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1901-11-22

House of Representatives

Mr. Speaker

took the chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- I beg to give notice that, on Tuesday next, I shall move -

That, until otherwise ordered, this House do meet at half-past two p.m., on Monday in each week in addition to the present sitting days:

That on each sitting day, until otherwise ordered, Government business do take precedence of general business.

Perhaps I may be permitted to state that I do not propose at present to ask honorable members to sit in the morning, because I hope that after what took place last night we shall make such reasonable progress with the Tariff debate as to render such a course unnecessary.

QUESTION

THE CORONATION CEREMONY

Mr PAGE

-I desire to ask the Prime Minister whether he has noticed the answer given by the Premier of Queensland to a question by Mr. Cowley in the Queensland Assembly? Mr. Philp stated that he had not received any invitation to the coronation ceremony in London, and I desire to know whether, under the circumstances, the

Prime Minister will take steps to advise the Home Government of the importance of Mr. Philp's position, with a view to securing his presence at that great function. We Queenslanders feel sure that the Commonwealth will not be properly represented if Mr. Philp is not present at the coronation.

Mr BARTON

- I know of no invitations having been issued for the coronation ceremony. I have not received one; Perhaps it will be better for me to abstain from so ill-advised a course as to make requests for invitations to Royal functions.

PAPERS

Mr. BARTON

laid on the table

Papers regarding the Immigration and Postal Bills, being correspondence between the Japanese and British Governments, together with a despatch from the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain to His Excellency the Governor-General.

Papers regarding the supply of meat by Australia and New Zealand to the Admiralty and the War-office. Ordered to be printed.

QUESTION

CIGAR MANUFACTURERS

Mr CONROY

- In view of the enormous profits now being made by cigar manufacturers, will the Prime Minister consent to the appointment of a Royal commission to inquire into the conditions of the trade and report on the advisability of bringing it under the Commonwealth control ?

Mr BARTON

- It seems to me that matters of that kind must be left in abeyance until the Tariff is disposed of. It is open to all honorable members during the debate on the Tariff to adduce any facts within their knowledge affecting the matters under discussion.

Mr CONROY

- I give notice that, on Tuesday next, I will move that, in view of the extraordinary action of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Customs in suddenly consenting to impose an increased duty on cigars, which will have the effect of putting a large sum of money into the pockets of cigar manufacturers, a Royal commission be appointed to inquire into the conditions of the trade, and ascertain what arguments can be

advanced in support of such action.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

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Mr CAMERON

- I desire to make a personal explanation. It has been repeatedly stated by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, that I was returned to this House on his surplus votes.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. The honorable member will be perfectly in order in making a personal explanation upon any matter upon which he has been misunderstood, but he must not introduce matter which has not been referred to in a previous speech, and concerning which he has not been misunderstood.

Mr Cameron

- I presume I should be in order in moving the adjournment of the House.

Mr SPEAKER

- Yes ; but the honorable member will require to state his reason for wishing to move the adjournment.

Mr Barton

- There would, I think, be no objection to the honorable member having some latitude so long as the honorable member to whom he refers has an opportunity of replying to his statements.

Mr SPEAKER

- There are certain forms of the House which must be complied with to avoid confusion. The honorable member must either confine his personal explanation to some matter on which he has been misunderstood, or secure the concurrence of other honorable members in moving the adjournment of the House to discuss some matter which he must place before me in writing.

Mr Cameron

- The question I desire to discuss is the statement of the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, that I was elected on his surplus votes.

Mr Barton

- That is not an urgent matter of public importance.

Mr SPEAKER

- As the necessary number of members have not risen in support of the honorable member's desire, he cannot proceed.

Sir William McMillan

- I think that under the circumstances the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Cameron, might be allowed to say a word or two. His remarks will not lead to any lengthy debate, and, with the concurrence of the House, he might be allowed to state his case.

Mr SPEAKER

- I shall submit the matter to the House. Heave must be given to the honorable member without any dissent. Has the honorable member leave to proceed 1

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

Mr CAMERON

- I desire to thank the House for their courtesy, because the matter to which I wish to refer is rather important to me. It has been repeatedly stated by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, that he was elected by some 9,000 odd votes over me, and that I was elected upon his surplus votes. I may explain that the Hare system under which every member has to receive a certain number of votes, or what is termed a "quota," was in vogue at the late federal election in Tasmania. When the primary count was finished, the votes recorded were as follow : - Braddon, 4,713; O'Malley, 3,939 : Cameron, 2,092 ; Fysh, 1,792 ; Piesse, 1,788. In other words, I was returned, without any votes from anybody else, in the third position on the poll. The quota was 3,595 votes. Sir Edward Braddon obtained his quota in the first count, and so did the honorable member, Mr. O'Malley. I did not. Now this is the point at which I wish to particularly direct the attention of honorable members to the statement of the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley. His surplus votes were 344, of which Mr. Blanchard received 7, I received 20, Mr. Fenton 31, Sir P. Fysh 32, Mr. Hartnoll 21, Mr. Piesse 31^ and Mr. Whitelaw 202. When the other candidates were struck out, as they were struck out in order, the figures for the first three on the poll were Braddon, 4,713 ; O'Malley, 3,939 ; and Cameron, 3,684. Thus I had a surplus over the quota of 89 votes,

which were afterwards distributed between Sir P. Fysh and Mr. Piesse. Therefore, honorable members can see how much truth there is in the statement that I was returned on the surplus of the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think that purely personal matters should be discussed in this way, because there will be no limit to them. However, I shall not refuse to put the question to the House that- the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, have leave to speak in reply to the honorable member.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

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Mr O'MALLEY

- I stated that the honorable member got in on my surplus, and I say so still. My surplus votes helped to make up the " quota " which was required by the honorable member in order to obtain a seat, and there is no doubt that the honorable member was returned by an absolute fluke. We shall not quarrel about it, only I wish to show that the vote in my favour, as well as that given to Sir' Edward Braddon, was a clear one, and that we got in on the first count. The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. Cameron, has come here full of malignity and spleen.

Mr SPEAKER

- The honorable member must withdraw that expression.

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- I withdraw. The extraordinary thing to me is that the honorable member should have allowed this matter to remain in abeyance so long. He wants to earn some kudos, but he has been neglecting his duty to the electors of Tasmania.

Mr SPEAKER

- I do not think that is a proper statement for the honorable member to make.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I withdraw. There is no doubt that the honorable member is continually acting towards me as though he were simply a political sausage skin filled with wind and water, and painted like a Chinese god.

Mr SPEAKER

- Order. The honorable member must withdraw that statement.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I withdraw it.

TARIFF

In Committee of Ways and Means : -

(Consideration resumed from 2 1st November, vide

page 7667).

DivisionIII. - Sugar.

Motion (by Mr. Kingston) agreed to -

That Division III. be postponed till after the consideration of Division VIa.

Item 8. Animals living, viz., cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry, ad valorem. 20 per cent.

Special.Exemption.

- Cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry for the improvement of breeds, subject to departmental by-laws.

Mr GLYNN

- I think that the Government should put this item in the free list. The amount of revenue derived from this tax will be so small as to be scarcely worth considering. Looking at the South Australian statistics, I find that almost all the importations, including birds, are from the other States. Most of the importations of stock from abroad have been made for breeding purposes, and this class of importation is very properly exempted from duty.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I would like to point out one or two principles which should be kept before us in dealing with the Tariff. In the first place we should remember that we are a United Australia, and that prior to federation many taxes were imposed which were prompted by Inter-State jealousy and retaliation. I think it will be recognised as a sound principle that if only a small amount of revenue is obtained from a particular duty - an amount

that is scarcely worth the cost of collection - it is better that that duty should be swept away. When we come to deal with the question of the importation of live stock we must recognise that the only country which is likely to export stock to the Commonwealth is New Zealand. I would further point out that the cost of sea carriage of animals is very high, so high that it amounts almost to a prohibitive duty. From my own experience I know that there is not the slightest chance of our markets being inundated with stock from abroad unless under very special circumstances. The figures supplied by the Treasurer show that he expects this duty to yield less than £1,000. Nobody will deny that this complicated Tariff will necessitate the employment of an army of revenue officers, and will involve a great deal of supervision. In cases like this, where the danger to our own breeders and producers is infinitesimal, if we can do away with an irritating tax that is costly in supervision, and absolutely unnecessary, it is far better to do so. In my judgment it would be well to abolish all these small pettifogging imposts, which really irritate, and which can be of no possible use to the Commonwealth. Therefore I beg to move -

That the words "and on and after the 23rd November, 1901, free," be added to the duty "Animals, living, viz., cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry. . . . advalorem, 20 per cent."

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Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- This is a duty which is very easily collected, without the slightest additional expense being incurred. In this connexion we cannot forget that we ought to be able to produce all the cattle necessary for our own requirements. At the same time we should recollect that there is a possibility of a very considerable importation of stock from New Zealand into Tasmania and New South Wales - an importation which would prejudicially affect the producers of those States. Whilst we are providing generally for the protection of native industries, we ought not to forget the claims of our farmers and producers in this respect, and the item upon that ground may well be retained. An almost similar provision operates in the New Zealand Tariff. Possibly the matter may form a subject for future consideration, both by the Commonwealth and New Zealand, but I do not think it would be well to strike out the item at present.

