty, which all England's best men deeply deplore. Much of the debate which has taken place - and possibly it may be said much that I have said - has been somewhat wide of the real question before the House, which is the Tariff. But I have always thought that discussion in detail upon a Bill of any kind should be reserved for the committee stage. If honorable members opposite believe that the Tariff proposals of the Government are so iniquitous and unjust to the people of this country that they are not worthy of discussion in committee, of course I do not object to their taking the course they have done. But I take a different view. I find, for example, that leaving narcotics and stimulants out of the question, this Tariff comes down, on an average, to something like 23 per cent, duties, with a big free list. Much of the discussion that has been launched against the proposed increase in Australia generally, and in New South Wales particularly, is not levied against the protectionist elements of the Tariff, but against the necessity for conserving the solvency of the States. It is well known that we have to make provision to meet the necessities of the States, and that we must raise a large revenue through the Custom-house.

Mr THOMAS

- Why?

Mr SAWERS

- I would dare the leader of the Opposition to challenge the Government upon that point. It is recognised that the money must come through the Custom-house, and much of the increased prices which may follow do not arise through protection, but are the result of federation, and of that sacrifice which all true federalists were prepared to make. I myself might prefer a somewhat different Tariff. I should like to vote for straight, clear-cut protection on certain defined lines, which I would propose to encourage particular

industries. I should be in favour of raw material coming in free, and of as big a free list as possible under the circumstances. No honorable member on this side of the Chamber wants to raise the prices of commodities unduly, but we are bound by a sense of our responsibilities as members of this Parliament to provide sufficient revenue. We are told that the revenue which the Government expect to raise is too great. The honorable member for North Sydney has suggested an alternative Tariff, which would bring in something like £8,048,000. I prefer to take the opinion of responsible Ministers of the Crown as to the amount which is necessary. They have had all kinds of information given to them from the various States, and after studying all the circumstances have come down asking Parliament for a £9,000,000 Tariff. I do not think that any private member is in a position to say that that amount is not necessary. I do not say that the honorable member for North Sydney does not possess ability, but he is not in possession of sufficient information to qualify him to say what should be the amount of the Tariff. I shall, as I told my constituents, do what I can to preserve existing industries. If moderate duties will do it, I shall be prepared to assist in creating new industries in this country. The honorable member for Kalgoorlie has spoken of the great hardships that this Tariff will throw on mining enterprises. If the honorable member's statements can be borne out in committee, after the Ministerial explanation, I certainly shall be quite prepared to vote against the Government, as I would against any Government, rather than do any injustice to a great industry. But that is no reason why I should support the amendment of the leader of the Opposition. We have heard much about the farmers. I think the farmers will be taken great care of by honorable members on this side of the Chamber. The farmers have put most of us into Parliament. There are not many farming representatives on the Opposition side of the chamber. Talk about the interests of the farmers comes with an ill grace from the left of the Speaker's chair. I shall do my best in committee to protect the farmers. But let me say this about them - they are quite prepared, I believe, to make some sacrifices for United Australia, but they are not short-sighted enough to support a freetrade policy, because they know that it is a matter of extreme doubt whether they can compete in the markets of the outside world.

Mr Fuller

- They are doing it every day.

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Mr SAWERS

- To some extent. But does the honorable member say that the farmers of this country will be able to send their wheat to compete at Mark Lane prices in the future? The wheat-producing countries of other parts of the world have greater facilities for growing wheat than have the farmers in the interior of Australia, who have to pay railway freight and other expenses before their produce reaches the foreign markets. What the farmers of this country realize more than anything else, is that, of all markets, a market at their own door is best; and if we can, under protection, build up a nation with a big population, will it not be better for our producers to find that they have a splendid market at their own door, than to have to depend upon the prices they obtain in European markets? No Tariff, of course, can be considered perfect. Even Ministers will admit that this Tariff is open to amendment. I regret exceedingly that federation should have found New South Wales with so low a Tariff. It would have been greatly to our advantage in this discussion, and would have made the problem easier of solution, if the right honorable member the leader of the Opposition had never altered the fiscal policy of New South Wales, and if that State had remained under the Dibbs Tariff. The right honorable member at that time had little idea of federation. I shall feel it to be my duty in committee to study the interests of my large constituency, but at the same time I shall remember that it is my duty to rise above provincialism, and to recollect that I am not the member for New England in a State Legislature, but the member for New England in the Parliament of Australia, and that I am bound to take not a provincial, but an Australian view.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Has not the honorable member a word to say for New South Wales?

Mr SAWERS

- I have everything to say in favour of New South Wales. The interests of New South Wales are the interests of Australia, and the interests of Australia are the interests of New South Wales. Whether a particular trade will flow through the channels of New South Wales ports, or through the channels of South Australian, Queensland, or Victorian ports, is to me, as a nationalist, a matter of supreme indifference. That, I think, is what many honorable members fail to understand; they fail to rise to that

view of the > : situation : we have too much provincialism. We should surely strive to frame a Tariff, not for the benefit of one State only, but for the benefit of Australia. I doubt not, but that when the Government proposals have been discussed and settled, this Parliament will have passed a Tariff which will meet with the approval of the majority of the electors of the country. I believe that it will be a Tariff which will yield that ample revenue which is essential for the development of the various States, as well as for all the purposes of civilized government. If New South Wales, as has been said, is to receive under the Government proposals more than she requires, then I say fortunate is she beyond all her sister States in being in that happy position. It will enable her to reduce various taxes and burdens upon her people. She will be able to reduce many burdens, and in doing so take into account the interests of the mining as well as the farming community.

Mr Poynton

- She can take off the land tax.

Mr SAWERS

- I am not here to talk about the land tax. If, as it is said, New South Wales should have an excess of £1,000,000, she will be able to assist her mining enterprise, reduce her iniquitous probate duties, and ease the commercial community by reducing her stamp duties, and affording relief in many other ways.

An Honorable Member. - Are we to dictate to New South Wales ?

Mr SAWERS

- My reply to that is that each State must put her own house in order. New South Wales is able to manage her own affairs, and it is not for us to dictate to her in what direction she should reduce taxation. If she has too much revenue, let us congratulate her on her happy position. I would say, in conclusion, that I trust that whatever Tariff may be passed, it will uphold existing industries, and that, within the limits of moderation and prudent statesmanship, it may still further assist Australia to advance along the pathways of industrial enterprise and national progress.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I am not at all astonished at the very remarkable speech delivered by the honorable member for New England ; neither am I surprised at the readiness with which he adapts himself to his new surroundings, and becomes immediately an advocate on behalf of his adopted State of Victoria-

Mr Sawers

- More provincialism.

Mr F E McLEAN

- And takes upon himself so readily and so naturally the responsibility of vilifying and detracting his own State of New South Wales.

Mr Sawers

- That is very ungenerous.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am not astonished, because during the three years that I sat with the honorable member in the State Parliament of New South Wales, I recognised always that he was a consistent and determined opponent of everything in the shape of progressive legislation. The honorable member has dried this afternoon to explain why he speaks strongly in favour of the establishment of wages boards in Victoria, and why, as a member of the State Parliament, he spoke so strongly, and voted so determinedly against the adoption of a system of industrial arbitration in New South Wales. But it will take more than the honorable member's explanations to convince me that he is any different from what he always was - a determined opponent of everything that made for the prosperity and progress of the great masses of the people.

Mr Watkins

- The same remark would apply to the honorable member for Wentworth.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Perhaps it might ; but if the honorable member had not projected this matter into the debate, I should have been only too pleased to proceed immediately to the discussion of the motion before the chair. It is little short of a calamity to the politics of the Commonwealth that many of us who have come here prepared to discuss on their merits, and without respect to any provincial considerations, the proposals of the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Customs, should be driven back into a discussion of State

politics simply because certain honorable members have taken it upon themselves to misrepresent historical facts, to misquote matters that occurred in our several States, and to furnish for the guidance of this House statistics and opinions which are utterly unreliable. The honorable member for New England stated that he was opposed only to certain principles in the measure that was introduced into the New South Wales Parliament to establish industrial arbitration. I find that he stated distinctly that he opposed the Bill itself because it contained principles which he thought were departures from the principles of human freedom.

Mr Sawers

- A very good reason, too.

Mr F E McLEAN

- He said-

Mr. Sidney Webb, at whose feet the Attorney-General seems to have sat--

Mr SPEAKER

- I am afraid I cannot allow the honorable member to follow that line of discussion. The question before the House is the financial and fiscal policy of the Government. I only permitted the honorable member for New England to touch the question of arbitration, because it was necessary for him to do so in reply to an interjection. The honorable member can refer incidentally to the matter, but he must not discuss it at length.

Mr F E McLEAN

-I am quite willing to recognise, Mr. Speaker, that your decision is right, and I will not pursue that line of argument further. I was trying to point out the consistency with which the honorable member for New England has opposed everything tending towards the welfare of the great masses of the people ; and as an illustration of that, I was merely quoting something to show--

Mr Sawers

- Why, the honorable member's own leader, the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney, * was the greatest opponent of that Bill.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am not responsible for the action of leaders or of associates. I simply mention the fact that the honorable member for New England opposed absolutely this particular Arbitration Bill. I have instanced the fact, not with a view of discussing the question of industrial arbitration, but as showing the perfect consistency of the honorable member's conservatism.

Mr Kingston

- I think the right honorable the leader of the Opposition even voted against the Commonwealth having power to legislate on industrial matters.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable member for New England, not content with dragging this matter into the discussions of the Federal Parliament, has attempted to dispute the fact that the great majority of the people of New South Wales, from which State he comes, are strongly in favour of the policy of commercial freedom, and have again and again declared, in the most emphatic and unmistakable manner, that they will not allow the shackles of protection to be placed upon them. The honorable member commenced by stating that at the election of 1894, which brought the right honorable the leader of the Opposition into power in New South Wales, no mandate was given upon the fiscal question. If there was any mandate given at that election - if there was any interpretation whatever to be placed upon the views of the electors as expressed upon that occasion - it was that they had determined that the unfortunate fiscal policy which had been fastened upon them accidentally should be removed at the earliest possible moment. The honorable member has even quoted history incorrectly. Sir George Dibbs was not defeated at that election ; he was returned to Parliament.

Mr Sawers

- I did not say that he was. I said he was defeated at the polls.

Mr F E McLEAN

- He was not defeated at that election ; he was returned and was permitted-

Mr Sawers

- He was defeated by Mr. Piddington.

Mr F E McLEAN

- That was in 1895. Sir George Dibbs was permitted from 1894 to 1895 to assist in preventing the enactment of free-trade and Liberal legislation. I do not want to prolong any discussion upon political events in another State, except in so far as they relate to" the particular work that we have in hand in this Parliament at the present time. I do not think that it is possible for the interests of the people of New South Wales as one of the component parts of this Commonwealth, to be fairly considered and dealt with, unless the political history of those few years is taken fully into account. In 1894 there was an absolute and unmistakeable mandate from the people of New South in favour of a reversion to the old established policy of that State. That mandate was coupled with a request for direct taxation, including a land tax, and I think that in the minds of most liberal members free-trade and direct taxation are inseparably associated.

Mr Kingston

- Is the honorable member's free-trade associated with a land tax ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- My right honorable friend thinks to score a temporary victory by raising the bugbear of a land tax in connexion with the discussion of these infamous fiscal proposals of his ; but we are not going to be drawn in that way. We are here to advocate a revenue Tariff as opposed to his proposed protective Tariff.

Mr Kingston

- A revenue Tariff which the honorable member says is inseparably connected with a land tax.

Mr F E McLEAN

- There must be a connexion between free-trade and direct taxation. If we want absolute freedom of trade - a freedom of trade which reduces the burdens of taxation through the Customhouse, it must be associated with a system of direct taxation ; but, so far as the Federal Parliament and our present work are concerned, direct and indirect taxation are not in conflict. Rightly or wrongly, wisely or unwisely, the understanding has been arrived at that the revenue of the Commonwealth shall be derived through the Custom-house, so that the question the right honorable gentleman would like to import into this discussion does not arise. The two policies were bound together in New South Wales in the years 1894 and 1895, for the simple reason that the revenue that was dispensed with by the removal of customs duties had to be made up by the imposition of more liberal and rational taxation. The honorable member for New England has denied, notwithstanding two elections in which the policy of the free-trade Government was clearly placed before the country and immense majorities voted in favour of it, that New South Wales has ever pronounced emphatically and unmistakably in favour of free-trade. It might be well to remind my honorable friend that he himself came into the Parliament of 1895 pledged not to interfere with the fiscal policy of the country. He and all those who followed the Minister for Home Affairs, would have been unable to obtain a seat in that Parliament had they not given the solemn pledge that, pending federation, they would uphold and maintain, the existing policy of the State.

Mr Sawers

- That was our only chance of defeating the anti-federalists.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- In both campaigns I was an ardent advocate for the adoption of the Constitution Bill, though I must confess that the proposals of the Minister for Trade and Customs have given me very serious cause to reflect upon the wisdom of my action. I was as strongly in favour of the adoption of the Constitution Bill as was any man in New South Wales ; and I am here to-day to do what I can to perpetuate the established policy of that State, and, if possible, to make it the policy of the Commonwealth. Even if the statements already made are not true, we have still the fact that, at the recent elections for this Parliament, the free-trade members returned by that State to the House of Representatives outnumber the protectionist members, and an analysis of the voting shows that those who sit on this side of the Chamber had the most pronounced majorities. How is it, if the people of New South Wales have not spoken in favour of free-trade, that out of the six representatives of the State in the Senate five are pronounced free-traders, and the nominees of the free-trade and liberal party, while the sixth is a man so universally esteemed, of such high character, and so thoroughly popular, that he received a very large number of votes from free-traders.

Mr Wilks

- The next protectionist on the poll was 25,000 votes behind him !

Mr F E McLEAN

- I mention these facts as a set off against the misrepresentations of history which we have had from the honorable member for New England, although the facts which he has mentioned may appear to be true to his own imagination. But the honorable member has not been satisfied with denying that certain votes in New South Wales meant certain things ; he has taken upon himself to show that the State was in an awful condition, and would have been much better off if it had adopted a contrary fiscal policy. Amongst other things, he instanced the fact that the large land revenue has been spent instead of being set aside to pay off the national debt. I am sorry that it has been necessary to constantly refer to these matters, but it has been continually asserted in this Chamber that New South Wales has been living upon borrowed money. During the seven years, between 1894 and 1901, the loan expenditure of New South Wales averaged between £1,500,000, and £1,750,000 per annum.

Mr Kingston

- That is not so bad !

Mr F E McLEAN

- My honorable friend's idea of expenditure may be shocked by the statement that New South Wales has spent £1,750,000 of loan money in one year. That is because he has had the control of the affairs of a very small State. A vigorous, healthy, prosperous State, which has taken upon itself the responsibility of constructing railways and developing its territory, cannot allow its public works to languish for want of capital. If the money had been expended upon non-productive works, and works which should be constructed out of revenue, I could understand the objection being raised.

But in this Commonwealth all the States have undertaken the management of their own railway systems, to the exclusion of others, because I suppose that in every State, as in New South Wales, it is very difficult to get a private railway or tramway Bill sanctioned by Parliament. Therefore the whole system of tramway and railway construction, which constitutes the great internal carriage system of the States, is in the hands of the State Governments, and they must overtake the growing requirements of a prosperous people. If they fail to do so they are retarding progress, and checking production. As honorable members know, the works which have been constructed out of loan moneys in New South Wales during recent years have been of a reproductive character. They are works which will be justified by any financier in this Chamber upon a close analysis of the expenditure. But some honorable members talk about land revenue as if the whole of the land revenue of New South Wales were derived from the sales of land, whereas only a portion of it is thus obtained. A very large portion of the instalments which are paid by selectors on their balances represents interest on the purchase money - in fact, the larger proportion.

Sir William Lyne

- It is the other way about. The largest portion of the money is principal.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The Minister must admit that, having extended the terms of payment up to something like 64 years---

Sir William Lyne

- Only in a very few cases.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I recognise that 64 years is the longest term. But if we take the shortest term in which free selectors have to pay their balances, I say, unmistakably, that the larger portion of their instalments represents interest on the balances due to the State. At any rate I am one of those who thoroughly condemn the system of using the proceeds of land sales as ordinary revenue. I am not here as an apologist for any policy which may have been pursued in any State which is contrary to sound financial business or sound economic theory. But I would point out that this has absolutely nothing to do with the question which we are discussing. I wish to come back to my argument, as I have been drawn aside from the line of my own thoughts by the speech of the honorable member for New England. I desire to deal with this question purely as one relating to the Commonwealth. I unhesitatingly affirm that the chief mistake which the Government have made in framing their Tariff has been that they have forgotten that they were legislating for the Commonwealth of Australia. The underlying and vicious principle in this Tariff is that it is framed to

suit one of the States of the Commonwealth, absolutely regardless of the interests of the other five. The Minister for Trade and Customs is a protectionist. He does not deny that in any shape or form. I believe that the majority of his colleagues are protectionists. Hence it was not to be wondered at that a Tariff framed by a Government composed mostly of protectionist politicians should be largely protective in its incidence. The people of New South Wales and their representatives in this Parliament, whilst themselves soundly freetrade, thoroughly recognised that it would not be possible to frame a Tariff for the Commonwealth which would be exactly in harmony with their own ideas. They were prepared to make concessions. The very fact of their entering this Federal Union was proof that they were willing to make concessions. They expected that large concessions would be demanded of them. But, in the wildest of their dreams, they did not expect that they would be asked to make the concessions which this Tariff demands of them. As reasonable men, who thought that the principle of compromise would enter into the deliberations of the Cabinet, they believed that they could safely trust the Government and the Parliament representing the whole of Australia to frame a Tariff which would be a fair and honorable settlement. Is this Tariff a fair and honorable compromise ?

Sir William Lyne

- Yes.

Mr.F. E. McLEAN. - Does the Minister for Home Affairs, who promised a 10 or 15 per cent. Tariff--

Sir William Lyne

- I did not promise anything of the kind.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Does the Minister, who would have jumped at a 15 per cent. Tariff at any time in New South Wales, and who would have considered that he had received all the protection for which he had been striving for years, contend that this

Tariff is a fair compromise between the rival policies of the various States ?

Sir William Lyne

- I do, most assuredly.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I certainly do not know upon what principle of averaging the Minister arrives at his compromise. If he were to add up the average rate of the duties prevailing in each of the States, and divide the result by the number of States, he might in that rough-and-ready way arrive at something which would be quite as fair as the Tariff submitted by the Government. But is that a fair way of arriving at a compromise when we remember that the leading partner of the union is absolutely free-trade in her policy, and that she has also the largest import and export trade of any State in the Commonwealth? It seems to me that the magnitude of the trade of the mother State - of her imports and exports - and of the interests that have grown up under her free-trade policy, should have been regarded in the framing of this Tariff. Had a Tariff been produced which would have been revenue producing, though its incidence might have been slightly protective, honorable members upon this side of the House would not have been found resisting it, as they feel compelled, in honour and justice to their own constituents, to resist the production of the Ministry. The Prune Minister promised at Maitland that he would produce a Tariff which would be revenue producing without involving the destruction of industries. I do not know whether he used the term "destruction" in connexion with this Tariff question - whether there was underneath that statement the inference that a free-trade policy, or that the adoption of a revenue Tariff would lead to the destruction of manufacturing and producing industries. I do not understand why he did not speak out plainly and unmistakably upon that occasion, and let the free-traders of Australia know what were his intentions. As it is, honorable members have been elected to this Parliament from New South Wales and Victoria who are pledged to revenue tariffism, and who are now asked to vote for a Tariff which, so far from being designed to produce revenue, has, as its first consideration, the protection of certain favoured industries which have grown up in Victoria. In introducing the Tariff the Minister for Trade and Customs did not say it was a revenue Tariff first and a protective Tariff afterwards.

Mr Kingston

- Does the honorable member say that I did not state that revenue was the first object ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- If the right honorable and learned gentleman says that he did, I will not repeat my statement.

Mr Kingston

- I do not blame the honorable member, because the misrepresentation has been so frequently made, but I distinctly said that revenue was the first consideration.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am quite prepared to allow the Minister for Trade and Customs to express his own views.

Mr Kingston

- I never said anything else.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am certainly under the impression that the right honorable and learned gentleman showed very much more enthusiasm and energy in defending the principle of protection than he did in unfolding the benefits of the revenue aspect of his policy. However, we have to face the present position. Whatever their pledges were to the people - whatever compact might have been made between the States in the past - we are face to face with the fact that the Government are trying to fasten on to this young Commonwealth a protectionist policy - a policy intended to bolster up certain manufacturing industries that* have grown up in this particular State of Victoria. I do not hesitate to say that the introduction of this Tariff marks an absolute breach of faith with the people of the Commonwealth. I go further. I say that this Tariff is a direct violation of the federal compact. Because, after all, a compact of this kind does not depend upon the mere letter of a written Constitution. There were certain fair and honorable understandings between the States when they agreed to join their lot in this great Commonwealth. The understanding was that there would be fair dealing - that there would be concessions - that there would be compromise - and that the policy of any particular State would not be" allowed to dominate the rest.

Sir William Lyne

- Neither does it.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Before I have done, I shall show the honorable gentleman that the policy of a particular State is to dominate. At any rate the policy of the honorable gentleman's State has not received any consideration, and has not entered into the policy of the Government in this Tariff at all.

Sir William Lyne

- We could not have a free-trade policy if we were to secure the revenue required.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable gentleman has justified his policy by slandering his State.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable gentleman says it was not possible to apply the New South Wales Tariff to the Commonwealth under existing conditions. We admit that much, but we say that no attempt to compromise has been made as between the Tariff of New South Wales and the extreme protectionist Tariff that was in existence in Victoria. What interests have we in New South Wales that have grown up under the policy of free-trade ?

Sir William Lyne

- None.

Mr F E McLEAN

- None whatever?

Sir William Lyne

- No.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I suppose our commercial supremacy and our shipping interests are nothing in the mind of the honorable gentleman. The honorable gentleman, I admit, never got much support from the commercial community or shipping interests, or from the people who occupy the great metropolis of Sydney. Nevertheless, I think he must recognise that they have the rights of citizens in their State, and the rights of citizens of this Commonwealth, and there has been an absolute disregard of the interests of the people of the great commercial centre - shall I call it the great commercial emporium - of New South Wales. Our shipping interests that have grown up under a free-trade policy have been ruthlessly disregarded in the

framing of this Tariff. I shall be able to show later on that the manufacturing industries of New South Wales are not the small and petty things that they have been represented to be, but that, on the contrary, under a freetrade policy, and without the coddling that has been given to the industries of the adjoining State, a very large and important manufacturing interest has grown up in New South Wales. I shall be able, also, to show that a very large proportion of the manufactures there have sprung naturally from the great shipping interests of the port of Sydney. Are they to be ruthlessly disregarded, and are we to be told that there has been a fair compromise in a Federal Tariff, which absolutely ignores them ? I am willing to admit that the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Government, in speaking at Maitland, was not so clear and emphatic in regard to revenue tariffism as he had been during the Federal campaign, and some time prior to the formation of his Government. The very fact that he took into his Ministry avowed protectionists, the very fact that he was associated with men from the other States who were strong in their advocacy of protection must, to some extent, have modified his own original views; but when the right honorable and learned gentleman was before the country trying to induce the people of New South Wales to accept Federation under the Convention Bill, then it was that he told them that there would be no possibility of a high Tariff being fastened upon the people of the Commonwealth ; that it would have to be a compromise ; that it would be a Tariff in which no single State could have its own views embodied - one in which a compromise would have to be arranged between the conflicting views of the various States. Now the right honorable gentleman calls this thing an Australian Tariff for the Australian people. I say it is the worst Tariff ever placed before any Legislature in Australia, and it is a Tariff that is going to sound sooner or later the death-knell of this Government. The honorable member for Hume may sneer.

Sir William Lyne

- I do sneer.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable gentleman may sneer, but I should like him to go to Albury to-morrow night to defend this Tariff. I should like him to go to Albury, Cootamundra, or some place in his own electorate to defend it.

Sir William Lyne

- I shall go to Sydney quickly enough ; let the honorable member make no mistake.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I should like the right honorable gentleman at the head of the Government to go to Maitland to defend this Tariff. I challenge any one of these gentlemen to go and defend the Tariff, as laid before this House, and explained by the Minister for Trade and Customs, before their constituents in New South Wales. Unfortunately, Senator O'Connor is not a member of this Chamber, and we have not an opportunity of hearing his explanation ; but he certainly told the people of New South Wales that he would be no party to the imposition of a high protective Tariff. The honorable gentleman ridiculed the idea that the fiscal question could arise in this Parliament. The conditions of the Constitution, he informed us, were such that they made it impossible for either free-trade or protection to become the policy of the Commonwealth. Well, there is an attempt being made now to make protection the policy of the Commonwealth . We are to judge of this Tariff not merely by the words of Ministers themselves, but by the words of their apologists in this Chamber. What have the speeches delivered in support of the Government been but speeches in support of the principle of protection. The honorable member for Gippsland, who made an honest, straightforward speech in this House, spoke in favour of the principle of protection, and the one doleful story he had to tell was about the decay of Great Britain under freetrade. One after another honorable members who have spoken in support of the Government have found their stock-in-trade in the same doleful story.

