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1901-09-26

House of Representatives.

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

QUESTIONS

BONUSES TO FARMERS

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- Some few days ago I asked the Minister for Trade and Customs a question with regard to the payment of certain bonuses to the farmers of Victoria, and he was kind enough to promise that he would procure certain papers relating to the matter. I would like to ask now what has been done in fulfilment of that promise.

Minister for Trade and Customs

Mr KINGSTON

- I brought the papers down to the House yesterday, for the purpose of showing them to the honorable member, and I will again send for them.

PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES ACQUISITION BILL

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

- In answer to a question yesterday I made reference to certain communications which have passed in connexion with the Property for Public Purposes. Acquisition Bill, and I think it well for the information of honorable members to now lay on the table the telegram which I received from the Premier of New South Wales, the telegram which I sent in reply, and two telegrams which I received from the Premiers of Queensland and South Australia respectively. As I do not think that under the circumstances it will be necessary to go to the expense of printing these papers, perhaps the House will permit the clerk to read them.

Papers read.

THE FEDERAL COMMANDANT : KANAKAS

Mr REID

- I would ask the Prime Minister whether the Government are responsible for giving information upon which certain statements are made in one of the newspapers this morning. I refer to the following paragraph : -

When Mr. Barton lays on the table of the House of Representatives the correspondence and cables exchanged between the Federal Government and the Imperial War-office in respect to the Federal Commandant, a curious story will be revealed. It appears that the Imperial authorities have been engaged in an attempt to bounce the Federal Government, not only into granting a much larger salary to the commandant than Mr. Barton has specifically stated is possible, but into permitting the incoming officer to bring out some members of the head-quarters staff with him. The War-office wants the commandant to be allowed to bring out his quartermaster-general. Apparently - though this point is not quite clear - the War-office has even ventured to offer the commandantship to officers without consulting the Federal Government as to whether they would be acceptable.] n the face of these curious tactics on the part of home wire-pullers, the Federal Government is maintaining the proverbial " stiff upper lip." The ' War-office has been pointedly but politely told that the Australian Government will grant no further salary than that already stipulated, and that Australia has officers fully able to fill the position of quartermaster-general. If communications which pass between the Federal Government and the Imperial authorities can conveniently be made public, it is well, I think, that they should be laid before the representatives of the people in Parliament, and that honorable members should not be left to look to newspaper paragraphs for official communications of great importance and interest to the public. It would be infinitely preferable that these papers should be laid on the table, but if they are communicated to the press they should be given, not to one paper, but impartially to the leading papers of the metropolis. I think my right honorable friend will agree with me that it is very inconvenient that such information should appear in the form of paragraphs so constructed as to lead us to believe that some communication has been made to a person connected with a newspaper on this subject.

Mr BARTON

- I am quite sure that my right honorable friend's experience will satisfy him that Ministers are not responsible for the state in which the press publishes what it chooses to call information. No information has been given by me which would warrant the paragraph the right honorable gentleman has read, and I am confident that none has been given by any of my colleagues. I know the Minister for Defence too well to suppose for a moment that he has communicated anything to the press, and moreover, the information, if correctly given, would not support such a paragraph. There has been no attempt on the part of the Imperial authorities to bounce the Commonwealth. My right honorable friend knows very well that in filling appointments such as this delays occur which are inseparable from the nature of things - especially when one considers the difficulty of obtaining a high officer to take up duties involving the command of the forces of a whole continent at such remuneration as the finances of the Commonwealth allow to be offered. I do not want to disclose anything further on this occasion, because I think the right honorable member will agree with me when I say that in many of these cases a premature disclosure of communications which have passed is apt to render entirely futile the negotiations in which the Government are engaged. I will ask the right honorable gentleman to have sufficient confidence in me to believe that as soon as I can lay on the table the papers relating to this matter I will do so, but I will endeavour to get the transaction completed before the communications are made public. In the meantime I would ask honorable members not to give too much credence to the statements in the press, because the contents of the papers have not been divulged, and any statements on the matter must be purely speculative.

Mr O'MALLEY

- I would ask the Prime Minister whether the same remarks would apply to the information about kanakas published in the Argus ?

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Mr BARTON

- If I knew what statement the honorable member was referring to, I should be prepared with a reply, but, the House meeting in the afternoon, have no time to read the morning newspapers, much as I delight in newspaper literature.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL

Third Reading

Mr. DEAKIN(Ballararat- Attorney-

General). - Before the third reading of the Bill is proceeded with, it is perhaps desirable, in view of the short time that will elapse for the consideration of this measure in another place, that we should omit the words in the first clause which propose to make the Act operative from the 1st October of the present year. Obviously that date will be too soon. I therefore move -

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clause1.

Motion agreed to.

In Committee(Recommittal) :

Clause 1 (Short title and commencement).

Amendment (by Mr. Deakin) proposed -

That the words " 1st day of October 1901 " be omitted."

Mr GLYNN

- I wish to ask the Attorney-General a question upon a matter to which I have referred previously. I do not think that this Bill will bind the Crown, unless it is expressly provided that it shall do so. I understand from the Attorney-General that a Bill is to be introduced to allow of petitions of right in all cases against the Crown. I merely wish to point out that until this Bill has been passed - and I do not know whether it is intended that it shall see the light during the present session - the remedies given against the Crown in this measure are nugatory.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

- The Bill to which the honorable and learned member refers will be supplied by a brief non-party measure, which I trust will be passed, no matter how busy the remainder of the session may be.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with a further amendment, and report(with concurrence) adopted.

Motion (by Mr. Deakin) proposed -

That the Bill be read a third time.

Mr POYNTON

- I do not know whether this is the proper time to refer to the matter, but I wish to mention that a number of circulars received in South Australia, and relating to the conduct of a German lottery, have recently been brought under my notice. I wish to ascertain from the Attorney-General whether this Bill will operate against that class of correspondence in the same way that it will operate against " Tattersall's." I understand that the lottery to which I refer is carried out under the authority of the German Government, but if we are to be just in this matter, it seems to me that the same principle that is applied to " Tattersall's" consultations under clauses 54 and 55 of this Bill ought to be applied to all lotteries.

Mr DEAKIN

- I would point out in reply to the honorable member that clause 55 reads as follows -

The Postmaster-General, if he has reasonable ground to suppose any person to be engaged either in the Commonwealth or elsewhere in receiving money or any valuable thing -

The words " or elsewhere " clearly cover the point raised by the honorable member.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I asked a question in connexion with this very matter.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I rise to a point of order. I understand that the Attorney-General has replied upon the third reading of the Bill.

Mr SPEAKER

- There is no reply upon the third reading of a Bill. The Attorney-General cannot speak again, but any other honorable member can speak, if he has not already spoken.

Sir MALCOLM McEACHARN

- I desire to know whether the Postmaster-General will take any action in connexion with this matter. If the particular provision referred to is to apply to the various States, action should also be taken to make it applicable to this German lottery.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I wish to ask the honorable member for Melbourne what action he suggests should be taken, seeing that there is no distinguishing mark upon these circulars to indicate where they come from.

Senator Malcolm McEacharn

- They bear the name of the place from which they come.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And is the nature of the business to which they relate also disclosed ?

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Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- Yes.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I was not aware of that. If that be so, I think that undoubtedly such correspondence should be stopped ; but if, on the contrary, these letters are closed, and there is no means of ascertaining the business to which they relate, it would be most improper for the Postmaster-General to open all letters received, with the object of preventing the transmission of such correspondence. The only effective way to stop such circulars is to prevent their delivery here. That remedy, however, can be applied only if it appears from the surface of the letters that they refer to business which is not legitimate. All this seems to indicate that there is not in the Post-office a batch of officials who go about with a search light wanting to open everybody's letters on the the supposition that they have reference to some gambling transaction. Here we have evidence that letters are not indiscriminately opened. I want to emphasize this point in order to disprove the allegations which were made against the postal authorities during the recent debate in connexion with this Bill.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- It is the replies that we want to stop.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- How can the honorable member prevent a reply being sent unless he can show that such reply is part of a gambling transaction % Of course, if he could supply that proof, there would be some legitimate ground to warrant the Postmaster-General taking action.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a third time.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION BILL

In Committee(consideration resumed from 25th September, vide page 5181) :

Clause 4 -

The immigration into the Commonwealth of the persons described in any of the following paragraphs of this section (hereinafter called "prohibited immigrants") is prohibited, namely : -

Any person who when asked to do so by an officer fails to write out and sign in the presence of the officer a passage of 50 words in length in the English language dictated by the officer.

Upon which Mr. Watson had moved, by way of amendment -

That after the word "namely," line 5, the following words be inserted: - {a) " Any person who is an aboriginal, native of Asia, Africa, or of the islands thereof." 15 o

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Minister for External Affairs

Mr BARTON

. - It is not necessary of course to state at this stage that the Government will oppose the amendment which has now been put from the Chair. I have waited some time with the intention of speaking immediately in answer to the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. My chance in that respect has only now arrived. I am not quite sure whether our standing orders allow of a reply being made upon the second reading of a Bill, but I might have replied upon that occasion if they permit of it. But it seemed to me it would accord more with the duty which I owe to this House if I waited till the amendment had been specifically moved, and then addressed myself to that amendment, which, after all, covers the whole ground of the discussion upon which we have entered. I am against an amendment of that kind for many reasons. If I thought it was the only way by which we might secure ourselves against the undue intrusion of elements which we have never welcomed, and which we shall never want, I might take a different course. But inasmuch as I do believe - and I think I shall substantiate this belief - that the course which the Government propose is equally effective for the purpose, or can be proved to be so far effective that it deserves a trial before any point or part of the relations between us and the rest of the Empire is disturbed - I think that that course deserves preference. This matter had been the subject of a very great deal of discussion before this Bill was brought forward. It has shouldered for years past. As far back as 1892, I remember being engaged with my present colleague, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, both of us being members of a Ministry at the time, in an endeavour to frame a Bill to meet this difficulty. Before we were able to lay such a Bill upon the table of the House, we had left office ; but I remember the difference that we felt between the anticipations with which we commenced the framing of that Bill, and the realizations of its difficulties when we endeavoured to frame it in such a way as to preserve the harmonious relations between us and the mother country. That difficulty was felt afterwards by others. It was felt by the present leader of the Opposition, with results which I shall endeavour to describe from that contemporary history called Hansard. It was equally felt in Natal. It was overcome there by proposals such as we are formulating now - -which are similar in spirit though not in very words - and overcome to this extent - that, whilst the Act did not succeed in extruding the overwhelming influx which had occurred before it came into operation, we have authority, which I shall quote, strong enough to convince us that it has since been successful in checking any further influx. What is the history of the matter? Before the period of the conference, which was held in England in 1897, at which the Secretary of State for the Colonies presided - and those who know him and have met him at such a conference will, I think, bear me out that he does not possess the character of a dictator to the colonies which some have endeavoured unjustly to fasten upon him - this question had been seething in the public mind, and so far as the Chinese are concerned, it had been partially settled. It had been absolutely settled in one colony, and of late years the influx into that colony has been far out balanced by the departures, and that is the colony which passed the severest test. I am speaking of only the Chinese influx, and of the State measures

which were endeavoured to be taken in the year 1896, the year before the conference to which so much allusion has been made. The right honorable the leader of the Opposition, who was at that time Premier of New South Wales, brought in a Coloured Race Restriction Bill, on which both he and the honorable member for Wentworth gave the New South Wales Parliament their views. This measure proposed to extend the provisions of the Chinese Restriction Act to all coloured aliens, and in that respect it resembled the amendment which the honorable member for Bland has proposed, because it dealt specifically with people on account of race and colour. On the 13th October, 1896, the honorable member for Wentworth made a speech upon the question. The honorable member will not expect me to quote the whole context, but he will correct me if any extract I quote seems unfair to him. I hope that he will find nothing offensive in my manner of dealing with these matters. I think his attitude has changed ; I shall show, I think, that it has, and I find myself in a state of wonderment as to how the change has occurred.