Mr HUGHES

- There does not appear to be any reason in the argument advanced by the Minister for Trade and Customs, except that there may possibly, at some time or other, be -an importation of live stock from New Zealand. The facts submitted by the honorable and learned member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, are a complete refutation of this theory. Only one horse was imported into South Australia, and even that animal was imported for breeding purposes, and would, therefore, be exempt from duty under this proposal. The Government have evidently drafted this Tariff with one specific object in view. Naturally, they desire to obtain revenue, but they certainly wish to protect the manufacturing industries, and, as the unfortunate farmer has to foot the bill, they propose, as a sop to him, that he should be protected against the importation of live stock from other countries. The duty is merely imposed to enable the Government to pose before the agriculturist and pastoralist as their saviours and guardians. Why should there be a considerable importation of stock from New Zealand by-and-by, as is suggested by the Minister for Trade and Customs ? Have we not recently passed through the severest drought that we have ever experienced? Are we to contemplate the possibility of a still more serious visitation ? Yet in the face of this we are told that we must impose a duty of 20 per cent, upon live stock. As has been pointed out by the honorable member for Wentworth, importers have not merely to contend against the expense of sea transit. The risk involved in the sea carriage of live stock constitutes a much more serious item. Only the other day, out of a cargo of valuable horses which had been shipped to South Africa, 30 per cent, were disabled before the steamer got fairly away from our coast.' The owners of cattle ships always calculate upon the disablement of a considerable number of the animals shipped. We have no desire that this Tariff should be a bogus one. Let us impose duties upon articles which will be productive of revenue. This duty will not yield revenue, and, therefore, I am opposed to it. I ask the right honorable gentleman, who is the Boanerges of the Ministry, to explain why he thinks there is any probability of a considerable importation of live stock from New

Zealand 1 I will be satisfied with an explanation. If we cannot have the item struck out, at least let us have some explanation which will enable us to say to the people that we retained this' duty to effect some good and useful purpose.

Mr O'MALLEY

- If this duty will not yield much revenue, I ask the Opposition to allow- it to pass. It will please the Minister, and will not harm anybody, as the only live stock that will be imported will be rats in the bottoms of ships.

Mr A C GROOM

- I must protest against the imposition of this duty. The Minister for Trade and Customs is making a very grave error if he imagines, for one moment, that the farmers are going to be gulled by such a transparent attempt to placate them. According to his own showing, this rate, if imposed, will be absolutely inoperative. As a farmers' representative, I object to allowing the duty to remain for the mere purpose of enabling the Government to point to it in the future, and say, "Look at what we have done for the farmers." The farmers and graziers do not want this tax. They recognise that with the establishment of Inter-State free-trade, any protection which they have enjoyed in the past has absolutely gone. What they desire to see in the future is low duties all round. This duty will not yield revenue, and will not protect the farmer or anybody else.

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Mr WINTER COOKE

- I agree with the remarks of the honorable member for Minders. If it were possible for this tax to become operative in the future, we should be creating a most undesirable state of affairs. If there is one thing more than another which we ought to avoid taxing it is the food of the people. Of course, I realize that under present conditions, we cannot avoid taxing such articles as tea and sugar, because they are productive of large revenue. I very much doubt whether this duty, if imposed, would ever become operative ; but, assuming that it did, I say that we should not by any law raise the price of meat. When it was proposed to levy a stock tax in Victoria, I was a member of the Legislative Council, and in that capacity I opposed it on the ground that we should not by any artificial means raise the price of meat to the consumer. That is the position which I take up to-day. This tax could become operative only at a time when there was a great scarcity of stock throughout Australia, and at such a period there ought to be no restriction upon its importation. The proposal is simply an attempt on the part of the Ministry to hoodwink the farmer into the belief that he is being protected.

Mr SKENE

- From my own experience, I know that this duty will be useless as a protective measure to the pastoralists of Australia. The Minister for Trade and Customs referred to New South Wales and Tasmania as States into which there might possibly be some importations from New Zealand. I cannot speak as to Tasmania, but so far as my recollection goes, and it extends over a great many years, there have been no importations of stock for food consumption into New South Wales, where, of course, there has been no duty: A few years ago an immense number of British breeding sheep, Lincoln rams particularly, were imported into New South Wales, and it soon became evident to the people of New Zealand that there was no market for them in the former State. As a representative of the farming and pastoral industries, and as one who thereby gains his living, I am quite prepared to give every opportunity to the consumer, believing that the worst subject for taxation is the food supply of the people. I am quite prepared to support the amendment, feeling that the proposed duty would be inoperative. The exportation of stock to the old country from both New Zealand and Victoria is increasing year by year; and, such is the surplus stock, that in Victoria, notwithstanding the prejudicial effects of the stock tax, three or four exporting factories have been making good profit. A factory, with the starting of which I had something to do at Geelong, as an outlet for our stock, even when the stock tax was in operation, was purchased the other day, at a handsome price, by, I believe, an English company.

Mr A McLEAN

- I was one of the strongest advocates of the stock tax in Victoria, and I have never seen reason to regret my action, because no duty in Victoria has done so much substantial good to the farmer.

Mr Skene

- No.

Mr A McLEAN

- Large stock-owners, like the honorable member for Grampians, can take advantage of the fluctuations of the market. The small farmers have to send their stock to market when ready, whether the market be

flooded or not, whereas the large owners are able to hold over and obtain high prices ; and it was in the interests of the small farmers that the stock tax was imposed. As to the item under discussion, I have no doubt that the Government propose it with the best intention. But it is an item which will lead to a great deal of discussion, and if the Government persist, we shall probably lose the greater part of the day. It is an item not worth wasting time over, because it will not produce revenue to any appreciable extent, and will be of no substantial benefit to the farmers. Under the circumstances, and with a view to saving time, it would be better for the Government to withdraw the item. The honorable member for Flinders stated that farmers could not be benefited in any way by protection ; but I contend that there are many items in the Tariff which will be of substantial use in that direction. This,, however, is not one of the useful duties. The only stock imported consists, perhaps, of a few draught horses occasionally from New Zealand ; but in Victoria the duty on horses was abolished Some years ago.

Mr. POYNTON

(South Australia).There is no doubt that the object of the Government in proposing this item is to give a sop to the farmers after having proposed heavy duties for the benefit of secondary industries. According to their own figures, the Government show that this duty will not result in any revenue ; and although I should be loath to do anything to prejudice the farmers, I cannot see that this is a duty which will be of any benefit to their industry. The only argument which can be advanced in favour of a stock tax is that in times of scarcity the consumers are called upon to pay high prices.

Mr A McLEAN

- Hear, hear ! That was because our own people would not go into the industry. There was only one season of scarcity after the imposition of the stock tax.

Mr POYNTON

- It is a cursed system of taxation which takes advantage of drought or failure of crops to raise the price of the food supplies of the masses.

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Mr A McLEAN

- The honorable member misunderstands me. I was arguing exactly in the other direction - that the stock tax prevented great scarcity when our own people would not go into the industry.

Mr POYNTON

- There have recently been large meetings of working men with the object of obtaining cheap meat by the abolition of such duties.

Mr Mauger

- Where?

Mr POYNTON

- At Brunswick and a number of other places.

Mr A McLEAN

- The meetings were addressed by gentlemen who know as little about the subject as the honorable members.

Mr POYNTON

- My work on behalf of the agricultural and pastoral industries in South Australia for years past speaks for itself. I repeat that the only argument in favour of a stock tax is that it raises prices in times of scarcity.

Mr A McLEAN

- A stock tax steadies prices ; that is the benefit.

Mr POYNTON

- We have passed through an unprecedented period of drought in Australia during which stock valued at millions of pounds has been lost, and yet there was no importation, or any likelihood of any importation, from outside. The best thing the Government can do is to quietly withdraw this item.

Mr PIESSE

- There is not much use in discussing what one State or another has done in reference to the importation of stock. We have to decide what is the best for the Commonwealth ; and, looking at all ' the circumstances, it would be well for the Government to abandon this item. Not much can be said for the duty as a source of revenue, and even those who desire to help the farming interests must admit that benefit has resulted from the free importation of store stock.

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Mr KINGSTON

- After the observations which have fallen from honorable members generally, and recognising that it is the duty of the Government, as well as of the Opposition, to do what is possible for the purpose of shortening debate, I will agree to the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth

Amendment agreed to.

Item, as amended, agreed to.

Item 9, Arrowroot, per lb., ld.

Mr. HUGHES

(West Sydney).- I move - .

That the words - "And on and after the 23rd November, 1901, free," be added.

According to the returns prepared by the Government, the revenue expected from the duty on arrowroot, tapioca, and sago is- £13,790, made up of £5,300 from New South Wales, £4,440 from Victoria, £1,700 from Queensland, £1,100 from South Australia, ±'450 from Tasmania, and £800 from Western Australia. The greater part of this revenue is estimated to be derived from tapioca and sago, and not from arrowroot. So far as we can learn the quantity of arrowroot used in New South Wales in 1900 was 200,155 lbs., of which only 13,750 lbs. came from outside. If a tax of ld. per lb. had been imposed on the 13,750 lbs., the revenue received would have been £57, a sum not sufficient to pay for the cost of collection. Of the 200,155 lbs. used in New South Wales last year, 177,000 lbs. came from Queensland, so that it is evident that this is purely a protective duty. If a duty of ld. per lb. had been collected on all the arrowroot consumed in New South Wales last year, the result would have been £1,250. That this is purely a protective duty is shown by the fact that on 1st September, 1901, the selling price of arrowroot in Sydney was 2Jd. per lb., and in Melbourne, where a duty of 2d. per lb. was levied, the price was 5 1/2d. per lb. That allowed three farthings extra profit on the turnover of the Melbourne merchant, and imposed a tax on the consumer of 2% d., or 50 per cent. On 10th October, 1901, immediately after the imposition of uniform duties, the selling price was 4d. per lb. in both Sydney and Melbourne, showing a rise in Sydney of 1 1/4d., and a fall in Melbourne of Hd. Practically the whole of the arrowroot is imported from Queensland, and therefore no revenue is derived. Of course- if this is a protective Tariff I see no reason why we should not encourage the production of arrowroot; but the duty cannot be justified for revenue purposes. Arrowroot very largely forms the basis of infants' and invalids' foods. It seems inconsistent that the Government should admit infants' and invalids' foods free and yet place a tax upon their chief constituent. Since the duty on arrowroot has been reduced from 2d. to ld. per lb. in Victoria, the price has been reduced by the manufacturers to the extent of 1 1/2d. per lb. That shows that they have had a good margin to work upon, owing to- the advantage which they have been able to take of the protective duty. I will not deny that the people of Queensland, who are engaged in the production of arrowroot are entitled to protection, and if the Government say that the object of this duty is to protect them, I will vote for it, but on the other hand if it is intended to produce revenue I shall vote against it, because there is no revenue to be derived from it. It is an outrageous thing that the Tariff should be hampered by a lot of items such as this, which can have no effect but to restrict trade.