Sir William Lyne

- What is the honorable member's stock-in-trade?

Mr F E McLEAN

- It reminds me very much of the debates that used to be current in our debating societies upon such questions as "Will England decay as the great nations of antiquity have done 1" We have been told not only that she will decay, but that she is in decay now.

Mr Ronald

- Is it true ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- I think it is about the greatest fairy tale my honorable friend ever tried to tell. It is about on a par with the £2,000,000 of imports which America received in 1898.

Mr Ronald

- That was in steel and iron. I made a slip, and looked at the wrong column in my figures.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- It may be also that the honorable member made a slip about the prosperity of the United Kingdom. Is it not possible that he may have been mistaken? Is it not quite possible that, in spite of all these doleful stories, England may yet be a nation that holds commercial supremacy in the world? At any rate, I still feel inclined, in spite of these doleful stories, to follow in the footsteps of the mother country, and to try and mould for this country a policy that shall follow the same lines. (House Counted.) We have been told over and over again by honorable members supporting the Tariff that British agricultural industries, manufactures, and exports have been declining and that Britain's choicest population has been departing to other lands where more favorable conditions prevail. The most bigoted free traders, if there are such people, for most free traders are too liberal to be bigoted, would not contend that a policy of free-trade would prevent the enterprising sons of Britain from seeking to colonize other lands and to improve their fortunes by taking their lot in younger countries where it must be obvious better conditions will prevail for the masses. While England has been sending out her sons to the ends of the earth she has been extending her colonial empire in such a way that she has attained to a position which has never been equalled before. Her power as an empire is unparalleled in the history of the world, and even in these States, in Canada, and in all parts of the empire this population which we have been told has been running away because of the disastrous policy which she has been pursuing has really been colonizing and establishing the same great principles of free government that have proved successful in the mother country. I shall admit cheerfully, if it is any concession or comfort to honorable members opposite, that the progress of America has been most remarkable. There is no necessity for a free-trader, arguing on the lines we are taking, to say anything against the marked prosperity of the American Republic. But it is only fair, in instituting comparisons of that kind, to remember the vast extent of that territory, the variety of climate and soil, and the possibility of developing a standard of living and a state of prosperity which could not be attained by natural conditions in any other part of the world. There has been no argument adduced to show that this restrictive policy - this policy which has restrained her from developing her energies to the fullest extent - has in any way assisted in the building up of that great and mighty republic. On the contrary, we have indisputable evidence brought before us now - the testimony of representatives of the labouring classes - that with all their natural advantages, with all their free institutions, the worst forms of poverty and destitution exist in the great States of the Union. It is a regrettable thing that it should be so, and I am not here to-night to attribute all this to the mistaken policy they have pursued. I believe that these problems of pauperism are far deeper than tin's fiscal question. I believe that under any fiscal conditions, there will be problems to be solved that will tax the intellect of the keenest amongst us, and when we have finished with this Tariff and with the fiscal affairs of the Commonwealth, we shall on!}' have begun to deal with the great questions by the solution of which we can alone effectually establish a high standard of living amongst our people. But let us begin well. Let us begin with all the advantages that are to be gained by the experience of the past. Is our experience of the mother land and of America such as to lead us to fetter this young Commonwealth with the shackles of a high protective policy. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo last week referred to the attitude of honorable members on this side as if an attempt were being made to deprive the industries of Victoria of their rights, to invade the industrial conditions here, and to throttle the industries which have grown up. Is there in this State any industry worthy of the name which has not grown up in the other States where they have had no fetters of this kind? Where are these industries which are going to be destroyed if free competition is allowed to come in? I ask, where are these great industries employing the thousands of stalwart hands? The statistics of the Commonwealth show us clearly that there are very few more hands employed in the manufactories of Victoria than are employed in those of New South Wales. And if in New South Wales they have built up industries without protection, if they have employed a large population without protection, and if it can be shown successfully that those industries are on a healthier and sounder foundation, how are we going to invade the rights of Victoria, and destroy her industries by lowering the Tariff? That is all we are seeking

to do. No one has asked that a policy of absolute free-trade should be established in the Commonwealth. We have admitted frankly that it would be impossible under present conditions to secure an absolutely free-trade policy, and that the nearest approach to it that we could hope to secure would be a fair revenue Tariff. Does the honorable and learned member for Bendigo believe that, if such a Tariff were established, the Victorian industries would be destroyed all at once ? He has admitted to this House that the very important industry connected with the manufacture of mining machinery would not be affected if it had no duties at all - that it has developed to such an extent that mining machinery can be manufactured here at such a price, and of such a quality, that it can hold its own against imported machinery. If that be a fact, then protection is a farce so far as it is applied to mining machinery. If, however, it is not a fact, and if the honorable and learned member has exaggerated to some extent the importance and magnitude of this industry, all I have to say is that the small proportion of protection that would be left to it under a revenue Tariff would at least afford fair compensation for any disturbance of existing conditions.

Mr HUME COOK

- Shall we not get revenue under this Tariff?

Mr F E McLEAN

- I presume that the calculations made by the Minister for Trade and Customs are correct ; I have not challenged them. "We are not in the position of experts who can challenge these figures, and for the purposes of controversy we have accepted them. We suppose that the Tariff will raise the revenue that is expected from it ; but it has been argued that if a revenue Tariff, which would not be designed to protect various industries, were introduced, it would lead to desolation in Victoria, that factories would be shut up, and vested interests would be interfered with. We had the poetical imagination of the Prime Minister running into thoughts of bare feet pattering on the pavement. His imaginative faculty was slightly stimulated at the time, and imagination is the basis of poetry.

Mr Barton

- I disclaim any pretensions to having a poetical imagination - I leave all the imagination to the other side.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I am glad to hear the Prime Minister disclaim the possession of any imaginative faculty; but I regarded his little flight the other evening as highly imaginative. We are told that if a revenue Tariff - not a free-trade Tariff, which would give no revenue at all - were established in this Commonwealth, the industrial interests of Victoria would be threatened, and that men would be thrown out of employment. My answer to that is that in New South Wales, where there is no form of protection, various industries have grown up, and large numbers of people are employed. In fact, there are only 5,000 more persons employed in manufacturing pursuits in Victoria than in New South Wales, the numbers being, I believe, 60,000 for Victoria, and 55,000 for New South Wales. I do not wish to make any comparison between the numbers of males and females employed in these industries, because that has already been sufficiently referred to. As a matter of fact, however, taking the figures as though the male and female employes stood upon a footing of industrial equality, we have 60,000 operatives in Victoria, as against 55,000 in New South Wales. I believe that the figures furnished to this House in a recent return gave rather a greater advantage to New South Wales, but it is sufficient for the purposes of my argument to adopt the figures I have mentioned. If we in New South Wales have been able, under a free policy, to establish industries which employ 55,000 people ; and if this development has taken place without any form of protection, why does the honorable and learned member for Bendigo suppose that the whole industrial fabric of Victoria is going to crumble into dust if we lower these duties from 25 per cent, to, say, 15 per cent. ? Is this the result of 30 years of protection in Victoria ? Have these industries which were set upon their feet by a policy designed to create employment, and to make Victoria a working man's paradise, no firmer basis than that ? If we reduce the duties - not abolish them - but reduce them to something like a reasonable proportion, will the whole fabric of Victorian industry go to pieces and leave us thousands of unemployed workmen? Shall we hear the pattering of bare feet upon the pavements, and all that sort of thing ? What can be done in one State can be done in another. The free policy of New South Wales has demonstrated the possibility of establishing large and important industries without the fostering aid of a protective Tariff, and I have no doubt whatever in my own mind that instead of these industries crumbling to the dust, and instead of large armies of unemployed being thrown upon the streets, as the result of a

revenue Tariff, it would very quickly be seen that a great impetus had been given to production in every form in Victoria, and in all the other States. I firmly believe that the lower these duties are, the less they press upon the people, and the less they interfere with the free exercise of the people's energies, the more our production and our manufactures will extend in every direction. There is just another point to which I wish to call attention. I have spoken of concessions and compromises, and of the advantages that were to be connected with this federal union. Let us remember that by the introduction of Inter-State freetrade, the State of Victoria, with her manufacturing industries, immediately gains free access to all the markets of Australia. Surely that is a fair compensation for any reduction in the duties. Victoria already had the New South Wales market, which had not been closed against her, except for a few brief years when the protectionists held sway in New South Wales, and even then the scale of duties was so low that it need not have interfered very much with trade if Victoria had been in a superior position to New South Wales. The markets of all the other States have now been thrown open to Victoria. The 20 per cent. duties have gone down in South Australia, and also in Tasmania ; and the Queensland markets are open to the Victorian manufacturer, who has now a wider range over which to distribute his produce. Is not that wider market a fair compensation for any small sacrifices that the Victorian manufacturer may be asked to make in the direction of accepting a lower Tariff? The idea of compromise that exists in the minds of the Government is a kind of Irish reciprocity, that is all on the one side. It appears that the high Tariff people are to have all their own way, and that the low Tariff people are to be levelled up to protectionist ideas.

Mr Chapman

- Does not the honorable member know that in dozens of cases the Victorian Tariff has been reduced?

Mr.F.E. McLEAN.- I do; and I know also that there are a number of sham reductions. The reduction of a duty does not necessarily mean that there will be any more revenue derived from the duty. The duties may be sufficiently high to exclude the goods subject to them ; and if they are it is an absolute farce to call them Tariff reductions. Take the case of timber, which is a kind of compromise between manufacturing and natural production. Undressed timber in large sizes of 12 inches by 6 inches and over has a duty of 1s. per hundred super feet ; and in the Victorian Tariff the duty was the same. The duty on undressed timber in what I call the medium sizes is 1s. 6d. per 100 super feet; and in Victoria the duty was the same. The duty on undressed timber in what I call the smaller sizes is 2s. 6d. per 100 super. feet; and in the Victorian Tariff it was 4s. That is claimed as one of the reductions ; but a duty of 2s. 6d. per 100 super. feet is sufficiently high to be prohibitive, and has been fixed, as the right honorable gentleman knows, for the purpose of keeping these small sizes out of the market and providing employment for the local saw-mill owner. That is the policy which has existed in Victoria all along, so that the mere reduction of figures is an absolute farce. Why is the Tariff scaled, unless it is intended that this 2s. 6d. duty on the smaller sizes shall keep small-sized timber out altogether, and give protection to the Victorian sawmill owner, and, I suppose, incidentally to his men ?

Mr HUME COOK

- Where are the biggest saw-mills - in New South Wales or Victoria ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- In New South Wales. The honorable member interjected the other day that we had to come to this side of the Murray in order to find saw-mills.

Mr HUME COOK

- No.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I heard the honorable member's interjection. I have here a return which was laid on the table of the House, and which will give the honorable member all the information he wants about saw-milling.

Mr HUME COOK

- New South Wales will get protection.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- New South Wales does not want, and does not ask for, protection ; and that State knows its own business better than does the honorable member. I want to quote these figures in order to show how Victoria stands in comparison with New South Wales - how Victoria stands with the fostering influence of this high duty, which it is now intended to reduce, but to reduce only to a figure that will still make . it

prohibitive. This return was laid on the table of the House, to order, on the 20th September, 1901, and it shows that in Victoria, with the high protective duty on these small sizes of timber - and on all timber, for the matter of that - there are 109 saw-mills, which employ 1,467 men. That is not a very grand achievement for 30 years of protectionist policy, as compared with that of New South Wales, where there are 259 saw-mills employing 3,004 men, or just twice the number employed in Victoria.

Mr HUME COOK

- There cannot be sawmills without timber.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I know that there cannot be saw-mills without timber; but the honorable member does not pretend to say that the timber supplies of Victoria have yet been exhausted?

Mr HUME COOK

- Victoria has not nearly the supplies of timber that New South Wales has.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I admit that Victoria has not anything like the forest lands that we have in New South Wales, but, on the other hand, there is not in Victoria anything like the difficulty that is experienced in New South Wales in reaching the forests. New South Wales has almost insuperable difficulties in developing the saw-mill industry, as any New South Wales representative, no matter on what side of the House he may sit, must know. The inaccessibility of the forests, so far as port and shipment are concerned, together with the state of the rivers and harbors, would seem to indicate that nature has conspired against the successful establishment of the timber industry in that State. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, and with ! a free-trade policy, we find that New South Wales employs twice as many hands as Victoria, and has more than twice the number of saw-mills. I simply take timber as an illustration ; but there are in the Tariff scores of similar instances where we see a duty reduced - that is a figure reduced - though it remains sufficiently high to exclude the imported article. As a concession to a free-trade colony that is absolutely meaningless. The honorable member for Gippsland, to whose speech I was referring previously, had a lot to say about the balance of trade, and he seems to hold very strongly to the idea that a nation which imports more than it exports must be rapidly going to the wall. But it is absolutely impossible to establish anything like a theory of national prosperity or national disaster upon mere figures of exports and imports. There is one part of the honorable member's speech with which I thoroughly agree ; and I hardly know how one who arrived at certain conclusions which appear in one part of that speech, could advance the somewhat extraordinary ideas which are found in another part. Mere figures relating to the external trade of a country can never by themselves establish anything like an index to national prosperity. It would be quite possible, though it would be a very extreme case, to imagine a country having very little import or export trade, and still, with a vast territory, varied resources, and a large amount of internal trade, having a high degree of national prosperity.

Mr A McLEAN

- I contend that internal trade is better than external trade.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I know ; and that is why I am puzzled how the honorable member reached the extraordinary conclusion that a country which imports more than it exports must be going to the wall. I find that every country in the world has at some time or other imported more than it exported. An extraordinary fact is that Victoria, during the ten years from 1890 to 1899, exported £150,748,000 worth of goods, and imported £164,798,000 worth, the excess of imports over exports in that period being £14,000,000.

Sir John Forrest

- I expect Victoria borrowed a lot of money.

Mr Isaacs

- That was the boom period.

Mr A McLEAN

- From 1883 to 1892 Victoria imported £62,000,000 worth.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The back of the land boom was broken in 1891, long before the crisis came. But in any case I do not attach any value to these figures. I do not regard Victoria or any other country as being on the verge of bankruptcy because it imports more than it exports. The figures are meaningless, except as showing that

the theory of the honorable member for Gippsland is wrong. The honorable member has tried to establish the theory that Great Britain is going to the wall as fast as possible, because for a number of years she has imported more than she has exported.

Mr A McLEAN

- I showed that the balance was going mostly into British pockets ; otherwise Great Britain would be going to the wall.

Mr F E McLEAN

- In New South Wales we find the very opposite state of affairs. During the same period of ten years, while the imports of New South Wales were £211,000,000, the exports were £238,000,000 - an excess over imports of £27,000,000.

Mr A McLEAN

- New South Wales was prosperous.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I am afraid that the honorable member and a number of other honorable members imagine that the crisis never struck New South Wales. They seem to think that they had their little boom and their little crisis all to themselves, and that it never reached the rest of Australia. It does not seem to have entered their minds that the destruction of Australian credit, caused by the collapse of the land boom in Victoria, had its effect throughout the Australian continent, and interfered with trade and commerce in every direction. To the remotest corner of the continent the effect of the collapse of the boom was felt. I am not trying to adduce anything from these figures except the fallacy of the honorable member's theory that a nation must be going to the wall because it imports more than it exports, by showing that his own State, which according to his opinion had a sound financial policy, had an excess of imports over exports to the amount of £14,000,000, while the State, which was on the wrong lines, and had a fiscal policy in which he does not believe, actually exported, during the same period of ten years, £27,000,000 more than it imported. I do not attach any significance to these figures beyond this - that it appears to me that in New South Wales there has been in recent years a large development of the export trade. It is patent to every man who studies the industrial history of these States that there has been in New South Wales a remarkable expansion of agricultural industry and of the export trade. I have to make another admission here. A great many of those who have tried to establish comparisons between these two States have alluded to New South Wales as the oldest State, and have asked why she did not prosper in the earlier years of her history. I am here to admit - and I think that my friends who come from New South Wales will agree with me - that up to the year 1850, or up to 1875 or 1876 at any rate, there had been a great want of energy and of push and go on the part of those who were in authority in New South Wales. The progress of that State was not as great prior to 1875 as it has been during the last quarter of a century. But let honorable members take the figures in regard to population, in regard to land settlement, in regard to agriculture, during the later years, and they will find that there has recently been a most remarkable expansion in production and in the growth of population. What is the secret of it all ? Under a free-trade policy, and without any protection, there has been, during these recent years, a remarkable growth of settlement, a remarkable increase in the output of wheat, a remarkable growth of the area under cultivation. This has taken place to a marked extent during the last five or six years, since the free-trade policy has been upon its trial. The facts cannot be disputed. There are many statements that can be disputed, but there are many facts that seem to me to be uncontrovertible, though there may be other reasons accompanying them. I am going to take, for instance, the figures given in the Statistical Register for 1900, in regard to the production of wheat. What do I find ? I will take the year 1894, as being the last year in which the policy of protection was in force in New South Wales. I think the protectionist policy ceased in the middle of 1895. In 1894 the production of wheat amounted to 6,502,000 bushels. In the year 1895, which was a protectionist year during half the time, the production of wheat amounted to 7,041,000 bushels. But in 1900, last year, the production of wheat had risen to 13,604,000 bushels, actually twice the production of the year 1894, when the protectionist policy was in full force in that State. When one State in this union can actually double its production of wheat in the short space of six or seven years under a free-trade policy, is there any reason to believe that devastation is going to overtake the agricultural industry of the Commonwealth, if a lower Tariff than that proposed by the Ministry should

be adopted t I say the facts are all against honorable members opposite. But I do not wish to follow the example of a great many honorable members who have preceded me, in establishing comparisons between the State of New South Wales and the State of Victoria. I think myself that while many of those comparisons are very fair as object lessons in regard to the working out of opposite fiscal policies, they are often attended by an amount of Inter-State bitterness which, perhaps, it is as well to avoid in discussion of this kind. However, I do not hesitate to say, from my own personal experience and knowledge of the conditions of life that prevail in both States, that I firmly believe that the policy of free-trade, so far from lowering the standard of living in the adjoining State, has rather improved the social condition of the people, and the means of employment. I do not think there can be any doubt about that. But I do not wish to be drawn into a controversy that would involve these comparisons between the two States, and which engender so much bitterness. I would point out this, Mr. Speaker : that if we are to live under friendly conditions in this new union, if we are to preserve the truly federal spirit which has brought this Commonwealth into existence, it will be absolutely necessary to avoid the course which has been adopted by this Ministry in throwing down the challenge to the people of New South Wales, and in establishing a policy which they must know is absolutely repugnant to the great majority in that State. What would be the effect of this policy if we, in New South Wales, were not a loyal people 1 What would be the effect of this ruthless disregard of the wishes of the people of one of the States ? I venture to say that if it were not for the loyal instincts of the people this policy would lead to an immediate agitation for the repeal of the union. Why ? Because the Prime Minister has, so to speak, brought the State of New South Wales into the federal union by leading them to believe that such a Tariff as this would be an impossibility. I challenge the right honorable gentleman to go upon the platform in New South Wales, from which he spoke during the referendum of 1898 and 1899. I challenge him, in the light of the statements he then solemnly made to the people of New South Wales, to justify the policy which has been laid upon the table of this House. There has been an absolute breach of faith. I repeat it - there has been an absolute violation of the Federal compact. The people of New South Wales joined this union in the full belief that we would treat one another as fellow citizens of a great Commonwealth and as having interests that had to be conserved and protected. We were willing to make reasonable sacrifices for a common end. But what sacrifice is the right honorable gentleman and his Government asking New South Wales to make ? Not merely to submit to a scheme of taxation that is against all their traditions, but to submit to it in its most odious form and in the highest degree. I do not want to exaggerate or speak upon this matter in language that is at all intemperate, but I do not believe that the Prime Minister in his wildest protectionist days - if he ever was a wild protectionist : and I always took him to be an exceedingly moderate man, indeed - would ever have dared, even if he had had a two-thirds protectionist majority behind him in New South Wales, to introduce a Tariff such as this. It would have led to an outburst of indignation sufficient to sweep any Government from power.

Sir John Forrest

- There is a £29,000,000 free list.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I know all about that, but the extent of the free list, so far as a reduction of taxation is concerned, is nothing. One million of taxation on a trade of £29,000,000 represents the smallest fraction of customs duties on the gross trade that one could possibly imagine.

Mr Barton

- But does not the honorable member see that if five ninths of our goods are to escape taxation, there must be a higher rate of taxation on the balance ?

Mr F E McLEAN

- We have conceded that.

Mr Barton

- Only to deny it.

Mr F E McLEAN

- If the Prime Minister had been in the House prior to the adjournment for dinner he would know that I conceded that at the very outset. There has been some controversy as to the necessity of raising £9,000,000 of revenue, but we will admit at any rate the necessity of raising £8,500,000, and we will admit that the people of New South Wales, by the act of federal union itself, gave away, to some extent,

their right to perpetuate an absolutely free-trade policy.

Mr Ewing

- What is the honorable member talking about.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member himself does not know.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I know very well what I am talking about, and the Prime Minister will know also when he goes to Maitland.

Mr Deakin

- Let us have arguments.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I do not want the Attorney-General to tell me what I am to say.

Mr Deakin

- And we do not want reflections cast on honorable members, but arguments.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- Does the honorable and learned gentleman think, that coming from the State where free-trade has been the established policy, I have no right to declaim against the treachery of this Government? This is a fair time to declaim against the attempt to fasten this odious Tariff on the people of an adjoining State.

Mr Deakin

- Let the honorable member go on declaiming.

Mr F E McLEAN

- If the honorable and learned gentleman is so used to the cajolery of .argument, so accustomed to his own professional ideas of speech, that he thinks there is no function for a Member of Parliament to perform, except to argue, all I can say is that if argument could have settled this question it would have been settled by honorable members on this side of the House, long ago. Arguments have been adduced, facts have been quoted, and logic has been presented to the House by honorable members of the Opposition, day after day, and night after night, sufficient to have converted the whole bench behind the Government. It is not argument that is wanted by the honorable and learned member. Votes are what he wants.

Mr HUME COOK

- That is what the Opposition need.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The less argument that enters into the minds of his supporters the better for the policy which the Government have introduced.

Mr HUME COOK

- What does the Opposition want?

Mr F E McLEAN

- They want a fair deal for their own States. They do not want advantage to be taken of the financial necessities of the States : they do not want advantage to be taken of the Australian union, in order to secure the establishment of a policy which is odious to them, and which they believe would be destructive of the highest interests of the Commonwealth. When the honorable and learned member interrupts and dictates as to the form of speech that an honorable member should adopt in this Chamber, I think it is almost time to ask whether we have any right to be here? I was saying when the Attorney-General interrupted me, that the Prime Minister will know what this discussion is about when he goes to Maitland, and I shall endeavour to show what it all means. I have heard the taunt hurled across this Chamber that it is only a question of the incidence of taxation. It seems to me that the incidence of taxation is everything. It is very largely a question of how this Tariff is going to bear on various interests, and how it is going to affect the various individuals who constitute the electors of the Commonwealth. Taking the broad view, that the revenue should be raised with the least possible interference with the industry of the people, and with the least possible oppression to the great masses of the people, and that under any circumstances no more should be raised than is absolutely required for the purposes of the Government, we regarded

this Tariff as one that should be resisted. Does not the Prime Minister know the difference between a revenue and a protectionist Tariff. If he does not, then what did he mean by all his talk of a revenue producing Tariff which would not destroy industries ? What did he mean by that, but that he intended to introduce a Tariff which would bolster up certain industries. During this debate, a remark has been made by an honorable member on the Government side of the House, that the free-trade party in New South Wales kept on the sugar duties in that State as a measure of protection to the sugar industry there. What are the facts of the case? The right honorable and learned gentlemen at the head of this Government, as a member of the State parliament of New South Wales, voted against the retention of those sugar duties. In New South Wales he regarded it as his public duty to vote against the proposal to retain the duty of £3 per ton on sugar.

Mr Barton

- That is not correct.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The Prime Minister cannot get away from it. A vote of censure was proposed against the Government for proposing to retain that duty.

Mr Barton

- Not for that, but for a breach of faith. The honorable member ought to take that home to his own party.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am going to tell the true facts about the retention of the sugar duty. They have not been presented to the House before. Let it be borne in mind that the Prime Minister voted against that duty.

Mr Barton

- That is not correct.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I must be dazed.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member is.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Did not the right honorable and learned gentleman move a vote of censure against the Reid Government for bringing in the proposal to retain that duty ?