Sir William McMillan

- I said in my own speech that my views had changed.

Mr BARTON

- I am not satisfied with the reasons the honorable member has given for the change ; and we are all entitled to deal with each other in matters of reason. The honorable member's bona fides is always apparent, but I am entitled to challenge the reasons on which he comes to his conclusions. The honorable member on that occasion said -

I candidly admit that if we had the power, and if the British Government give us the power -

I wish to be perfectly fair in giving this as a preface to the quotation. The honorable member continued - I would go to any extreme of prohibition to prevent a large number of these coloured people from settling in the waste lands of the tropical parts of Australia. We occupy, I must confess, rather a mean position. We propose to shut out a nation which is rising into the first class by energy, by intellect, and by material resources - I mean the Japanese. What is the position which an Australian takes up? An Australian will not allow a Japanese to come into his own country, but he goes into Japan, and calls himself a British subject, and any man who attempts to shut him out, he threatens with the British flag.

These are not my views, but are the views expressed on that occasion by the honorable member for Wentworth. The report proceeds -

Mr. Davis. You cannot do it according to the Attorney-General.

Mr McMILLAN

- There is no doubt that any British subject can get into Japan as a free citizen, without any stigma being cast on his colour or his race.

Mr J C Watson

- He is restricted to one quarter.

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Mr McMILLAN

- We are creating an anomaly, and, in my opinion, a very mean position for ourselves as British subjects. I am not denying the necessity for this legislation, although I do not agree with many people that it is as imminent a danger as they think ; but I say most emphatically that this is the first of a series of Acts which must bring us face to face sooner or later with the particular tie which binds us to the mother country. For instance, if I may digress, there is a general idea amongst colonial statesmen that we ought to be able to make independent treaties even with foreign countries. That is another question which is in the near future. But I would ask the Premier--

The honorable member meant the present leader of the Opposition. He continued - to seriously consider that it may be better to suspend the operation of this Bill until it is known what the action of the British Government will be. Nobody can say at this moment whether it will be allowed or disallowed. I think it will be more courteous, more dignified, and equally independent if we allow sufficient time to the British Government to give a clear-cut opinion on this question before they allow the Bill to come into operation.

Mr. Wilks. - Hansard ought to be burned.

Mr BARTON

- No doubt some people regard it as a seditious and scurrilous publication.

Sir William McMillan

- Since then the British Government have given us rights in regard to immigration.

Mr BARTON

- The description given of that speech by the leader of the Opposition, who is now at one with the honorable member for Wentworth upon this question, is as follows : -

With reference to the speech of the honorable member for Burwood (Sir William McMillan), I do not think it is unfair to say that it was a speech of a character which suggested that, if there was any considerable party in this House actively opposing the Bill, the honorable member would be found at the head of that party, in a very bitter and determined opposition to the proposal of the Government.

The attitude of the leader of the Opposition at that time was that a proposal of the character of that which has been made by the honorable member for Bland, went a great deal too far. In fact, I shall show that he was of opinion that a proposal such as that made in the following year also went a great deal too far. Nevertheless, within the last fortnight we find him taking up the mental attitude that a similar proposal in the Bill now before the House does not go far enough, and I am at a loss for the reason.

An Honorable Member. - He has had experience since then.

Mr BARTON

- Honorable members may make all sorts of excuses for the leader of the Opposition, but that shall not deter me. At page 3,952 of the same volume of the New South Wales Hansard of 1885, I find the honorable member for Wentworth reported as saying -

We are brought in this debate face to face with the problem of our position as British citizens. We intend by this Bill, not merely to keep out coloured races who are aliens to ourselves, but coloured races who stand exactly in the same position as ourselves in every part of the world, and who seek the protection of the British flag.

That, it seems to me, is almost a prophesy of what the Secretary of State for the Colonies said afterwards. The honorable member proceeded -

I take it for granted that we are not so silly as to be frightened at a very small fractional increase of the alien population ; but it is because we foresee, or think we foresee, that if we do not take these drastic measures, our population will suffer, and that this proportion will grow till it becomes a considerable integral part of the whole. That is the position I think we take up. That is our reason for doing it ; but what is it, after all, that allows us to do it ?

This is where my honorable friend was most impressive -

It is simply the fact that we are British citizens. If we were not British citizens, if with this enormous territory - because I am looking at it from the federal point of view -

The convention had not met then. The honorable member proceeded - with 8,000 miles of coastline, more or less, we were separated to-morrow from the mother country, it would be a much more serious matter than it is to attempt legislation like this.

I am afraid I very much agree with my honorable friend in that.

Mr Page

- He has seen the error of his way since then.

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Mr BARTON

- We will see whether he has. He then said -

I should have been glad if the Premier had told us that some kind of diplomatic correspondence had been going on between the Home Government and ourselves during the last eighteen months.

He referred to the Hobart Conference held in the previous March, and being assured by my honorable friend that it was not referred to there, he went on to say -

Well, even so, it does seem to me that our position would have been a stronger one - and that this House ought reasonably to ask for it before we pass a Bill like this - if the opinion of the British Government had been obtained as to how this Bill will be met when it gets to the old country. I would point out that, if this Bill happens to be disallowed, we shall be placed in a very humiliating position.

Then he went on to put forward the suggestion that instead of the Bill coming into law on the 1st January, it should come into law only by proclamation. He continued -

Then the Government would have the power to hold over this Bill, at any rate, until we saw whether it was in consonance with the views of the British Government, and we should not have the humiliation of passing a Bill and letting it be known to the world, and then having it stopped by the action of the Home

Government.

That attitude was confirmed on a later occasion, but before coming to that, I may be allowed to refer to a few of the intervening facts. In the interval there occurred a conference in England, and a speech then made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies has already been quoted in this debate. That speech was made with a view of pointing out to the assembled representatives of the British colonies, the difficulties of the British Government in assenting to certain classes of legislation. The legislative power was not denied, but it was pointed out that it drove the British Government into a position of withholding, if necessary, or of not withholding the Royal assent- that it placed the Government in the dubious and difficult position that if they did that which their hearts prompted them to do, in giving full sway to the legislation of autonomous countries such as these, it embarrassed, and might embroil their relations with other powers, and that it was not right to place the British Government to the stress, or the Crown to the painful necessity of assenting to such acts if other equitable and effective means could be found for carrying out the popular will.

Mr McDonald

- Is that Mr. Chamberlain's speech ?

Mr BARTON

- That is what he said on the subject.

Mr McDonald

- I should like to hear it quoted at length.

Mr BARTON

- I would quote the whole passage if I had it by me.

Mr McDonald

- I will get the whole of it.

Mr BARTON

- At any rate, honorable members may take it from me that that is the construction which I think any reasonable mind would place on what the Secretary of State for the Colonies said.

Mr Kirwan

- That was four years ago.

Mr BARTON

- I admit that it was four years ago, and I shall come to the question of the lapse of time in a few minutes.

Mr Spence

- There have been big changes since then.

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Mr BARTON

- There have been big changes, and I will, come to those also. That was the position in effect taken up by the representative of the then Queen's Government in England - that the Government ought not to be put to this painful necessity. I find I have the text of Mr. Chamberlain's speech here, and I shall read it. It has already been read in the course of this debate, but as an honorable member asks me to quote it again, I cannot well refuse his courteous request. Speaking of legislation in progress in regard to aliens, and particularly Asiatics, Mr. Chamberlain said -

I have seen these Bills, and they differ in some respects one from the other, but there is no one of them, except perhaps the Bill which comes to us from Natal, to which we can look with satisfaction. I wish to say that Her Majesty's Government thoroughly appreciate the object and the needs of the colonies in dealing with this matter. We quite sympathize with the determination of the white inhabitants of these colonies, which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of millions of Asiatics, that there shall not be an influx of people, alien in civilization, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx, moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population. An immigration of that kind must, I quite understand, in the interests of the colonies, be prevented at all hazards, and we shall not offer any opposition to the proposals intended with that object, but we ask you also to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which makes no distinction in favour of or against race or colour, and to exclude, by reason of their colour, or by reason of their race, all Her Majesty's Indian subjects, or even nil Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples, that it would be most painful, I am quite certain, to Her Majesty to have to sanction it.

There he offers opposition, not to the exclusion of those whom we wish to exclude, but to their exclusion for the humiliating reason of their colour or their race, which, he says, is alien to the traditions and the whole policy of the Empire. Mr. Chamberlain went on -

Consider what has been brought to your notice during your visit to this country. I shall read the passage about the Indian princes, to which some honorable members seem prone to take a little exception. This speech was made during the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. Mr. Chamberlain proceeded -

The United Kingdom owns, as its brightest and greatest dependency, that enormous Empire of India, with 300,000,000 of subjects, who are as loyal to the Crown as you are yourselves, and among them there are hundreds and thousands of men who are every whit as civilized as we are ourselves, who are, if that is anything, better born in the sense that they have older traditions and older families, who are men of wealth, men of cultivation, men of distinguished valour, men who have brought whole armies and placed them at the service of the Queen, and have in times of great difficulty and trouble, such for instance, as on the occasion of the Indian mutiny, saved the Empire by their loyalty.