Treasurer

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I am very pleased to be able to claim the vote of the honorable member for West Sydney. This duty is not imposed for revenue purposes, but as part of our policy to protect the natural industries of the Commonwealth. The production of arrowroot is an industry natural to the States of Queensland and New South Wales.

Mr Kirwan

- And the Ministry are going to protect it at the expense of the children and invalids of the Commonwealth.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- That is not so, because I am told on very good authority that arrowroot does not form the basis of infants' and invalids' food, and that it is not one of the necessary ingredients. I am told by a reliable authority, who has no object in misleading me, that arrowroot does not form the basis of these foods which we have placed on the free list. If we are going to make this a revenue Tariff pure and simple, we must strike out this and many other items, but we have never pretended that this is a Tariff for purely

revenue purposes. The Tariff is a revenue Tariff, which will also give protection wherever we think that it is perfectly justified. If we are to help the producers, we must assist those who are engaged in the production of arrowroot in Queensland. There is no reason why Queensland should not supply the whole of the arrowroot required in the Commonwealth.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- She is practically doing it now.

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- Then we are going to help her. If we take the duty off, somebody will come in and try to capture the market.

Mr Hughes

- Why did they not do that in New South Wales?

Sir GEORGE TURNER

- I do not know. Apart from that altogether, it is our duty to give assistance to the primary producers as far as we possibly can. I am sorry that the honorable member for West Sydney has moved his amendment, because he will have to vote against it, as I claim his vote for this duty as a protectionist impost.

Mr. HUGHES

(West Sydney).- I am very glad to have been able, at last, to draw from the Government an admission that this is a protectionist Tariff. It has been described as a revenue Tariff, and now we find that it is partly for revenue and partly for protectionist purposes, but apparently wholly protectionist in so far as duties of this kind are concerned. I do not understand how it becomes part of the policy of the Government to omit the stock duty and to persevere with a duty such as this. I shall adhere to what I have said, and leave it to some other person to move an amendment. I now desire to withdraw mine.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. JOSEPH

COOK (Parramatta).The imposition of this duty is merely a piece of bluff on the part of the Ministry intended to deceive the producer, for whose benefit it is ostensibly designed. The Ministry have professed anxiety all through to protect the primary producer, but they have imposed duties which, in almost every case, will be inoperative in that direction. It has been shown that arrowroot can be grown in Queensland without any protection at all.

Mr Salmon

- Is there no protection in Queensland ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes.

Mr Salmon

- Then why does the honorable member say that they can do without protection?

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

-Because they can supply the Sydney market. The duties are not required for the protection of the producers of arrowroot, but their effect will be to put money into the pockets of the manufacturer - money which they are well able to do without. The Government have taxed all the things which the farmer uses, but they have given him no compensation. The duty on arrowroot is one which will bear heavily on the general mass of the people, because it is an article that enters very largely into the composition of children's foods, and also into the diet of sick people. Although there was no duty imposed on arrowroot in New South Wales, prior to the introduction of the Federal Tariff, ,no material importations were made from abroad, but nearly the whole of the arrowroot consumed in that State was obtained from Queensland. In Victoria, a large sum has been extracted from the pockets of the taxpayers by means of the duty on arrowroot, and now it is proposed to extend the same operation to the whole of the people of the Commonwealth.

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Mr KIRWAN

- I was disappointed at the remarks of the Treasurer. I. had hoped that he would have treated arrowroot in the same way as the previous item. Notwithstanding what the Treasurer says, arrowroot is very largely used as an article of food for young children and delicate people. The Treasurer admits that this duty is



imposed for purely protective purposes; but it will certainly fall upon the shoulders of those who are least able to bear it - the sick and the young. Its only effect will be to increase the price of arrowroot throughout the Commonwealth, without in any way stimulating its production. I would point out that in New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia arrowroot was formerly admitted free, and that the same remark applies even to the highly protected colony of New Zealand. No good reason has been advanced why we should not follow the example which has been set to us by four of the States, in admitting this commodity duty free. The revenue which such an impost will yield will be very small indeed. . The Treasurer himself estimates that he will receive a total revenue of only £13,790 from arrowroot, tapioca, and sago. How much of that will be derived from arrowroot? I am satisfied that the bulk of it will be derived from . tapioca and sago. Very little arrowroot is' imported from outside the limits of the Commonwealth. Even in New South Wales, where it was formerly admitted free of duty, the quantity imported in 1900 was 200,000 lbs., of which only 13,750 lbs. came from beyond the Commonwealth limits. Nearly the whole of the amount which was imported from abroad came from the New Hebrides. I wish, further, to point out the extraordinarily high nature of this duty of 1d. per lb. The value of arrowroot is about 2Jd. per lb., so that the duty proposed represents considerably over 40 per cent. The sole effect of this duty will be to increase the price of the commodity to the consumers. The wholesale price which Messrs. Parsons Bros. Limited charged for arrowroot in Sydney on 1st September last was 2½d. per lb. for 7-lb. tins. In Melbourne, where there was a duty of 2d. per lb., the price was 5½d. per lb. for 7-lb. tins. That represents a difference, of considerably more than the duty. If we compare the prices two days after the imposition of the Tariff, namely, on 10th October, we find that in Sydney the wholesale charge had risen from 2½d. to 4d., whilst in Melbourne upon that day it was also 4d. The Government will receive practically no revenue from this duty, as nearly all the arrowroot consumed within the Commonwealth is imported from Queensland. The only effect of this impost will be to 'increase the price of arrowroot to the people by 1 ½d. per lb. Therefore, I shall vote in favour of placing this commodity upon the free list.

Mr. HENRY

WILLIS (Robertson).I hope that the Government will remit this duty, which really constitutes a tax upon a class of the community who ought not to be taxed, namely, the sick and the young. I would .point 'out that in a work recently published by

Dr.

Muskett, who is an authority upon children's ailments, it is declared that the mortality amongst children by reason of the fact that they are not able to obtain this class of nourishment, owing to its cost being beyond the means of the poorer people, is enormous. Yet the Government propose to tax this commodity. It seems to me that they could very well allow it to be placed upon the free list.

Mr. L.

E. GROOM (Darling Downs).I hope" that the Government will adhere to the duty proposed. In framing this Tariff, honorable members should recollect that they are legislating for a United Australia. They should bear in mind that there are a ' diversity of interests to be considered, and that not only are we framing a Tariff for the Commonwealth, but that we are superseding the policies which have hitherto been adopted in the various States. Consequently, it is our duty to study the industries which have grown up under the State Tariffs as far as we can do so consistently with raising sufficient revenue to meet the needs -of the Commonwealth. Honorable members upon the Opposition side have spoken entirely from the point of view of the State to which they belong ; but I would ask them to consider the position of Queensland, where the duty on arrowroot has hitherto been 1d. per lb. The manufacture of arrowroot is really one of the primary industries of that State. The country and conditions are suited for its cultivation,

And

the skill which has been applied in its production is bearing good fruit. I ask honorable members to look at this matter from the same stand-point as did Grover Cleveland, who, when he wanted to reduce the Tariff of the United States by 70,000,000 dollars, said-

Justness and fairness dictate that in any modification of our present laws relating to revenue, the industries and interests which have been encouraged by such laws, and in which our citizens have large investments, should not be ruthlessly injured or destroyed. We should also deal with the subject in such a manner as to protect the interests of American labour, which is the capital of our working men. Its stability and proper remuneration furnish the most justifiable pretext for a protective policy.

That is the utterance of a man who is inclined to be a free-trader. We are merely revising the Tariffs of the various Australian States, and it behoves us to see that the industries which have grown up in those States are not ruthlessly destroyed. As a representative of Queensland, I appeal to the committee not to alter this duty. In that State there are no less than thirteen factories engaged in the manufacture of arrowroot, and employing a large number of hands. In 1900 they manufactured 772,280 lbs., of which quantity they exported 463,617 lbs. In Queensland in 1900 the price of arrowroot varied from 2d. to 4d. per lb. This plant is not grown in Victoria. That the industry can be fostered and established by means of a protective duty has been abundantly proved by the experience in Queensland, and with the prospect of the wider market which the Commonwealth affords, it promises to become one of the great industries of Australia.

Mr Henry Willis

- Will this duty reduce the price?

Mr L E GROOM

- In Victoria the price will be less, and in New South Wales it will, I imagine, be very much the same as it has been hitherto. The imposition of this duty will foster the industry to such an extent that it will become a very valuable asset to the Commonwealth, and Queensland will have cause to congratulate herself that she joined in the federation.

Mr FOWLER

- I consider that this item should properly be placed on the free list. I am aware that the Government contends that arrowroot does not enter into the composition of invalids' food. I might even admit that. But if it does not, it forms of itself an invalids' food - one which is in fact consumed much more largely than are the higher-priced invalids' foods. I believe also that a medical man like the honorable member for Laanecoorie might argue that this particular form of invalids' food is sometimes abused, and that children are fed upon it to an undue extent. But the abuse of an article of diet in certain respects must not be taken to condemn the use of the article generally. I know that in Western Australia arrowroot is an article which is repeatedly recommended for use by medical men, and that taken in combination with milk, it is necessary for the preservation of the lives of a very large proportion of the people, young and old, not only upon the gold-fields, but even in the more settled parts of the country. It has been pointed out already that in New South Wales, where it was formerly admitted free of duty, the Queensland article was very largely used, and I see no reason to apprehend that it will not continue to be so used throughout Australia, irrespective of whether there is a duty upon it or not. In attempting to carry out the principles of protection in relation to an article of this kind, the Government are making a big mistake. The people of Victoria adopted ' the policy of protection because they thought that by so doing they were benefiting themselves ; and now for the first time in their history they are being asked to sanction protection to an industry outside of their own borders. That will cause them to reflect upon the true incidence of a protective policy. As a result, the protectionists throughout Australia will begin to realize that their pet policy means protection for one particular State to the detriment of the other five. They will begin to perceive that a protective policy always entails undue sacrifice on the majority of the community; and in view of what I have said, I hope the Government, even in their own interests, will consider the advisability of removing this duty.