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Mr Barton

- No. It was for a breach of faith in regard to the compact which virtually existed between both parties, that pending the election the Tariff should not be disturbed.

Mr F E McLEAN

- That is a very clever and lawyer-like evasion of the fact.

Mr Barton

- But it is true.

Sir William Lyne

- I am not a lawyer, and I say it is absolutely correct.

Mr F E McLEAN

- The Minister for Home Affairs was one of the party that was trying to get into office. The old duty of £5 per ton had been in existence for very many years as a revenue duty. It had been in existence, I believe, almost from the inception of responsible government in New South Wales as a revenue duty. In effect it had had a protective incidence, and under what started as a purely revenue duty the sugar industry had grown up. When the free-trade party came into power in 1894 they decided that the sugar duty should be repealed, and a scheme was evolved which gave it a five years' life. The duty was to be reduced at the rate of £1 per ton per annum until finally extinguished. In 1898, however, it was found that the state of the revenue actually required the imposition of more taxation. The right honorable and learned gentleman who now leads the Opposition in this House then came down to the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, and asked for the imposition of a tax of 3d per lb. on tea, and he proposed to retain the £3 per ton on sugar, and one or two countervailing duties on articles in which sugar was used for manufacturing purposes. That, it is said, was a breach of the fiscal compact. Could any fiscal compact relieve a Treasurer from the necessity of carrying on works in his State, and providing the necessary revenue ?

The leader of the Opposition took the only course open to him at that time, in order to restore the financial equilibrium of the State. It was no breach of any compact. So far from being a protective duty it was proposed simply in the interests of the revenue, although we have always admitted that it had a protective incidence. Are we going to establish the Tariff of the Commonwealth upon the lines of the purely provincial Victorian Tariff? The honorable member for Kalgoorlie has placed the House under a deep obligation by giving us information as to the probable effect of the proposed Tariff upon the importation of mining machinery into Western Australia, and I hope that, whatever may be the result of the vote upon the motion before us, the Government will give earnest consideration to his representations. It will be a very serious thing if, in framing a Tariff for the Commonwealth, we impose burdens upon the mining industry of Western Australia that will seriously hamper it. I gathered from the speech of the Minister for Defence that he sees that Western Australia is likely to be harshly dealt with under the proposed Tariff. If the honorable and learned member for Bendigo is correct in his statement that the manufacture of mining machinery can be successfully conducted in Victoria without protective duties, why should a burden be placed upon the miners of Western Australia, and a check put upon their industry? Now that we have established intercolonial free-trade, and the productions of the various States can be freely exchanged, I should like to remind honorable members that the provincial protection which formerly existed really had its foundation in the cry for the conservation of the home market and retaliatory duties against other States. If any honorable member carefully studies the history of protection in Australia he will find that that has been its backbone. We hoped that, with the destruction of the provincial boundaries, and the establishment of free intercourse between the States, enlightened statesmen would see that the old cries would have no meaning to the people. How can the proposed duties develop the agricultural industry of the continent? How is the competition of other countries likely to affect our agriculturists? We have been told that New South Wales has imported breadstuffs from abroad which she could have produced herself; but it was only very rarely and in bad years, when her harvests had practically failed, and wheat was at a very high price, that importations from America were possible. Honorable members know that grain cannot be landed in Sydney or Melbourne from America at a profit at any time when there has been a fairly good season in Australia. It was only during times of shortage that we were compelled to import breadstuffs from abroad.

Mr Fowler

- And the importation was in the interests of the consumers of the State?

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Mr F E McLEAN

- Yes, and they were entitled to cheap bread. The people from whom we imported agricultural produce were, for the most part, brother Australians, to whom we have always given the advantages of free-trade, and with whom we have now entered into federal union, and secured those advantages from them. Now that the Inter-State barriers are down, are we to believe that the continent will be inundated with foreign agricultural produce?

Mr Chapman

-- What about New Zealand?

Mr F E McLEAN

- I do not regard New Zealand as a foreign country. If the proposed Tariff is directed against New Zealand - as the honorable member's remarks would imply- I regret the imposition of duties to hamper the free exchange of products between New Zealand and the States of the Commonwealth.

Mr Conroy

- They have no cheap labour there.

Mr F E McLEAN

- No. New Zealand is entitled to every credit for the way in which she has developed her resources.

Mr Chapman

- Under protection!

Mr F E McLEAN

- I have already clearly demonstrated that protection has nothing to do with agricultural production. Does the Home Secretary attribute the doubling of the New South Wales output of wheat within five or six years to protection? In 1894, when New South Wales had a limited protection, and duties upon grain, her

production of wheat was 6,500,000 bushels, while in 1900, with a free port, her production was 13,000,000 bushels.

Mr Isaacs

- Did that happen without State encouragement?

Mr F E McLEAN

- I am rather astonished that an honorable and learned gentleman who wishes to establish a national department of Agriculture should throw contempt upon State encouragement of farmers.

Mr Isaacs

- Quite the contrary.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I approve of everything that will encourage the farmer, except the tyranny of those who would prevent him from freely exchanging his produce where he pleases. I do not know of any special encouragement that has been given to the New South Wales farmers, except wise and liberal land laws, and I hope that we have not reached a stage when we shall allow our controversies to so blind us to facts that we shall taunt one another upon matters of this kind. The agricultural industry is so large and important that it behoves both the States and the Commonwealth to do everything within reason to encourage the settlement of the people on the soil; and to educate them to the highest pitch of agricultural science, so that they may be in a position to fight upon the fairest terms with all the nations of the earth. We are not going to do the farmer good, or to stimulate agriculture, by framing mere paper duties. Some of the proposed duties are merely duties on paper. They are intended to delude the farmer by making him believe that he is sharing in the distribution of benefits, when the only effect of the Tariff upon him is to increase the prices of the commodities he uses. Let those honorable members who represent agricultural constituencies try and persuade the farmers that this Tariff is going to increase the price of their products, the output of their products, or the area of the land under cultivation. How is it going to do that? The two largest States of this union have reached a point at which they can export their surplus products.

Mr Kennedy

- How many of the staple products are they in a position to export as surplus agricultural products ?

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Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable member is a farming representative, and he knows as well as I do that we are exporting our surplus products. We are exporting wheat, for example - not to a very great extent, I admit - but we have reached the point at which we can supply our own requirements ; and if production is stimulated to a greater extent it cannot possibly give the farmer a better price for his products. We are exporting butter, and I do not see how the duty upon butter will give the farmer a better price for that article, either in the home market or in the markets abroad. If it can be shown to me that the farmer or the factory worker is going to receive a benefit, as well as the manufacturer - that the policy of the Government will stimulate manufacturing enterprise and industry, and open up the vast avenues of employment foreshadowed by the prophets of protection - I am perfectly open to conviction. We are starting a new Commonwealth, and I do not think that any of us are so prejudiced that we are not prepared to learn something. But the simple fact stares us in the face that the producers of Australia are not threatened with an inundation of foreign products. Indeed, the only port which has remained open in the Australian continent has not been inundated with foreign products. I can show that it has not been inundated with foreign manufactured goods, as some honorable members have claimed.

Mr Ewing

- Why do the ships go to Sydney 1

Mr F E McLEAN

- They bring goods to us, and take away our products. But does the honorable member want to set up the monstrous doctrine enunciated by a previous speaker, that the aim and end of national existence should be to maintain ourselves independently of all foreign countries ? That is a state of happiness, if I may so call it, which can only be attained in an absolutely barbarous country. The honorable member for Gippsland talks about ocean transit, and the means of transit, a* black-mail- as something that is levied upon the producer. The radical difference between the free-trader and the protectionist - and it is almost a pity that we have to repeat these statements - is that the former regards every improved means of transit

as a direct stimulus to production. We regard the ocean steamer that brings us the products of other lands, and takes away our products to other lands, as being a blessing and not a curse. The protectionist idea seems to be that we should be self-contained - that we should be able to produce everything that is required for the happiness of our own people. Then where is the necessity for interchange ? If every people upon the face of the earth became self-contained, it is obvious that trade would become a thing of the past, and we should relapse into that glorious state of things which existed in perfection before ocean navigation was known at all. I suppose that the only way in which a community can become self-contained and independent is by having no trade at all. But civilization involves the idea of the inter-dependence of nations. It is the inter-dependence of nations, the interchange of goods between them, the establishment of means of communication between one country and another, that constitutes civilization itself. What distinguishes a civilized from an uncivilized people, is their contact with other nations, their trade with other nations, and their interchange of commodities. Now, however, we are asked to look upon all these things as evils, and to regard the ability to produce everything within our own Commonwealth as the highest ideal of national greatness. I fail to understand why the advocates of protection do not carry their argument still further. If the ability to produce everything that is required for our own people is a good thing for the Commonwealth, surely it is an equally good thing for the States. I was reading the other day of a proposal which was seriously made in the State of New York, but which I am pleased to say was declared illegal by the Supreme Court of the United States. That proposal was to prevent the use of stone in buildings in the State of New York if it had been quarried in any other State of the Union. That is the legitimate outcome of the protectionist doctrine. If it is a good thing to shut ourselves within the circle of the Commonwealth, it is a good thing to shut ourselves within a narrower circle ; and if it is a good thing to trade with our neighbours, it is equally good to trade with any one who is willing to purchase our commodities.

Mr Mauger

- The protectionists were strongly in favour of federation all through.

Mr F E McLEAN

- I might reply to the honorable member, but my better judgment induces me to refrain from making the observation which I am tempted to make. We are welded together for good or for ill in one indissoluble union, and we have to learn to pull together. I recognise that it is a fair thing to make comparisons between the industries of one State and those of another. But I hope that these comparisons will always be made in such a way as not to engender Inter-State bitterness. I wish to say, in conclusion, that the people of New South Wales have come into this union expecting fair play. That is all. We do not seek to fasten our policy upon the union.

Mr McCay

- The honorable member said before the dinner-hour that he supported federation in order to secure the New South Wales fiscal policy for the whole of Australia.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- The honorable and learned member is altogether at sea. Even if I had said that, I do not know that there is anything in it to recant. Whatever our remote ideas may be, and however much we may be buoyed up by the hope that better counsel will prevail in the Commonwealth, we are practical enough to recognise that in the immediate present nothing but a Tariff compromise is possible. If that is any consolation to the Government, we admit it freely. But we say that this Tariff is not a compromise. It is an attempt to fasten, upon the whole of the Commonwealth a particular form of fiscalism. There is no lowering of the duties-
Mr. Mauger. - Nonsense.

Mr F E McLEAN

- There is no lowering of the duties so far as Victoria is concerned in order to make fair compensation for the wider market which the Commonwealth offers to that State. I suppose it will be admitted that the Commonwealth does provide Victoria with a wider market. South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland in themselves furnish markets that it is quite worth the while of Victoria to have. If the Inter-State duties are to be remitted, and Victorian goods are to be allowed free access to those States, is it not fair that New South Wales, which had least to gain by coming into the union, and which was the most reluctant to join it, should have a reasonable amount of consideration in the framing of the Tariff,

and that in it the principle of revenue tariffism, as opposed to protection, should be honestly observed 1 I apologize for having spoken at such very great length. The matter, however, is of such importance to the whole of the Commonwealth, and particularly to the State of New South Wales, in which taxation will be enormously increased, that I think we should insist upon right lines being observed in the framing of this Tariff. The amount of the Tariff may be overestimated, the Treasurer may be asking us for more than he really requires, but we are not going to quarrel about that. We shall admit, for the sake of argument, that a Tariff of £8,500,000 would be necessary, but we see no reason why in raising a Tariff of £8,500,000 respect should not be shown for the convictions, traditions, and vested interests that have grown up in one of the largest, most populous, and oldest States of the union.

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Mr ISAACS

- No one dreams of reproaching the right honorable the leader of the Opposition for adopting the course he has taken of promptly challenging the Government proposals. The right honorable gentleman is the leader of a party of very pronounced and very decided views, a party that in some respects, I am sorry to ' , know, when it finds occasion to refer to Victoria, mingles a little acrimony with its > arguments. But, putting that aside, and I believe time will cure that, I believe it is a part' which will yield to none in sincerity, in patriotism, and in a desire, a genuine desire, to advance the welfare of this country. We stand at the present moment debating one of the greatest questions which can agitate this or any other community. We stand facing each other across a very clearly marked and well-defined line - the line of fiscal policy. We take widely divergent views of much of the evidence that lies around us. We are in absolute antagonism as to what is the wise economic system to adopt for the Commonwealth ; but we are, I feel proud and happy to say, in entire accord in this - that we all desire to place Australia, so far as wise legislation and administration can place her, on the very pinnacle of prosperity. At this particular moment, when we are about to take an initial step - a step that must under any circumstances materially influence, and probably for a considerable time direct and control a great portion of our fiscal history, I do not regard it as unfitting or as an unbecoming thing on the part of the leader of the Opposition to formally ask this Chamber whether it is prepared, in the name of the people of the Commonwealth, to ratify and to indorse the proposals put forward by the Government. There is no doubt that the right honorable gentleman has performed his task in his usual able and skilful manner, and it behoves us to recognise the height of the occasion. I feel bound to acknowledge that this debate has been carried on in a manner that reflects credit upon the Federal Parliament. The circumstances under which the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney approached his task were, I believe, not of the most encouraging nature, from his stand-point. We remember, and we must remember, and it is hard indeed to deny it, that he is asking us to disregard what I believe to be the plain understanding upon which this Government received its gift of power. He is asking a majority of this House to forget the pledge under which they were returned as supporters of the Government, and to disregard the promise that the Government gave the country, and which, in my opinion, they could not possibly satisfy without exposing themselves to some attack like the present. Therefore, I when we remember all the circumstances, and when we remember the rather chilling reception that the views of the right honorable gentleman met with upon the address in reply, I think it speaks volumes for his courage and for the courage of many of those honorable members who follow him, that they should endeavour now to raise, what I believe the general opinion of Australia, and certainly the wider experience of the world, teaches us is the standard of a dying faith.

Mr Wilks

- Why, the streets of Melbourne are crowded with free-traders now.

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Mr ISAACS

- Yes ; the proof of it is the majority in this House. .Before I proceed to deal, so far as the time at my disposal will permit me, with the substance of the right honorable and learned gentleman's speech, and with the arguments so well put by our honorable friends on the other side, I should like to say two or three words about the nature and character of his address, and of the addresses we have had following his. Now, with regard to the speech of the right honorable and learned leader of the Opposition, to a large extent - and I say this by way of prefatory observation - it consisted of a dissection of details. I have no hesitation in saying for myself that upon many points of detail, and many important points, it will be my

duty to offer the freest commentary, and, if necessary, a strenuous opposition, because there are items in this Tariff which demand a great amount of explanation - I want to speak quite frankly- - and to say there are items in this Tariff that I cannot reconcile with any fiscal system. There are items for which I can find no reasonable grounds for inclusion in the Tariff, either from a free- trade or a protectionist stand-point. There are items of duties which I believe press unnecessarily upon some of the occupations and upon the daily life of the people, and I believe that when this Tariff is finally dealt with they will no longer find a place in it. But, sir, that is no reason for voting against the Government upon this occasion. The proposal of the leader of the Opposition is not a proposal to deal with details. It is not a proposal to lop away a few superfluous branches. It is a proposal to lay the axe at the root of the tree. In that respect I cannot follow the right honorable and learned gentleman. There is another observation I should like to make upon the speech, and it is, that as an effort of pure destruction, its object was unmistakable.

But as an attempt to construct any policy for the Commonwealth, to take the place of that which he condemned, it was absolutely destitute and bare. That is not sufficient. Before he can fairly ask any body of honorable members in the House to precipitate a political crisis, he should have something to offer in the place of that which he has attempted to destroy. We saw the right honorable and learned member, with his accustomed ability, set himself with vigorous arms to tear down the structure which it has taken the Government with all their care, attention, and honesty of purpose months to erect, and when he had resumed his seat what glimmer had we from him of any substitute he was prepared to offer 1 Absolutely none. I want to emphasize this point, that when he had finished his address to the House and to the country, he had left us absolutely in the dark as to whether he proposed to put further duties on some of the articles in the Tariff, whether he proposed to reduce the already too restricted free list, whether he proposed to still further carry the Tariff in the direction .1. object to, by putting on duties which must be borne by the consumer, or whether he proposed to replace a portion of that Tariff by direct taxation. I was in utter doubt when he had resumed his seat as to what his intentions were. I did not know whether he intended to put on direct taxation of any kind, or, if he did, whether it would be of that particular kind which is favoured in leaflets that have been apparently industriously circulated among my honorable friends on the other side, or whether he intended to favour that form of taxation which is sometimes called a single tax, utterly out of place for federal purposes, I should imagine, but which was supported also in leaflets somewhat ostentatiously displayed by speakers on the other side. Before we are asked to enter into what would be a political cataclysm, before we are asked to inaugurate the political history of the Commonwealth with disorder, we should have a distinctly better policy to offer to the people. We should have a very good reason for disorganising trade once more, and that reason should be one that is open and plain to the people of the Commonwealth, and not one that is left to conjecture of the haziest kind. In the speeches of the honorable members for North Sydney and Wentworth, especially in that of the latter, we had an indication of the kind of

Tariff which some of my honorable friends on the other side would favour; a Tariff which the honorable member for Wentworth told us last night would, if he had his way, have absolutely no free list. Is that such a Tariff as the people of the Commonwealth would tolerate? Is that such a Tariff as would find favour with the people of New South Wales, or of Victoria, or of any other State in the union? Will honorable members who pose as the friends of the working man, who declaim against taxing babies' food, babies' boots, and all sorts of things, come down to the House with a proposal that not a single item of import shall escape taxation on its entering into the Commonwealth ? Not only will they take no means in their power to encourage local production, but they will take care to put a tax that cannot be evaded or avoided on every article which is consumed ? That is a position which I think ought to be fairly put before the people of Australia, and it is one which having been advocated from the opposition side will require a considerable amount of displacement.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Distinctly no.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- It has never been advocated.

Mr Kennedy

- It is one of the policies put forward.

Mr ISAACS

- Do my honorable friends tell me that I did not hear the honorable member for Wentworth aright, when he said that he preferred to have no free list ?

Mr Sawers

- The future Treasurer.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- What did the leader of the Opposition say ? Be fair.

Mr Cruickshank

- The honorable member for Wentworth said no free list.

Mr ISAACS

- I do not want to use any word that savours of sharpness; but I desire to put my views before the House. In all probability, should the event occur which is desired by my honorable friends opposite, who would be the Treasurer or the Minister for Trade and Customs, who would lead in this matter?

Mr O'Malley

- Sir WilliamMcMillan.

Mr ISAACS

- If the lieutenant-general of the Opposition held the position of Treasurer or of Minister for Trade and Customs what would be the probability, on his own admission, of having one single article admitted into the Commonwealth free of duty?

Mr Cook

- The honorable and learned member is not fair.

Mr ISAACS

- When my honorable friends pose as friends of the farmer they must tell him that not a single agricultural implement must come into Australia untaxed. When they tell the farmer that they are his friends let them couple it with the admission that they want to tax his cream separator, which is free under this Tariff, and his reaper and binder. And when they speak to the miner let them say that they want to tax mining machinery, and do not go to them with differing proposals. Before they want to displace the Government let them at least agree among themselves.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Why does not the honorable and learned member be fair and say what the leader of the Opposition stated in regard to the free list? He stated distinctly that there would be a free list. The honorable and learned member is like an advocate.

Mr ISAACS

- My honorable friend had a very fair show to put his views before the House. If we judge his speech by ability we can recognise its great merit, and if we measure it by square miles we can say the same thing, I trust that he will now permit me in my own unsophisticated way to put my views before the House.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I only want the honorable and learned member to be fair.

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Mr ISAACS

- I want to deal with one phase of this matter from a neutral stand-point for the consideration of both sides of the House, and I wish, in order to do that, to submit the words of an authority - a free-trader who has graduated in the school of Adam Smith, and who occupies the position of Professor of Political Economy in one of the provinces of Canada. I wish to quote a few words of his in a recent work he has issued which have, to my mind, a striking appositeness to the present situation. My honorable friends say that we should by way of preference have a free-trade Tariff. If they really mean that it will involve a good deal of direct taxation. But then they say they recognise a little difficulty in the way of doing that, and want a fair revenue Tariff. I wish to point out the observations of the gentleman to whom I have referred - Professor Davidson - in his recent work, published in 1900, on Commercial Federation, and Colonial Trade Policy. At page 84 he uses words which, I think, ought to weigh well with honorable members on both sides of this House, as showing the views of even free-traders as to the sort of Tariff that a federation, and especially a young federation, ought to have. Speaking of Canada, he says -

By the 91st section of the British North American Act, the Dominion of Canada is given power to raise revenue, either by direct or indirect taxation, and it has raised revenue by direct taxation. But practically

the Dominion is barred from levying direct taxes. By section 92 of the Act the provinces are restricted to direct taxation, and it would be more or less an invasion of their sphere for the Dominion to levy direct taxes - a fact which is practically recognised. Indirect taxation must be levied largely on imports, and cannot, when the volume of imports is small, help being protective, and protective to a very considerable extent. Even the late Lord Farrer recognised that free-trade in Canada was a financial impossibility ; and what is true of Canada is more or less true of the other colonies.

I wish to impress the succeeding sentence upon my honorable friends, because it deals with the next phase of this matter -

For many years to come it may safely be said that considerations of revenue will stand in the way of a purely revenue Tariff.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- If the honorable and learned member will read Mill, or Fawcett he will find an entirely different view expressed.

Mr Conroy

- Why did the Prime Minister deceive the people of New South Wales upon this matter ?

Mr ISAACS

- If my honorable friend the member for Werriwa will take the opportunity to think about this matter I am sure that he will not disturb me. I appreciate the view that my honorable friends on the opposition side take when they are driven - because that is what it comes to - to the admission that they cannot have a free-trade Tariff. I wish to say a few words in reply to some observations which have been made with regard to the Prime Minister. I heard that right honorable gentleman in Melbourne - I was not at Maitland, but I heard his deliverance in Melbourne - and I am perfectly certain that there was not one of my honorable friends on the opposite side who failed to note what he said at Melbourne.

Mr Conroy

- He spoke with different tongues at Melbourne and Maitland.

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Mr ISAACS

- No one could have been more clear or more distinct than the right honorable gentleman, in his Melbourne speech, in conveying the fact that he had resolved that whilst taking care as far as he could to raise the necessary revenue, he would afford sufficient protection to prevent the wanton destruction of industries. The people of this Commonwealth knew that full well, and I know that it was appreciated in the sense in which I refer to it. I have reason personally to know it, because, although I have a constituency largely connected with the mining and farming interests, I was opposed by the president of the Free-trade League in Victoria. Now can any honorable member tell me that there was any mistake about that. I regard that as convincing proof that the Prime Minister made his mind perfectly clear to the people. However, I have differed, and do differ from the Government on some of the items of their Tariff I cannot, as an honest man, refrain from saying that their intention, as expressed on the platform at Melbourne, before one of the largest meetings I have ever seen, they have apparently honestly endeavoured to carry out. I am sure that the position is well appreciated, but I will go further and venture to say that if my honorable friends of the other side will look at the reports of the New South Wales Parliamentary Debates of February, 1899, they will find that it was admitted by them in their own House of Assembly that a protectionist Tariff would be necessary for the Commonwealth. If that is the position, what is the complaint on that score? Let us face this question fairly, and deal with it on its merits ; do not let us attempt to cloud it by any aspersions. When my honorable friends find that a free-trade Tariff is impossible, and that a pure revenue Tariff is impossible, they say - " Let us come as near to free-trade as we can." They say - "You Victorians are benighted ; you have never had the free light of Heaven cast upon your fiscal enquiries. We admit that you cannot rise to the full height of free-trade, skill and knowledge, and, as the American comedian sang -

If you can never be like us,

Be as like us as you can.

Then they say to us - "Come as near to this free-trade Tariff as you are possibly able." Now, that is the debatable land, and that is the point which, I must admit, in fairness to the right honorable the leader of the Opposition, was emphasized by him in his speech. He also emphasized it in his speech on the

address in reply in a manner which I wish to acknowledge was most eloquent and most able. On this occasion, at all events, he found himself amidst surroundings that were a trifle unsympathetic, and, as he complained afterwards, a little unresponsive, and he did what is frequently done by party leaders - he told this House that he appealed over our heads. He said to us - " I am not speaking to you so much as to those behind you. I am appealing not so much to you as to the constituencies."

Mr Wilks

- He did very well on Monday night for a start.