It is consistent with what the right honorable gentleman said, to mention at this point that I do not believe that any considerable proportion of gentlemen in the House would wish in the case of those Indian princes, to put them to the humiliation of such a test as is proposed in this Bill. Mr. Chamberlain proceeded -

I say, you, who have seen all this, cannot be willing to put upon those men a slight which I think is absolutely unnecessary for your purpose, and which would be calculated to provoke ill feeling, discontent, irritation, and would be most unpalatable to the feelings, not only of Her Majesty the Queen, but of all her people.

What I venture to think you have to deal with is the character of the immigration. It is not because a man is of a different colour from ourselves that he is necessarily an undesirable immigrant, but it is because he is dirty, or he is immoral, or he is a pauper, or he has some other objection which can be defined in an Act of Parliament, and by which the exclusion can be managed with regard to all those whom you really desire to exclude. Well, gentlemen, this is a matter I am sure for friendly consultation between us -

There is no hectoring there -

As I have said, the colony of Natal has arrived at an arrangement which is absolutely satisfactory to them, I believe ; and remember they have, if possible, an even greater interest than you, because they are closer to the immigration which has already begun there on a very large scale, and they have adopted legislation which they believe will give them all that they want, and to which the objection I have taken does not apply, which does not come in conflict with this sentiment, which I am sure you share with us - and which the visiting Premiers showed they shared with Her Majesty's Government - and I hope, therefore, that during your visit it may be possible for us to arrange a form of words which will avoid hurting the feelings of any of Her Majesty's subjects, while at the same time it would amply protect the Australian colonies against any invasion of the class to which they would justly object.

There is the whole speech, with the exception of a few complimentary words at the end.

Mr McDonald

- It does not refer to any outside subject. The right honorable and learned member said it did in the first place.

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Mr BARTON

- I say that it does. If honorable members have followed me they will see that Mr. Chamberlain said the Home Government sympathized with our determination to prevent the influx of these hundreds of millions of Asiatics, alien in religion and alien in customs, whose influx would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population. He understood that an immigration of that kind must be prevented, and stated that his Government would not offer any opposition to proposals intended with that object. He asked us to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, and pointed out that to exclude, by reason of their colour or race, all Her Majesty's Indian subjects, or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful to Her Majesty to have to sanction it. He said that they, who had seen these Hindoos, could not be willing to put upon them a slight absolutely unnecessary, and calculated to provoke ill-feeling, discontent, and irritation. Then Mr. Chamberlain went on to say - What I venture to think you have to deal with is the character of the immigration. It is not because a man

is of a different colour from ourselves . . .

That, I think, extends to the whole class of these immigrants. Mr. Chamberlain went on to state further objections, and then referred to the Natal Act. What is the Natal Act? Section 3 provides -

The immigration into Natal by land or sea of any person of any of the classes defined in following sub-sections (prohibited immigrants) is prohibited, namely : - (The first sub-section is as prescribed in our own Bill) -

Any person who, when asked to do so by an officer appointed under this Act, shall fail to himself write out and sign in the characters of any language of Europe an application to the Colonial Secretary in the form set out in the schedule.

That Act was passed without special reference to British subjects, it was passed for the exclusion of Hindoos. It was as well known to Mr. Chamberlain as it was at the time to the Premier of Natal, Sir Harry Escombe, that the Bill was to be passed with that object. I will show presently that it was understood in that sense by my right honorable and learned friend, the leader of the Opposition in this House. The Natal Coloured Races Restriction Bill of 1896 was passed before the conference took place in London, but it did not receive the Royal assent. And why? Because it specifically professed to exclude people by reason of their race and colour. Whatever had been assented to in the past with regard to Chinese, it was felt by Her Majesty's Government that international complications were likely to ensue, if they would not necessarily ensue, by excluding people on a mere colour line. That is why the Bill finally passed by the Natal Legislature was spoken of as a proper one by the representative of the Queen's Government. The Coloured Races Restriction Bill, laying down a proposal very similar to that now wished to be laid down by the honorable member for Bland, did not receive the Royal assent, and a preference for a class of legislation which would not create complications either within or without the Empire was sufficiently indicated by Mr. Chamberlain. If it was not sufficiently indicated then, why did the right honorable and learned member at the head of the Opposition, as Premier of New South Wales, bring down a Bill of precisely that character as soon as he came back from England? We must judge the way in which the conference with Mr. Chamberlain was regarded by the actions of those who attended it. Natal had passed her Act shortly before the conference met, when the Australian Premiers returned, my right honorable and learned colleague, the Minister for Trade and Customs, as Premier of South Australia, brought in a Bill on the lines indicated, and although he did not succeed in carrying it, he fulfilled the evident understanding arrived at. My right honorable colleague, the Treasurer, as Premier of Victoria, brought in a Bill on the same lines, but the Legislative Council practically threw it out. My right honorable colleague, the Minister for Defence, then Premier of Western Australia, brought in another Bill on the same understanding, and carried it. I shall prove that that Bill is effective. The right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, as Premier of that State, also brought in a similar Bill, and if he is here when the division is taken, he will, I am sure, vote in accordance with an undertaking which he honourably made.

Unfortunately Queensland did nothing. Sir Hugh Nelson soon after the conference went out of office. He was succeeded by Mr. Byrne, and we all know how in his case a legislative and a patriotic career of high promise was cut short by death.

Mr McDonald

- Sir Hugh Nelson signed the treaty with Japan.

Mr BARTON

- I am coming to the Japanese agreement presently, and I shall show that from the time that agreement came into operation the departures of Japanese from Queensland have exceeded the arrivals. New Zealand passed a Bill on the lines I have indicated, and New South Wales only remains to be mentioned. My right honorable and learned friend at the head of the Opposition came back from the conference, as I have said, and brought in a Bill with reference to which I should like to make one more quotation of two or three lines from a speech made by the honorable member for Wentworth. It is to be found at page 5049, of volume 91 of the New South Wales Hansard. He said -

Whatever may be the discussion upon the Bill which is to follow this, it seems to me very unreasonable, under all the circumstances, to provoke any lone debate upon this Bill.

That is to say, he clearly opposed the previous Bill, which was dropped so far as I can discover, because the Government of the day apparently came to the conclusion that the Immigration Restriction Bill, which they brought in upon the lines of the Natal Act and carried, would prove sufficient for the purpose. On that

measure the honorable member for Wentworth made the statement which I have quoted, and expressed his own opinion in this way -

I feel myself exactly as I felt before.

We know how he felt before from the quotations I have made. The honorable member continued -

We might have a gradual, slow, insidious, immigration of an alien and undesirable people, or we might have immense hordes of these people coming in under certain conditions. I do not believe anything has arisen in New South Wales which should lead us to fear either of those two consequences at present.

Sir William McMillan

- We are not legislating for New South Wales now.

Mr BARTON

- I know that. I shall come to that point if the honorable member will give me time. I cannot deal with 100 questions at once.

Sir William McMillan

- But do not forget that fact.

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Mr BARTON

- I shall no more forget it than I shall forget the honorable member's attitude on this question. The honorable member continued on the occasion I have referred to as follows: -

They may apply to the tropical parts of Australia, and it is in those tropical colonies that I think legislation should have been initiated.

That is where it was not initiated -

I should now prefer - although I do not suppose the suggestion will receive any consideration - that this Bill of such a tremendously drastic character should be kept aside subject to proclamation by the Executive, if any real danger threatened our shores. At the same time it does seem to me, as far as I can gauge public opinion, that the country is in favour of the measure which passed both Houses in the present Parliament, and that any lengthy discussion would at the present time be out of place.

That Bill was dropped, and one in accordance with the Natal Act was substituted. All I have to say further in regard to the attitude of my honorable friend the member for Wentworth is that I can thoroughly enter into and sympathize with the feelings and expressions of a public spirited man who may be led to say even more than he means in the warmth of his advocacy of a great principle. That we have all done

Mr V L SOLOMON

- And it is because of that sympathy that the Minister is quoting Hansard

Mr BARTON

- Does the honorable member think that in his own interests, or in the interests of any one else, Hansard should be a sealed book *? For what reason is it published except for reference and in order that the people may know what their representatives are doing 1 And who is to blame or interrupt me if I choose to draw a distinction between the attitude taken up by my honorable friend on one occasion and that adopted by him on another '!

Sir William McMillan

- I do not.

Mr BARTON

- I am sure the honorable member does not, so long as I couch my comment in perfectly inoffensive terms.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- But we are dealing now with Australia as a whole.

Mr BARTON

- We are; but I think the honorable member sometimes forgets it. I will show that, although we are legislating for Australia, that fact does not alter the question involved, if the honorable member will allow me to reach my point in my own way. That is a liberty which I always give him. We know how the honorable member's leader treated an interruption last night. I was going to say that I cannot think that the honorable member for Wentworth said as little as he meant. I think he rather said more than he meant in some passages of his speech. I am not, however, going to be one of his captious critics. I have too much confidence in his integrity to admit of that ; but I do think that on the occasion I have referred to he

gave reasons for hesitation with regard to measures framed in the spirit of the amendment moved by the honorable member for Bland which ought to appeal not only to his mind, but to the minds of us all on the present occasion. Let us see how the Immigration Restriction Bill got on in the New South Wales Legislature. Tracing its history a little further, we come to the second reading, which took place on the 24th November, 1897. In moving the second reading of that Bill, my right honorable friend the leader of the Opposition in this House, first of all described the measure in terms so accurate that we need not go over the ground ; then he said he had put in an additional safeguard to that provided in the Natal Act. That is to say an additional safeguard that the applicant should know the particular language and not merely the particular form in the schedule of the Act, in which' he could be coached up. He put in the schedule, but left it open so that there might be a change. We have left this Bill open in precisely the same manner, so that the test passages may be changed, in order to defeat the tricks which have been foreshadowed by honorable members. The right honorable and learned gentleman then went on to say - This Bill will become law if the committee pass it in the shape in which it is now.

The right honorable and learned gentleman had the conference in his mind -

If the committee alter it, then, of course, I .am not so sure of my ground.

He thinks differently now. He went on to say, urging a reason which I think applies on the present occasion, so far as it may apply at all with regard to this more stringent Bill-

We shall be in a better position to obtain a better measure if this Bill proves of little use.

It was urged the other day by the Attorney-General that we shall be in a position to obtain a more stringent measure if this Bill is not utterly effective for its purpose, as I believe it will be. But that is the kind of statement that provoked the high indignation of the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney last night, although in the volume from which I am quoting, he is reported to have said the same thing himself.