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Mr MANIFOLD

- I hope the Government will not consent to the removal of this duty. The cry about taxing invalids' and infants' food has been made too much of, not perhaps to such an extent in this Chamber as by a section of the press, especially in Victoria. Arrowroot and other products of starchy roots are condemned by almost the whole of the medical profession as not good foods for invalids or infants.,

Mr Henry Willis

- Is not the starch extracted 1

Mr MANIFOLD

- To a certain extent the starch is extracted, but any medical man will at once say that arrowroot is one of the worst foods for young or sick children.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- If doctors do not prescribe arrowroot, the bulk of the consumption is by invalids and children, the

balance being so exceedingly limited as to be scarcely worthy of consideration. The effect- of this duty, in New South Wales particularly, but also I believe in Victoria, has been to increase the price of the article to the consumer ; and the idea of bringing about such a result for the benefit of an industry in one of the States, is monstrous in its injustice and absurd, in view of the fact that that State has practically the monopoly of the supply. There' is no reason, if the article be admitted free, why Queensland should not continue to enjoy this practical monopoly. In New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia, there has hitherto been no duty on arrowroot, and the result of the proposed impost must be to increase the cost. There is nothing to be urged in favour of the duty from a revenue point of view, the amounts realized in other States where a duty prevailed having been exceedingly small.

Mr Kingston

- There is a duty of 1d. per lb. on arrowroot in Tasmania.

Sir EDWARD BRADDON

- I do not defend the Tasmanian Tariff, which was framed at a time of pressure, when we were compelled to impose duties burdensome to the consuming classes. While I was Premier of Tasmania, I never attempted to defend the Tariff ; on the contrary, I endeavoured to reduce it very considerably, and in regard to this very item, I hope the committee will see fit to relieve the public of an additional charge on an article which enters largely into the lives of the poorer classes, and a charge which cannot by any means give us revenue or advance the interests of the Commonwealth.

Mr. A.

C. GROOM (Flinders). - A duty of 46 per cent, is enormous on an important article of food. It may be true that arrowroot is not a first-class food for infants, but, at any rate, it is in general consumption throughout the Commonwealth, especially amongst the poorer classes. A favorite argument amongst protectionists is that high duties always decrease prices. On 1st September, 1901, when there was no duty in New South Wales, the price of Parsons Brothers' arrowroot was 2½d. per lb., whilst in Victoria, under a duty of 2d. per lb., the price was 5½d. As showing the difference the new duties have made in the price of this article, we have the fact that on 10th October, two days after the Tariff was introduced, the price, alike in Sydney and Melbourne, became 4d. In 1900, when there was no duty in New South Wales, the importation of arrowroot into that State amounted to over 200,000 lbs., of which only 13,000 lbs. odd come from outside Australia. This shows distinctly that the whole supply of New South Wales was obtained from Queensland ; and if the same be the case in regard to the Victorian supply, we see that in this instance, at all events, protection does not lower the price. The Government should be prepared to reduce the duty by one-half, or what -would be better, place arrowroot on the free list.

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Mr WILKS

- We have been told that arrowroot, in the opinion of the medical faculty, is an injurious article of food, and if that be so, I do not see why we should assist this industry. Our duty would rather be to bring a Health Act to bear in order to prevent the consumption of arrowroot. Potatoes contain more starch than do any other vegetable, but surely on that account it would not be suggested that we should not eat potatoes. When the view that arrowroot is unfit for human consumption is entertained by one honorable member, and another honorable member advocates this duty on behalf of a certain industry, are we to understand that arrowroot is to be used only for the purpose of bill-sticking ? If so, honorable members will have to consider their own interests, and, in view of the next election, have the article placed on the free list. There is no argument in favour of the duty from a revenue point of view, and as the industry does not seem to require protection, I am prepared to vote for this article being placed on the free list.

Mr Manifold

- As a matter of personal explanation, I should like to say that I never described arrowroot as unfit for human consumption. I never wished the committee to understand that that opinion was held by medical men.

Mr McCAY

- As to the figures which have been quoted, showing the relative prices in Sydney and Melbourne on 1st September, 1901, I would point out that the 2d. per lb. levied in Victoria was a revenue duty, arrowroot not being manufactured in this State.

Mr A C GROOM

- It is not a revenue duty now.

Mr McCAY

- I am now referring to the figures which were quoted in order to show the weakness of the Victorian duty of 2d., and the virtue of the free-list in New South Wales ; and I am drawing attention to the further fact than when we impose revenue duties, which members of the Opposition so strongly advocate, the consumer certainly does pay an enhanced price. Now that Australia is federated, and the article is manufactured within our border, there will be no chance of making the consumer pay the duty, because there is no necessity for duty to be paid by anybody. As to the prices on 10th October, I should like to see a current price-list issued by the trade, and not a typewritten statement. I am not in a position to either confirm or contradict the statement as to the price being id. per lb. in Melbourne and Sydney on that date ; but accepting the first comparative figures as correct, for the purposes of argument, an explanation can be found in the fact that the 2d. per lb. in Victoria was a purely revenue duty. Will it be alleged that arrowroot is manufactured in Victoria ?

Mr Poynton

- The honorable member for Bourke said it was manufactured in Victoria.

Mr HUME COOK

- I was under a misapprehension.

Mr Ewing

- Arrowroot is manufactured largely in New South Wales.

Mr McCAY

- When it is found that prices are increased by the imposition of a duty for revenue purposes, it is hardly fair to say that the result is due to protection.

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson (Brisbane). - As far as Queensland is concerned the production of arrowroot is a very important though minor industry, and we sincerely hope that the proposals of the Government will be adhered to. Honorable members appear to forget that the duty will be levied only upon the imported article, and that it is directed against the cheap labour of the West Indies and other places.

Mr Poynton

- What we complain of is that the duty increases the price of the article that is made here.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- If we take the duty off arrowroot we shall also have to admit cornflour free. We know that cornflour is made in the old world from diseased potatoes, and that arrowroot is a much more pure and wholesome article of food. If arrowroot is placed on the free list we shall find our markets flooded with the products of coloured labour in other parts of the world, whereas if the duty is retained a promising industry will be encouraged and the price will not be increased to the consumer.

Mr. HENRY

WILLIS (Robertson). The honorable and learned member for Corinella has stated that arrowroot is sold in Sydney at higher prices than are obtained for it in Victoria.

Mr McCay

- I said just the opposite.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- As a matter of fact arrowroot is dearer in Melbourne than in Sydney to the extent of the duty levied in Victoria.

Mr McCay

- Because it is a revenue duty.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Arrowroot is sold in Sydney at 4d. per lb., and in Melbourne at 6d. per lb., because the Victorian duty of 2d. per lb. is added to the price. This clearly shows that the people have to pay the duty, and that is the reason why we object to the tax.

Mr Salmon

- If the article comes from Queensland there will be no duty paid upon it.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- That is so, but hitherto there have been importations of arrowroot from the New Hebrides, and also from the Sandwich Islands, and the imposition of the duty will have a tendency to keep up prices. The producers of arrowroot in Queensland require no protection, and the same thing applies to New South Wales. The only effect of the duty is to impose taxation upon the people for the benefit of a few manufacturers.

Mr. POYNTON

(South Australia).What I complain of is that the honorable and learned member for Corinella only used one-half of the figures which he had at his command for the purpose of supporting his argument that duties did not increase the price of goods in cases where they were made within a State. The fact is, however, that since the imposition of the Tariff the price of arrowroot has increased in States where it was previously admitted free, from 2fd. to 4d. per lb.

Mr Watson

- That is only a temporary increase in price.

Mr POYNTON

- The consumer has to pay the increased price all the same. Out of the total importation of 220,255 lbs. of arrowroot into New South Wales under the old Tariff only 13,000 lbs. were imported from beyond the Commonwealth.

Mr Harper

- Where does the honorable member get his figures from %

Mr POYNTON

- That has nothing to do with the honorable member.

Mr Harper

- Is the honorable member speaking on his own authority ?

Mr POYNTON

- I am satisfied that the figures are authentic. The honorable member is at liberty to refute the figures if he can. , Arrowroot is not a revenue-producing article, but the duty is imposed to enable the manufacturers to increase their prices, and the result is to impose a heavy tax upon the poorer classes. The duty amounts to £9 6s. 6d. per ton, and a much smaller impost would suffice to protect those engaged in the production of arrowroot.

Mr. A.

McLEAN (Gippsland).- The honorable member for South Australia,

Mr. Poynton,

has told us that the great bulk of the arrowroot consumed within the Commonwealth is produced in Queensland. None of that will be subject to duty in passing from one State to another.

Mr Poynton

- That does not affect the question.

Mr A McLEAN

- I know my honorable friend thinks that if a duty is put on any article, the price of that article must necessarily be increased to the extent of the duty, but I would point to the example of wheat, which was subject to a duty in Victoria of practically 3s. per cental, and yet did not, owing to the duty, command any higher price in the local market.

Mr Poynton

- That was because Victoria had a surplus to export.

Mr A McLEAN

- The honorable member admits that Queensland is eminently suited for the production of arrowroot, and if we encourage the industry it will, probably, very soon reach such a stage that we shall be able, not only to supply all our own requirements, but also to export large quantities. So far as we are concerned internal competition will suffice to keep prices down, and as soon as we produce sufficient for our own requirements, any nominal duty must become a dead letter.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I notice that the duties are not removed even when they do become inoperative.