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Mr ISAACS

- Yes ; the right honorable gentleman did very well on Monday night, and he did a very adroit thing, for before he ventured to express his views, he took care to find out what was the temper of the meeting, and to satisfy himself that it was properly constituted before he proceeded to address it. I wish to say, with reference to the right . honorable gentleman's appeal to the country in his speech on this motion, that it was the sort of appeal that always commands from me a very large amount of sympathy. It follows an idea that is at the very base of my political education and faith, but there is one flaw in the right honorable gentleman's argument on this occasion. When he told us that he appealed to the constituencies he forgot that the appeal to that tribunal had already taken place. He forgot for a moment that that tribunal had been approached a few months ago, and had given its judgment, and that we were here not to question that constitutionally given judgment, but to loyally endeavour to carry it into effect. On some future occasion no doubt the right honorable gentleman, and my honorable friends behind him, will have an opportunity of renewing their attempt to convince the country that their view is the right one. They will have an opportunity of exercising the prerogative that the minority always have of attempting to obtain a reversal of the country's verdict. But, until that time comes, it is our bounden duty to obey the mandate that has sent us here ; and that is why the Government ought to be supported. I would further say, that if the right honorable gentleman made his appeal, not in order to control this House, but for its advice and its guidance, we should look, not alone at the mere handful of people in Australia, but at that larger sphere which is around us in the civilized world - that teeming mass of toilers who range themselves under the - banners of western civilization. If the right honorable gentleman appeals to the ' experience of the wide world, what verdict will he get ? What answer will come across the Atlantic from our brothers in both Federations 1 What answer will come from that mighty empire in Europe which attained its unity and practically its federal form, and certainly its protectionist policy from the transcendent genius of Bismarck ? I need not refer to other countries, but I will say that the "majority of the 350,000,000 of workers and toilers in Western Europe and America will give a verdict that will be adverse to his contention. We may also appeal to the experience of the mother land ; and I want to say that it is not we on this side who appeal first to that experience. It is in response to the challenge thrown out by the other side that we venture to assert our right to controvert the assertions and arguments which have been fairly, but, as we believe, inaccurately put forward relating to the mother land we all love and revere. It is our bounden duty to do that ; and when we have done it, can we help seeing that even amongst the 40,000,000 who people that land, there is a change of opinion manifestly proceeding ? Fair-minded men in the mother land to-day are recognising, as they must recognise, that protection in the majority of the countries of the world is a fact that must be recognised, even if protection be wrong. That that is a fact which must be reckoned with is too often forgotten. I am going to show, if I am permitted, that not only is there a change of opinion amongst thinking men - philosophers, if honorable members like - and amongst politicians and commercial men, and even in the cotton trade in Manchester, which is the cradle of what I believe to be the free-trade fallacy, but also by official acts, England has been quietly but clearly turning in the direction which will ultimately bring > her into line with the rest of the civilized ! world. I hope to bring before the House ! considerations which, when fairly and fully looked at, will not only strengthen protectionists on points of principle in their faith, but will, if my free-trade friends consider the matter, as I believe they will, do much to alter their internal opinion, however little it may change their votes, and do much to shake this superstition which has not even the benefit of antiquity to give it any reverence. It is a superstition that may be most clearly expressed in the words that a nation's industries can best be promoted by absolutely ignoring their existence. Attempts have been made to support this superstition. The honorable member who preceded me said that all the arguments were on the free-trade side, and that he and his friends had

approached the question from the standpoint of principle, whereas we had not done so. But whether we approach the question from the stand-point of principle or from the stand-point of practice, the protectionist doctrine is the one that can best stand the test.

Mr Conroy

- According to the wealthy man, yes.

Mr ISAACS

- If the honorable member will only have patience I shall give him some material which will, perhaps, answer him better than immediate reply to his interjection. This is a matter to which the people of the country are looking very earnestly, and I think they regard it as becoming that it should be treated in the manner it deserves. It is not a matter that can be disposed of by flippant observations, and while I hope I shall not be thought for a moment to be lecturing honorable members, I desire to say that I wish to avoid, as far as I can, replying to interjections, and to place my views before the House as shortly as the subject will permit, though, unfortunately, at greater length than I could desire. We have been told only in the last few minutes that on the point of principle protection cannot be defended ; and I should like to deal with the question from that standpoint first of all. We have heard time after time, not merely in this debate, but on previous occasions, from the other side the well-worn phrases that are so often used to dignify free-trade, as it is called. I have a vivid recollection of the glowing words of the right honorable member for East Sydney when he told the House and the country that free-trade is synonymous with liberty. He told us that restraint on trade is indefensible, and his argument rested upon the doctrine that all State interference is unjustifiable. I would like to know how that argument appeals to my honorable friends in the opposition corner. The argument is not new. Every schoolboy, as Macaulay would put it, is able to read it on page after page of our history. So far as I have been able to learn, it is an argument that, with this single exception in relation to trade - and why there should be this exception, reason can scarcely find an intelligible answer - comes from the lips of those who pride themselves on being conservatives, who are worshippers of the doctrine of laissez faire. They find in that argument their very last defence when they hear the hand of progress knocking at the door of privilege. Liberty ! Why, that is the argument that capital always uses to labour. It is the argument of the man who claims the right, without restriction, to employ any one he chooses, of any sex he pleases, at any price he thinks fit, for as many hours as he can get them to work, under any circumstances and conditions which necessity can drive them to accept.

Mr Watkins

- Is it not also the term used by the anarchists ?

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Mr ISAACS

- It may be; but it was the argument of the southern slave-owners of America. Freedom of trade, when used as synonymous with liberty, means freedom of trade in commodities, including the most precious commodity in the world, the only commodity the workman can offer - his labour, his skill, his life itself. It was the argument used in early times by the English mine-owner, who claimed the right to harness women to trucks as beasts of burden. It was the argument under which it was sought to suppress the trades' unions, because it was said that the labourer should have perfect freedom to sell his labour for whatever price he could get for it. It is the argument used to-day against the restriction of the immigration of black labour into Australia. And yet that is the argument which is put forward by my honorable friends opposite, as the great argument to support free-trade. I venture to say that if we look at history from the very earliest period to the present time, we cannot refrain from admitting that whenever humanity has stepped forward to rescue the weaker of her children from the grip of a relentless commercialism - a commercialism that has taken for its creed the very same merciless maxim that is inscribed to-day on the banner of the free-trade party, " Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," buy the products of labour, or labour itself, in the cheapest market - I say whenever humanity has gone forward on that holy mission, it has been this false goddess masquerading in the guise of Liberty that has obstructed its progress. If that is true, then Madame Roland was right when she cried : " Oh, liberty - what crimes are committed in thy name ! " That is the way the matter stands, on principle ; and, if we turn from principle to the teachings of experience, what do we find ? When my honorable friends tell us it is England that presents the single instance of the benefits of free-trade, and that she sets an example for the whole world to follow, I should like to say a few words - a very few words indeed - to show why I do not agree

with their views about the position of England. I am not going to say that England is decaying. Far be it from me to say that England is decaying. I believe, sir, that there is too much stability in that kingdom, too much in the energy of her people and in the characteristics of her race, to savour of anything like decay. But it is perfectly clear that she is being outstripped in the commercial race by other competitors. What are the true facts 1 Speakers who have preceded me in this debate have emphasized this all important fact, which is constantly ignored by honorable members opposite, that when, 60 years ago, the mother country cast aside as useless the armour which had shielded her industries through preceding centuries, she had not a rival near her to contest the commercial field. Her insular position had secured her against continental disorders. Her navigation laws had contributed not only to the maintenance of her naval defence, but also to giving her an unequalled capacity for carrying the merchandise of the world. It was her flag, and her flag alone, practically, that sheltered the ocean-borne commerce of the world. Her manufacturers at home had established their factories on a safe and secure and permanent basis. Her workmen had acquired an unrivalled skill and reputation. She had huge accumulations of capital to buttress up her commercial enterprise. Competitors ! There were none in sight; and there was only one drawback to prevent her from becoming what Cobden dreamed she would become, the workshop of the world. That drawback was, as we all know now--

Mr Cameron

- Does the honorable and learned member forget about the Dutch?

Mr ISAACS

- It is impossible to forget about the Dutch or about the honorable member either. But the one drawback England had was the want of raw material and cheap food. We must not forget that her limited area, her climate, and the then state of agricultural science, prevented her from growing the necessary food for her people ; and it was not within the range of human vision at that time that agriculture could step forward in the way it has done since to increase the output of cereals. Sir, under those conditions - under those exceptional conditions - conditions that the world had never previously seen, and which, I venture to say, the world will never see again - the mother country proceeded to lay aside, not as inherently fallacious, but as no longer useful to her, that economic system by whose aid she had risen to commercial greatness. Other nations were unprepared for the fray. Other nations at that time were practically called upon by England to be her hand-servants. They were called upon and looked upon as being, as was said by a learned writer, " hewers of wood and drawers of water " for her ; and they were unable to cope with her in the competitive field. For a time she had undoubtedly the most brilliant success.

Mr Wilks

- Still has.

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Mr ISAACS

- She has a great success but relatively, a lessening success. And why ? Because other nations have awakened to their possibilities - because other nations have developed their resources - because other nations are no longer content to produce raw material, send it to England to be manufactured, and get back the finished products made up by the English workmen. We are told that the policy of a nation that has been so eminently successful, and that has raised it to so high a pitch in the commercial world, is one that we should emulate and follow. The great and magnificent success England enjoyed for many years was thought by Cobden and his followers to be a condition of things that would exist for ever. But there are those to-day - and they are increasing in numbers, and as I shall point out, their thought is reflected in some of the latest official acts of England - who believe, seeing things clearer to-day than men did 60 years ago, that this freetrade success is after all a mere transient gleam upon the vast firmament of Time, and by no means the fixed and resplendent sun that it was so fondly hoped would for ever irradiate and warm the path of human progress. I do not want to encumber my speech with figures any more than I can help, but I desire to read some very important testimony to the statements I have made. If they are wrong, then honorable members have the means of checking them. I would only say in passing that a pronounced free-trader like Professor Lecky, a man whose sympathies are all with the free-trade cause, but who, as an historian, is compelled, to his sorrow, to chronicle the facts as he finds them, tell us that protection is spreading amongst the democracies of the world, and that even thought in England is tending in that direction. He tells us that free-trade is practically synonymous with freedom of labour, and

that it is a wonderful thing that the workers do not perceive it. It is only a matter of time when they will do so.

Mr Conroy

- The honorable and learned member should read the rest of the passage.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Would the honorable and learned member mind giving us the reference to Lecky, and not the mere general statement 1

Mr ISAACS

- I have not got the book here, but the passage I refer to is to be found near the end of the second volume.

Mr Conroy

- I will get it.

Mr ISAACS

- If the book is obtained for me I will read the passage. I turn from that to a much more prosaic proof. I will read now a passage from what I consider to be the representative journal of the cotton trade, the Drapers' Record. That newspaper claims to have, as I believe it has, the largest circulation of any trade journal in the world, and it is a London publication. In its issue of May 25, 1901, at page 449 - I give these references for the benefit of honorable members-

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I do not want references to an ephemeral newspaper, but I should like the page of Lecky.

Mr ISAACS

- My honorable and learned friend shall have both. This is an ephemeral newspaper which reflects the feelings and thoughts of the cotton trade in England to-day.

Mr Fowler

- What ! The Draper's Record ?

Mr ISAACS

- Yes. My honorable friend will laugh presently perhaps, when I refer to references which he gave us last night. This journal refers to the advance made by America in supplying goods to the world, including Australia, and it admits that the vast encroachments which the American trade is making on that of England give reason for " very serious consideration and action on the part of our manufacturers." Then it refers to protection as one of the suggested remedies. It is opposed to protection, but it admits, as I shall show, that protection is one of the remedies now suggested in England. It states : -

Protection, a subject we are very content to leave to others, is the stormy petrel of English political debate, and that Ave are to discuss it again and again in the future there can be little doubt. For the present question, it would seem on the face of it there should be no need for such an answer ; for why, we may well ask, should Northampton boots, Leicester hosiery, or Manchester shirts need protecting from rival goods hailing from New York or Chicago, where none consumption is concerned ? But it may be the difference in labour conditions in the two countries will leave us a choice of but two remedies - cheaper labour (longer hours) or protection.

In that statement the whole position is summed up.

Mr Poynton

- Is the allusion to the cheap labour of Chicago 1

Mr ISAACS

- I was just going to refer to that. The false reason, as I shall show it to be, which is given for this choice of the only remedies - cheap labour, or protection to guard the industries of the country where they come into competition with the rest of the world - is simulated, I believe, to make way for the admission.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Why does not the honorable member quote from "Made in Germany " % It is just as germane as that.

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Mr ISAACS

- No doubt my honorable and learned friend will say at a later period that the mercantile community knows its own mind. I should think so, and I should say that a journal of this kind, when speaking on behalf of the cotton trade of England, knows what it is talking about. When the honorable and learned gentleman gets

up will he tell us that the English cotton manufacturers do not know anything about the subject? Then we are told, as the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Poynton, has mentioned, that the reason given for this change is that the wages paid in the cotton trade in America are less than those which are given in the English trade.

Mr Poynton

- Who gives that reason ?

Mr ISAACS

- The honorable member suggested it.

Mr Poynton

- I did not. I asked whether they were afraid of cheap labour in Chicago ?

Mr ISAACS

- I should like to read some extracts from The Effects of the Factory System, a well-known work by Mr. Allen Clarke, one of the leading journalists of England, whose sympathies are entirely with the working classes. He deals with the question of the cotton operatives - with this very industry, which we may call the centre of the free-trade craze- and I want to show what free-trade has done for the cotton worker in England. I find that at page 18 he writes -

In 1846 Howe invented the sewing machine, which has not yet taken any of the tragedy out of the " Song of the Shirt."

At page 59 he writes -

Of late years there has been a marked difference in some trades as to the proportions of male and female labour. Take weaving only as an example. Formerly there would be in the Huddersfield district about 70 per cent. of men weavers to 30 per cent. of women. To-day, we believe, the percentages are about reversed - at all events there are not more than 40 per cent. of men, if so many.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- That is the condition that Victoria is coming to.

Mr ISAACS

- Mr. Clarke gives in his work some most heartrending accounts of the condition of the factory operatives. He tells us that there are married piecers who are earning 13s. per week. He tells us of the miserable food they have to eat, and of the miserable houses they have to dwell in. And this is an Englishman ! This is not some one who is trying to decry his native country. At page 138 he writes -

Female factory labour, whether single or married, but especially married, is the great curse of Lancashire. To take a pistol and shoot a man is moral compared with its effect.

This is in free-trade England !

Mr Fowler

- Does the author attribute those conditions to free-trade?

Mr ISAACS

- No.

Mr Fowler

- Is the honorable and learned member aware that the author is a free-trader?

Mr ISAACS

- Will my honorable friend remember that he has referred us to England as offering an example to be followed.

Mr Fowler

- I showed that free-trade is improving the conditions of the masses in England.

Mr Wilks

- And making them better able to fight the battle of life.

Mr ISAACS

- If I may be allowed to proceed my honorable friends will find their arguments more than answered. Mr. Clarke writes at page 154 of his book -

The cotton operatives, men and women, work hard, and work long, in hot stuffy air, midst eye-dazzling machinery, and ear-smiting thunder, liable to all sorts of accidents in the mill, liable, because of their occupation, to catch chest complaints when they leave the mill ; getting few holidays, and unable often to afford a holiday when the factory engine is stopped for this purpose ; weakening and debilitating

themselves physically, mentally, and often morally, and transmitting to their children their ruined constitutions and feeble frames, all for a wage that would hardly keep my lady in gloves and bonnets, or my lord in cigars and wines.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- These are arguments against factories, not against freetrade.

Mr ISAACS

- They are evidence of the misery prevailing in English factories.

Mr Wilks

- What about the misery prevailing in Victorian factories?

Mr ISAACS

- I have pointed out the conditions of the individual worker ; let us see what effect free-trade has had, not upon factory hands, but upon labour itself, and upon the use of capital by English manufacturers. The manufacturers, finding themselves pressed by foreign competition, are reducing the wages of their employes as low as they can, and when they can no longer reduce them, they are sending their machinery to the East in order to obtain the cheaply paid labour of those countries for the manufacture of goods which go back to England, and are then sent out here and all over the world as British goods.

Mr Wilks

- If the honorable and learned member wants a country where low wages are paid, let him go to protective Germany.

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Mr ISAACS

- I am not giving statements appearing in an ephemeral newspaper, but the statements of trades' representatives. On page 164 of this book, I find that -

Mr. William Muffin, secretary to the Lancashire Card and Blowing Room Associations, said - "The Lancashire cotton trade was in a deplorable condition." Then, in an article in the Factory Times, for November 22nd, 1895, entitled "Our Trade: a serious question for consideration." Mr. Mawdsley, the secretary of the Amalgamated Associations of Cotton Spinners, says - "Much as we deplore the fact, there can be no question that the countries of Eastern Asia are more and more preparing themselves for an onslaught on the cotton trade. We are not going to moralise on the fact that the great bulk of the cotton machinery at present being made is for export, though that is a matter which might well be considered..... Our export trade is, and must remain, the backbone of our business, and it is consequently abroad that we shall have to look for any relief worth having."

What does Mr. Clarke say ? -

The foreign markets from which Mr. Mawdsley hopes so much are already being opened up by others. The Egyptian Cotton Company is building at Cairo ; and " many persons are watching the inception of this enterprise with eagerness as to other ventures to follow." While spindles in Lancashire have only increased by 50,000 in three years, those in other parts of the world have increased over 3,500,000 in the same time. Of this increase, over 1,000,000 is in India, China, and Japan.

I should like honorable members opposite, and the members of the labour party, whose sympathies in this direction are identical with my own, to note that it is the workers of India, China, and Japan who are cutting down the wages of the English workers to-day.

In India, the increase in spindles and looms during the last fifteen years has been 270 per cent. ; increase of hands, 300 per cent. ; increase of cotton consumed, 425 per cent. ; and while in Lancashire, mills were standing idle and thousands of operatives out of work, thirteen new mills were in course of erection in India.

Does that not appeal to my honorable friends ? Does it not show them that the admission of foreign goods without restraint is depriving the English operative of his living, and, indeed, of his life? Time will not permit me to read more, but it is a matter to which my honorable friends must give the most earnest consideration. During the speech of the leader of the Opposition, I ventured to make an interjection, which has been the subject of some comment in this Chamber and out of it, when I said that it was in England that " The Song of the Shirt " was written. My right honorable friend said, at a later stage, that it had probably not occurred to me that that poem was written in the deepest and darkest protectionist times. Do honorable members know what the terrible duty on cotton was in England when that poem was written ?

Do they know that the duty upon manufactured calico was 10 per cent., and upon calico goods 20 per cent.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- What was it on bread ?

Mr ISAACS

- I have here statistics which will show that the price of bread was pretty much the same then as it was many years later. I hope before I have done to give my honorable friends some startling evidence, not from the columns of the newspaper, but from the report of a joint committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which sat as lately as 1894. I said at a later time that "The Song of the Shirt" was still being sung; but we are not able to hear it quite so loudly. I will give honorable members a proof of that.

Mr Wilks

- The last Victorian report upon the unemployed will do.

Mr ISAACS

- My honorable friends will find some instructive reading, prepared, not by enemies of England, nor by those who want to predict her decay, or can by any possibility be charged with disloyalty to her, but by the Earl of Dunraven's committee upon sweating, which sat in 1890. They will find that in the tailoring trades, and in the chain trades all over England, in the boot-making trade - the conditions were not so bad in some places - in the cabinet-making and upholstering trades, and in various other trades, the most bitter sweating exists in England.

Mr Cameron

- And everywhere else. The honorable and learned member has to prove that England is worse than other places to make anything of his argument.

Mr ISAACS

- I want to prove that my honorable friends opposite, when they say that free-trade has made England a paradise to the worker, are utterly wrong. I want to show them that when they attempt to throw dust in the eyes of Australia, and point to England as the great exemplar for our fiscal policy, they are pointing to what is absolutely misunderstood. When, they tell the people that in England high wages and the greatest happiness prevail, and that there the workers are sure of employment, they are telling them something which can be easily disproved on the clearest evidence.

Mr Poynton

- Can the honorable and learned member tell us where this working man's paradise exists 1

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Mr ISAACS

- Some day I hope to visit it with my honorable friend. I shall refer now to the shirt-making industry, to establish the observation which I made, somewhat contrary to parliamentary rules, early in the debate. I find in the report of the joint committee on the sweating system, to which I have just referred, the following passage under the head of " shirt making " : -

This is a recognised branch of the clothing trade, and the evidence brought before us seemed to show that the trade is carried on chiefly by women in the East End, that the life of these engaged in it is very hard, that the wages are very low, and that there is an utter absence of an}' organization.

Mr Glynn

- That is what Sidney Webb says is the cause of it all - absence of organization.

Mr ISAACS

- Why has not free-trade cured it? The essence of the honorable and learned member's argument is that trades unionism is a restriction of freedom of trade. If my honorable friend had lived not so very long ago, he would, upon the same argument, have been found prosecuting some of the workers for combining.

The report continues -

Shirts of the commoner description are sold wholesale for 10s. 6d. a dozen. For sewing these shirts with a machine, 1s. 6d. per dozen is paid ; for finishing, 1d. a dozen ; for cutting out, about 1d. This came to 2s. 1 Ad. ; and the sweater, according to Mr. Arnold White, gets 4s. This leaves the share of the middleman about 50 per cent, of the gross sum he receives.

Mr. ArnoldWhite brought before the committee four women, all of whom had either worked at shirt-making

casually, or had but recently taken it up. I shall read extracts relating to one or two of them : -

Mrs. Casey, whose husband was a dock labourer, and who said that she had several children to attend to, stated that she made shirts at 7d. and 8d. a dozen, that she earned at this work 1s. 2d. a day, and her materials cost her 1s. 3d. a week, besides the cost of a sewing machine, for which she had to pay £7 3s., in instalments of 2s. 6d. a week. Her rent was 2s. 9d. a week. Six years ago she used to get 1s. 9d. to 2s. a dozen for the same shirts. "I begin work," she said, "between seven and eight in the morning, and have to work sometimes till eleven at night. I have to attend to the children." Another woman, Mrs. Liddle, said she was paid 7d., 8d., and 9d. a dozen for common shirts. "I have," she said, "sat up until twelve and one o'clock at night to do a dozen and a half; the children have been so tiresome and cross that I have had to keep leaving off to attend to them. If I could have the little baby put at a home, and had my work regular every day I could earn 12s. a week." Mrs. Attewell, whose husband was a dock labourer, and in partial employ, gave evidence as regards the lowness of wages and the hard work required to earn them. "Sometimes I have not more than 3s. I do not average more than 3s. By the time I have paid my rent and firing, I do not reckon that I have more than 1d. a day to find bread for the children. I have three children to find bread for. When my husband is not at work, of course I have to find bread for them." When her husband was at work she said she did not do shirtmaking. Mrs. Glazier, a shirt-finisher, doing all her work by hand, and whose husband was a dock labourer, had worked at shirt-finishing for four years. Her eyes were bad, and she could not earn full wages, and could only finish a dozen and a half shirts a day, for which she received 3d. a dozen, thereby only earning 4d. a day.

Will my honorable friend tell me in the face of this evidence and of the evidence given by clergymen before this inquiry, that today there is no "Song of the Shirt"? I shall read only one more case.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Protection will not cure that.

Mr ISAACS

- Protection will give the means of curing it.

Mr Conroy

- The honorable member for Melbourne Ports said in the Review of Reviews last month that only 4d. per dozen was paid in Melbourne.

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Mr ISAACS

- Let me read another piece of news to my honorable friends, under the heading of "Mantle making." The Rev. Mr. Adamson says -

Some of the best silk mantles sold in the West-end shops are made in his parish for 7½d. each, this being the price paid "for making the whole mantle right throughout, and they have to find their own cotton and silk, and oil for the machine." The sweater, however, only pays 5d. to the worker, and the latter can make 1s. 3d. or 1s. 1d. a day.

I do not think I need go any further. This report was written in 1890. I shall now fulfil my pledge to the honorable member for South Sydney, by reading half-a-dozen lines from a still later report of a joint committee of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. This committee was presided over by the Duke of Devonshire, and its report was presented in 1894. There were labour representatives upon it, like Mr. Mann and Mr. Maudsley. Also there was a minority report, which really went further in some respects than did the general report. What I shall read condenses, I think, for the information of honorable members, what is pertinent to the questions which have "been put to me and to other honorable members. On page 10 of the report, I find the following passage : -

The elaborate inquiries made by Mr. Giffen have led him to the following conclusions, which were submitted by him to the commission in evidence. He considers, on the basis of actual returns for the year 1885 as to great masses of working men, that, taking the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, the actual earnings of adult males engaged in manual labour are approxi

Thus, according to this calculation 59 per cent, of the total number earn between 20s. and 30s. a week, and 82 per cent, not over 30s. a week. With regard to the price of food, I find it stated on page 11 of this report-

This being the fact with regard to money wages there also appears to be reason for thinking that, taking together the rise of prices up to about the year 1872 and their subsequent fall, the purchasing power of

money is at least as great now as it was 50 years ago, especially with regard to the articles most consumed by the poorer classes, and much greater than it was twenty years ago.