Mr Reid

- I was speaking for New South Wales

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Mr BARTON

- Of course; the right honorable and learned member was speaking for New South Wales. If I were to put the cart before the horse, I should get to that part of my argument now ; but surely my right honorable friend will have a little patience and forbearance. I am showing that these things were said, and I intend to show how they ave applicable to the present situation. The right honorable and learned member continued -

The position I took up was this : I found that we could not get the Royal assent to the Bill which we passed-

That was a Bill containing a provision similar to that contained in the amendment which has been moved by the honorable member for Bland--

It was represented to me that the Bill now before honorable members would be assented to-

As this one would be, and for the very same reasons - : -

It was also represented to me that it had been tried at Natal, and had stopped Indian immigration - the immigration of British subjects.

That was the point which an honorable member raised in an interjection just now.

The Premier of Natal himself gave me that assurance.

That ought to have been enough for my right honorable friend. It was enough for him then, but it is not enough for him now.

My position was this : Being unable to get the Bill that was wanted, after using ever}' possible effort, not by myself alone, I thought the next best thing was to make a trial of this ; but I made a most distinct statement that if this Bill did not achieve the object, we would come with irresistible force with a Bill which would.

A similar statement was made by the Attorney-General last week, which excited the high indignation of my right honorable friend. Then, in the debate, from the report of which I have been quoting, an honorable member (Mr. Wood), foreshadowed an amendment, though not quite the same as that of the honorable member for Bland.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I have no doubt that he was prompted by a colleague of the Prime Minister.

Mr BARTON

- At any rate, it is fail that I should give his question and the answer of the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney. The honorable member for Parramatta, when I have quoted both, will not think that there is any reason for speculation as to Mr. Wood's motive. He asked -

Cannot the honorable member amend the clause so as to provide that the educational test shall only apply to coloured races, and the other subclauses to white and coloured people ? We have never assumed that it was necessary for immigrants to subject themselves to any educational test. A very large percentage of our immigrants who are absolutely " uneducated " have in many cases proved themselves to be the better class of immigrants.

To that question the right honorable and learned member replied -

With reference to this educational test, I must warn the House against seriously altering the character of this Bill, because if we do, I have no assurance that we will get the Royal assent. I am quite sure of getting the Royal assent if we do not alter it in any respect, and I am afraid if we did what the honorable member for Eden Bombala suggests, we would imperil the passing of the Bill.

No such peril is dreaded by him now -

It has an appearance of equality in dealing with white and coloured races, which strongly recommends it to the Imperial Government as a Bill which they can assent to, and if we alter that character and bring back, to them, the objectionable feature that it applies only to colored, not to others, we may find ourselves just as far off as we were before. We have in the Bill itself a discretion which the officer must exercise as he is directed by the Government, and, as at present advised, I should not think the Government would give such instruction as would put any European through this educational test. That was the proposal of the Government of which the right honorable and learned member for East Sydney was the head, and it was the same as that which has been loudly denounced by him as hypocrisy. He was perfectly prepared to be guilty then of what he would call, but what I do not call, hypocrisy.

Mr Reid

- My Bill provided for the European, not the English, language test.

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Mr BARTON

- What difference does that make to the argument 1 Does the right honorable and learned member suppose for a moment that if this Bill went home, providing for the English language instead of a European language test, there would be any more risk of its being vetoed ? It would be even more acceptable from the point of view of some of the international relations of England if it did. I am prepared to risk that, however, because Bills providing for a European language test have been accepted by the British Government. That fact gives a further warrant to us that our Bill will receive the Royal assent if we provide for a European language test. I am prepared to avoid all risk whatever, and even though there may be some objection on the part of Japan, I am bound to take this step, because the people with whom we are dealing are not those outside the Empire. We are dealing with the Empire, and particularly with the mother country, and we want to frame our Bill so as not to embarrass her - not for the sake of outsiders, but for her sake and for our own sake. That being the attitude we take up, if I can find an equal assurance of the passage of this Bill by the substitution of the word " European," for the word "English," as in the course of events I do, I am prepared to forego my wish about the word " English," and adopt the word " European " instead, because the matter is not a vital one. Another objection was raised to the statement of my right honorable friend that the Government would not give any such instructions as would put any European through this educational test - that is to say, that the European would be allowed to come in. " If it is administered in that way," said Mr. Wood, " there will be no objection." To that the right honorable and learned member replied -

It is one of the recommendations of the Bill that it gives us scope to administer it in that way.

Mr. Wood.Would it not be equally objectionable in the eyes of the British Government ?

Mr Reid

- The difference is that they have nothing to do with our administration of an Act, but they have something to do with the assenting to our Bills.

What did that mean! That the care of the British Government was not to embarrass its relations with its 300,000,000 or 400,000,000 of coloured subjects, and perhaps provoke resentment from those to whom it owed gratitude for their stand in the defence of the Empire, and not to permit to pass measures calculated to cause trouble, much or little, between England and other nations. The answer of the right honorable and learned gentleman shows conclusively and rightly what the advantage of a Bill of this kind is - that the administration of our laws, once they receive the Royal assent, whether through the Governor-General or from His Majesty, is not a matter in which the Imperial Government meddles. But the question whether a Bill, on the very face of which are scored lines of offence against those it does not want to offend, is one with which the British Government will deal, because it is a trustee for the whole Empire, of whom the white subjects are only one-eighth, and the peace of the Empire lies in its hands. While it will not resist the legitimate aspirations of any white self-governing country to preserve itself as white and its race as pure as they now are, it only asks and urges that that country shall take the steps it considers necessary to effect its object in a way which will enable the mother country to give its assent with a light heart, and not with that heaviness of heart which maybe the precursor of a severance between us. I feel very strongly about this matter. It is true that on the surface this is a measure dealing only with method. Whether you exclude by saying on the face of your Bill that the Asiatic and the African shall not come in, or whether you exclude by imposing a test which renders you practically free from their incursions, is said to be a matter of method. So it is on its face. But what is the difference in essence ? In the one case you have it absolutely established that your Bill will receive consideration and will be allowed to come into operation. You have it also established that it involves no danger whatever to those relations of the Empire which are to us the guarantees of peace. What is the other case ? That both internally with regard to its own subjects, and externally with regard to those whom it does not and ought not to desire to offend, a Bill amended in the way now proposed has proved already to be calculated to give offence. If you can get a good thing by one of two ways, one of which is peaceful, and marks also the duty which we owe to the Empire to which we belong, and the other of which is calculated to bring about different results, why should we quarrel about the matter ? Why not let this Bill go as it has been framed 1 There has been an assurance that if it does not prove effective, further measures may be taken. The assurance has been given by the Secretary for State that if measures of this kind do not prove effective, further representations may be made, and more stringent provisions may be passed.

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Mr Watson

- We had that assurance in New South Wales.

Mr. BARTON. The assurance was given before the New South Wales Act was passed. If you come to the conclusion that these Acts are in themselves as reasonably effective as you can expect any measure of exclusion to be, why should you hesitate % If there is a difference between an Act which has not yet been tried, such as that proposed, and the series of Acts which have been tried, a difference which might amount to seven Chinamen or Afghans in a year, are you going to let that stand in the way, and light the Empire over those seven immigrants 1 I do not believe such a thing. I have too much confidence in this House to believe that it will be done. Let us look to the question whether these Acts do prove effective. Before doing so, I come to the question as to the difference between the position of the States standing alone, and the position of the Commonwealth. The position of the Commonwealth is this - that in respect to all powers of legislation which it has, it can pass Acts on this subject to apply to the whole six States instead of to one. The States have more numerous and in some respects larger powers than the Commonwealth : but on the question of immigration and emigration, there are what are called concurrent powers of legislation, the exercise of which by the Commonwealth will supplant to the extent of their operation any law of a State. We have to exercise that power. We are told that we shall be cut clown in our legislative freedom if we are not looked upon as being entitled to have a Bill with an amendment of this kind assented to whenever we like. I venture to think that that is a misunderstanding of the position, a perfectly innocent one, but a misunderstanding nevertheless. There is an ultimate power in the British Government of exercising its trusteeship for the rest of the Empire by vetoing any kind of legislation which makes against either the interest of other parts of the Empire, or prejudices its external relations. We have a great difference in our instructions I admit. In the instructions issued to the Governors of States in 1892 there was a list of subjects measures affecting which were to be reserved for the Royal assent. There is

no such list in the instructions issued to the Governor-General, who has a very much wider power of discretion; but the Constitution says that, with respect to every measure which comes before him for the Royal assent, he shall declare either that he gives assent under his discretion, that he withholds assent, or that he reserves the measure for His Majesty's pleasure to be made known. I think those are the words - we have the same words in other Acts - and we find them in our own Act unencumbered with the long list of powers of reservation, which are set out in other Acts, but accompanied by a general power of reservation which is given to the Governor-General to exercise at his discretion. Now, what does this come to? There is an ultima ratio, one last step in legislation to be taken by any colony or State which remains a part of the Empire upon which a reservation is absolutely indispensable. If it is known from past history, or from the utterances of those who guide the course of the Empire, that a class of measure affects the interests of fellow subjects of ours outside of Australia, or affects the relations of the whole of the Empire with other powers - and on this we have a most significant and distinct intimation - that is the class of Bill which must be reserved for the Royal assent. It would be impossible in an Empire such as ours, comprising so many free communities, to have a Governor-General in each of them with full powers of assent in regard to measures affecting the interests of the Empire at large, and that is the one respect in which we must be controlled. We cannot do anything that would tend to a disturbance of the relations of the Empire without the matter being first submitted for the Royal assent, and it follows that a measure containing the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland not only would be, but must be, reserved for the Royal assent. It is not for me to advise, or for the Attorney-General to obtrude his opinion, because in the absolute nature of the case, when a matter touches the Empire in its heart within, or on its fair face without, that must be regarded as a matter for the head of the Empire alone to determine, of course, on the advice of those Ministers who are its trustees. That is the position in connexion with this Bill from which we cannot escape, and that is the position that makes it incumbent on me to say that I cannot assent to the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland. It is incumbent upon me to say even more; and that is, that I will be no party to sending home a Bill containing such a provision for the Royal assent. If it were necessary for me to say more than that - but it is not - I should be prepared to use stronger terms still to indicate the length to which I would go rather than send home a Bill containing a provision such as that contemplated by the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. We have arrived at a very critical point undoubtedly. The difference between us, as I said, is described as a difference of method; but while it is only a difference of method on the surface, in its core it involves our future relations with the Empire to which we belong. It is not so very long since the whole of these colonies were seething with a determination not only to be loyal to the Empire but to spill their hearts' blood for it. I am not going to be one of the first to believe that any of that spirit has evaporated. I have confidence in this House in many matters - much confidence, even if it have no confidence in me - but I must believe the assurances given to men like my light honorable friend, the leader of the Opposition, and acted upon in the case of New South Wales, and given to the other Premiers, and acted upon in the case of six out of seven of the States. That is proof that the assurances were believed, and there is no point of difference between the position of a State and of this Commonwealth when it comes to the last resort - when a measure is presented for the Royal assent, and when it has to be determined whether or not it is of a character affecting the material interests of the Empire. In that respect the State and the Commonwealth must be treated alike, except that, as we go along, affairs that are external to this Commonwealth, but internal to the Empire, will probably fall more and more into our hands, affording all the more reason why we should endeavour to walk abreast with the Empire, having no idea of turning round at the next corner and leaving it. As to whether a measure of this kind will prove effective, I shall now lay some figures before honorable members. Every one will admit that the information that can be obtained from Government sources is imperfect - I will admit that.