Mr A McLEAN

- We have not removed the duties on butter and wheat because they do no harm. Before we imposed these duties we were large importers of those articles, but within a very reasonable time we became large exporters. We admit that the imposition of duties will increase prices at the outset, but as soon as we supply our own requirements local competition will become sufficiently keen to keep prices down. I merely rose for the purpose of showing that the imposition of this reasonable duty for the establishment of a new industry will not increase the price to the consumer, but will, within a short period, have the effect of permanently reducing it.

Mr HARPER

- I think I may fairly claim to know something about arrowroot, although I am not in any way interested in its production. I know the history of the arrowroot business, and I can assure the committee that at the present time it is essentially a Queensland industry. For years past that State has been producing nearly the whole of the supplies used in Australia. It is chiefly cultivated at a place called Pimpama, south of Brisbane. It can also be successfully produced on the northern rivers of New South Wales. When one reflects that Queensland is no better adapted for the production of arrowroot than is northern New South Wales, and that under a moderate duty the industry has flourished in the former State to such an extent that the whole of Australia draws its supplies from there, one is afforded strong evidence of the good effect of a protective tariff.

Mr Page

- How many men are engaged in it ?

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Mr HARPER

- I have not the statistics before me, but I know that the industry is what my friends opposite would call a primary industry. We are frequently asked how the farmers of the Commonwealth are to be benefited by protection. My reply is that they will be benefited by such duties as this. Arrowroot is pre-eminently an article which the small man can produce in a marketable condition, and sell to those who can distribute it throughout the various States. In the early days almost all the arrowroot consumed in Australia came from Great Britain. It was called "West India arrowroot."

Mr Mahon

- Do I understand the honorable member to say that all the arrowroot which is consumed in Australia comes from Queensland ?

Mr HARPER

- Yes.

Mr Mahon

- Why, 15,000 lbs. were imported into Western Australia from abroad in the year 1900.

Mr HARPER

- In the early days almost the entire consumption of Australia was met by imports from Great Britain. Those imports came in as "West India arrowroot." Some of the arrowroot imported may have been West India arrowroot, but my firm had an analysis made, and found that a great deal of it was potato flour, with an admixture of some other starchy material. Then Queensland began to produce it. The enormous superiority of the Queensland article at once enabled it to command a market. Of course, the protective duty imposed only benefited the industry in Queensland. When the Queensland arrowroot came to Victoria it had to pay a duty of 2d. per lb. In all the Southern States, where it was subject to purely revenue duties, these were added to the price, and that fact accounts for the difference in cost which has already been referred to.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Can it be grown in Victoria ?

Mr HARPER

- I believe that the climate of Victoria is too cold for its successful culture. The cultivation of arrowroot being pre-eminently a primary industry, in which small men are engaged, the duty proposed will simply have the effect, not of interfering permanently with the price of the article, but of keeping out of the country inferior brands which might otherwise come from abroad, and which no doubt are being imported into Western Australia at the present time. In Queensland and Northern New South Wales the output can be increased to an indefinite extent. Consequently local competition will regulate the price, and result in

the public being supplied with an article equal in quality to that obtainable in any part of the world, and superior to that of most places.

Mr R EDWARDS

- I hope that the Government will not give way in connexion with this duty. I assure honorable members that the growing and manufactures of arrowroot have become an industry of miserable magnitude in Queensland since an import duty was placed upon that commodity. Prior to the imposition of that duty, although the industry had been in existence for 30 years, it was anything but a success. Since then, however, it has taken very deep root in that State, and if the duty is continued for a few years longer, I am inclined to believe that it will thrive without it. Arrowroot is grown to a large extent in southern Queensland. An attempt has been made to cultivate it in the Johnstone River and Cairns district, but I do not know with what success. I am, however, given to understand that it is the intention of more than one planter in that locality to erect new factories conditionally upon the 1d. per lb. impost being retained. The industry is essentially a small farmer's industry, the area under cultivation in Queensland being divided amongst a considerable number of families. Altogether there are 700 acres under arrowroot cultivation there, and if this protective duty is retained, the industry will become a very important one. Hardly any other than white labour is employed in this connexion. Last year the production amounted to 772,280 lbs., out of which 463,617 lbs. were exported. I hope that the committee will allow the duty to stand.

Mr McDONALD

- I remember that this particular industry has been the subject of discussion several times in the Queensland Parliament, and it has always been referred to as a sort of one-horse industry. The principal cultivator of arrowroot in that State is a man who used to pay his employees 12s. 6d. weekly. He also deducted a percentage for wet days, and charged the men for their rations.

Mr L E GROOM

- How long ago is that?

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Mr McDONALD

- It is not so very long ago. I do not care to mention names, but the honorable member for Moreton will confirm what I say. I wish further to point out that arrowroot is not a good article of food. Even as an infants' food it is bad. In spite of the fact that for years past the industry has been protected, it has not grown to any considerable dimensions.

Indeed, it is generally believed that a number of the Queensland mills import large quantities of arrowroot from abroad, which they mix with the local article in order to make it marketable. To my mind the number of small farmers engaged in the industry could more profitably turn their attention to other pursuits.

Mr. WINTER

COOKE (Wannon). This is one of those questions which involves a very great principle. Some honorable members opposite base their views upon the statement of John Stuart Mill that it is necessary in a young country to protect - certain industries for a time, until they become strong enough to walk by themselves. Here is the case of an industry which has been brought into existence by means of protection. It is now strong enough to support thirteen factories, which are able to export to a free- trade State, and to sell the article which they produce in competition with the world. Is not this a case in which the industry should no longer need to be protected ? When is its infancy to cease ?

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actual revenue to be obtained from this -duty is small. If an industry which has been protected, and is exporting, cannot continue to live when the duty is taken off, how long has the duty to continue? I agree with the honorable member for Darling Downs that this Parliament is legislating for the whole of Australia ; though his real argument is that we are not legislating ;for the whole of Australia, but for a certain :number of growers in Queensland. It would !be to the advantage of the consumers throughout the Commonwealth, seeing that this arrowroot can be grown in Queensland in competition with the rest of the world, that this protection should be removed. "The honorable, member for Oxley has said that the duty may be removed in a reasonable time ; but there are very few, if any, instances of manufacturers coming forward and asking to be relieved of protection. In 1894 and 1895 there were. some reductions of duties in Victoria, but the great depression at that time was unfairly attributed wholly to protection, and it was that which made the reductions possible. . The protectionists have shown by their own arguments that

this duty can be dispensed with.

Mr KNOX

- While I agree that a considerable principle is involved, surely we might postpone the discussion of it until we come to some more important item. We are wasting time by wholly unjustifiable reiteration. I believe that the grower of arrowroot in Queensland will go on and prosper whether we continue this duty or dispense with it, and on this and many similar items I am prepared to cast my vote against protective duties without debate.

Mr CRUICKSHANK

- If I thought for a moment that this was going to be a revenue duty I should vote against it ; but whether the industry would not prosper under a 10% duty as well as under a 1d. duty is another matter. If the price has been raised in New South Wales, it is merely a trick of the trade, because the merchants of that State receive the arrowroot under precisely similar conditions to those which previously prevailed ; and prices will in the long run find their level. It has been shown that the greater part of the Commonwealth is fitted for growing arrowroot, and I draw a distinction between a native industry like this and one that is bolstered by protection. No doubt, as the output of arrowroot gets greater every year, the prices to the consumer will become lower. My opinion is that the imposition of this duty will not make arrowroot dearer to the consumer.

Mr O'MALLEY

- Accord - king to Coghlan, the birth-rate of Australia is decreasing, and it must continue to decrease if there be any increase in the cost of infants' food. I have no responsibilities, but I do not desire to increase the expenses of the working men who are building up this country, and increasing its population.

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Mr WILKINSON

- So far this industry has not assumed very great proportions ; but if Queensland should be able to supply the whole of Australia the duty would be inoperative. We have evidence that the protection granted to the Massey-Harris Company in Canada enabled them \* to obtain the home market, and to flood the markets of the world with their productions. Queensland is exporting arrowroot, not only into other States of the Commonwealth, but to Natal, Cape Colony, and even Great Britain, notwithstanding that only a small area of country is under crop at present. As to the allegation that large quantities of inferior arrowroot are imported and mixed with the local article, we find that while 728,000 lbs. were manufactured in Queensland last year, only 13,000

lbs. were imported, and the latter, it is quite likely, came in at some of the northern ports. The export of arrowroot from Queensland to the United Kingdom last year, amounted to 35,000 lbs., to Cape Colony, 92,000 lbs., and to New Zealand, 39,000 lbs., so that the Queensland article is finding its way into the markets of the world. If employers are mean enough to exploit their workmen it does not follow that they will be permitted to continue doing so.

Mr PAGE

- What is the average wage paid ?

Mr WILKINSON

- So far as my information goes, I am prepared to admit that the figures quoted by the honorable member for Kennedy are correct. The wages paid are low, but we are hoping that before long, Queensland in common with the other States will have similar laws to those which are in force in Victoria, and that no employer will be allowed to exploit his men. If, while protecting the manufacturer and the grower, we are able to protect the workmen, we are taking a step in the right direction.

Mr Page

- Protect the workmen first, and get protection afterwards.

Mr WILKINSON

- If Queensland supplies the whole of the Commonwealth, the imposition of this duty will not be felt ; but until that time arrives we are quite justified in making this small impost.

Mr. R.

EDWARDS (Oxley). - A wrong impression might be created by

what has fallen from the honorable member for Kennedy to the effect that this industry is in the hands of



one man in Queensland.

Mr McDonald

- I did not say that ; I said that one man was a very large producer.

Mr R EDWARDS

- Arrowroot growers in Queensland are very numerous, especially in the district of Oxley, and I think the information of the honorable member for Kennedy, as to this employer paying very low wages and making deductions on wet days, is incorrect.