In other words, this committee would not take it upon itself to say that the purchasing power of money was greater then than it was under protection, but it did say that it was greater than it was twenty years ago when free-trade had been in sway for some considerable time.

Mr Fowler

- Did the committee recommend a return to protection ?

Mr ISAACS

- No ; but I shall show that England has taken many steps in that direction recently. When we find that under free-trade these lamentable conditions occur, we may well ask what benefit is being got ? What is the test of happiness ?

Mr Brown

- Can protectionist countries show any better results ?

Mr ISAACS

- Undoubtedly. Sixty years is too trivial a period to enable my honorable friends opposite to observe the results of free-trade, but a few minutes constitute too long a term for them to listen to what I. have to say about protection. What have been some of the startling results of the introduction of free-trade ? Has it improved the position of the agriculturist in England? No. In 1895 we find that there were 1,000,000 persons less engaged in agriculture than there were in 1841. Has free-trade increased the independence of England ? Certainly not ! Why, America - as has been pointed out clearly and unmistakably. - could, within a few weeks, by cutting off the supplies of corn and cotton, reduce England to submission. During the American war we had a wonderful instance of that. The cotton trade had to stop. In Manchester, which is in the midst of a cotton district, £168,000 a week in wages was lost to the workers, and there were half-a-million persons obtaining regular relief. That is the result of free-trade England depending upon other countries for her means of labour, instead of being self-sufficient and self-contained as Australia may be with her varied resources and wonderful climate.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- How could England, be self-sufficient ?

Mr ISAACS

- Does my honorable friend say that the conditions of England are so different to those of Australia that we cannot take the former country as an example ?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Yes.

Mr ISAACS

- Then why point to freetrade England as a guide to Australia at all ? I want to ask my honorable friends also whether they regard the distribution of wealth among the people as a test of happiness.

Mr Conroy

- Certainly, we want to see it.

Mr ISAACS

- At last we have reached something we can regard as common ground. I shall refer my honorable friends on this subject to an authority they will not question Mulhall. There is nothing ephemeral about him. Let us read what Mulhall says in his Wealth and Industries of the World.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The trouble is that the honorable and learned member will not give us all he says.

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Mr ISAACS

- I have only one lifetime, and I am sure I may depend upon my honorable friend upon some future occasion to add to what I say. I should like to quote this, because it is a pregnant statement. At page 100 of the 1896 edition of his work it will be found that Mulhall says -

Eighty per cent, of the total wealth of England belongs to 14 per cent, of the adult population.

Does that not satisfy my honorable friends opposite? And he points out also that judging by the probate returns, which are very indicative of the condition of affairs -

Fortunes over .£5,000 are multiplying much faster than fortunes under £5,000.

And admitting it, as he must, he says that-

This is the reverse of what is desirable, and this congestion seems to increase in intensity the higher we go.

Mr Poynton

- Now, give us America.

Mr ISAACS

- Is that not sufficient evidence of the deplorable contrast between rich and poor - between millions on one side and misery on the other - that our honorable friends have referred to ?

Mr Poynton

- Give us America now.

Mr Wilks

- Two minutes of Carnegie will do now.

Mr ISAACS

- I prefer to take my honorable friends on their own ground, and where they say free-trade has done so much, yet when I come to deal with them there they say " Please move off a little." I want to say also that if we take the income tax. returns it is clear from those of 1868, the latest about which I could read.

Honorable Members.- Oh !

Mr ISAACS

- That was not sufficient I suppose- from 1846 to 1868? I find that 1 per cent. of the population of the United Kingdom received 25 per cent. of the nation's income ; and reading that by what Mulhall says the position in that respect must be worse to-day than it was then.

Mr. Wilks. - These are dusty statistics.

Mr. ISAACS. - I wish to say to my honorable friends that if they will look at a few official Acts of England they will see whether there is a genuine belief on the part of the English Government that free-trade is to be the eternal policy of that country. We have been reminded of Canada. We have been told that Canada, with the most loyal consideration for the mother country, gave her a preference - I think it is about 33 1/2 per cent. in the Canadian Tariff, the Fielding Tariff. Do honorable members recollect how that was effected ? Do honorable members recollect that when the matter was proposed to Mr. Chamberlain he said, in effect, to Canada - "Wait, there is a little difficulty in the way. We have at present two treaties - one with Germany and one with Belgium, in which the most favoured nation clause exists ; and if you give us this preference Germany and Belgium must share it. So wait." And the English Government proceeded to denounce the Belgian and German treaties. Why ? Because they were anxious to get this protection from Canada. England comes in and gets this preference, which is nothing but protection. She does not stand upon her recent traditional policy of free-trade, but she breaks through it voluntarily, openly, intentionally, in order to gain protection against the rest of the world in Canadian ports. Is that adhering to free-trade ? Do we find the British Government, when it comes to a question of principle, saying - "We stand, and prefer to stand, as the one living example of free-trade in the world ?" Not a bit of it.

Mr Kingston

- Do not forget the result to Canada.

Mr ISAACS

- I am not forgetting it. If honorable members will read the most recent journals published in England - if, for instance, they will read the journal called Commerce, for last month, they will find that the Canadian woollen manufacturers are so affected by the competition of the lower paid British labour in their lines, that they have told their workmen that they must reduce their wages. And when that paper was published a strike was imminent, because they were losing money.

Mr Glynn

- Still, the average against them is 19 per cent. ?

Mr ISAACS

- We can understand it when we consider the low wages which I have pointed out are being paid in England.

Mr Kingston

- And Canada lost her favoured nation treatment with Germany.

Mr ISAACS

- And as the right honorable gentleman says, Canada lost her favoured nation treatment with Germany. I want to point this out, because these are matters which take place under our very eyes. But is that all ? Does England say to her West Indian colonies, the trade of which was departing from England - "We still stand by this ancient" - it is not ancient, it is very recent - "this Cobdenite doctrine of freetrade, and let trade go where it pleases " ? Not at all. The British Government have actually given a subsidy to steamers to go across between Bristol and Jamaica, and the first of the subsidized steam-ships, the Morant, left in May of this year. Is that not departing from the free-trade policy ? If we want a recognition of the encouragement of British industry as against the rest of the world, we have a recent example from the Throne itself.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Surely that is facilitating exchange - subsidizing steamers?

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Mr ISAACS

- Does my honorable friend say that the subsidizing of steamers is not interfering with the freedom of exchange ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It is facilitating export.

Mr ISAACS

- Of course it is facilitating trade, and when we give protection here we facilitate our home trade.

Mr Cameron

- When we have supplied ourselves, what should we do with the rest but export it to the best market ?

Mr ISAACS

- I think, sir, that so far as England is concerned, I have proved to demonstration that its free-trade policy has not been a startling success, nor any success, as honorable members opposite have contended. But if we turn across the Atlantic and look at the condition of affairs in America ; if we remember that in America the founders of the republic, Washington, Madison, and Hamilton all laid down the doctrine that is existing to-day in America/ - that in a country of such wide extent, with undeveloped resources, so like Australia, protection was necessary to encourage her manufactures, is it not something we should look to with reverence and respect ?

Mr G B EDWARDS

- Franklin was the greatest philosopher amongst them, and he did not believe in it.

Mr O'Malley

- Oh! he is dead a hundred years ago.

Mr ISAACS

- I shall not repeat the arguments of some of my honorable friends, who have so eloquently dealt with this question ; but I shall refer to the observations of men in high positions in America. I shall refer to the speech of the man who is now President of America, but who was then the Vice-President, Mr. Roosevelt. I will quote from TheAmericanPublic Opinion, of 9th May, 1901, some words that were uttered by him at the banquet of the Home Market "Club. He said : -

During the last four years this nation has so conducted itself as not only to add immensely to our material prosperity, but also to add to the heritage of honour which we arc to leave our children. It ill becomes us to speak in any spirit of mere boastfulness or arrogance; for to give reign to such a spirit is to insure future disaster. Yet we can do no better work in the future if we realize that we have worked well in the past. I wish to say a word upon the extraordinary domestic prosperity which has been brought about in such large part by the poliCY for which the Home Market Club has so prominently stood. You of this club have been unswerving in your devotion to sound economic thought. You have with heartiest enthusiasm upheld the finally successful effort to put the gold standard upon as safe a basis as it is possible by legislation to put it. You have steadily advocated a Tariff policy, which, in its actual working, has vindicated itself by a success which is literally astounding. It has benefited not merely the manufacturer and the wage-worker, but the whole population. It lias built up an elaborate and highly diversified industrial system at home, has procured a return for labour which is absolutely unparalleled any where else, and, contrary to all the predictions of its opponents, has opened an immense export trade with every part of the world. There may have to be changes in detail to suit the shifting national deeds; but YOU

have once for all established the principle that the Tariff shall always protect the conditions of American life by a duty at least equivalent to the difference in the labour cost here and abroad.

Nothing could be more to the point. Nothing could be clearer than this announcement by the Vice-President then, and the President now, of the results of the American economic policy on that great country. I do not need to go to debatable matter. I do not need to take up statistics from any source. I have here the statement of a man who knows what he is talking about, who has fought the fight, and who has secured the suffrages of a majority of his fellow citizens.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- A man who is acknowledged to be a little eccentric.

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Mr ISAACS

- I wish we had some in this country as eccentric. I want to clear away a little fallacy that has been circulated with regard to what the late lamented President McKinley said in reference to this very question. I think they were the last public words he ever uttered. The day before that dastardly assassination he delivered himself of opinions on this very question at Buffalo. These opinions, as expressed, we have been told, indicated an intention to revert to free-trade. So far as I have been able to discover, his words gave no such indication. I have not had an opportunity of seeing an American journal, but I found his words in the English journal, Commerce, for 11th September, 1901. This is what he said - Our capacity to produce has developed so enormously, and our products have so multiplied, that the problem of more markets requires urgent and immediate attention. Only a broad and enlightened policy will keep what we have. By sensible trade arrangements, which do not interrupt our home production, we still extend the outlets for an increasing surplus. We must not repose in the fancied security that we can forever sell everything, and buy little or nothing. We should take from our customers such of their products as we can use without harm to our industries and labour. Reciprocity is the natural outgrowth of our wonderful industrial development. Under the domestic policy now firmly established, what we produce beyond our domestic consumption we should send abroad. The period of exclusiveness is past ; the expansion of our trade and commerce is a pressing problem.

Mr Wilks

- A half-way house to freetrade.

Mr McCay

- The honorable member would be sorry to have to walk the other half.

Mr ISAACS

- It is the real free-trade that is only obtained by protection. Mr. McKinley went on to say - Commercial wars are unprofitable, and reciprocity treaties in harmony with the spirit of the times, while measures of retaliation are not.

Now come the words which indicate the whole key to his meaning -

If, perchance, some of our Tariffs are no longer needed for revenue, or to encourage and protect home industries, why should they not be employed to extend and promote our markets abroad ?

I would like to point out to those who say that a protectionist Tariff cannot give revenue, that America is embarrassed by an overwhelming revenue. When Mr. McKinley was first elected - shortly before the Tariff of 1890- Mr. Gladstone, with an eloquence and a power that he amongst very few in the world could wield, told the Americans, in effect, that to attempt to do what they were desirous of doing, to build up an iron industry that could compete with England, was practically the same thing as trying to grow pineapples in a hot-house. But to-day, what is the iron industry ? How has his prophecy been falsified ? Very much like the prophecy of Cobden, who said that within ten years all the world would be freetrade.

Mr Wilks

- He said 50 years.

Mr ISAACS

- America has not the difficulty that England has in one respect. We were told that in Victoria more women were employed in factories than men. I naturally asked whether that was the result of protection, or whether the same result was obtained under freetrade ? When I turn to England, what do I find ? Let it never be forgotten that in England, in the textile and the non-textile factories, and also in the workshops under the Factories Act, the proportion of females is alarmingly large as compared with males. There are

2,975,394 males ; and 1,508,406 females - over 50 per cent, of the number of males equalled by the number of females. The females, however, as well as the males, include little children, or half-timers, as they are called. These little children include 27,936 males, and 30,237 females. Of those under eighteen who were employed on full time there were 463,088 young men, and 401,054 young women. In the face of these figures are we to look at the number of women employed in Victoria as a result of protection? In boot and shoe factories there were employed 64,410 males, and 26,365 females; in clothing factories, 95,544 males, and 144,065 females ; and in the manufacture of tobacco, snuff and cigars, 8,963 males, and 21,586 females. These figures are taken from the report of the Chief Inspector of English factories for 1898. Now I am going to refer to New South Wales as compared with Victoria. I think I have shewn that if we turn to the older countries of the world we can get no consolation from the free-trade stand-point. But what do we find when we come to New South Wales and Victoria? 1 What are the tests that the leader of the Opposition and my honorable friends on the other side are ready to apply to distinguish the prosperity, as they term it, of New South Wales from the decay of Victoria? 1 The increase of population in New South Wales, so far as the rate is concerned, is surpassed by Queensland, where the increase is almost double, and by New Zealand as well as Western Australia. Those are protectionist States.

Mr Cameron

- The honorable member cannot call Western Australia a protectionist State.

Mr ISAACS

- I do not know what my honorable friend calls it, but I call it protectionist. It is certainly not a free-trade State, and it is certainly more protectionist than free-trade.

Mr Cameron

- Western Australia has no industries to protect.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. Two or three times I have been on the point of asking honorable members not to interject so frequently, but I was loath to interrupt the honorable member who has been speaking. I must ask honorable members to interject much less frequently, and particularly to abstain from cross-firing by making remarks across the chamber to members other than the speaker.

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Mr ISAACS

- I desire to say one or two words with regard to the supposed superiority of New South Wales under her free-trade Tariff. I am going to ask my honorable friends from New South Wales if they are genuine free-traders, and, if they are, whether they are prepared to go before the people of New South Wales and tell them that they are ready to apply their doctrine all round? I am desirous to ask my honorable friends to answer that question at their leisure. They can appeal to their past actions, and tell us whether they are prepared to say to the farmers and miners of New South Wales what they are saying to the artisans - that they refuse to countenance any State encouragement or assistance. I ask them if they know what protection really means? Does it not mean this - that you are to give assistance to the worker, to whatever rank or class he belongs, in order that he may meet competition at the point where competition is felt? I want to know whether that is not real protection?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- No.

Mr ISAACS

- How can my honorable friends escape from that position? If we see that in the Commonwealth of Australia there are workers in factories whose products come into competition with similar products from other parts of the world, and we desire to enable those workers to fairly meet that competition, are we not to be allowed to do it, when my honorable friends are prepared - and I am ready to go with them - to assist the primary producers when they send their products to foreign markets to meet the competition there? Allow me to show how that is done, and allow me to show how my honorable friends would not dare to go before the farmers and miners of New South Wales and say - "We are prepared to maintain this principle against you as we are prepared to maintain it against the factories, that you shall go as you please, but you shall not come to the State for assistance." They would not dare to say to them as to the workers in factories - "Succeed if you can, and survive if you can - if not, die." The leader of the Opposition told the country during the elections that his policy was to take all the puppies of industry and

cast them into the water, where they were to sink or swim as best they could. Is he prepared to cast the agricultural puppy into the water, or is he prepared to cast the mining puppy into the water, and allow these primary industries to sink or swim without State assistance? I should like to know whether my honorable friends will say to these industries, as to the others - "We refuse to recognise your claims for assistance." My honorable friends must ponder a little over what I am saying, and see how far they are able to go. . The doctrine I have stated is the one upon which the whole argument rests - that the State must say to the workers in boot factories, and in hat factories, and in clothing factories - "You must succeed as best you may ; the State is not going to render you any assistance. We are not going to put our hands into the pockets of the taxpayers to help you, but you must face the competition of the world unaided."

Mr Page

- They are doing it now.

Mr ISAACS

- Well, if they are doing it now, are the farmers and the miners to be placed on the same footing ?

Mr CAMERON

-What help are the farmers and miners getting ?

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Mr ISAACS

- Does my honorable friend know anything about the matter ? Does he know that in New South Wales during the last ten years they have spent £250,000 in prospecting votes for the benefit of the miners ? Does he know that that money has come out of the pockets of the general taxpayer? Does he know that in New South Wales they spent in one year - last year or the year before - £110,000 in water conservation for the benefit of the farmer - all out of the pocket of the general taxpayer ? Does he know that £31,000 was provided for agricultural colleges, and that £14,000 was provided out of the pockets of the general taxpayer in the form of subsidies for agricultural societies, whilst £15,000 was spent in the importation of stud stock? Does he know, moreover, that in order to help the producers on the various rivers - the Tweed, the Richmond, the Clarence, the Macleay, the Hastings, and the Hunter - to get their produce, and particularly their maize and sugar, to the markets or the mills, no less a sum than £115,000 was provided out of revenue, and £300,000 out of loans ? Are they aware that all this has been done to help industries, to do what ? To help industries to raise products and put them upon the markets of the world, at prices which would pay the producers and enable them to meet competition. If the outpouring of this money from the pockets of the taxpayer - and artisans have to help to pay it - were stopped, do honorable members think for one instant that the grain of New South Wales would find its way to the markets of Europe? No; there would not be any grown, because it would not pay to grow it. I agree with the payment of money in this way, because it was part of the policy of the Government to which I had the honour to belong under the leadership of the present Commonwealth Treasurer. When we expend out of the general pocket hundreds of thousands of pounds in order to assist the general producers - as we ought to do, because it is their right as citizens of the Commonwealth - we ought not to suddenly reverse the position and, taking a high and lofty stand, say that the State will not assist manufacturing industries. To do so would not be fair or right. If those "puppies," as they are called by the leader of the Opposition, are to be ruthlessly thrown into the water, let us do the same thing all round. Let the Opposition do it if they dare. Let the Opposition go on the platform in New South Wales and, consistently standing by their principles, say that not a penny of the general revenue shall go into the pockets of any particular section or any particular industry. They dare not do it.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the honorable and learned member say that building railways is protection 1

Mr ISAACS

- I call it protection to build railways that are unproductive, as they are in New South Wales to a large extent. In that State there are railways which are run at a yearly loss of close on £350,000 ; in order to do what ? To open up the country and enable farmers to send their produce to market. Let me show honorable members that New South Wales is an admittedly protective country in some respects. It may astonish some honorable members to hear that such is the case ; but is it not admitted that it is protection if less rates are charged on the railways for goods that are produced in New South Wales than are

charged for similar goods that are produced elsewhere ? That is done on the railway's of New South Wales to-day. I find that wines in bulk or case, if made in New South Wales. are specified in the railway tables to be carried at a less rate than if they are made elsewhere, and the same rule applies to cheese, bacon, ham, and other produce of the kind. Are honorable members aware that daily produce, and dried fruit, and other fruit, are actually carried at special rates, if they are on the up journey to Sydney, in order to allow them to get to foreign markets, as well as to that city ? Yet I am told that no distinctions are made in New South Wales. I am told that New South Wales is right throughout a consistent free-trade country, when, at the same time, there are in the system of government there such marked distinctions.

Mr Wilks

- And yet the honorable and learned member wants an Inter-State Commission to destroy all that.

Mr ISAACS

- - I am not talking about an Inter-State Commission. In any case an Inter-State Commission is as between the States of Australia, and not as between Australia and the rest of the world.

Mr McDonald

- That does not fit in with the honorable and learned member's argument.

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Mr ISAACS

- Does the honorable member really know whether up to the present moment New South Wales has been protective or free-trade ? Another recognition is made in New South Wales in regard to railway charges : and I must not be misunderstood in referring to this matter, because it is, in my opinion, perfectly light that there should be such recognition. While ordinary machinery is carried at what are called first-class rates, or about £3 ls. 7d. per ton for 100 miles, agricultural and mining machinery is carried at B rates, or 17s. 2d. per ton for a similar distance ; and that is done for the encouragement of the farming and mining industries. I admit that that is a proper thing to do ; and when I am told that no encouragement is given in New South Wales by way of protection, I ask what are these differential rates but protection ? AYe must never forget that the special rates for grain, as compared with the rates for general merchandise, which prevail in New South Wales - and the same condition exists in Victoria - are intended to encourage, and to rightly encourage, the producing industries. That is clone, in the first instance, at the expense of the general consumer, but that this encouragement ultimately benefits the country is beyond all question. It helps to develop the country, and indirectly assists in creating population where no population could otherwise exist. How can farmers settle in the country without railways, even if those railways are non-paying ? How can we have great producers of every kind settled in the far interior of New South Wales if they are not given special consideration? And how can we ever have a great industrial community if we are to expose our manufacturers to the inroads of the cheaply-paid and degraded labour of the rest of the world? That is the question we have to meet and solve. When I hear it contended that the people of New South Wales will not have any of these considerations given to producers, primary or secondary, I say that honorable members have not read their own history aright, and are not acquainted with the facts around them. I was very much amused when the leader of the Opposition said that males predominated in New South Wales manufactories. I wonder if he thought that we overlooked the fact that among those manufacturing industries were the treating of raw material, the product of pastoral pursuits, including glue, oil, grease, and manures, in which there are 3,122 males and no females engaged, according to the last report of the State Factory Inspector in 1901 ; that in smelting and ore-dressing pursuits there are 3,061 males, and in saw-milling 3,750, or altogether 9,933 males.

Mr Wilks

- These are substantial industries.

Mr ISAACS

- They are substantial industries.

Mr Wilks

- The Tariff the honorable and learned member supports would kill them.

Mr ISAACS

- No Tariff in the world can affect them. No Tariff can affect sawmilling, or the manufactures of glue, oil, and grease, in New South Wales. I want to show that the argument of my honorable friend opposite is destroyed when he says that protection in Victoria conduces to the employment of females as compared

with males. Two facts entirely destroy that contention - first, that in England the proportion of females is greater than in Victoria, and next, that in New South Wales nearly 10,000 individuals are engaged in trades that have nothing to do with the Tariff at all. Now what about wages ? I should like honorable members to pay attention to these facts, because at the Town Hall the other night, the right honorable the leader of the Opposition dealt with the question of wages. I have taken these figures from the 1901 reports issued by the Governments of Victoria and New South Wales, respectively. The test of whether a policy is good or bad for a country is not to find out what is the highest wage, or even the average wage, but what is the limit to which the avaricious employer can force his workmen or workpeople to slave for him. That is the question ; what is the minimum wage ?

Mr Cameron

- What is the purchasing power, not what is the wage.

Mr ISAACS

- In New South Wales and Victoria the purchasing power of money is practically the same. We need not go further than Mr. Coghlan for that. But I will allow my honorable friends opposite to judge for themselves and make their own comparisons after they hear the figures I shall give them. We will take some of the protected trades. First of all we will take boots.

Mr Wilks

- Trades which have wages boards.

Mr ISAACS

- Let me introduce one observation upon that interjection. Wages boards are impossible in free-trade countries. My honorable friend in saying that has struck the weakness of his position. You cannot have wages boards in free-trade countries, because the moment you put wages up beyond the foreign level you are inundated with the cheaper labour products of other lands.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- How long was it after the inauguration of protection in Victoria that wages boards were started ?

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Mr ISAACS

- I am sorry for my honorable friends opposite. They appear to be so pained at these points that they cannot restrain themselves for a moment. One can always tell where there is a corn by the exclamation of the sufferer when the tender part is touched. If my honorable friends have not tender corns they will restrain themselves for a little while. Not only is it impossible to introduce wages boards into a free-trade country, but I should like to point out further that the very same party in Victoria that is opposing protection has consistently opposed the Factories Acts. What is the consistency in their arguments ? They tell us at one time that in New South Wales - in a free-trade country - wages are higher than they are in Victoria; and with the next breath they tell us that if we do not amend our factory laws business will go to New South Wales from Victoria, because manufacturers can obtain labour for less wages in that State. It is impossible to reconcile those two arguments. The one cuts the throat of the other. Now let me read what is the minimum wage paid in these two States in certain trades - I do not care whether they are under wages boards or whether they are not. These are facts. In the boot trade, for males, in Victoria the minimum wage for clickers is 42s. ; in New South Wales, 25s. ; for makers, in Victoria, 42s. ; in New South Wales, 20s. For machine operators in Victoria, 42s.; in New South Wales, 32s. 6d. For females in Victoria, 20s. ; in New South Wales, forewomen 22s. 6d., down to 10s. for machinists, and 5s. for trimmers, and 3s. for tyers off and bench hands. In the clothing trade, for males, cutters in Victoria receive 45s. ; in New South Wales, 25s. Stock cutters in Victoria, 50s. ; and order cutters in New South Wales, 50s. Pressers in Victoria, 45s. ; in New South Wales, 35s., Or 40s. for order work.

Mr Fowler

- Is that the average?