Sir William McMillan

- Will the Minister say whether coloured British subjects are included in the figures which he is about to quote?

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Mr BARTON

- Yes; I understand so. The first thing to take account of is that these returns are complicated by the existence in all the States of Chinese Restriction Acts of differing strength and potency. For instance, in

New South Wales the Chinese Restriction Act provides that only one Chinese shall be brought in for every 300 tons of a vessel's tonnage, and the poll tax. there is £100 per head. In Victoria and in Queensland the conditions are less stringent. In Tasmania I think there is a light restriction, but in that State there is very little influx of this, character. I will deal with the Chinese first - although, unfortunately, I cannot put them out of the way by dealing with them.

I desire to point out that in New South Wales during five and a half years 739 coloured aliens were admitted. During that period, 328 Chinese entered, and 2,296 left the State - that is a little short of seven to one have left - and thus the departures have put the arrivals into a minus quantity every year. The influx of aliens, including Japanese, Assyrians, Indians, Afghans, Javanese, Chinese, and others, was 739, and there were 2,296 departures. The departures were the same as previously mentioned for Chinese, there being no record of departures except of Chinese. In Victoria, with a lighter restriction Act, and with no Immigration Restriction Act such as we propose, and such as exists in New South Wales, 1,500 more Chinese came in than left, the arrivals being 3,944, and departures 2,419. There being no general Immigration Restriction Act in force in Victoria, 5,489 coloured aliens entered the State, and 3,096 left, or, roughly speaking, an excess of influx over and above departures of 2,300. In Queensland the figures are more significant and startling still, but let it be recollected that there is no Immigration Restriction Act in that State. There is, of course, a Pacific Islanders Act in operation, and with reference to the kanakas it might save time if I mentioned at once that in the five and a half years which the return covers the excess of arrivals over departures was about 2,000. As to the Chinese immigration, under a light restriction Act 4,443 came in, and 3,244 left the State, giving an excess of arrivals over departures, roughly speaking, of 1,200. There was an increase of these aliens of about 4,000 during that period - that includes till. Now I wish to say something about the Japanese. With regard to the Japanese, an arrangement was entered into in 1899 between the Queensland Government and the Japanese Government, and the matter stands in this way. I will take the figures for 1899 onwards. They show that during two years' and eight months 304 Japanese came into the State and 864 left, or a decrease, since Queensland has had this arrangement with Japan, of 560. It is quite evident that the influx of Japanese into Queensland cannot be the main point of dread or apprehension. In Western Australia they have not only a Chinese Restriction Act, but an Immigration Restriction Act, and the figures I have cover a period of three years and eight months, because the Immigration Restriction Act only came into operation in 1898. The figures in this case are complete, because they include the departures, and they give us some indication of how an Act of this kind will operate if it is fairly and honestly administered. Of course, it is of no use to pass an Act of any kind if it is not to be honestly administered. In Western Australia, from the beginning of 1898 we find an influx of 525, and an outflow of 896, so that there was an excess of departures over arrivals of 371.

Mr Kirwan

- What have the departures to do with the Act ?

Mr BARTON

- They have nothing to do with the Act, except that the administration of these Acts generally shows that the country is discovered by the aliens to be not such a pleasant place to live in as it was before the Acts were passed, and perhaps that is the reason why the departures exceed the arrivals.

Mr Wilkinson

- Was the influx of Japanese into Queensland, referred to by the Prime Minister, confined to those who came into the State under the treaty ?

Mr BARTON

- I understand that it included all those who entered the State, and I may mention that within the last week or two, a report has been received from the Honorable John Douglas, Commissioner at Thursday Island, stating that there is a large decrease there, and that the Japanese are really disappearing. These figures which I have been quoting have been obtained from the various Customhouse officers at different ports - the only reliable persons, who can give information as to the entry of these persons into the States, and who have to administer the various Acts. I have taken the greatest trouble to get these figures, and I have not hesitated, in concurrence with the Minister for Trade and Customs, whose officers have been applied to, to get the best and most reliable information. I think that my right honorable friend, the leader of the Opposition, will say that he has the most complete confidence in these returns.

Mr McDonald

- They do not correspond with the Registrar-General's figures.

Mr BARTON

- So much the worse for the Registrar-General's figures. I think honorable members will agree with me when I say that the Government has a right to believe that the officers of the Commonwealth who hold our commissions will treat us fairly, and that we are justified in relying upon them. If they give wrong information they know very well what will happen to them.

Mr Kirwan

- If the Prime Minister had lived in Western Australia he would not say that the Act had proved effective there.

Sir John Forrest

- Nothing of the sort - look at the statistics.

Mr Kirwan

- I have lived on the goldfields, and I know that the Act has not proved effective.

Sir John Forrest

- People cannot go there unless they go through the ports.

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Mr BARTON

- I am sure that the honorable member for Kalgoorlie will forgive me if I regard the testimony of the Minister for Defence, who has administered the affairs of Western Australia as Premier, and who has confidence in these returns as reliable corroboration of the figures. Neither the honorable member for Kalgoorlie, nor the honorable member for Kennedy, agree with me apparently, but it is open to them to combat my figures afterwards if they can. In Western Australia the number of Japanese who went into the State from the beginning of 1898 was 34, while 159 went out. During the same period 76 Afghans entered the State and 245 left it. Of Chinese, 334 came in, and 418 went out, and we will score these off, because they did not come under the Restriction Act. Of others 81 came in and 74 went out. That is at the rate of a little under two a year. In other words there was a dread influx in that case of seven in three and a half years. But in regard to every one of these races - Chinese included - where there is in operation a Chinese Restriction Act and an Immigration Restriction Act, as is the case in New South Wales and Western Australia, we find that the figures show a remarkable excess of departures over arrivals, which in respect of the Japanese really means that there are four or five times as many going out of the country as are coming in. In the case of the nondescript persons who cannot be classed under a distinct head we find that there is also a very large excess of departures over arrivals. These are the official figures, and we thus have it upon record that an Act of this kind does prove and has proved effective. But I did not think that Sir Harry Escombe, the Premier of Natal, was likely to be wrong. After the operation of the Natal Act, he told my right honorable friend opposite that it accomplished what was expected of it, and that it prevented an influx of the Hindoos, from whom the residents of Natal had most to fear. My right honorable friend opposite believed that statement at the time, and no doubt he believes it still. Into what further, then, have we to inquire in a case of this kind? We have gone to the best source for information. From the figures I have collated it can be seen how legislation of the character proposed in this Bill operates with regard to the Japanese. Still, premising that New South Wales might not have kept a record of the Japanese departures, I am going to tell this committee how much that State has suffered from Japanese from the beginning of 1899, two years and eight months ago - or just at about the period that the Queensland Restriction Act came into operation. The total number of arrivals within that period is 54. I ask honorable members to recollect that this number has reference to a race in regard to which the official correspondence laid upon the table of every House of Parliament in the various States establishes the fact that their custom is not to remain here, but to come under agreement for two or two and a half years, and then to return to their own country. I have already given the figures in regard to Queensland, which show that during the same period that State has lost 864 Japanese, as against 304 arrivals. Therefore she is by 560 head clearer of Japanese than she was at the beginning of that period. In Western Australia 23 arrived, and 117 went out during the same period. In Western Australia, therefore, when one came in five went away. Whether we take the results of the operation of the Restriction Acts in New South Wales or Western Australia, or whether we take the operation of an agreement with a foreign power such as is

offered to us by the Japanese Consul, we find that in every case there is an efflux and not an influx. I think I have said enough to show that a similar measure to that which is now proposed by the Government is admittedly effective in Natal, and that it has proved its effectiveness in Australia. As it is reasonably certain that such a measure is sufficiently effective, and as we know that we can increase its stringency if we find that it is not so, is there any danger in delay ? " Yes," I say, " there is." Which is the course that will make for delay? Is it not the course of adopting that step which we have already been warned will necessitate delay, and may result in the loss of the Bill ? Certainly, that is the course which a man if he wanted to provoke delay would invent. I have never wobbled or wavered upon this matter from the beginning to the end, and wherever I have had to express an opinion on the influx of undesirable immigrants, I have always expressed myself as strongly against it. I am ready to do as much, if not more than anybody else, to prevent such an influx. I do not agree with the honorable and learned member for Parkes, who said that the tendencies of this kind of immigration were not dangerous. I do not think either that the doctrine of the equality of man was really ever intended to include racial equality. There is no racial equality. There is that basic inequality. These races are, in comparison with white races - I think no one wants convincing of this fact - unequal and inferior. The doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of the Englishman and the Chinaman. There is a deep-set difference, and we see no prospect and no promise of its ever being effaced. Nothing in this world can put these two races upon an equality. Nothing we can do by cultivation, by refinement, or by anything else will make some races equal to others. I do not want to lay down with too much preciseness any of these differences, because there is not one amongst these races whom I wish to hurt or wound. But we know that we can have our own way in the direction that has been shown us, and that we shall have the Royal assent to a measure framed upon those lines for an absolute certainty ; and as far as I am concerned if this measure were passed without substantial alteration I should be able to advise the Governor-General to assent to it at once. But if it be passed on the lines suggested by the amendment of the honorable member for Bland not only would it be unnecessary for me to advise, but I would not advise one way or the other, simply because there is a reserve duty in the head of the Government of this Commonwealth - I am speaking of the Governor-General - which forces him to reserve those matters which go to the root of the Imperial relation. That is the position which we occupy. The Bill which we propose will provide equal effectiveness so far as experience can guide us. There is no threat of injury to us if we take the course proposed, but certain delay and possible refusal, if that refusal is to be grounded upon the doctrine of the trusteeship of the head or seat of the Empire for the rest of the Empire, which doctrine was laid down in the course of our visit to England last year, and to that extent rightly and properly laid down. There is that reserve power, that trusteeship in the head of the Empire - I mean the King, with his advisers, who are responsible to the whole of the Empire - which we cannot by any argument efface. We cannot say, " Because we ought to have this thing we must have it." Those who have to consider these matters at the other end of the world have to consider whether the foreign or internal relations of the Empire are threatened by such legislation, and, if not threatened, whether it has a tendency to embarrass them. If they come to a conclusion in the affirmative, they are not only not wronging us, but they are merely doing their duty to the Empire by refusing to assent to it. I wish to make my meaning as clear as I can about this matter. I feel in my heart that we ought to have legislation such as is proposed by the Government, and I know that if we take the course offered to us by the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, we are unlikely to get such legislation, except at a cost which I am sure the honorable member for Wentworth would not be willing to pay. In this connexion I desire to say that whatever interpretation an opponent may have put upon the utterances of the honorable member, I believe that he is instinct with that loyalty which would refuse to imperil for an instant the institutions of the Empire.