Mr. McDONALD

(Kennedy).- I say emphatically that my information was obtained from the workmen themselves, and that if the honorable member for Oxley moved in the same circle as I do myself, he would have known the facts. The honorable member for Moreton can bear out everything I have said.

Mr PAGE

- In the Queensland Parliament the employer referred to, who was a member, was challenged on similar allegations. Why did he not then give a denial? I am not going to be a party to protecting to the extent of a farthing any industry in which proper wages are not paid.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- To those of us who have lived in a free-trade community one surprising feature of the debate has been the confession of protectionists as to the poor wages paid in protected industries all over the world. We were told the other day that in the country where there is the highest protection, the negroes employed in the tobacco and cigar trade are paid starvation wages, and now we find that in a Queensland industry the wages are 1 2s. 6d. per week. If these wages are all that a duty on arrowroot will give, this is not a native industry we need care anything about. This commodity is found upon almost every table throughout the Commonwealth, and surely we ought not to ask the people to pay a duty for the purpose of providing work at such a rate of remuneration. We are told now that more protection will enable better wages to be paid ; but there is more protection now than heretofore, and yet, with an increase in the price, we have heard of no increase in the wages. The honorable and learned member for Corinella says that it is the importer who adds to the price ; but if the grower or manufacturer in Queensland had not added to his price, the, importer could not very well have asked for more from the consumer, because, in that case, other people would have started to import at the enhanced profit.

Mr L E GROOM

- The duty will enable the growers to pay better wages.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- But have they paid better wages ?

Mr L E GROOM

- We hope to see them do so.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Let the honorable gentleman get a guarantee for the workmen before he asks for further protection. We might as well take the money out of the Treasury, and put it directly into the pockets of the manufacturers in Queensland. We have workmen coming about the precincts of this building in a state of sincere anxiety, believing that if the protection given to industries be reduced, they will lose their employment. These men have been so long accustomed in Victoria to protection that that is their sincere belief; but we in New South Wales have had a different experience.

Mr Mauger

- Journeymen cigar-makers in New South Wales have joined with their employers in the request for protection.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- We know how workmen can be got to join with their employers, and how some of these petitions have come to be signed.

Mr Mauger

- Does the honorable member make out that workmen are fools and rogues?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I never suspect workmen of anything so idiotic. It is the honorable member's own guilty mind that

suggests such a thing.

The CHAIRMAN

- I must ask the honorable member to withdraw that expression.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member for Melbourne Ports has made an infamous imputation.

The CHAIRMAN

- The honorable member for Parramatta must withdraw.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I withdraw, of course, but I would ask your protection, Mr. Chairman, against these interjections, which it is a strange thing you do not hear. They lead to a lot of trouble, and when we reply, you call us to order in a minute. I say that in some cases workmen sign these petitions when they do not care anything about the matter. In all the protected industries which have been referred to during the debate, we find that miserably low wages are paid, and that the increased duty seems to find its way into only one quarter. Until I have some guarantee that the duties are going to benefit those who find the labour, I shall continue to utter my protest against them.

Mr MAUGER

- I must object to the insinuation of the honorable member for Parramatta that the working men, either here or in New South Wales, have been coerced into signing petitions which they do not understand. The petitions that have been signed by the cigarmakers constitute an appeal on behalf of the operatives in all the States, and these men thoroughly understand what they want.

Mr. JOSEPH

COOK (Parramatta). - I did not make any insinuation such as the honorable member for Melbourne Ports suggests, but I repudiate the honorable members sinister insinuation. He must be blind, deaf, or something else--

The CHAIRMAN

- Order ! Both honorable members are getting away from the subject.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Yes ; but I am the one to be pulled up, as usual.

The CHAIRMAN

- Order ! I must ask the honorable member for Parramatta not to make reflections on the Chair. I am endeavouring to do my duty, and I do not think there is one honorable member who can charge me with partiality' to members on one side of the Chamber or the other. I have endeavoured to keep order, and I must appeal to the honorable member as one who has had a large parliamentary experience, and has been a Minister, to assist the Chair, and maintain the dignity of the committee.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- You said, Mr Chairman, that we were both out of order, and I was simply pointing to the fact that I was pulled up while the honorable member for Melbourne Ports was not checked. I repudiate the honorable member's insinuation, and he is not going to fasten it on to me. I stated that I believed that the people of Victoria had acted in sincere anxiety for their own welfare, and that they thought they were coming here on an errand which they had to perform in order to conserve their own interests.

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Mr GLYNN

- I wish to direct attention to one fact. Hitherto in New South Wales and South Australia arrowroot has been free, and there has been open competition in those markets between Queensland and the United Kingdom. We find that in South Australia, out of a total importation of 15,000 lbs. of arrowroot, 7,000 lbs. came from Queensland, and a little over 2,000 lbs. from the United Kingdom. Thus, with competition in a free port, the Queensland people got very much the better of their rivals. Out of the total importation of arrowroot into New South Wales, not more than 7 per cent. came from any other place than Queensland. It is absolutely ridiculous, therefore, to ask for more protection.

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

The committee divided -

27

AYES

32

NOES

Majority ... .. 5

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Mr POYNTON

- I move -

That the words "and on after the 23rd of 'November, 1901, 1/2d. per lb." be added.

The duty proposed in the Tariff amounts to 46 per cent. duty ad valorem, and the amendment will provide for a 23 per cent. duty, which ought to be a sufficiently heavy impost to place upon an article of food.

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

The committee divided -

29

AYES

30

NOES

Majority..... 1

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

REQUIRES UPDATING

Mr CONROY

- Although there are many honorable members on this side who think that we should proceed further in our objection, even in the face of the votes which have already been taken, we shall offer no further opposition to the duty on arrowroot.

Item agreed to.

Item 10. Bacon and hams partially or wholly cured, per lb; 3d.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- We have now reached the stage at which we must recognise a spirit of compromise. It has been understood all through that in raising the revenue necessary to keep the different States in a solvent condition, both sides must, to a greater or lesser extent, give up their extreme principles. I regret to say that in some of our debates a protectionist spirit has been evinced which almost amounts to one of prohibition. We do not intend to take any such extreme view as free-traders. Every one of the duties upon articles such as bacon and hams are, of course, more or less protective. But we acknowledge the fact that, if we are to raise a certain amount of revenue, we cannot have either a purely free-trade or a purely protectionist Tariff. Therefore it will be only fair and honorable for both sides to recognise the peculiarly anomalous position which we occupy upon this question. It might have seemed more in keeping with our principles to have proposed the excision of this item, but I recognise that revenue must be raised. If then, we are to tax the importation of bacon and hams what is a reasonable rate to impose? Putting a similar test to that which I have put in other cases, and taking the duties in force in the majority of the States, I find that the Government have gone a little too far in connexion with the proposed duty. In New South Wales bacon and hams were formerly admitted free; in Victoria there was a duty of 2d. per lb. upon them, in Queensland it was 3d., and in South Australia 4d. per lb. In Queensland there is a brand of bacon manufactured which is equal to anything in Australia, and far superior to anything one can get from New Zealand. Yet that industry does not require a heavy protective duty at the present time. In Western Australia- and Tasmania the duty imposed is 2d. per lb. I think that 6d. per lb. is a fair price for bacon as it comes out of the factory. Therefore, a duty of 2d. per lb. represents a protection of 33-1/3 per cent. When to that duty is added the over-sea charges from New Zealand, it will be seen that it is really a prohibitive impost, and will absolutely exclude the New Zealand bacon. In order to save time, therefore, the Minister for Trade and Customs might agree to a reduction of the duty proposed to the amount indicated.

Mk KINGSTON.- The Government believe that the rate proposed is a fair and legitimate one for the protection of one of the most important industries which Australia is capable of sustaining. I think that we should do all we possibly can for the purpose of securing this industry. ' I should like to mention to

honorable members that New South Wales in 1898 imported 403,000 lbs. of bacon and hams; and in 1899, 763,000 lbs.

Mr Thomson

- From where t

Mr KINGSTON

- I have not the particulars available at the present moment, but my colleague informs me that the bulk of it came from New Zealand. If we cannot produce bacon and hams of sufficient quality to satisfy the Australian taste - as some people seem to think - it seems to me that when those articles come from abroad we ought to exact from them a fair contribution to the revenue. The quality and character of the imported articles can well afford to pay this duty. Under the circumstances, therefore, I ask the committee to accept the proposal of the Government.

Amendment (by Sir William McMillan) proposed -

That the words "and on and after 23rd November, 1901, 2d." be added.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I wish to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs whether, in the event of it being discovered that the Tariff raises the price of meat to the miners, he will endeavour to arrange a reciprocal treaty with New Zealand for the free interchange of those products for which the two countries are best adapted ?

<page>7720</page>

Mr THOMSON

- I support the proposal of the honorable member for Wentworth. If we raise the duty upon these articles too much, we shall risk doing an injury to our producers. The one condition necessary, if we desire our producers to turn out a perfect article, is that there shall be a reasonable competition with that article from elsewhere. If we once erect a barrier within which a man is assured of his market, irrespective of the quality of the article which he produces, we shall reduce the level of the industry, and prevent the establishment of that perfection which will allow of export at some future date to other parts of the world. There is no reason why we should not have an export trade to the East and other places, but we must first give a competitive inducement to the production of an article of first quality. Ministers have failed to recognise that, even if they impose a protective duty of 3d., they cannot make it achieve the object which they have in view. Victoria has produced an admirable quality of hams and bacon, with a protection of 2d. per lb. The industry is flourishing here, and there is a large output. Under these circumstances, will that industry not be able to send its produce - for which 2d. per lb. has proved to be a sufficient margin of protection - throughout the other States, and thus destroy the very effect which the Government seek to bring about?

Mr SKENE

- The Minister for Trade and Customs has quoted statistics concerning the importations into New South Wales, but I would point out that he has failed to give any information regarding the importations into Victoria, Tasmania, or Western Australia, where a duty of 2d. per lb. has been operating. I would specially ask him if he can supply us with the figures relative to the importations into Victoria? Those having reference to New South Wales convey no information as to what a duty of 2d. per lb. will probably yield.