Mr ISAACS

- No ; the minimum. I am taking the real test of what the worker has to endure. Trimmers in Victoria receive 45s.; in New South Wales 10s. or 17s. 6d., for orders. Machinists, 45s. in Victoria ; 45s. in New South Wales. Coat hands, 45s. in Victoria ; New South Wales 30s., or 40s., for orders. Females : - Trousers hands, in Victoria 20s.; in New South Wales 10s., or 20s. for orders. Coat hands - Females, 20s. in Victoria ; 12s. 6d. New South Wales, or 15s. for orders. Vest hands, Victoria, 20s.; New South Wales,

7s. 6d., or 20s. for orders. Slop trousers - machinists, Victoria, 20s.; New South Wales, 9s., or 25s. for orders. Finishers, 20s. in Victoria ; 8s. in New South Wales. Apprentices in Victoria, 2s. 6d. to 20s. ; New South Wales, 2s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. Shirtmakers - Victoria, 16s.; New South Wales, 12s. 6d. Bakers - Victorian minimum wage, 50s. for 48 hours' work ; New South Wales, foremen, 50s., and bakers of bread, £1 7s. 6d. I have been at pains to take these figures out as accurately as I could, and think I have been successful. The figures are in print. I shall be glad if honorable members opposite will scrutinize them, and see if they are correct or incorrect.

Mr Wilks

- Full of errors !

Mr ISAACS

- Well, I have tried to state them correctly, and if the honorable member can show any errors in them, I shall be glad to have them pointed out. To my mind - those figures are eloquent of the difference between the two countries. They show clearly that what was said was perfectly correct - that you cannot in a freetrade country stop the inundation of lower paid products.

Mr A Paterson

- Do the workers get the minimum wage in Victoria ?

Mr ISAACS

- They do.

Mr A Paterson

- The factory inspectors say that they do not.

Mr ISAACS

- I have had some means of looking into the matter, and I believe that although there are attempted evasions, on the whole the minimum wage is paid. However, it is something to have the power of enforcing the payment by law. Now, I would say to my honorable friends opposite that it is perfectly clear that the very founders, not so long ago, of free-trade policy - Adam Smith, Cobden, and Bright - were all opposed to trades' unionism. My right honorable and learned friend, the leader of the Opposition, has, I believe, the proud distinction of holding the Cobden medal. What did his master say? I would ask him whether he adheres to Cobden's opinion, because it is the foundation of free-trade doctrine. He said - Mr. John Morley gives this in his Life of Cobden - " Depend upon it, nothing can be got by fraternizing with trades unions. They are founded on principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly. I would rather live under a Dey of Algiers than a trades committee."

Are honorable members who are free-traders - who are absolute followers of Cobden - prepared to follow him in that ?

Mr Fowler

- I have heard protectionist manufacturers say the same thing.

Mr ISAACS

- But protectionists who are not manufacturers do not say so. What did Mr. John Bright say ?

Mr Fowler

- Another manufacturer !

Mr ISAACS

- Does my honorable friend disown the great free-trade apostle ? Does he say that Mr. Bright is to be discarded ? In 1888 Mr. Bright wrote a letter to Mr. Reavis, an American gentleman residing at St. Louis, in which he said -

Whilst your Tariff is in force you need not expect your workmen to be wise. Protection, which means robbing somebody-

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Mr Cameron

- Hear, hear !

Mr ISAACS

- I expected that cheer. Will the honorable member cheer when I have finished ? Mr. Bright continued - Protection, which means robbing somebody, will not content itself with enriching manufacturers, but will be called in to give higher wages and shorter hours to your workmen.

How is it that I do not hear the cheer of my honorable friend? Because he dare not be as consistent as

Bright.

Mr Cameron

- I dare!

Mr ISAACS

- He dares to be as consistent !

Mr Cameron

- Did I ever say that I was in favour of wages boards ?

Mr ISAACS

- My honorable friend then objects to give good wages to workmen. He advocates no higher wages and no shorter hours for workmen.

Mr Cameron

- I have never advocated either the one or the other.

Mr ISAACS

- I fear I have occupied the time of honorable members at far too great length. I did not address the House on a previous occasion, but I feel that however much I differ from my friends on the Opposition side we are one in the object at which we aim. We are desirous of obtaining by the right method that which is the great object of our Commonwealth - a fair recognition of the rights of labour. The only difference between us is that I believe it is the regulation of the trade in human labour that will best attain that object, and that it is not the unregulated and unrestricted traffic in human labour that will conduce to the happiness of my fellow creatures. I remember reading some years ago the words of a talented writer - I think it was Arnold White - who pointed out that capital had every possible advantage over labour ; that capital was careless of the country in which it lodged; that it had no nationality ; it owed no allegiance to any country, and that it could change its form with most infinite facility. In a moment it could be flashed by means of the electric wire from country to country, from continent to continent, from hemisphere to hemisphere ; but labour was chained to the soil, and to the one trade. It could not pass even from one occupation to another. It is idle to say that if one industry fails labour can turn to another. Capital can do so, but labour cannot. For these reasons I believe we shall best secure the happiness of our country, and its future prosperity, by adopting a protectionist policy. I do not say a policy of prohibition, because that would give a monopoly to the internal manufacturers. I am not here as an advocate of the manufacturers' profits, but at the same time I do not advocate free-trade, because that is the other extreme, and would give the monopoly to the foreign manufacture. It is by fair protection that we can, I might say almost, in the words of Mr. Roosevelt, properly bridge the difference between home labour and foreign labour. It is that which can best keep out the grinding of the poor, which can enable us to shut out the degrading competition of the east - which we may have to fear sooner than we anticipate - and it is that which will best fit us, I believe, for the companionship and respect of the whole civilized world.

Mr. HENRY WILLIS (Robertson).As the hour is late I should be glad if the Prime Minister would allow the debate to be adjourned.

Mr Barton

- I do not think it is yet time for us to adjourn.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The Prime Minister consented last night to the honorable member for Southern Melbourne moving the adjournment.

Mr Barton

- If we were to be always as courteous as that, the honorable member knows he would never allow us to finish the debate.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The Prime Minister cannot see any unfairness in refusing an adjournment to an honorable member of the Opposition..

Mr SPEAKER

- Order !

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I feel that I must go on, as it is not the intention of the Prime Minister to grant an adjournment at this

hour. It would, I think, be more courteous to allow an adjournment on this occasion because I happen to be on the Opposition side of the House. The Prime Minister might very well have commenced the all-night sitting with a speech from one of his own supporters. However, I have no strong objection to going on, although one cannot help feeling tired and fatigued after sitting here all day, and listening to lengthy addresses. I think it is a privilege to follow the honorable and learned member for Indi. He has given us a very long address, but, so far as I have been able to follow him, he has said very little which will not be replied to very fully by honorable members who are to follow me. I have made some notes, however, and I intend to devote some attention to the speech that he has delivered. From the very beginning of his address he misrepresented facts as they really exist. I should like to point out first of all that, like many other honorable members on the Government side of the House who have spoken, he is not satisfied with the Government proposals. He says that in committee he will give a determined opposition to the proposals of the Government, and we know very well that when before his constituents on a certain occasion he spoke out most determinedly against such a principle as that which is contained in the Government proposals. Later on in my address I shall quote the words actually used by him on that occasion. The honorable and learned member said that the leader of the Opposition was destitute of a policy to take the place of that put forward by the Government. It could be only an honorable member who is innocent of the career of the right honorable the leader of the Opposition who would have the effrontery to make such a statement as that. I do not think the Prime Minister would say that he entertained any doubt as to what the leader of the Opposition would do if he were called into power. There is not the slightest doubt that the leader of the Opposition would have a policy to bring forward in accordance with the pledges that he made to the people of the Commonwealth, not only upon the mainland of Australia, but in Tasmania, and in the very speech quoted by the honorable and learned member for Indi, in which he referred to the tossing of the puppies into the water in order that they might learn to swim. If it were necessary I could go further. The honorable and learned member says that already there is a too restricted free list, and he presumes that the leader of the Opposition would still further curtail it. Had he been so just to the leader of the Opposition as to read the motion now before the House, he would have noted that it is quite the opposite to that which he suggests. The honorable and learned member has not done himself justice in coming before the House, with a reputation such as he possesses, without having read the terms of the motion that we are now discussing, and especially paragraph (&). The honorable and learned member for Indi says that he has noticed that single tax leaflets have been distributed throughout the Chamber, and by that remark he endeavoured, I think, to discredit the freetrade party of New South Wales, who are here as revenue Tariffists, and who went to the country as such. We have never put forward, through the leader of the Opposition, other than revenue Tariff proposals. The only publication circulated amongst members, which has come under my notice - and I am a regular attendant here - is a compilation which has been specially prepared for the liberal party in this Chamber, so that they may successfully and accurately bring forward particulars of what has been said and done within the State of Victoria during many years past. In this compilation there is an extract delivered by the honorable and learned member for Indi some time ago, which I think will be interesting to him, inasmuch as it will refresh his memory as to what his views were on that occasion. He said - And the miner ; how is he on a level with the worker in the town ? He has a weight around his neck. We are told that the miners patriotically stood by protection in the past. Are we to whip the willing horse to death ? Is protection to go on for ever to an unlimited extent - right on, as we are told, to prohibition ? Are we never to stop taxing the miner ? He is the man who goes through the most arduous labour, and most dangerous pursuits, to win the wealth of the country ; and what does he get in return for it ? A promise that more burdens will be laid upon him. His pick is weighted with taxation. Every article he wear³ is weighted with taxation, and when he goes home every article in the house, even his knife and fork, is taxed.

Mr Isaacs

- That speech was made in the Legislative Assembly in 1892; but it is a garbled extract. I stand by what I said on that occasion.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable and learned member admits that he made the speech when a representative of the

people, and yet to-night he denounces the views he then expressed. He also stated that the honorable member for Wentworth allowed no free list in his suggested Tariff ; but I was present when the honorable member was speaking, and I heard him say that if there were no free list, 10 per cent, duties would raise sufficient revenue for the expenditure of the Commonwealth, and he went on to state what the position would be if there were a free list of so many millions. Free-traders have always provided for a free list. The Minister for Trade and Customs, the Treasurer, the Minister of Defence, the honorable member for Wentworth, and others, have all had recourse to a certain publication for the proposals and arguments which they have brought forward ; and the process of reasoning in that publication is upon the basis that if there were no free list, duties of 11 per cent, would be sufficient, though the honorable member for Wentworth suggests 10 per cent. The honorable and learned member for Indi said further that under the Constitution there could not be a free-trade Tariff ; but I appeal to the Treasurer to support me in the contention that it would be possible. I would remind him of a telegram which he sent to Senator Pulsford - I think in 1S98 - which was published, and which stated that it was possible, under the Constitution, to have either a free-trade or a protectionist Tariff. If it were necessary I could bring forward other evidence to show that members of the Ministry, including the Prime Minister, have repeatedly made that statement. Sir George Turner

- It would not be possible to raise the necessary revenue under free-trade.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That argument was used by the honorable and learned member for Indi ; but if he had read what has been published by men who are deserving of consideration, upon what is possible under the Constitution, he would know that a proposal has been put forward to show that the Commonwealth could be financed with a Tariff producing a revenue of something like £6,000,000 ; and that would be practically a free-trade Tariff, as we understand the term in Australia. He says further that it is impossible to have a revenue Tariff. I may mention that both in the Argus and in a monthly serial a scheme has been outlined under which £S, 500,000 might be raised by a 15 per cent, tariff with a free list of £8,500,000. The honorable and learned member for Indi then referred to the leader of the Opposition, who, he said, showed his adroitness at the Town Hall meeting by early asking the people to indicate whether they were in favour of the Government proposals or not. The honorable and learned member added that the leader of the Opposition having taken the vote in question, afterwards knew how to address the meeting. Did the honorable and learned member wish to infer that the leader of the Opposition would have talked in favour of protection had the meeting been against him ?

Mr Isaacs

- Nothing of the kind. I merely answered an interjection.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I think the honorable and learned member will find it fully recorded in his notes. He went about the matter in a very deliberate way, and I made a note of the point, believing that he was in earnest in his statement. The honorable and learned member further says that he is here to carry out the mandate of the settlers of this State. But the mandate of the settlers of Victoria was to a very large extent in favour of a revenue Tariff, as against a protective Tariff. In the district which the honorable and learned member represents, a very strong vote was cast against him, and in an adjoining electorate one of the strongest free-traders of Australia polled within a few hundred votes of the successful candidate, clearly indicating that there is a strong feeling throughout Victoria in favour of a revenue Tariff, in contradistinction to a protectionist Tariff such as has been submitted by the Government. He further stated that a change of opinion was taking place in England, at the present time, in regard to its fiscal policy. If the honorable and learned member is abreast of events in England and elsewhere, he must know that Great Britain, in pursuance of her open door policy, recently sent her ironclads to China. She had the support of Germany and America in the position which she upheld - because she is wedded to the open door policy of freedom of commerce to all nations - in China. This fact goes to show that the honorable and learned member was not well informed when he said that public opinion in England in regard to the fiscal doctrine was changing. If it were necessary I could quote from all the leading men of England to show that they are strongly in favour of a free-trade policy, and that they denounce the system of protection. The honorable and learned member also stated that a superstition existed that industries can stand by ignoring their existence.

Mr Isaacs

- I said that they can best be encouraged by ignoring their existence.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I suppose that means that the statement that industries can stand without protection is a superstition. That is really the essence of what the honorable and learned member means, if he means anything. But I would point to New South Wales in proof of my assertion that industries can be established without the aid of protection. More men and less women are employed in the industries of New South Wales than are engaged in those of Victoria. If we take Coghlan's statistics we shall find that the horse-power represented by the machinery used in the New South Wales factories is greater than that represented by the machinery used in the Victorian factories, and that the output of the former is greater per head than that of the latter. This condition of affairs has been brought about without the assistance of protection. The honorable and learned member for Indi has had something to say about the freedom of England and the sweating which takes place there. If he reads Wilkinson upon The Alien Immigration of England, he will find that the East End of London is referred to as the place where sweating chiefly prevails. This sweating is brought about by the influx of aliens from Germany, Russia, Austria, and elsewhere. More than half the population of the East End of London are Russian Jews, who follow the callings of shirt makers, tailors, etc. These people are sweating the workmen of England to such an extent as to call forth keen opposition on the part of the labour organizations of England. As a result 45 labour organizations there have banded themselves together against the housing of these people in the East End of London, and in opposition to alien immigration to England. The honorable and learned member also referred to Coghlan, and said that free-trade was declining in England. He spoke of the English artisan. As far as I have been able to gather, from the time of Cobden down to the present, the English workman has continued to improve his position in every walk of life. I will give a few quotations from men who have been leaders of the working classes of England. George J. Holyoake in Sixty years of cm Agitator's life in England, says -

It seems incredible to one who has lived in the age of protection, that it is necessary to say whether it is good for the working class. Twenty years after free-trade began in England, we . found at our co-operative stores that £1 spent there purchased more than could be bought for 30s. in the starvation days of protection. 18 s

In the early days of co-operation and of Chartism, the leaders of both parties opposed free-trade on the ground that it would increase competition, and therefore lower wages. On the contrary, the great mass of our workmen receive, on the whole, double the amount of wages they formerly did, and their hours of labour, which extended to twelve or fourteen hours, are now, in a vast number of trades, reduced to eight hours per day. Protection is. good for the employer, but bad for the workman, and means the plunder of the general population of purchasers.

Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., for many years secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, says -

I have turned 60 years of age ; therefore I have a keen recollection of the difference in the homes of the workers then and now, at least for more than 50 years of it. An artisan of fair standing is better clothed and fed to-day, than were the ordinary shopkeepers of my early time. Then we worked 60 hours a week for about 1 2s. less than is now paid for 54 or 56 hours per week. The whole of the conditions of life have been raised in every respect. There is no comparison between most things of that day with this day. The honorable and learned member then referred to the Draper's Journal, and he said that the cotton trade of Lancashire was declining. He went on further to say that machinery that was required in the cotton industries of Cairo, China, Japan, and India was being made in free-trade England, and it would appear from his argument that he thought there would be competition with cotton goods made in England, because of the machinery being purchased to carry on the manufacture of cotton goods in Cairo. To me it appears a most fallacious argument, and one that is scarcely worthy of the honorable and learned gentleman. The honorable and learned gentleman had something further to say about the " Song of the Shirt," and he went into detail, just as I am doing here - and I am doing it because it appeal's to be the custom to do so - to show that in England people are receiving very little money for their labour in the East End of the great city of London. That is not denied, and it is brought about by the sweating I have

referred to in this address. But I wish to point out to the honorable and learned member and to those who agree with him that there is another gentleman who has written something upon this question - the secretary of the Victorian Protectionists' Association, Mr. Samuel Mauger, M.P. This is what he says about the condition of affairs in Melbourne, and I think that the honorable and learned member for Indi should pay some attention to it : -

Shirt-finisher. - Expert hand. Three children. Husband out of work, and cannot get anything to do. Gets 4d. per dozen for finishing shirts. Takes ten minutes to do one. Sometimes works from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m., as she has to lose some time going to and from factory, and must make up for it.

Mr Isaacs

- What is the date of that '?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- 20th September, 1901-

Can only earn two shillings for twelve hours' continuous work. Out of this five individuals have to be kept and house rent paid. Sometimes makes infants' dresses, for which she is paid 4d. each. Working such long hours has seriously interfered with her health.

Shirt-maker. - Does machining only. Machines shirts throughout to make them ready for finishing. Gets from 1s. 7d. to 2s. 2d. per dozen, but those at the lower rate pay best, as too much work must be put into the others for the additional money. Can do one dozen working twelve to thirteen hours per day. Average earnings 1s. 7d. per day. Widow, four children ; one working ; earns enough to keep himself.

Mole-finisher. - Husband out of work. Little girl helps by taking work to and from factory and sewing on buttons. Gets 2s. per dozen ; out of this must provide own sewings. Can only do one pair per hour ; usually works until 11 p.m., as some time is lost in the morning waiting till work is brought from factory, as this factory insists that its work shall be returned every 3' day. Average about 10s. per week, out of which three individuals must be kept.

Mole-finisher - Widow, two little children, gets 2s. per dozen, and occasionally a line at 2s. 6d. Takes twelve hours to do one dozen. Sole means of support ; finds own sewings.

He says further -

Prior to the present Factories Act and the establishment of wages boards - 1. Sweating was almost universal. 2. There was no minimum wage. 3. Long hours prevailed. 4. No record was kept of home workers. 5. Alleged apprentices were unpaid. 6. No check was even attempted upon unfair alien competition.

That is the statement made by Mr. Mauger as secretary for the Victorian Protectionist Association, and it is a reply to the honorable and learned member for Indi, who quoted statistics to show that the workers of England are as poorly paid now as they were in the days of Tom Hood. I remind the honorable and learned member that, in this city, which is so bolstered up by protection, a poor woman, who has six little children to provide for, is sweated almost to the verge of starvation.

Mr Mauger

- Not now ; that is all cured.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The statement I have read was written by the honorable member himself, and published in September this year in the Review of Reviews.

Mr Mauger

- Yes ; but what is it referring to ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member should know that best himself.

Mr Mauger

- It is referring to a time previous to the passing of the Factories Act.

Mr Conroy

- But it is under the system of protection in Victoria.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I find that in the debate on the Budget in the Victorian State Legislature the honorable and learned member for Indi, himself said -

As the honorable gentleman spoke, I could not help remembering that national difficulties mean individual

distresses, and that individual distresses mean, first of all the suffering of the poor,- because the very first thing that occurs in times of national trouble is the loss of the comforts and the necessities of the poor. The poor are the first to lose them, the last to have them restored ; and we know perfectly well that although in times of difficulty the rich relieve the distress to a certain extent, it is in the poor man's cottage that poverty makes her earliest call and her most lengthened, stay.

That is the statement made by the honorable member.

Mr Isaacs

- That is why I object to your free-trade duties.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable and learned member says further -

I was therefore most anxious to hear from the Treasurer some remedies for relieving the country from its present distressful condition, and at the same time - for this, I think, is the cardinal thing to be looked at - placing the burden upon the proper shoulders. I must admit that I felt a great deal of disappointment. In the Premier's speech we were promised an income tax and a tax on unimproved land values. The latter was not mentioned by the Treasurer.

That is all I think I need read from the honorable and learned member's speech on that occasion, which is to be found in Hansard for 1892-3.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- After 22 years of protection.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is the statement made by the honorable and learned member for Indi, who is an old politician, and one who has taken a very active part in the Legislature of this State. The honorable and learned member asked members on this side of the House whether we could go back to New South Wales and advocate free-trade. I think the honorable and learned member is under some misconception as to what free-trade really is, and also as to what protection is. As it exists in Victoria, and as they have it in America, protection is a misnomer. That is admitted by the great thinkers of the day, and with respect to all the arguments the honorable and learned member for Indi used here to-night against New South Wales, because of a certain protection as he terms it which was given to industry in that State, because it was a free-trade State, I say it is the very thing one would expect in a free-trade country, that they should encourage industry, because free-trade should protect a country in the true sense of the word. Protection as it exists here in Victoria is really a misnomer, and Mr. Gladstone himself has said so.

Mr MAUGER

- About Victoria?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- No, in speaking of protection in England, Mr. Gladstone was never in Australia. But there is a gentleman who is in public life in England who has been in Australia. And in looking through this publication I came upon an interesting quotation which I think will show that he believes that protection is a robbery.

Mr Isaacs

- He did not say that at Waterford.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable and learned member also made a severe attack upon New South Wales because she has made grants to certain industries.

Mr Isaacs

- No ; I honoured her.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable and learned member appears to be opposed to grants being made by the Crown to open up the mining fields of that great State.

Mr Isaacs

- No ; more honour to her.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable and learned member used it as an argument against that State because she encourages water conservation and irrigation.

Mr Isaacs

- No ; I praised her.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- There was no point in the argument at all, unless it was to show that it was not in the interests of the people that it should be done.

Mr Isaacs

- No; I said that it is a most advantageous and proper practice.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I think the honorable and learned member called it protection, and his idea of protection is placing very heavy duties on the masses of the people. There is another passage which I shall quote for his benefit from the debate of the 9th August, 1892 : -

There is no tax proposed that will not create vested interests, but there are taxes proposed that, so far from ameliorating the condition of the poor, will remove those articles which are the necessities of their very existence further from their reach. The poor man's means of subsistence, his clothing by day and night, his shelter, his tools of trade - all these are removed further and further from his reach, perilously near to absolute deprivation. We have duties of 50 per cent. proposed on some of the necessities of life. Is that a proper mode of relieving the distress of the country ? I cannot understand it.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- Is that from Hansard, or the Drapers' Journal?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is from Hansard. Then the honorable and learned member made another attack on New South Wales, because she has preferential rates, to show that she had some protection to offer her people against the competition of the adjoining State.

Mr Isaacs

- No attack.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Let me remind the honorable and learned member that the railways of that State are managed by commissioners, and that it is no part of the policy of the Government to levy those rates, but that it is a part of the administration of the commissioners to levy preferential rates on produce that is carried, though I suppose there will be a time, not very far distant, when these things will be regulated more to our satisfaction. I think I have dealt pretty fully with many of the arguments brought forward by the honorable and learned member. There is something that might be said on the other side, and I think it goes to show that they were very flimsy arguments, and quite unworthy of a gentleman occupying the position he does in the public life of this country. They say that any argument is better than none, and when you have a cause that is waning - a cause that has aroused the indignation of the people to the extent of holding public meetings from one end of the country to the other - it is necessary that the advocates of that system should come forward with some argument, even if it be as weak as that which he advanced. As I must go on at this late hour, I shall say something about the policy of the Government as it was outlined at Maitland. When the Prime Minister was seeking the suffrages of the people of New South Wales on behalf of his followers in that campaign, he went from one end of the country to the other stating that what was required was a policy that would raise revenue so as to provide sufficient money for the exigences of the weaker States. He said that the difference between his proposal and that of any one who might seek to be Prime Minister must be very little indeed, because a certain amount of money had to be raised. It was quite different from the arguments which he had hitherto used - that we could have either free-trade or protection. He said that there must be a revenue Tariff - one that would raise £8,500,000, and that his proposal was quite equal to any other that might be advocated, and he used arguments to show that the farmer, the artisan, and the cottager would be serving their own interests best by following him and his nominees. When he had gone from one end of the country to the other, making his statements, he found that there was still an agitation going on in other parts of Australia. The Treasurer was making Strong protectionist speeches in the vicinity of Melbourne ; other gentlemen whom he was associated with were also making Speeches to the effect that there must be a policy of protection ; and we are now asked here why we have taken up a position in opposition. Do honorable members suppose that we were quite

innocent of what was taking place here, and that we were not acquainted with the fiscal faith of those gentlemen with whom the Prime Minister was associated 1 Undoubtedly we were ; and we made it known from one end of the State to the other that this was a protectionist Government, and that the statements of the Prime Minister to the people were not of any consequence - that they were mere platitudes in order to secure their support. And when he found that the agitation was so strong against him, and that he had no opportunity of gaining a majority of the seats in the State, he took up another line of action. He said - " This is a question of returning good men," and he went from one end of the country to the other on the good man ticket. It was not a question of free-trade or protection with him. This is what he said : - The incidence of taxation would be so adjusted that it should not fall heavily upon the cottager and the artisan.