Sir William McMillan

- Will the Prime Minister let us know what was the date of the last advice from the Home Office upon the subject ?

Mr BARTON

- On 14th May the Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote a despatch which is addressed to the Governor-General, and forwarded copies of two despatches, addressed to the Governor of Queensland, relative to -the reserving of a Bill passed by the Legislature of that State entitled "A Bill to amend the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts 1893-1895." Mr. Chamberlain ' adds these few words to the

Governor-General -

I trust that your Government will join with

His Majesty's Government in deprecating legislation of the character of the provision in that Bill to which His Majesty's Government have felt bound to take exception.

I felt so strongly upon this matter that I appended the following minute, which I am bound to stand to. I should be weak and irresolute indeed if I did not stand to it. Indeed, it is the minute of all my colleagues, because we agreed to it in Cabinet : -

Minute to his Excellency, intimating that I am quite in accord with the principles and the policy laid down in the two despatches, of which copies are transmitted, and .that this Government does not contemplate the proposal of any legislation likely to conflict with the views which the Secretary of State has expressed.

It was my intention when I rose to quote this despatch, but to quote it later in my speech. I wish to add that there is a despatch enclosed which is not secret, apparently, and which has been read to this House. That document, after describing the provision to which the Imperial authorities took exception, went on to say -

His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the motives which have induced the Government and Legislature of Queensland to pass that particular provision of the Bill upon two grounds. Those grounds were read by the Attorney-General, and I do not propose' to weary the House by repeating them.

Mr McDonald

- Why did the Imperial Government sanction the other Bills ?

Mr BARTON

- Is it to be accepted as a fact, because certain Bills of a different sort have received the Royal assent, that when these strong representations are made by His Majesty's Government, we are to disregard them because of those other events ? I say we must not disregard them. I am bound not to disregard them, and I do not intend to.

Mr McDonald

- Because the Prime Minister has put his foot into it already. He is up to his neck in it now.

Mr BARTON

- I have said not one syllable more in that minute than I meant to say and adhere to, or than I would have said now if I had not written it.

Mr McDonald

- Why did the Prime Minister not say it the other night ?

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Mr BARTON

- Because I had not the opportunity of saying it. When I spoke upon the second reading of the Bill I had had no intimation that any such amendment as that submitted by the honorable member for Bland was to be proposed.

Mr McDonald

- What about the Postal Bill?

Mr BARTON

- Is this my speech or that of the honorable member? I repeat that when I moved the second reading of this Bill I did so holding the principles laid down in that minute, to which principles I mean to adhere. I intimated all along to everybody who spoke to me on this matter - and it must have gone round the House

- that I did not intend to speak upon the amendment until the honorable member for Bland had actually moved it, and had allowed me an opportunity of hearing his reasons for submitting it. I have found no reasons in his speech which have not been adequately traversed in the references which I have already made. The concluding portion of the despatch to Lord Lamington, to which I referred, was -

I earnestly trust that your Government will give the arguments set forth above their most careful consideration, and that they will either agree to leaving in abeyance the present Bill, or substitute for it another not containing a provision to which Baa Majesty's Government feel bound to take exception on grounds both of principle and policy.

I will say no more than this as to those papers. In answer to a question the other day I told the honorable member for Kennedy that I did not think there was any other paper which I thought I ought to lay on the table of the House and have printed. I am free to say that again ; but lest there should be any lingering

feeling in the mind of any honorable member that I am keeping something back, I will say that while there has been a communication made to another Government, which I am not at liberty to disclose, I am bound to give the House the information that it only accentuates and puts more emphatically the grounds which have actuated the Imperial Government in taking up the attitude which they have adopted. If I were to lay the document before the House, I could found no further argument on it, except on account of its being more emphatic ; and, therefore, there is no need for me to say anything more about it.

Mr Reid

- Is it in reference to this matter ?

Mr BARTON

- Yes ; and I should be only too glad if I were able to show it to the right honorable and learned member.

Mr Reid

- Is it addressed to the Governor of Queensland ?

Mr BARTON

- Yes.

Mr Higgins

- Is there- anything in the Governor-General's instructions as to the reservation of Bills ?

Mr BARTON. - I have already gone over that ground, and mentioned that the instructions of 1892 contained a category of the subjects on which Bills should be reserved.

Mr.

Higgins. - I am asking as to the Governor-General's instructions.

Mr BARTON

- The instructions to the Governor-General are void of any such category, and do not deal with the question of what class of Bills he should reserve for the Royal assent. But the Constitution provides that in case of Bills being presented to him for assent, he should either give that assent, or withhold it, or reserve the Bills for His Majesty's pleasure to be made known ; these three courses are in the Governor-General's own discretion. That is the position on the face of the Constitution ; but I have already explained that there is, and must be, so long as we belong to the Empire, one class of Bills which no Governor-general and no authority representing the Crown, can ever fail to reserve. These are Bills dealing with matters affecting the internal and external relations of the Empire beyond the bounds of the State which makes the law. That is the constitutional position, "from which we cannot get away.

Mr Reid

- Does not this Bill affect the relations of the Empire with other nations ?

Mr BARTON

- No.

Mr Reid

- I think it does.

Mr BARTON

- It does not, because it is laid down on lines which the right honorable gentleman himself adopted, and which were assented to, in a Bill of this class.

Mr Reid

- But still it does affect other nations.

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Mr BARTON

- It does not affect other nations in that degree, or on those principles which appear to His Majesty's Government to contain objections. If it appears to go to a limit or a length which might at first sight appear to be one to which the Imperial Government might take some general exception, the answer is, that it is precisely of the class of Bills which have been allowed in the past, and that as we have been led to understand the British Government will not take exception to such Bills, we are content to abide by their decision that they will not be embarrassed. "We are not studying Japan or any European or other nation. We are studying our relation with the Empire ; and it is by that relationship that we ought to shape our course. We have an alternative. We can leave the Empire. We have another choice besides. We can take up repeatedly such a position in relation to the Empire as to cause both it and us to think that our

continuance within its folds is not agreeable to either. I do not want to see that point reached.

Mr Reid

- Hear, hear. Nobody does.

Mr BARTON

- When honorable members talk so roundly - and surely everybody has the right to talk roundly - of the position they mean to take up in wresting assent from the British Government - which, by some sort of implication, is said to be a hectoring or selfish Government, instead of one which extends uniform protection over all parts of the Empire - by declarations of the kind proposed, let us consider the position for a minute. Of course, we have no wish to leave the Empire ; but if we imperil our relation with the Empire, or create friction which may ultimately lead to severance, let it be remembered that it is under the protection of the British fleet that we make our proposals - under the protection of the first line of defence, which all can assume as an everyday right of their own, forgetful that it is nearly all paid for by the taxpayers of Great Britain and Ireland.

Mr Reid

- Does the Prime Minister propose to alter that state of things ?

Mr BARTON

- I hope to make a proposal for altering that state of things before long, but I cannot make a proposal of that kind now. The right honorable gentleman has a colleague, the right honorable member for Tasmania, Sir Edward Braddon, who has imposed on the Constitution a provision in the 89th section, which prevents our doing what we want for defence, either by land or sea.

Mr Reid

- Surely the Prime Minister does not make the Opposition responsible for that ?

Mr BARTON

- I do not make the Opposition responsible, but I know that the leader of the Opposition has by his side daily the answer to his question. He does not need to ask me why we do not do things for which the Constitution, at the instance of the venerated and respected right honorable member, does not make provision. We cannot build a fleet, and the world knows that we cannot. We cannot obtain the money necessary for such a purpose without - if I may use a vernacular expression - " bumping up " against the Braddon blot.

Mr Reid

- AVe can always be liberal.

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Mr BARTON

- AVe can always be liberal, and that is the sort of liberality I want to say a word about. We can be particularly liberal in attempting to dictate the functions, operations, and relations to other powers of the Empire, so long as, snug under the Braddon section, we do not have to pay money for a fleet. In any case, if we had the money, we have not the fleet. I say that the tendency of such amendments as that now before us is gradually to break down the security of our relations, because they strike a blow and says at once - " You have told us there is one way and only one way in which, if we observe consideration towards you and the rest of the Empire, we can get our will. But we propose to get it in another way - by a declaration which puts you at any rate in a position of embarrassment, and which may involve our being longer in the carrying out of our object." I say that that is both dilatory and futile. That is not the way to deal with the Bill, and so far as I am concerned, I am bound to oppose this amendment with all my strength. The honorable member for North Sydney asked me a question about the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi. I cannot exactly say what course the Government will take, as honorable members will readily appreciate, until I know what is to be the fate of this amendment. If this amendment is carried, I shall have to consider whether I have any more advice to offer on this or any other subject. But, if this amendment is not carried, I will say as to the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi, that I do not like it, and that I shall probably vote against it. If, however, I had to discriminate between that amendment and the amendment now before us, inasmuch as the former does not put in the forefront of the Bill a declaration which I now consider, after all that has passed, unnecessarily offensive, I should be inclined to support it. But I should advise honorable members, if they wish to get effective, certain, and speedy legislation on the subject, not to carry either of- the

amendments. If they do carry either, there is more chance for the Bill with the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi ; but I am not sure how great the chance is. I shall make this amendment a vital point, and for the reason I have given, namely, that it affects our relation with the centre of the Empire.