Mr GLYNN

- If the figures given by the Minister for Trade and Customs are analyzed, it will be found that they do not tell so strongly in his favour as he imagines. I think that a considerable quantity of the importations into New South Wales came from South Australia, and were forwarded to Broken Hill. I find that of the total export of bacon and ham from that State, 319,000 lbs. found their way into New South Wales. The carriage of bacon is pretty costly, and these figures indicate that nearly half the importations into New South Wales went to Broken Hill from South Australia. If we turn to the table of the imports of South Australia, we find that out of the total of 213,000 lbs., 126,000 lbs. came from New South Wales. Therefore, we have evidence that in New South Wales, protection was not required to stimulate the industry, because that State seems to be a large exporter. It is a large importer chiefly in connexion with Broken Hill. There is another matter in this connexion which we ought to consider. Four of the States are exporters of bacon and ham, and upon the principle that an exporting country does not need to be protected, that is an argument in favor of those articles being placed upon the free list. Although Western Australia, as a matter of fact, imports in excess of exports £85,000 worth of bacon and ham, in New

South Wales the excess value of the imports is £14,000 only. Tasmania, which is the other importing State, only takes an excess of £3,000 worth of bacon and ham from outside. We see, therefore, that the great importing State is Western Australia, that New South Wales is practically not an importing State at all, and that four out of the six States are exporters. Therefore, it appears to me, that the free-trade case is pretty strong. South Australia enjoys the highest protection. In that State the duty is 1d. per lb. more than is now proposed, and I know upon the evidence of a merchant, that they cannot produce in large quantities a good quality of bacon and ham there. Comparatively speaking, the biggest importation from England is into South Australia. In view of these considerations, the argument is in favour of placing bacon and ham upon the free list.

Mr E SOLOMON

- I wish to point out the position in regard to Western Australia. The total quantity of bacon and hams imported into that State in 1900 was 3,191,658 lbs. This was actually the produce of Australia. The quantity imported from the United Kingdom and other places outside the Commonwealth totalled only 150,941 lbs., notwithstanding the duty of 2d. per lb., which I suppose was imposed for protective purposes. That duty was fixed by the present Minister for Defence, with the view of producing revenue, and as a protection to the local growers. At the same time Western Australia imported very large quantities from the other States, and we ought not to increase the duty, seeing that these hams are used on the gold-fields and in the back country, where in many instances fresh meat is very scarce. The proposed addition of 1d. to the duty will be a burden upon those who can least afford it.

Sir WILLIAM

McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I am regarding this as a purely revenue duty ; and I again remonstrate with the Ministry for trying to establish an absolutely prohibitive impost. The whole of the revenue which the Treasurer estimates he will receive from the duty on bacon and ham, is £1,143, and I warn the Treasurer that, if he persists in his present course, we shall have to review the whole of this Tariff within twelve months, because he is simply throwing away duty.

Sir George Turner

- The honorable member said a few minutes ago that 2d. was a prohibitive duty.

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Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- I may have used an extreme term, but in any case 2d. is very near the prohibitive mark. And how much nearer prohibition is a duty of 3d. ? The retail prices of many articles are such that an addition of 1d. to the duty will make enormous differences. The present prices have been largely regulated by the duty of 2d., and there is neither reason nor common sense in forcing that duty up.

Mr Crouch

- We want to do something for the farmers.

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- At the present time in Australia we are curing bacon and hams that can almost compete with the world, the improvement in these commodities during the last five or six years having been enormous.,

Mr Crouch

- Do not the farmers deserve some consideration?

Sir WILLIAM McMILLAN

- Why is this duty put on - is it merely for pleasure, or is it for the purpose of obtaining revenue ? I am surprised at the obstinacy of the Minister, and I ask every reasonable man, even the most rampant protectionist, to vote for the amendment.

Mr PIESE

- I had hoped the Minister would see his way to accept the amendment. There are two States in which perhaps this increase of duty is of some moment. In Western Australia duty has to be paid on a large consumption, while in New South Wales the article has hitherto been admitted free ; and it is perhaps unwise to increase the price to a large proportion of the population of the Commonwealth, when the present duty has been the means of encouraging a flourishing industry in Victoria.

Mr KIRWAN

- The Treasurer estimates the total revenue which will be secured from bacon and hams throughout the Commonwealth at £1,143 ; but I think I can show that, under a duty of 2d., revenue to a larger amount

than that is obtained from Western Australia alone. The Treasurer estimates that the duty on bacon and ham in Western Australia will realize £62. But the total quantity of British and foreign bacon and hams imported into Western Australia last year, under a duty of 2d., was 20,123 lbs. of bacon, and 130,817 lbs. of ham- a total of 150,940 lbs. On that quantity, a duty of 2d. means £1,257, while a duty of 3d., presuming there is no increase in the importations, means £1,886. Under these circumstances I cannot understand how the change to 3d. per lb. can be expected to reduce the amount to £62

Sir George Turner

- My figures are calculated on the basis of Inter-State freetrade, which makes all the difference.

Mr KIRWAN

- But the figures I have quoted refer to British and foreign produce only - they have no application to Australasian produce.

Sir George Turner

- With a duty against the outside world, the Western Australian people will take Australian goods.

Mr KIRWAN

- The Treasurer is overlooking the fact that for the next five years there will remain the ordinary duty of 2d. per lb. in Western Australia. The Treasurer's estimate, I presume, is for the next financial year.

Sir George Turner

- No; it is for a normal year.

Mr KIRWAN

- Then the state of affairs on which the Treasurer's estimate is based will not come into existence for five years. There seems to be an extraordinary discrepancy, and anything the Treasurer has said fails to satisfy me that an error has not been made in the calculation.

Sir George Turner

- I have nothing to do with local duties which the Western Australian people may choose to impose.

Mr KIRWAN

- But surely the Treasurer takes existing conditions into consideration, and does not look forward to a state of things which will not come into existence for five years ?

Sir George Turner

- I have nothing to do with Inter-State duties in my calculations.

Mr KIRWAN

- But surely in giving honorable members information as to the amount of revenue to be received from these duties, the Treasurer takes everything into consideration?

Sir George Turner

- All I have to do with is Commonwealth revenue.

Mr KIRWAN

- But the figures I have given are based on British and foreign produce, apart altogether from Australasian produce.

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Mr KINGSTON

- The honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, has referred to the question of reciprocity with New Zealand. I can only repeat the observation which I made in introducing the Tariff, that our fiscal proposals considerably affect our relations at the present time with New Zealand. Our first duty is to adopt a uniform Tariff, on the basis of which it is possible New Zealand might approach us. All I can say at this moment is that we regret that our relations with New Zealand are not as close as they are with the States of the Commonwealth. We should have been delighted to see New Zealand a member of the Federation in the first instance ; and not only this Government, but any Government which happens to be in power, would undoubtedly give the most friendly consideration to any suggestion from that colony for more intimate relations with the Commonwealth. I feel that I am simply interpreting the wishes of all who have considered the question, but the honorable member for Tasmania will not expect me to say more on the subject. As to the amount of duty on this particular item, the honorable member for Wentworth has pointed out that 2d. is prohibitive.

Sir William McMillan

- I said that 2d. very nearly approached prohibition.

Mr KINGSTON

- The honorable member for Fremantle, Mr. E. Solomon, has urged that we ought not to cause the burden of taxation to fall on the backs of those, who are unable to bear it. I venture to think that the question chiefly resolves itself into one of taxing the dearer hams and bacon. These will be introduced and consumed by persons who can afford to pay for them under all circumstances, and may be regarded as absolute luxuries. To talk about those gentlemen who introduce these dearer hams and bacon, and who scorn the local product, as persons on whom the burden of taxation will bear, too heavily, is suggesting a state of things it is impossible to seriously contemplate. This is a question of taxing highly superior and much-desired articles, which are seldom secured except by those who can well afford to pay for them, and who will not unduly feel a little additional taxation.

Mr Thomson

- Why not prohibit importation ?

Mr KINGSTON

- I think a little extra revenue from those who use these articles will be particularly agreeable. We cannot give too much attention to a duty of this sort, which is important to Queensland and other States, which have been mentioned as producing excellent articles of this description. I was sorry to hear the remark which fell from the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, as to the worth of our South Australian product, but of course that is a matter of taste, and tastes differ. I am happy, however, to be able to quote, against the honorable member, the opinion of the acting leader of the Opposition as to the value of our products. When the honorable member for North Sydney suggests that it is necessary to have competition with the outside world in order to secure the quality of our hams and bacon, he is suggesting a position which cannot be seriously defended. When the States were divided, and each had its little market with small competition, something of the sort might possibly have occurred ; but the removal of the fiscal boundaries of the States will, I venture to think, supply that keenness of competition which the honorable member suggests is necessary to secure excellence. The Australian article is excellent already, and if further competition be desired for the purpose of perfecting it that competition will be provided by the means I have mentioned. '

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Mr THOMAS

- I shall support the amendment, and I only regret that the proposal is not to remove the whole of the duty. The estimated revenue from this item is very small. We ought not to rely for revenue upon duties upon the necessaries of life. Looking at the matter from a purely protectionist point of view, there is no necessity for a duty on bacon and hams, any more than on mutton, and why the Minister for Trades and Customs has not proposed a duty of 3d. per lb. on mutton I do not know. There should be no necessity to import any bacon into the Commonwealth. There is ample scope and opportunity for the production of all the ham and bacon that we consume. I have a letter here, dated 17th October, from the Broken Hill Chilled Butter and Produce Company, who ask whether something cannot be done to get rid of the differential railway rates that are now charged on the South Australian lines. If a ton of South Australian bacon is sent from Adelaide to Broken Hill, the railway freight is £1 17s. 7d., but if the bacon should happen to come from New South Wales or Victoria, or New Zealand, the freight is £5 14s. 5d. Therefore, the South Australian bacon-curers have had the protection of not only the import duty of id. per lb., but of £4 per ton in the shape of a preferential railway charge. Still they have not been able to supply their own market or the requirements of Broken Hill. Whether this arises from indifference or dislike to the occupation of rearing pigs, or from a preference for other and less natural industries, I do not know. The editor of the Agricultural Gazette, of New South Wales, informed me recently that there was no more profitable occupation in Australia than that of growing pigs. The proprietor of a poultry farm, near Sydney, who also rears pigs, informed me that his pigs were more profitable than his poultry. No protection was afforded by the New South Wales Tariff, and yet he could make a profit. If our own people will not produce bacon, let us get it from those outside who can supply us, and not charge our consumers 2d. per lb. more for the sake of protecting those who do not deserve any protection. This duty is of very little consequence from a revenue point of view, because the total amount expected to be raised under it is only about £1,100, and the people will have to pay considerably more for their bacon in order to benefit the revenue to that slight extent.