I would like to ask him if this Tariff that has aroused the indignation of the cottager and the artisan from one end of the Commonwealth to the other--

Mr Mauger

- In what part ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In the city of Melbourne itself the people are thronging to large halls to hear what can be said in denunciation of the Government and their proposals. In Sydney, and the country towns of New South Wales, meetings are being held. I received a letter to-day, as well as yesterday, intimating that anti-Tariff meetings are being held from one end of that State to the other, and before this debate is finished honorable members will find that the reports in the daily press will be sufficient to rouse the indignation of the people from one end of this State to the other. On two occasions recently I received a letter from South Australia, stating that the people there must oppose this iniquitous taxation. This journalist, who has a family of ten, and is a member of the Fourth Estate, writes, saying that the taxation that will fall upon him and his family will be too much for him to bear. The incidence of taxation have not been justly fixed for the cottager and the artisan under this Tariff proposal. We were told that raw material would be brought in free for the manufacturer, but that has not been provided for. The Prime Minister said further, that there was to be, not a high protectionist Tariff, but a Tariff which, would produce revenue without destruction. Presumably he meant that the Tariff was not to be destructive of industries, and, therefore, that he was going to provide some protection, although he told the artisan that the taxation was to be so adjusted as not to fall heavily upon him. Now, how has that promise been fulfilled? The cottager will have these articles taxed: - Flour, toilet sets (cheap), white and printed bowls and basins, common jugs, common cups and saucers, white and printed plates, condensed milk, starch, blue, glass jugs, sugar basins and butter dishes, workmen's hats, cheap vases, ewers and basins (cheap sorts), glass tumblers (cheap sorts), safety matches, and lemon peel. These articles are all taxed, and the secretary of the Protectionist Union, who claims to be a friend of the working man, cheers the fact that these poor people will have to pay taxes upon these goods ranging from 50 per cent, to 125 per cent.

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Mr Mauger

- The working people understand it all right !

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The working people do not understand it. The working people of Victoria have for the last 20 years been reading a penny paper called the Age which tells them that it is a good thing to be taxed.

Mr Mauger

- The best friend they ever had.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The worst friend they ever had. They were first induced to take the paper because its price was reduced to 1d. Had the Argus taken the same course which was followed at that time by the Age, we should have had the people of the city of Melbourne and its vicinity in favour of a free-trade policy, instead of being in favour of a protectionist policy through having imbibed the erroneous ideas published daily in the Age. Now, let us see how the farmer is benefited, as he was induced to believe he would benefit, by the policy of the present Government. The following articles which he consumes are heavily taxed under the Tariff: - Molasses, linseed oil cake, oilmen's stores, salt, rugs, &c, buggy mats, tents, tarpaulins, ammunition, guns, rifles, &c, plain galvanized iron, corrugated iron, lamps and lampware, lanterns,

lamp stoves, agricultural, horticultural, and viticultural machinery and implements, mould boards, ploughshares, plough-plates, sheep-shearing machines, portable engines, traction engines, road-making ploughs and machines, knife sharpeners, nails (wrought or pressed), wire nails and others, spikes, staples, brads and tacks, tanks. These tanks are for the use of men who live in the drought-stricken parts of South Australia, where they will have to pay 3s. for every 100 gallons of their tanks' capacities.

Mr Kennedy

- That is ruinous.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member sneers at the fact that these men have to pay 3s. per 100 gallons for their tanks, and scoffs at their necessities, situated as they are hundreds of miles away in the drought-stricken parts of the continent. The honorable member is one of those who are favoured to the extent of being able to get nine or ten bushels to the acre, whereas these poor unfortunate settlers of whom I am speaking, consider themselves fortunate if they get only five bushels to the acre. The list of articles used by the farmer, and which are to be subject to duty, comprises also the following: - Weighing machines, weighbridges and scales, boilers, pumps, and pumping machinery, screws, axles, springs, bolts and nuts, barbed wire, bar, rod and angle iron, harness and paint oils, kerosene, paints and colours, varnishes, cement, tiles, (for dairy purposes), sheepwashes, patent and proprietary medicines, building timber, doors, bellows, sashes and frames, wood in shape for boxes and doors, axe and pick handles, vehicle tires, harness, whips, leather belting, express and goods waggons, and four-wheeled buggies without tops, two-wheeled vehicles, brushware, fleece twine, engine packing, halters, &c., sporting powder, reaper and binder twine.

Sir George Turner

- There is no duty on angle iron.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- These articles are taxed at rates varying from 35 to 125 per cent.

Mr Mauger

- That is not a fact.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- There is a duty of 20s. per ton on salt, equivalent to 125 per cent., and that is apparently imposed for the purpose of protecting an industry on York's Peninsula in South Australia, which employs only a few hands, and which requires no protection whatever. I purchased salt extensively from the company which carries on that industry, as far back as twenty years ago, and I can say confidently that the industry of salt making in South Australia does not require the protection of a duty equal to 125 per cent. Any one who sees the list of prices published by the company which carries on this industry will find that it charges excessively for its salt, because there is sufficient protection in the fact that the cost of bringing the salt from other parts of the world is very heavy. I think that in all probability there will be a further increase under the new Tariff.

Sir George Turner

- There has been a duty upon salt for years, a duty of as much as 30s. per ton in some of the States.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Another article which is taxed is printing paper, and with regard to this the Government have taken a good deal of credit to themselves. I have here, however, a circular which goes to show that the tax on printing paper will not fall so heavily upon the proprietors of the large daily papers as upon many of the poor struggling newspapers that are doing a great amount of good in the interior away from the large centres of population. I am talking of centres where the daily papers do not arrive until they are two days old. Small journals circulating in the country will find this a very severe tax indeed, and I have received letters from conductors of newspapers in the particular electorate which I represent who say that the impost will be more than they can bear.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member's leader advocated this duty.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It does not matter whether my leader advocated it or not. I believe it to be a tax that ought not be

imposed, because newspapers should be encouraged as far as possible. It appears from the list I have read that the Government are in favour of taxing the masses of of the people very heavily, first on the necessities of life, and next o?i every article of manufacture. All this taxation is felt most by the cottager and the artisan, who are referred to in the quotation from Kipling introduced into the Prime Minister's speech. It is the intention of the Government to tax artisans and the masses of the people generally, and then, as far as possible, to tax every member of the community. The miner and the mining industry are being taxed to such an extent as to prevent many mines being opened up, and to cause the closing down of many others, owing to the increased cost of machinery. In this way the development of the mineral wealth of Australia will be retarded.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member does not really think that.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- If the honorable member for Melbourne Ports had been in his place this afternoon and heard the speech of the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, who told us that, in consequence of the increased duties, tens of thousands of pounds will not be spent in mining and mining machinery, he would not make such a remark.

Sir George Turner

- Would the honorable member not have any duty at all on these things?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- No.

Sir George Turner

- Then where are we to get revenue ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- When I come to deal with the Treasurer's proposals, I shall show him where he may get revenue. From the speeches of the Treasurer, and his general reputation, I take it that his contention is that the consumer does not pay the tax. An interjection he made this I evening bears out the idea that that is his opinion.

Sir George Turner

- The exporter pays the greater part.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is a fallacy which I hope to refer to to-morrow, assuming that I obtain the adjournment of the debate at midnight.

Sir George Turner

- I was in the Customhouse for two or three years, and saw some of the invoices.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The proposal of the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Customs is that we shall raise something like £9,000,000 of revenue from this Tariff. It has been stated in the course of tins debate that this is a Victorian Tariff. Many of the rates charged in Victoria are to be seen in the Tariff before us, but some have been increased while others have been reduced. I am inclined to the opinion that the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Customs, in framing the Commonwealth Tariff, had before them that of Mr. McKinley in America. There is a feature in the Tariff which is only to be found in the McKinley Tariff, namely, the composite duties.

Sir George Turner

- I first saw those duties in the Canadian Tariff.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The Canadian Tariff is copied from the American Tariff, and these composite duties originally appeared in the imposts introduced by Mr. McKinley. I am glad the Treasurer admits the source from which these imposts are taken.

Sir George Turner

- We had a similar impost in Victoria in regard to confectionery.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- And by that means the Government are able to drain far more out of the people than the people are aware of. For instance, common cups and saucers pay 6d. and 15 per cent., which really comes out at 40

per cent.

Sir George Turner

- The honorable member must not depend on the accuracy of the Argus figures.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I suppose the Treasurer discredits a high-class paper of that kind 1

Sir George Turner

- I undoubtedly discredit some of its figures.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I think it will be found that some of the figures advanced by the Treasurer are likely to be challenged. On the whole I think that the figures submitted by the Argus are correct, though I have not taken the trouble to check them. The McKinley Tariff, according to Mulhall, is one that exacts from the people millions of pounds more than they have any right to be called on to pay, to the extent of 33 per cent. The Tariff is so high that goods cannot come into the country.

Mr Kennedy

- Yet it brings in that amount of revenue.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I am certain the honorable member does not understand the case. It is not only the amount paid at the Custom-house that the consumer pays. The 33 per cent, is the added price that is put on the articles manufactured within the country ; and that is why free-traders object to a protective Tariff. If £10,000 is raised by putting a duty on certain articles, and one-quarter of the quantity consumed comes through the Customs, leaving three-fourths to be manufactured in the country, the price of that three-fourths is raised to the amount of the duty that is paid at the Custom-house. When people consume these goods, as they must, they not only pay the £10,000 of duty, but three times £10,000, or £40,000 in all, which is added to the price by the local manufacturer. Mulhall says that the charges made in this way amount to 33 per cent, on the imports of America, and this 33 per cent, means hundreds of millions of pounds. Under the Tariff adopted, the Treasurer has provided specific and ad valorem duties. And the device will have the very same effect in Australia that it has had there. In many cases it will be prohibitive. It is only a matter of time when we shall have the same condition of things prevailing here as prevail in America to-day. If there is a protective duty so that goods cannot enter a country, the men who are manufacturing those goods are able to create a corner in them, and by that means can obtain a rise in price up to the amount of the duty. When that is done it can readily be seen that 33 per cent, would not be the limit of the amount to which the prices would rise. In New South Wales industries have been established that have not had the advantages of protection. Yet those industries exist today in a much stronger condition than they exist in Victoria. The manufactories in New South Wales for 1899 numbered 3,027 against 2,912 in Victoria, The male employes of those factories were 44,041 in Victoria, and the females were 16,029. In New South Wales we had 47,063 men, and 8,583 women. The totals are 55,646 for New South Wales, and 60,070 for Victoria. So that the excess of males in New South Wales over Victoria is 3,022 - and this in a country that is not protected as against a country that is bolstered up by protection ! We have an excess of females in Victoria of 7,446 as compared with New South Wales. The classes of industry that are given in Mr. Fenton's publication in Victoria, and also Mr. Coghlan's statistics in New South Wales, are as under : - In connexion with the raw material of pastoral pursuits in Victoria there are 1,942 persons employed ; in New South Wales, 2,690. In the manufacture of food and drinks, there are 9,957 employed in Victoria, and 9,356 in New South Wales. In clothing and textile fabrics, there are in Victoria 17,728 persons ; and in New South Wales 10,984. In building materials, in Victoria, 5,131 ; in New South Wales, 6,277. In metal works, machinery, &c, in Victoria, 9,423: in New South Wales, 11,901. In ship-building, repairing, &c, in Victoria, 168 ; in New South Wales, 1,499.

Sir George Turner

- Does metal work include the smelting works 1

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Yes.

Sir George Turner

- There are about 4,000 there.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- But the figures also include the Victorian manure works. In the manufacture of furniture, bedding, etc, there are 1,446 employes in Victoria, and in New South Wales, 1,701. In the manufacture of books, paper, in printing, etc, there are 5,168 in Victoria; in New South Wales, 5,058. In the manufacture of vehicles, saddlery and harness, there are in Victoria 2,312 ; in New South Wales, 1,950. In connexion with the manufacture of light, fuel and heat in Victoria, 895 ; in New South Wales, 957. Miscellaneous - Victoria, 6,300 ; New South Wales, 3,247. These industries are classified in eleven classes. Victoria has a majority of persons employed in six of the eleven, and New South Wales has a majority in five. In the total, Victoria employs 10,562 more people, chiefly women and girls, than we employ in New South Wales. That accounts for the difference between the 55,000 and the 60,000 employed in these two States.

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Sir George Turner

- There is a larger population in New South Wales.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- We have a larger population, and the unfortunate thing for Victoria is that we are continuing to add to our population, and are taking people away from this State. I think it will be interesting if I give the Treasurer the latest returns, as evidently he has not seen them. In connexion with industries for the manufacture of clothing and the textile trades, in which chiefly Victoria has women and girls employed, there are 17,728 persons engaged in Victoria as against 10,984 in New South Wales. In New South Wales these employes are chiefly men ; so that in that industry we have 6,744 more employes in Victoria, whose employes are chiefly girls and women, receiving the wages referred to so graphically in the Review of Reviews by the honorable member for Melbourne Ports.

Mr Mauger

- The honorable member knows that that is not correct ; those figures refer to the time before the Factories Act was passed, six years ago.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- But was there not protection in those days ?

Mr Mauger

- Only partly.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- -There has been protection in Victoria since 1870. I intend shortly to read some pages of statements made by Sir Graham Berry and others in regard to the protective policy of this State. The agricultural implement industry of New South Wales employs 193 persons, in Victoria 1,107. In the manufacture of furniture, bedding, etc. - an industry that surely is one which should be encouraged, if we are to encourage industries at all - New South Wales has 1,701 persons engaged, whilst in Victoria there is 1,446 - an increase of 255 persons employed in New South Wales over Victoria. This is an industry that evidently does not require protection, and yet the Government propose giving it more protection. The policy of the Government will give higher duties. It is called protection, but of course that is a misnomer. In the making of coaches and waggons in New South Wales. 1,472 persons are employed, while there are 1,817 engaged in the same occupation in Victoria. In saddlery, harness, and whip-making in New South Wales there are 461 persons engaged, while there are 495 in Victoria. There are 17 men at work in the making of spokes in New South Wales. but none in Victoria There is thus a total of 1,950 persons employed in these trades in New South Wales as against 2,312 in Victoria, so that the latter State has the advantage in numbers. In the match-making, cat-gut, and sausage-skin making, and ink and cutlery trades, which are classified as unimportant, there are more persons engaged in Victoria than in the mother State. In 1889 the plant employed in the manufactories of New South Wales consisted of 33,180 horse power, and was of the value of £5,640,384, while the plant employed in the factories of Victoria consisted of 33,046 horse-power, and was valued at £4,632,629. Therefore, New South Wales had an advantage over Victoria of more than £1,000,000 in the value of its manufacturing plant. That, I think, goes to show that the factories of New South Wales are on a solid foundation. They have had no protection. They have been developed naturally and are firmly established, and there is more than a million invested in them in excess of the sum invested in Victorian manufactories.

Mr Mauger

- Smelting works !

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member objects to smelting works.

Mr Mauger

- Oh, no, I do not.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The value of the production of all industries in New South Wales was £28 13s. 7d. per inhabitant, while in Victoria it was but £26 lis. 4d.

Sir George Turner

- The figures quoted by the honorable member include the pastoral industries of New South Wales

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I do not think they do.

Sir George Turner

- Certainly they do.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The value of the manufactures of New South Wales in 1899 - which is a matter of more interest - was £9,207,000, while the manufactures of Victoria were valued at £10,052,000. So far as the value of manufactures is concerned, Victoria thus had an advantage of £845,000. According to the official comparisons made by the Factories Commission, the average weekly wage paid to males in Victoria is £2 per head, while in New South Wales it is £2 ls. 5d. The average weekly wage paid to females in Victoria is 16s. 7d. per head, whilst in New South Wales it is 17s. 3d.

Sir George Turner

- And yet our manufacturers want to go over there to start because it is cheaper to manufacture in New South Wales !

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Reference has been made by an honorable member to the population of the several States. In the Gazette of the 16th inst. it is set forth that during September last the arrivals in Victoria by sea from neighbouring States comprised 2,830 men, and 1,443 women, while the departures from Victoria to the neighbouring States consisted of 3,388 men, and 1,660 women. Victoria thus suffered a loss of population to the extent of 558 men, and 217 women in one month.

Mr McCay

- That was due to the fear of a free-trade Tariff, caused by the want of confidence motion.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- These people have made their way to the State where industries have hitherto not been protected, but where they can obtain higher wages and find better opportunities for progress. During last month the arrivals from New South Wales in the neighbouring States consisted of 1,231 men and 615 women, and the departures from the neighbouring State to New South Wales consisted of 1,688 men and 728 women. New South Wales thus gained from the neighbouring State 457 men and 11.3 women. Coghlan shows that during 1900 the arrivals and departures by sea were as follow : - The gross arrivals in Victoria consisted of 53,559 males and 28,598 females, making a total of 82,157. The gross departures were 53,946 males and 29,738 females, or 83,684 in all. The excess of departures over arrivals comprised 387 males and 1140 females, making a total loss to Victoria of 1527 in that year. The total arrivals into New South Wales - the State which some honorable members despise -

Sir George Turner

- Oh, no; we are all proud of New South Wales.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The total arrivals in New South Wales during 1900 consisted of 45,585 males and 23,195 females, making a total of 68,783. The departures comprised 40,417 males and 21,340 females, making a total of 61,757. There was an excess of arrivals over departures from New South Wales of 5,168 males and 1,858 females - a total gain of 7,026 against a loss to Victoria of 1,527. Even the natural increase in New South Wales is very much greater than in Victoria. I am very pleased to have an opportunity of referring to

the Tariff proposals of the Government. Before I deal with them in detail, however, I should like to say that on the Victorian basis there are 140,000 persons employed in the factories of the Commonwealth. It is computed that the value of manufactures in the Commonwealth has increased at the rate of £200 per man, and according to Coghlan there is an increased value given of £33,316,000 to manufactures. According to Mulhall's statement, of that sum £11,105,333 is the increased value given to these manufactures by protection, and paid for by the people - a sum which they would not be called upon to pay under a free-trade Tariff. On the assumption that there are five members to every family, 760,000 families are thus represented. That means, according to Mulhall, that an amount of about £15 per family is paid in taxation. Under freetrade we could pay these 140,000 artisans £80 a year pension, and be no worse off than we are now. When Victoria was under a free-trade Tariff, she was very much more prosperous than she is to-day. In this connexion I should like to institute a comparison between the population of Victoria and that of New South Wales. In 1860 the former State was under a policy of comparative free-trade. At that time she had a population of 537,847, as against 348,546 in New South Wales.

Sir George Turner

- AVe had the gold rush, too.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The gold rush really took place in the early fifties. In 1870, when Victoria was growing tired of her free-trade policy, her population totalled 726,599, as against 498,659 in New South Wales. In 1890, after a protective policy had been operating for twenty years, the population of the two States was very nearly equal. New South Wales had made up nearly the whole of the deficiency which formerly existed. In 1898 New South Wales had outstripped her rival and possessed a population of 1,346,240 as against 1,175,463 in Victoria. During 28 years, therefore, New South Wales gained 398,717 upon the population of Victoria. In 1860 the imports of New South Wales represented a value of £6,604,069, whilst those of Victoria totalled £3,532,452. In 1870, when Victoria had altered her policy, the imports of New South Wales aggregated £9,935,067, whilst those of Victoria represented £12,341,955. In 1890 the New South Wales imports totalled £25,383,397, as against Victoria's £21,711,608. In 1898 New South Wales imported £24,453,560 worth of goods as against Victoria's £16,768,904. It will thus be seen that New South Wales made very rapid progress under the free-trade policy adopted in that State, whilst Victoria under a system of protection lagged behind. The exports from New South Wales in 1860 represented £6,609,461, whilst those of Victoria totalled £13,828,606. The exports of the latter were double those of the former. In 1870, just after Victoria had adopted a protective policy, her exports fell considerably. In that year Victoria exported £14,557,520 worth of goods as against the £11,261,219 worth exported from New South Wales. In 1890 the exports from the two colonies were about equal, but in 1898 New South Wales had increased her exports to £25,944,020, whilst Victorian exports totalled a value of £16,006,743, which represents a decrease in comparison with the progress made by New South Wales. In 1898 the exports of New South Wales amounted in value to £27,648,117, and those of Victoria for the same year amounted to £15,872,246. We see from that that the exports of New South Wales were vastly greater in value than those of Victoria, but during the decade between 1860 and 1870 Victoria, under her free-trade policy, made rapid progress as compared with New South Wales. Honorable members will find from these calculations that a decline set in in Victoria when a change was made from a policy of free-trade to one of protection. To show how agriculture was affected, under the policy of the right honorable the leader of the Opposition, and under the Tariff which he introduced - a freer Tariff than Australia ever had before - I may say that after it came into operation the amount of land that was brought under cultivation, and the quantity of wheat grown, increased to such an extent as to affect the imports of wheat into New South Wales from the colony of South Australia. I know the quality of the grain grown in South Australia, and having gone into the matter very fully, in the district which I represent, because it was part of my duty, as well as my pleasure, to note the progress of the electorate, I found, upon investigation, that the grain grown in the Narromine and Wellington districts, was equal to the best wheat grown in the State of South Australia. New South Wales had not been able to grow sufficient wheat for the breadstuffs she required, but ' under the policy of freer trade introduced by the right honorable member for East Sydney, facilities for the opening up of land were given, and opportunities for obtaining cheaply the implements required in

agriculture, and thus a new province was added to the area under cultivation in New South Wales. I find that the area under cultivation in New South Wales in 1891 was 846,383 acres, while in 1898-9 it had increased to no less than 2,206,500 acres. That is a really wonderful increase. The figures for Victoria are 2,116,654 acres in 1891, and 3,210,445 acres in 1898-9. These figures show that under the policy of freer trade there was an immense advance made in the area under cultivation in New South Wales. One result of that has been that New South Wales was able, during one year, actually to provide herself with all the breadstuffs she required, when she had previously imported millions of bushels of wheat from South Australia, and on several occasions from Victoria. The honorable member for Gippsland made some reference to education, and in some way associated it with, free-trade and protection. He claimed that the people of Victoria were better educated than those of New South Wales I think it will be interesting to honorable members to know the position that is occupied by the two States in relation to schools. In New South Wales they have 2,602 schools, 4,759 teachers, and 203,910 scholars, with an average attendance of 141,723. In Victoria they, have 1,877 schools, 4,618 teachers, and 212,164 scholars, with an average attendance of 134,976. The amount of money which is spent on schools in New South Wales is about £200,000 a year more than is spent in Victoria; so that the teachers, as well as the labouring community, are better paid than they are in this State. The Savings Banks' deposits were referred to by the honorable and learned member for Indi. In 1898-9 the deposits in New South Wales were £9,480,944, and in Victoria £8,517,005; so that the deposits of the working community were larger in New South Wales than in Victoria by nearly a million of money. The average amount of deposits was £39 2s. 4d. in New South Wales, and £23 19s. in Victoria. Now, in regard to the Tariff proposals, I find that according to the Treasurer the total imports are estimated at £63,000,000 ; and this estimate is based upon the trade of the year 1899, which he regarded as normal. The InterState trade he estimates at £28,000,000.

Mr Kingston

- £29,000,000.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I would point out that the Minister for Trade and Customs differs in his figures and calculations from the Treasurer, which I think goes to show that they did not confer when they were bringing forward their estimates.

Sir George Turner

- Both estimates came from the same man, anyhow.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The inflation of value according to the Treasurer was £4,000,000. In 1899 there was an inflation of trade of 6 per cent.

Sir George Turner

- No, 1900.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- In 1900 the trade was £70,000,000 ; and the Minister adopted the returns for 1899, because he believed that to be a normal year. Then he estimated an inflation of trade of 6 per cent., or £4,000,000 for that normal year. If it was a normal year, why did he estimate an inflation of trade of £4,000,000? The imported stocks are estimated at £2,500,000. Then there is an allowance for the effect of protection, in reducing imports of manufactured articles and raw material, of £5,000,000. I take it that he does not expect so great an amount of imports under his policy as prevailed in 1899 to the extent of £5,000,000. Then for gold specie he allows £1,000,000; Government goods, £1,000,000; and the free list, £6,500,000; leaving a taxable balance of £21,000,000. Analyzing these figures closely, I find that it is not unlike an estimate which was made by the ex-Premier of South Australia, Mr. Holder, where he estimated the import trade at £63,500,000, and the Inter-State trade at £29,000,000. That is why I am inclined to think that the Minister for Trade and Customs consulted that publication rather than the returns which were perused by the Treasurer.