Mr Reid

- Which amendment t .

Mr BARTON

-The right honorable and learned member knows well enough that when I say " this amendment," I ordinarily mean the amendment before the committee. I am opposing the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, and I say that, in my humble belief, it affects our relations with the Empire, or has a tendency to affect them in a way which we ought not to favour. If we are right in the position we have taken up in the last two years with regard to the rest of the Empire - that that which touches or invades one part touches the whole - we must allow the rest of the Empire to hold a similar opinion ; and more especially must we allow the head and centre of the Empire, which has ultimately to take decision until we are independent, to regulate the external relations of the Empire and those internal relations which we have no right to effect ourselves. Now, we can get our object in one way, and we ought to do it in the way proposed by the Bill. As to the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi, I have already said that it is not subject to the main objection I have to the amendment now before the committee, and on which I make that amendment vital. The amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi does not lay down in- the forefront of the Bill colour or race objections, which proclamation, I think, endangers the passage of the Bill. I am sure that such a proclamation will delay the passage of the Bill, and if reluctantly the Royal assent were given, it would be given with grief at the other end of the world, and with a wondering sigh as to why this course was insisted on when we could have got our way with another. The amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi is devoid of objection on this ground, but it will not help the passage of the Bill, and the honorable member would be well advised if, after the present amendment has been dealt with, he withdrew his own. I want to say no more 15 p except that it is not often I trouble the House at great length, and I must ask honorable members to bear with me on this occasion. I have listened to a great deal of discussion, and have been very quiet under it. I am sure I had enough to say to justify me in addressing myself at some length on so important a matter. I again ask honorable members, in voting on this measure, to take such a course as will give them the legislation that they desire - as will carry out and not defeat their wishes, as will not lead to delay and heart burnings, not in one but in many quarters, the inevitable result of an amendment which I most earnestly deprecate.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- Like several other honorable members, I was disappointed at not being able to speak on the second reading. At the same time, I recognise that the clause which is now before the committee is one which fully opens out the whole of the main question of the Bill. I am rather pleased that I- had not the opportunity of speaking at an earlier period of the debate, because I have had the advantage of listening to some very able speeches, notably by the leader of the Opposition and other honorable members whom I need not name. But, perhaps, the most extraordinary speech to which I have listened is that just delivered by the Prime Minister. I could understand, a day or two ago, from the tone of the debate, that the Prime Minister intended to give us for once in the history of his Government some little sign of backbone, and sticking to a measure. We are told that this amendment is a critical one. We are told, or, at any rate, it is hinted, that if this main clause of the Bill is not carried very much as it is submitted to the committee, it will be worth the consideration of the Government whether the Bill shall be gone on with at all. Since the introduction of the Bill we have had the Prime Minister intimating first of all that he is prepared to accept an alteration suggested by one of his own supporters that the test should be in any European language instead of in the English language, and we now have a second climb down, if I may be permitted to say so, in the way of a suggestion by the Prime Minister that, rather than adopt the amendment proposed by the honorable member for land, he would come down a little further and take the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi.

Mr Barton

- I said not one solitary syllable of the kind. I said my inclination was to oppose the amendment.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The right honorable and learned member would have one or the other.

Mr Barton

- I said the honorable and learned member for Indi's amendment was not a vital one, because it did not raise the same Imperial question.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I may put it as a distinct climb down.

Mr Barton

- That is nonsense.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Either the Prime Minister desires to have the Bill as introduced by the Government, or he does not. Instead of insisting upon the test of the English language, upon which the greatest stress was placed by him, he is going to -accept the European language test. So far as that point is concerned, however, I am in agreement with him. It is certainly better that the words " any European language " should be substituted for " English language." If we do that we shall not give offence to the Germans, French, and other European peoples who may desire to enter Australia. The Prime Minister also suggested that, rather than accept the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland, which deals with the question in a direct and straight way, he would accept the amendment suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi, although it deals with this question in a manner which I do not think will meet with the approval of a large number of supporters of the Government. It deals with it in a way that is not straightforward, and which permits both Houses to evade what should appear directly within the four corners of an Act of Parliament. I say emphatically that the Prime Minister has surprised not only myself, but a good many other honorable members.

Mr Barton

- I have done more than I ever hoped to do in surprising the honorable member.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am beginning not to be surprised as to the Minister's want of firmness in sticking to a Bill. " If he gave up the whole measure, and accepted the amendment the honorable member for Bland, I should not be surprised.

Mr Barton

- I have given up a great deal more. I have given up the honorable member.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Evidently the Prime Minister has also given up being quite so subservient to amendments from a certain quarter of the committee.

Sir William Lyne

- I thought the honorable member was fair.

Mr. »V. L. SOLOMON.- I am fair, and shall be fair always as long as I see the Bill stuck to and voted upon fairly. But when it is distinctly said that this is not to be a party question, while at the same time honorable members on the other side of the House have it put to them in that light, what are we to think? We have seen honorable members on the Government side pressed right and left to vote for this clause, not because it is best for Australia, but because the question is a party one.

Mr McCay

- Who on this side has said that %

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not intend to answer the catechism of the honorable and learned member. I know that it has been said, and the honorable and learned member must also be aware of that fact if he has not been asleep.

Mr McCay

- Then I must have been asleep.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The honorable and learned member must know that pressure has been brought to bear on the Government side of the committee.

Mr McCay

- I know nothing of the kind.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- There is not the slightest doubt that it has been brought to bear. Otherwise how can we account for the change on the part of those whose pledges and speeches have been so distinctly for a white Australia ?

Mr Higgins

- It is because of indiscreet speeches like that of the honorable member on this point.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- Does the honorable and learned member imagine that he and his learned friends have alone the right to make indiscreet speeches ? If he thinks that he has that monopoly, I shall ask him to revise my speeches before I make them. The want of firmness on the part of the Government in regard to any of their Bills has ceased to be a matter for surprise. The question now before us is one of much more moment to Australia. It is one that has not been occupying the attention of the people of Australia for the last two or three years ; it has not been placed before the electors of the Commonwealth simply as a political cry during the Federal campaign. But it is one that has received attention for the last sixteen years at least. During that time it has been a very prominent question in Australian politics. I do not intend to apologize to the committee for taking up any time in dealing with a matter of this kind, because it is one in which I have taken the strongest interest for sixteen at least years. My interest in it has not been smothered up in any way. It has been shown throughout that period by open advocacy in the columns of the press, from the public platform, and from my place in the State Legislature of South Australia. My interest in the subject has not been aroused by the speeches of eloquent men, by sentimental platitudes, or even by cleverly written articles in the public press. It has been kindled by an intimate acquaintance with the people of some of the very nations of the East whom we are seeking by this measure to exclude from Australia. I can speak from a fifteen years' residence in a portion of Australia more tropical than the most northern part of Queensland. I have been able to witness the influx of thousands of Chinese and other Asiatics into that part of our island continent, and to see the result which that influx has had upon growing settlement. In these circumstances, I can speak perhaps with a closer knowledge of the subject than that possessed by many other honorable members who could address the committee more eloquently. I have not only lived among these people, but I have had an opportunity of judging of their qualities while a great many of them have been in my employment. Chinese, Japanese, Kanaka labourers, Malays, and Javanese were employed by me during my fifteen years' residence in the tropics, so that I am not talking away from the book. I employed a large number of Chinese when European labour had been driven out of that part of the country. It was not until then that I utilized their services. My experience of these different races has shown me that it is not so much the vices or the uncleanness of the Japanese, Chinese, and Malays that we have to fear, but rather their virtues, if I may put it so, their industry, their indomitable perseverance, their frugality, and their ability to compete against European labour. 15 p 2

Sir William Lyne

- That does not say much for our own people.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- If the honorable member had seen a few thousand of these coloured aliens, living among a thousand white people in one settlement, during a residence of fifteen, ten, or even five years, he would know that what I say is correct. I am sorry to say that this Chinese invasion started in 1873 or 1874, on the North coast of South Australia, owing to the ill-advised action of the Government of that State in permitting the importation of a large number of Chinese for the purpose of providing cheap labour for the mining syndicates then working gold mines at Pine Creek and Yam Creek. That was followed a little later on by a general influx of Chinese into the Northern Territory, and subsequently by the letting of a contract for railway works, which permitted several thousand of them to come into the territory for the purpose of constructing the line. The result was that the handful of Europeans, then numbering about 1,500, was gradually driven out of that part of the country. There was no trade or industry in which white men had previously engaged that was not invaded by these aliens. There was no trade, whether it was tailoring, bootmaking, gardening, fishing, laundry work, or engineering - even to the management of batteries, which they picked up very soon, being a most industrious and imitative people - which they did not enter,

and from which they did not drive out the white man. There was not a trade throughout the length and breadth of the settlement from which the Europeans were not ousted by them. That is why I do not wish to see Australia overrun by this class of people ; and the opinion I have formed is not due to the political or electioneering reasons which the honorable and learned member for Parkes suggested, were at the bottom of this agitation. Nothing of the sort. The Restriction Act was brought in in 1886, as the result of an agitation which sprung up on the North coast against the continuance of Chinese immigration. At the time that, was the only form of Asiatic invasion which we had any reason to dread up there. The people of Northern Queensland, of Port Darwin and of the settlements along the North coast, decided that they were not going to have their country absolutely taken from them by hordes of Chinese encouraged there by a . weak,

Government, and I was one of the delegates appointed in the year 1888, to visit the Australian capitals with petitions from the people to the Governments of the various States, begging them to stop this influx of aliens.

Mr Higgins

- Has the honorable member found that these aliens engage in wholesale trade in the North ?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Yes ; there is no trade that is too big for them.