Mr Kingston

- The Victorian prices have not risen Id. since the Tariff.

Mr THOMAS

- Then the duty is of no use from a protective point of view.

Mr MAHON

- The Treasurer is finding that his Estimates, which were challenged some time ago, require considerable revision.. He expects to receive £62 from this duty in Western Australia, evidently assuming that British and foreign produce will cease to be imported, and that the requirements of Western Australia will be met by supplies from the eastern States. I quite appreciate the Treasurer's view, and I also understand the information which was volunteered by the honorable and learned member for Corinella, who seemed to think that honorable members on this side were quite ignorant of the effects of the sliding scale. The Government are imposing a duty of Id. per lb. more than was levied under the Western Australian Tariff, and whilst I admit that that will operate against the bacon and hams introduced from Great Britain, it certainly will not have the full effect the Treasurer seems to anticipate. If it operates at all, it will obliterate the revenue entirely.

Sir George Turner

- They will still import a very small quantity from Great Britain.

Mr MAHON

- Surely, if this duty operates at all, we shall, import a larger quantity than will yield £62 in the way of revenue. I want to show that this duty is not required from a protectionist point of view. I wish to show the Treasurer that, with a duty of 2d. per lb. against the eastern States, the produce from those States will more than hold its own. Last year, Western Australia imported only 20,123 lbs. of bacon of British and foreign produce, as against 2,800,000 lbs. odd, the produce of the eastern States. The quantity imported from beyond the Commonwealth limits, therefore, is practically a drop in the bucket. The position in regard to hams is almost equally decisive. Last year the hams of British and foreign produce imported into Western Australia totalled 130,817 lbs., as against 378,593 lbs. imported from the eastern States. I contend; therefore, that this duty is not required, even from a protective point of view. That being so, it is an unnecessary burden ; and, therefore, I hope the amendment of the honorable member for Wentworth will be

Mr A C GROOM

- I find that the quantity of bacon imported into Victoria for 'the year 1900 totalled 21,074 lbs., as against 2,205,474 lbs. exported. The total quantity exported by this State to foreign countries during the same period was 183,749 lbs. ; showing that the duty of 2d. per lb. which has been in operation was not required at all, and was absolutely prohibitive so far as the imports from foreign countries were concerned. I shall certainly vote for the amendment.

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Mr WILKINSON

- There is hardly an item in -the Tariff which will affect the southern parts of Queensland and the northern portions of New South Wales more than does this one. I speak on behalf of the southern portion of Queensland - for that " locality which is called the "Maize Country," and which is the great pig raising district of Australia. So far, all the speeches which have been delivered have been in favour of the consumer. But we must not forget that the man who is a settler upon the soil, together with his family, are consumers also. During the great banking crisis of 1893, it was the pig and dairying industries which saved the country. Now that these industries are assuming decent proportions, it would be cruel to take away that measure of protection which they have hitherto enjoyed, and to throw them into competition with the outside world. If we turn to statistics we shall find that settlement upon the land - which is the most desirable form of settlement that a country can have - has been greatly stimulated by travelling dairies and ham and bacon factories in Queensland. I would further point out to honorable members opposite that, after a short time, internal competition will bring down the price of any article which is produced locally, and that fact has been abundantly proved in Queensland, where excellent bacon and ham can be purchased at as low a figure as it can be bought at in any other part of Australia. If we allow this industry to come into competition with the outside world it will certainly suffer injury. I hope that the Ministry will not consent to any reduction in the duty.



Sir WILLIAM

McMILLAN (Wentworth). - I can prove to the honorable member for Moreton that the imposition of this duty will make no difference whatever to the State from which he comes. For nearly twelve months past it has been almost impossible to get bacon from Queensland into the market of New South Wales, because the people of the former State consume the whole of its product. At the present time probably the best bacon in all Australia is produced in Queensland. To-day, without any duty at all, Queensland can hold her own against either New South Wales or New Zealand ; and consequently it does not make the slightest difference, so far as the northern State is concerned, whether or not there is a duty. In 1900 Queensland imported 57,268 lbs. of bacon, and exported 1,650,000 lbs., and at the present time there is not one-tenth of the quantity of Queensland bacon going into New South Wales which that State would take if it could get it. The Minister for Trade and Customs when he talked of bacon must have meant ham, because he spoke of taxing the higher-quality article used by the extremely voluptuous man. As a matter of fact, there is no importation of bacon from beyond the sea, except from New Zealand. There may be a small quantity of ham imported, but even that has been decreasing ; and practically the ham manufactured in Victoria and Queensland is equal to any which can be imported. I honestly believe that, except in times of drought, or in times of great necessity, we could afford, without injuring the industry in Australia, to put this article on the free-list. But I recognise the fact that this is regarded as a revenue item, and there is no use in attempting prohibition. No honorable member will have the temerity to say that in dealing with this Tariff every possible item should be raised to such a rate as to prohibit the foreign article ; but really that is what honorable members are trying to do.

Mr. L.

E. GROOM (Darling Downs). I hope the acting leader of the Opposition will not press the amendment. So far as Queensland is concerned, this duty has done more than any other to assist agriculturists engaged in this industry. I know the honorable member is eager to give every assistance to the farmer ; and I would point out to him that in Queensland this industry had practically no existence until there was imposed a duty, which, however, was by no means prohibitive. I understand that the honorable member for Flinders is an advocate of moderate duties, and I appeal to him not to support the amendment. The possibilities of this industry are practically unlimited. There are four States in Australia which Queensland ought to be able to supply, and we have the country, the foodstuffs, and the factories, not long established, with men of the requisite skill. Last year Queensland exported 1,229,890 lbs. of bacon, of which New South Wales took 1,039,972 lbs.; and 64,671 lbs. went to the Philippine Islands.

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Mr FOWLER

- I am at a loss to understand what underlies the proposals of the Government in matters of this kind. We have here an industry, granted to be of considerable importance, which has thrived under a duty of 2d. per lb. Any one who wishes to produce pork can do it with advantage under such a duty; and if, in addition, we can get a little revenue, and also perhaps slightly ease the price to the consumer, I cannot understand why the Government refrain from taking advantage of the occasion. We have been taunted from the other side that we are objecting principally to revenue duties, but it would be well for the people of Australia to fully realize that it is this policy of protection run mad which kills revenue.

Question - That the words proposed to be added, be so added - put.

The committee divided -

23

AYES

30

NOES

Majority..... 7

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

Item agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT

Additional Sitting Day - Christmas Adjournment - Federal Capital Site

Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - I move -

That this House do now adjourn.

It does not follow, because we are adjourning early to-day, that we shall not seek the assistance of honorable members in getting through more business on following Fridays.

Mr MAHON

- I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he proposes to adopt the suggestion made by the Age, the great democratic newspaper, and the apostle of an eight hours working day? In a leading article to-day the Age says- .

At present the House meets four days a week. Why should it not meet every day until it has disposed of the Tariff? And instead of working from 2.30 p.m. till . 11 p.m., what is to hinder it working from 9 a.m. till 3 a.m. daily. The majority of the Chamber has the matter of procedure in its own keeping.

This great radical journal, which receives the support of the advocate of the eight hours system, wants honorable members of this' House, and the Speaker, clerks, and other officers, to work for eighteen hours a day; I wish to know whether the Prime Minister, who is so responsive to the suggestions of the Age in other respects, intends to adopt this proposal ?

Mr O'MALLEY

- Would it not be better for the Prime Minister to call us together every morning at 10.30, on four days of the week? It is, of course, inconvenient to members' who reside in South Australia, or in New South Wales to come here on Mondays.

Mr BARTON

- We can discuss this matter on Tuesday next.

Mr PAGE

- It seems to me that it is only the representatives of two great States who are considered in this matter, and I desire to enter my emphatic protest.

Mr SPEAKER

- The Prime Minister has just called attention to the fact that notice of motion has been given for Tuesday next in regard to the question which is now being debated. Honorable members must not anticipate the discussion of that motion.

Mr BAMFORD

- I suggest that the Prime Minister in his statement on Tuesday next, should indicate what is to be done with regard to the Christmas adjournment. Honorable members are anxious to know over what period the adjournment will extend.

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Mr McDONALD

- I hope the Government will take into consideration the desirability of making the adjournment as short as possible, in order to meet the convenience of those honorable members who are anxious to close the session.

Mr: JOSEPH COOK (Parramatta).I should be glad if the Prime Minister could also tell us what definite steps are to be taken in regard to the fixing of the Federal Capital site.

Mr. BARTON

(Hunter- Minister for External Affairs.) - I may or may not be able on Tuesday to say something about the Christmas adjournment, but I hope I shall be. For the present I shall avoid any reference to the extension of the sittings of the House, beyond saying that it is not my intention to enter into any controversy, with either the eight hour journals or their opponents. I hope that the honorable member for Maranoa, who has referred to the special consideration shown to honorable members from the great States, will not get into such a great state as to think that I have any ulterior motives in my mind, or that I shall show any undue preference.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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16:00:00

House adjourned at 4.0 p.m.