Sir George Turner

- These returns were all made out by Mr. Locker, of New South Wales.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Then I find that the Minister for Trade and Customs made his figures to total £8,482,000, and the

Treasurer his to total £8,94 1,000. There is a difference of £459,000 between the totals of the two Ministers.

Mr Kingston

- I did nothing of the sort.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- These were the figures that were published in the press, and in putting them together, they come out in this form. It would appear to me that they do not agree in their Estimates, and that there was really no need for the long delay which took place in bringing forward the financial statement, because practically the same figures were before the public in April last, and, I dare say, perused by the Treasurer as well as the Minister for Trade and Customs. I feel inclined to believe that the Minister for Defence also perused these figures, because if one reads the report of his speech delivered last evening one will find that he used the same argument as is used in that publication, and went the length of quoting figures that are not recorded in the statement made by either of his colleagues So that I think Ministers have been guided by the statements of a free-trade representative, rather than by their own convictions as to the Tariff necessities of the States. I feel that I must say something about the way in which the people of New South Wales have been deceived by the Prime Minister. When he was before the people of that State, he told them that it was his intention to bring forward a policy that would provide for a revenue Tariff. He represented that it was necessary to raise a certain amount of money for every State, and that the financial necessities of the States demanded that there should be high duties, but that a Tariff would be framed with a view to producing revenue only. Now we find that a protectionist Tariff has been brought forward which will tax the artisan and the cottager to the extent of as much as 125 per cent. Upon salt there is a duty of 125 per cent., upon starch 100 per cent., waggons and buggies 80 per cent., workmen's hats 77 per cent., and cheap vases 75 1/2 percent.; whereas it was expected that the Tariff would provide for 15 or 20 or, at most, 25 per cent. duties. If the people had been given to understand that that amount of taxation would be levied upon them the returns at the last election would have been very different from what they were in the State of New South Wales. The Tariff is very much higher than the people had any reason to expect. All the States will feel it very keenly, and I believe that the people will, when the opportunity occurs, state that they have been deceived as to the financial policy of the Government. I feel that I have been placed at a very great disadvantage in speaking at such a late hour. It appears to be the intention of the Prime Minister to force this matter forward with as little discussion as possible.

Mr Barton

- Honorable members have already had six days in which to discuss the motion, whereas in the House of Commons the whole thing would have been over in two days.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- These tactics were adopted by the Prime Minister early in the debate, but from what I have read of the proceedings in Australian Parliaments, I have no hesitation in saying that those who have had the best constitutional experience would not have acted as he has done. Ministers have not been in their places to hear the charges that have been made against them, but they have as far as possible ignored what has been going on, because they have counted heads and have found that they have a majority.

Mr Barton

- Is that so ?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I judge so, from what has been stated in the newspapers. I believe, however, that the people should have a voice in this matter, and I can only hope that things will take such a turn as to enable them to make themselves heard.

Mr Barton

- When they make their voice heard, the honorable member will lose bis.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I hope that the people of the country will soon have an opportunity of deciding whether they shall be represented by men who have been faithful to their promises, or by those who have deceived them from the outset. The Prime Minister implies that I shall not be here after the next election. All I can say is that I had the opposition of the Prime Minister himself in my electorate, and that I beat him badly. In the very

places where he spoke on behalf of his nominee, I secured the largest majorities, and in almost every part of my electorate I scored heavily against the best man who could be brought against me. The only place in which I did not score a complete victory was in the town of Mudgee, which was a free-trade constituency in the days of Sir John Robertson, and the people there did not vote for free-trade because the Prime Minister told them that it was not a question of free-trade or protection, but of providing revenue sufficient for carrying on the Governments of the different States. As a strong federal constituency they were prepared to support the Prime Minister and place him at the head of the poll. His old friends who knew him in 1885, when he was a free-trader, stood by him on this occasion, believing that it was a question of introducing a revenue Tariff only. At Dubbo, where the Prime Minister himself appeared, I fairly ran away from him, and I will do it again.

Mr Barton

- The honorable member generally does run away.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The Prime Minister knows that there is not much running away about me. I was a consistent supporter of the Prime Minister throughout the federal movement.

Mr Barton

- And the honorable member ratted afterwards.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is a most ungracious remark for the Prime Minister to make. I was a staunch federalist from beginning to end, and I stumped the country at my own expense in advocacy of the federal cause. The right honorable gentleman wrote me a letter, and offered me a constituency, which I did not accept.

Mr Barton

- Because the honorable member did not think he could get in.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I did not think I could, because the honorable member had no constituency to offer which was likely to return a federalist, as he had already selected the best districts for his own friends.

Mr Barton

- I selected the best men.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- As to whether they were the best men or not, I will say nothing, but all I can say is that I was a strong supporter of the cause to which the Prime Minister has proved a traitor, by deceiving the people of New South Wales. What is more, I know that as the electorate the right honorable gentleman represents is free-trade, he will not dare face his constituents with this Tariff. Had the right honorable gentleman not received a "walk over" at the election, I do not think he would be Prime Minister to-day.

Debate (on motion of Mr. Watson) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Asiatics in Government Departments - Motion of Censure.

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

.- - I move -

That the House do now adjourn.

I trust that the common sense of the House will see that this debate has been sufficiently protracted, and ought to be brought to a close to-morrow night.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- As one of the patient members of the House who has listened to the remarks of, at any rate, three of the Ministers, and a large number of Ministerial supporters, I protest against the suggestion of the Prime Minister, that honorable members who have been stopping here night after night, should not have a fair opportunity of addressing themselves to the important subject now under discussion. I do not know what may be the feeling of other honorable members who have not yet spoken, but, so far as I am concerned, remarks of that kind are much more likely to protract than to limit anything I may have to say. I am sure that I have the sympathy of at least eighteen or twenty members who hitherto have not spoken, but who have as much right as honorable members who have addressed themselves to the question, to justify

their attitude to their constituencies. I take the opportunity now of asking the Prime Minister a question in regard to a most important matter.

Mr Barton

- I do not answer questions pending a vote of no-confidence.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Of course it rests entirely with the good taste, judgment, and good sense of the Prime Minister whether he answers or not ; that is a matter for his consideration, not mine. Some few weeks ago, I called attention to the fact that since the 1st January, when the Postal and other State departments were taken over by the Commonwealth, a considerable number of Chinese have been employed in the Post and Telegraph department in the northern portion of South Australia, in spite of the sentimental expressions of opinion we have heard from members of the Government in reference to a " white Australia." In answer to questions, the Prime Minister admitted that some fifteen Chinese or other Asiatic aliens were employed in the department. That was several weeks ago, and since then we have had from the Ministerial side most eloquent appeals for the exclusion of Pacific island labourers and the restriction of undesirable immigrants. I want to ask the Prime Minister a simple question which, outside the ordinary business routine of the House, I have no doubt he can answer by a simple " yes " or " no." I desire to know whether the matter I have referred to has received the attention of the Government, and whether a stop has been put to the employment of these Asiatics. This is no new matter which has been broached in the Commonwealth Parliament. The Minister of Trade and Customs, and you, Mr. Speaker, both know that this is a question which times out of number I have brought before the South Australian State Parliament. It was only by strenuous effort that I succeeded in stopping the employment of Chinese and other Asiatics on the Government railways in the northern portion of South Australia, and when the feeling in regard to Asiatic labour is so much stronger in this House than even in the State House to which I have referred, the natural corollary of having succeeded to some extent in the latter is that I should follow that success up, and still further try to stop the employment of aliens in the telegraph department of the Commonwealth. I now desire to ask whether this matter has received the attention of the Government, and what course they have taken.

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Mr KENNEDY

- It is not often that I trouble the House, but I feel it incumbent upon me at this particular moment to make an appeal to the leader of the Government, in the interests of the welfare of the Commonwealth, not to stop the splendid educational process we have been promised by the leader of the Opposition on the important fiscal issues which are now agitating the mind of the community. There is no doubt that it was with the best intentions in the world that the leader of the Opposition thought fit to formulate the motion of want of confidence in the manner in which he did. But having formulated the motion in that particular direction, it seems to be his especial care, and the care of those of his followers who have directed their attention to it, up to the present, to carefully avoid the issues laid down. The leader of the Opposition promised the House that the benighted protectionists of Victoria would receive an educational influence--

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, whether the honorable member, is in order in criticising the action of the leader of the Opposition in submitting the motion now being discussed by this House ?

Mr SPEAKER

- I did not hear the honorable member for Moira say anything that was disorderly, or I should have called his attention to the fact.

Mr KENNEDY

- I hope, in the interests of the privileges of honorable members, that I have said nothing to transgress the rules of debate in this Chamber. Nothing was further from my intention than to criticise the action of the leader of the Opposition in formulating this motion, because, as one who would uphold the rights of members of this House, I feel that the right honorable gentleman was perfectly justified in the course he took, and I have already said so. I was making an appeal to the leader of the Government not to prevent the educational influence that we are promised by the leader of the Opposition. In my humble judgment, if I may be permitted to say so, the educational influence has not yet reached the benighted individuals for whose benefit it was promised. I would also ask the leader of the Government, in justice to a few of those

sitting behind them, not to compel them to give a silent vote. There are a few points of considerable importance involved in this particular motion. It may be that the fate of the Government, and the fate of this Commonwealth, will be determined to a very considerable extent by the division that will take place on it. Therefore, honorable members on both sides of the House are entitled to consideration. I do not wish for a moment to hamper debate, and am strongly opposed to restrictions being placed upon members giving free expression to their opinions. Are we to act without regard to our surroundings ? We often see a man going along the street so immersed in his own internal affairs as not to recognise what is going on to the right, to the left, or in front of him, until he is brought into violent collision with some other passing body. Are we to sit down and take what is presented to us, and then explain our action to our constituents as best we may ?

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- That is what the Government want us to do.

Mr KENNEDY

- I do not understand that the Government wish us to do anything of the sort. They do not object to the continuance of the debate so long as it is relevant to the issue. I am not going to say for an instant that any matter irrelevant to the issue at stake has been introduced, because I know that that would not be in consonance with the rules of this House, and would not be permitted by the Speaker. But at times, with the best intentions imaginable, honorable members have been led off upon side issues. I trust that the Prime Minister will seriously take into consideration the appeal made to him, that he will do nothing to unduly hamper or restrict the privileges of honorable members, and that the fullest opportunity for discussion will be given to them. I would also appeal to honorable members opposite to leave nothing undone to increase the education of the benighted Victorian protectionists. I have felt a great responsibility imposed upon me since the motion of the leader of the Opposition was proposed, and have sought to " rise to the occasion " by sitting here continuously for six days and nights, listening to the debate. I am prepared to sit here for a longer period, but I shall look upon it as time wasted to some extent if the educational process is not conducted on a higher level than it has been in the past.

Mr. SYDNEY SMITH (Macquarie). The Prime Minister has really criticised the action of the Opposition. I must say that there is no desire on our part to prolong the debate, except that we feel, as the honorable member for Moira states, that this is one of the most important questions that will be submitted to Parliament, and that our constituents expect every member who feels so disposed to give expression to his views upon the question. I hear many honorable members taking exception to the time occupied in dealing with the question.

Sir John FORREST

- Four hours !

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Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I admit that I took four hours, and I should be prepared to occupy another four hours if the circumstances should arise again, particularly as honorable members opposite were endeavouring to block discussion by a conspiracy of silence. We broke that down. I have noticed that a great deal of time has been taken in the discussion of other measures. Eight sitting days were occupied in debating the Defence Bill. Adjournments were allowed at 1 1 o'clock.

Mr Barton

- Those days are over now.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- This is a matter that affects the lives of every person in the Commonwealth, and, therefore, it is only a fair thing that honorable members should have an opportunity of expressing their views. The honorable member for Robertson spoke to-night under great difficulties. He was practically forced to speak at the last moment, when he was ill, and could not give expression to his views. He was cut short.

Sir John Forrest

- He spoke for two hours.

Mr Barton

- He did not take a short cut!

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member intended to speak on several other matters, but his health did not permit him. The members of the Opposition have no desire to take up time unnecessarily. It cannot be said that the discussion to-night has been monopolized by honorable members on this side of the Chamber. The exAttorneyGeneral of Victoria thought it right to give expression to his views - and rightly so - and he devoted long arguments to the defence of protection. He took two hours to do so.

Mr Kingston

- Two hours well spent.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- I do not object to that, but why should the Government object to other honorable members giving expression to their views 1 It is our duty to enter a protest against the reflections sought to be cast upon the Opposition by the insinuation that they are trying to prolong the debate. We do not wish to prolong it unnecessarily, but we do wish to give expression to our views as representatives of the people of the Commonwealth.

Mr THOMSON

- I have only a few words to say in regard to the observations of the Prime Minister reflecting upon the Opposition, and, indirectly, on such members of his own party as have taken the opportunity of speaking upon this important question. As has been pointed out, this is the most important matter that has to come before the Federal Parliament. It is a question affecting the destinies of Australia one way or the other for many years. If there is any earnestness as to the policy supported on either side, surely it will find expression on such an occasion as this.

May I point out that members of the Ministry seem to overlook the fact that the postponement of this Tariff rests entirely at their own doors. If they had recognised their responsibility they would have handled it long ago. We know that for a time, at all events, it was their intention to postpone it until next session. That was the desire of some of their supporters, and it was only when the Government found that public opinion was strongly against the adoption of that course that they entered upon the consideration of the matter. How have they laboured at it 1 They tell us that they have worked night and day. We know that we had to grant them a day a week for some time, in order that they might be able to give additional attention to it. During that period all the energies of the Ministry were bent on the framing and discussion of the Tariff. They have now brought it before Parliament, and we have to apply our attention to it, and to consider all the complications and difficulties connected with it just as the Cabinet have done. That being so, can the Government expect Parliament to do in six days what they have taken six months to accomplish 1 Surely adequate time should be given to honorable members on both sides of the House to deal with this question. So far we have had the freest debate, and honorable members on the Government side of the House have exercised their privilege quite as freely as honorable members of the Opposition.

Sir John Forrest

- Honorable members will be able to discuss the Tariff in committee.

Mr THOMSON

- Surely the right honorable gentleman does not want a repetition of long speeches on questions of policy when we get into committee ? It will be the desire of honorable members when they reach that stage to address themselves simply to the items. I am quite sure that if honorable members get an opportunity of expressing their views on the Tariff in the House at the present juncture, they will not inflict what might be termed second reading speeches in committee.

Mr Barton

- No; because they have given us committee speeches on the motion itself.

Mr THOMSON

- They have had to do so in some cases in reply to Ministers.

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Mr Barton

- I think the leader of the Opposition began it.

Mr THOMSON

- As a matter of fact, the leader of the Opposition did not begin it. It was the members of the Government who first entered upon that course. Instead of giving us, as they might have done, a general

representation of the Tariff, they went into detailed items. However, my remarks on that head have arisen from the interjection by the Prime Minister. I would only say that it is quite useless to attempt to put on the shoulders of the Opposition the responsibility for the delay that has taken place in dealing with the Tariff, and that it is unwise also to request honorable members to pass what is equivalent to a second reading of the Tariff without that full discussion which should take place in the interests of their constituents. The discussion has taken this form in order that long speeches shall not take place in committee, and I think it would be very unjust for the Ministry to strive to restrain speakers on either side. In that I join with the honorable member for Moira.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- I deeply regret the fact that we have commenced these post-midnight sittings, for they result in nothing but a waste of time. The House gets worn out and demoralized. I deeply regret also that the Prime Minister has thought fit to intimate that some steps should be taken to bring this very important debate to a close. I recognise very fully that there is a vast difference between the capacity and standing of the right honorable and learned gentleman and myself. On the other hand, I recognise no difference at all between the right honorable and learned member for Hunter and the member for South Sydney. Every representative of every constituency has the fullest right to ventilate his views on this very important question. If this debate were prolonged for another month I should not think it time lost, and I should demand the right to express myself very fully upon a question that affects every man, woman, and child in the Commonwealth. The remarks made by the Prime Minister are, in my opinion, uncalled for. There is nothing in the debate so far, nor has there been in any debate which has taken place during the session, to call for such comments. I have listened to-night to one of the finest speeches I have ever heard on the fiscal faith opposed to my own, and I have heard also during this discussion able speeches from my own side. These speeches must have an educational effect, and for the Prime Minister to try and make out any case for applying the closure to this debate is utterly preposterous and uncalled for. Even if we had to sit here night after night for seven days a week, I should resist any attempt to stifle discussion upon a matter which is of the most vital importance to the Commonwealth.

Mr CONROY

- Some few evenings ago when an attempt similar to this was made, I objected to the Minister for Trade and Customs holding out what I conceived to be a threat. I must say that I hold the same objection in regard to the action of the Prime Minister in threatening the House to-night. It is not the way to conduct the business of a deliberative Assembly. I think it is admitted on all hands that we could not have a more important question engaging our attention, and that being the case it is not time lost for members to discuss the Tariff in the way in which they have been doing. I am as anxious as any honorable member to get back to my own home and to be done with these weekly trips, that disarrange one both in mind and body. The strain of travelling 1,160 miles a week is very great, and I object to it as much as any one. In my opinion, however, there will be no time lost by the full discussion of this motion. If we devote full time to the consideration of the Tariff now we shall save it over and over again in committee. When honorable members feel that they have expressed themselves generally on the Tariff, that they have taken all the objections that they can, and that they have resisted it as strongly as it is within their power to do, they will accept a defeat in committee as soon as the result of a division is announced, and will not raise captious objections. Much as I have disliked the conduct of Ministers over and over again, I have steadily refrained from speaking, in order to allow the Government to get on with business. I have said nothing save for the few interjections which have been called for from time to time by the conduct of Ministers. Surely when we have already seen so many Ministers addressing themselves to the Tariff at this stage other honorable members generally may do the same. 1 The Minister for Trade and Customs declared his belief in it.

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Mr Kingston

- I have not spoken in this debate.

Mr CONROY

- The Minister made a long speech in introducing the Tariff.

Mr Kingston

- One cannot very well introduce a Tariff without speaking.

Mr CONROY

- I think that the Minister foresaw many of the objections that might be raised to it. He tried to anticipate a great deal that would be said. But he did not satisfactorily answer any of the objections that have been raised, although, no doubt, he did the best he could. What I wish to point out is that a debate which is prematurely stopped must inevitably engender ill-feeling. . There will be quite enough ill-feeling exhibited over this Tariff

Mr Barton

- Another threat.

Mr CONROY

- I submitted in silence the other night to an interjection from the Prime Minister. I did not draw attention to it, because the right honorable and learned gentleman had been attending a State luncheon that day ; but there is no such excuse for him upon this occasion.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member cannot refer to what occurred during another debate.

Mr CONROY

- I have put up with enough of the Prime Minister's rude remarks, and if he makes any more of them he must expect to receive a full answer. I shall deal with him, when we come to discuss the Tariff, in quite another way. I shall then show what has been his conduct towards the people of New South Wales. If the Ministry each night threaten the Opposition, we will threaten them. They will find that their conduct, so far from advancing business, is calculated to seriously impede its progress. The result of attempting to close the discussion upon the motion of censure, before honorable members have had a full opportunity of expressing their opinions, will be to prolong it indefinitely. Such conduct on the part of the Ministry will prevent us from going to the country as soon as we otherwise should, because I am quite sure that we shall go to the country when the Senate comes to deal with this Tariff. That chamber will not accept it.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable and learned member is not in order in making a reference to the Senate.

Mr CONROY

- For certain reasons I shall be glad to see this debate closed as soon as possible. I should like to know--

Mr Kennedy

- The date of the elections ?

Mr CONROY

- I am anxious that we should get into committee as soon as we conveniently can, but that stage cannot be reached until honorable members have had a full opportunity of expressing their views upon the motion which is now engaging the attention of the House. I might have called attention to the fact that the Government are themselves to blame for the delay which has occurred. The whole of the people of Australia recognise that. They should have introduced their Tariff long ago. The Ministry have had an opportunity of going through that Tariff item by item, and yet they object to honorable members discussing it for a week. We have had six sitting days in which to discuss the motion submitted by the leader of the Opposition, and there are seventy-five honorable members in this House, each of whom represents some 10,000 or 12,000 electors. My idea is that the debate ought to be continued for a sufficient time to allow of expressions of disapproval regarding the Tariff reaching us from all the citizens of Australia. The people have not yet had time to consider its full effect. Having recorded my protest, I shall not, at this late hour, occupy further time. I merely desire to add that the Ministry show a subservience towards their own supporters, when the latter desire to move the adjournment of the debate, which contrasts very strangely indeed with their conduct when a member of the Opposition wishes to adopt a similar course. The Government are altogether lacking in that courtesy which should be extended to all honorable members. They will not gain by adopting such tactics, as they will discover later on.

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs). - Upon two occasions the Government have given to members of the Opposition the privilege of continuing their remarks upon a succeeding day. That is a privilege which has not been asked for by any honorable member upon the Ministerial side of the House, and it is altogether and flagitiously incorrect to say that we have been guilty of discourtesy to any honorable members of the Opposition.

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Mr Poynton

- How did the Government treat me the other night?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Yes ; how did the Government treat the honorable member? With gross discourtesy and rudeness.

Mr BARTON

- The honorable member knows that I do not take points of order, and, therefore he is allowed to be as rude as he pleases in making interjections of that kind.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Prime Minister must understand that he does not enjoy a monopoly in that respect.

Mr BARTON

- In dealing with the honorable member I seem "to have the monopoly of courtesy. The honorable member has spoken about the Chinese in the Northern Territory. If he has any understanding of parliamentary usage - and I think he has - he must know that it is not usual for Governments to answer questions when constitutionally their fate is in the balance. The honorable member did ask on 1st October -

Whether any, and, if so, how many, Chinese and other Asiatic aliens have been employed in the Post and Telegraph department in the Northern Territory of South Australia since the department was taken over by the Commonwealth ?

Sir PhilipFysh replied :

Fifteen Chinese, but no other Asiatics have been employed in the Post and Telegraph department in the Northern Territory of South Australia since it was taken over by the Commonwealth. They were all employed previous to the transfer and were taken over with the department.

I do not think the honorable member means to infer that the honorable member who is now in the Chair, and who was then Premier of South Australia, willingly employed Chinese any more than we would. When he flouts the Minister for Trade and Customs, he does not suppose that that right honorable and learned gentleman ever willingly employed them. But if he thinks that the Premier who happens to be in office is to blame for the employment of Chinese, he had, at any rate, a few hours of office himself, during which time he might have got rid of them. I wish the honorable member to understand that I will give no information upon this or any other subject until the motion of censure is disposed of. Then the Postmaster-General will be able to give the information which is sought. The honorable member for North Sydney has accused me of reflecting upon my party, and upon other honorable members who have spoken. I merely said that I hoped the House would realize that sufficient-time has been occupied in discussing this motion of censure. That is not a reflection either upon honorable members who are going to support me or upon those who intend to vote against me.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I say it is an impertinence to those who have not spoken.

Mr BARTON

- The honorable member totally over-estimates his own importance when he comes to that conclusion. I am sure that the better judgment of my honorable friend, the honorable member for North Sydney, will show him, upon reflection, that it is not correct to talk about this as a question of delay resting with the Government, or any question of doing within six days what it should take six months to do. The question is merely one of fair and adequate debate. The question is whether the public interest will gain more by prolonging the discussion, or whether it will gain more by an early decision upon a question which, although I cannot go into the merits of it, is practically decided now.

Mr Thomson

- The question is whether the representatives of the people are to have the right to express their opinions.

Mr BARTON

- It is not a question as to whether they should have the right to express their opinions, because, whenever I have spoken during the debate, I have always freely conceded the right of every member of the House to speak as long as he thinks fit. The possession of the right to speak is one thing, and the common sense exercise of it is another. As to the exercise of the right, I freely concede to my honorable friends opposite a particular degree of common sense in judging at what time this debate should close.

For instance, the honorable member for South Sydney said that another month would not be insufficient to allow for the debate.

Mr G B EDWARDS

- No ; I did not say that.

Mr BARTON

- I believe that the honorable member said that the conclusion of the debate might take place in another month. Every question has to be debated, and every question has to be decided. The real point is as to when the debate is adequate, and whether the decision comes too soon or too late. We say that it is a fair . and reasonable view to take that the House should within six days conclude the debate upon a motion which would not take half that time in the House of Commons, where there are 670 members. It is a reasonable thing to expect that we should come to an early conclusion upon the question, because the whole of Australia is not merely waiting upon this debate, but upon the decision of this House upon the Tariff, and that decision ought not in the public interest to be unduly delayed. I shall now say only one word as to the. honorable member for Werriwa, and that is that I pay him a high compliment when I ignore him.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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01:34:00

House adjourned at 1.43 a.m. (Thursday).