Mr Higgins

- Importing 1

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Yes, they also do that. So as some of us were concerned, as long as these men were doing a little peddling and buying their goods from us, we did not feel where the shoe pinched ; but when we found that they were importing goods from Hong Kong, and importing Californian flour at a price lower than that at which we could get it from Adelaide, and selling it at a very small profit, and that they could live for very much less than we could, we took action. That was one of the reasons that first induced the agitation in the north "against Chinese immigration. I was rather struck with the remark of the honorable and learned member for Parkes, that this agitation was hysterical ; that there was no danger ; that it was one of those matters which some honorable members used as a political platform cry, and that an Immigration Restriction Bill was utterly unnecessary. I cannot be accused of having recently adopted this platform cry,- because in 1888, before I had ever thought of entering the political arena, I came to the southern ports of Australia from Port Darwin for a health trip, and undertook at my own expense the organization of a crusade against the influx of Chinese. On 1st May, 1888, we held a monster meeting in the Town Hall in Melbourne, presided over by the Mayor of Melbourne, and amongst others there were present the Honorable W. H. Roberts, M.L.C., the Honorable James Munro, and Messrs. F. W. Pearce, J. L. Purves, Q.C., Dr. McInerney, David Gaunson, and W. Trenwith. The meeting was an immense and an enthusiastic one, and to show what my opinions were then, I will read the report of my speech, which appeared in the Argus of the following day -

Mr. V.L. Solomon said that some Victorian newspapers had discredited his mission as a delegate from the Northern Territory in regard to the Chinese question, but he was prepared to show that neither himself nor any other delegate had received one sixpence for his labour. (Hear, hear.) Although the people living in the south of Australia felt to some extent the difficulties and troubles which the influx of Chinese brought upon them, they could not possibly grasp the magnitude of the question so far as the Northern Territory was concerned. (Applause.) It was much to be regretted that Chinese coolies had been got from Singapore in the past for the purpose of working mines in country which was supposed to be a hotbed of disease. It had been demonstrated that Europeans could work there, and the continual increase of Chinese miners was a menace to the well-being of the community. After fifteen years' experience of Chinese at Port Darwin, he could say that in no sense was their presence conducive to the advancement of any new colony. There were 7,000 Chinese in the Northern Territory as against 1,000 Europeans, and the time was ripe for a decisive blow to their further influx. (Applause.) He could scarcely agree with the terms of the resolution in asking for a residential tax, which would be impracticable, impolitic, and unfair to those who had already been admitted to Australia. (Cries of "No.")

That resolution was for the imposition of a poll tax of £100, and a residential tax of £20 per annum upon all Chinese coming into Australia.

There should be no retrospective legislation. The proposal to treat with the Home Government on the matter was a weak one. (Great applause.) The communications which had recently issued from the Premiers of the three colonies savoured of a nasty under-current of Imperialism which should be avoided. (Applause*) An appeal to the Imperial authorities to settle the question of a treaty with China after the colonies had legislated for themselves was very impolitic, inasmuch as it amounted to an admission that they were bound by a treaty which they were not parties to. There should' be an Australian Conference on the subject, but no treaties should be admitted which were never intended to affect Australia. (Applause.)

Mr KING O'MALLEY

- What did the Age say ?

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Age at that time was not quite so potent a factor in politics as it is to-day, and I have not taken the trouble to refer to its report, but I have no doubt that it was just as firm upon the question, and probably more so, than the Argus. If the honorable member looks up the files of the newspapers in the library, he will be able to read some excellent speeches, which were delivered by some of those whom I have named. The honorable and learned member for Parkes also said that the statistics which have been put before the House show so slight an increase in the number of Asiatic aliens during the last few years that the matter is really unimportant, and little or no danger to the Commonwealth can be demonstrated. I entirely disagree with that opinion. I say that there is to-day a greater danger to the Commonwealth from Asiatic immigration than ever existed before, inasmuch as the larger prosperity that we hope for, the increase of industrial pursuits, the fact that manufactures will be able to pass freely from State to State, will offer far greater inducements to the cheap labour of the East than could be offered by any one State. The establishment of manufactories in any State by these people would mean a market several times as great as the market they could obtain before we had federation. Then the proximity of the northern portion of Australia to the home of these Eastern races is an always existent danger. The recent troubles both in China and in Japan have not tended to make the people there more settled in their homes, or less liable to taxation. The recent warlike operations in China must lead, in the natural course of events, to a considerable increase in the amount of taxation which will have to be squeezed out of the Chinese people. The more the difficulties of living in China and Japan are made apparent, the greater will be the desire of the people there to come to Australia, which is a veritable paradise to the Asiatic alien. How is it that these people in the past few years have been content to come here under labour conditions, under conditions as to the repayment of their passage-money, and under other conditions which make them for a year or two virtually slaves? It is because they are willing to submit to anything to escape the peculiarly hard conditions of life which they have to undergo in their own country. It is due to the legislation passed in 1888 - within nine months of the agitation to which I have referred - which, although imperfect, has barred a great many from coming here, that the influx has been checked. It has been said that uniform legislation was at that time placed on the statute books of the States, but that is not so. In New South Wales, for instance, a heavy poll tax was provided for, while in South Australia there was no poll tax, but simply a tonnage limit. The worst point about that legislation was that it provided for the issue of permits to those who had been in a State for a certain number of years. Those permits, in many hundreds of instances, were used to bring back persons other than those to whom they were issued, having been deliberately sold in the open market in the ports of China. Of course, of late years, since the practice has been called attention to - and honorable members who come from South Australia will know how frequently it has been called attention to in the South Australian Legislature - more stringent conditions have been imposed. The holders of the permits have had to get their photographs affixed to them, and to sign their names to them.

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Mr Poynton

- That is not much of a check.

Mr. V.L. SOLOMON.No; because Chinamen are very much alike. But the influx of the Chinese has been checked to some extent, though the legislation which has been passed does not go far enough. While it checked the influx of the Chinese, it did not check the influx of the Japanese, or Malays, or Javanese, or a host of others who are as great a danger to the working classes, the artisan classes, and the trading

classes of Australia as the Chinese themselves. In Port Darwin our experience of the Japanese was similar to that which they had on Thursday Island. Gradually the ownership of the pearling boats and most other kinds of business became vested in the Japanese, while the white traders, the white artisans, and the white workers were driven out of that part of Australia. There has been some talk of the danger of excluding our fellow British subjects from India, but I am inclined to think that that danger has been very much exaggerated. Since 1892 we have had upon the statute book of South Australia an Indian Immigration Act, which provides for the indenting of Indian labourers under Government control, at a wage of 1s. a day, for a period of five years, in order to provide planters with labour. But the Indian Government did not encourage the emigration of labourers from India. The authorities there, by very stringent regulations in regard to the employment of agents, both at the ports from which the labourers were to come and the places at which they were to be employed, with regard to the payment of passage-money, and the making of provision for their comfort, medical attendance, and general conditions, put every possible obstacle in the way of their emigration. The result has been that, instead of great tracts of sugar and rice land being cultivated in the Northern

Territory by capitalists, no capitalist has yet applied to the South Australian Government for permission to indent a single Tamil or Indian labourer. That fact speaks for itself. The Indian Government did not want their labourers to leave India, and said so. To show the change in the current feeling since 1892, I may mention that the Act to which I am referring provided, not only for the importation of labour for the development of territory by planters, but also for their use, if the Government desired, upon railway construction and other public works. The present Bill is a very old friend of mine. I remember that in 1898 it was introduced into the South Australian Parliament in almost its present form by the Attorney-General of the day, the present Minister for Trade and Customs. Mr. Chamberlain's remarks, warnings, and pleadings upon that occasion are to be found in the Hansard of three years ago, and they correspond almost word for word with the excuses and pleadings which are adopted by the Attorney-General of the present Federal Government. Even at that time this Bill was scouted because it attempted to impose the educational test of 50 words in English. It was defeated upon the second reading, although, in order to be consistent and with the object of making it more stringent in committee, I voted for the Bill at that stage. Upon that occasion we were told that, unless we consented to pass the Bill as introduced, we should risk having it vetoed by the Imperial authorities. It was also urged that we should be scouting the Empire, that we should almost be inviting it to cut the painter - that we should be severing ourselves from the mother land to whose protection we have owed so much for such a long period. All these objections sound very familiar to me when I read the Hansard of three years ago. But the arguments used then in regard to each individual State can hardly be applied with the same force to-day. It was all very well to argue that a colony with less than a quarter of a million inhabitants could not dictate to the Imperial powers what legislation they wanted, especially in view of the fact that the Governor of that colony could not assent, to the Bill even if it had passed, but would have had to reserve it for Her Majesty's assent. With these facts plainly before us, it seems to me that the conditions then were very different from what they are to-day.

Sir William Lyne

- What about New South Wales?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- New South Wales is a little larger. But the difference between New South Wales and South Australia merely represents the difference between a South Australian mosquito and a Northern Territory one.

Sir William Lyne

- It is four times as large in population.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is a little larger, certainly. It has actually a population of over a million, which is nearly as large as that of some of the larger villages in the United Kingdom. New South Wales at that time was desirous of pleasing the Imperial authorities, and would have consented to the passage of the Bill in its present form. But the then Premier of New South Wales, who is the present leader of the Opposition, urged the passing of the Bill in the terms just read to us by the Prime Minister from the New South Wales Hansard, telling us, in one of the most eloquent speeches I have heard during this debate, that the conditions of the whole of Australia in seeking to pass a measure of this kind are entirely different from what they were in the individual States. I thoroughly agree that they are absolutely different. If Australia, with all its interests,

with its greater ambitions, is not to receive more consideration at the hands of the Imperial Parliament than did the individual States of the group prior to the accomplishment of federation, I fail to see where the advantage of federal union comes in.

Mr McCay

- Did we federate because the home authorities gave the individual States too little consideration ?

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- To a very large extent I think that we did. One reason why we federated was because we were undoubtedly cramped in our trade relations. Another was that we can better administer the Defence department, the Post-office, and similar departments as a whole. Still a third reason was that our commerce, trade, and importance, and our ability to help one another in defence matters, would be enhanced tenfold. To say now that the pleadings of Mr. Chamberlain to the Premiers who met him not to hamper the Imperial Government upon this question have the same application to-day in regard to the demand of a population of 4,000,000 people as they had -when applied to the demand of a mere handful in each State for this great power to govern ourselves in a matter of self-defence is sheer nonsense. This is a matter not of self-defence against some enemy openly invading our shores, but of self-defence against the insidious influx of a population which will sap the very foundation of our social system, which will undoubtedly injure all classes of the community, whether traders, working-men or artisans, and which may in a few years lead to those difficulties, the serious results of which we have seen in American history. I think that the leader of the Opposition put the position well when he told us that this great cry about the desire of Great Britain to avoid offending Japan was hysteria, and that too much importance must not be attached to the fact that these two nations are upon friendly terms to-day, because to-morrow Japan might be an ally either of Russia or of China. I wish to say a few words about the difficulties of our geographical position. I pointed out, when speaking upon the address in reply, that the position of the northern portion of this country has altered materially, from a geographical stand-point, within the last few years. At Port Darwin we have the cable, which must be protected, and which, with the rich lands and mines there within a few days' sail of the home of the Chinese, Japanese, Malays, and others, offers the greatest temptation for the incursion of these people - at a point, too, which we are not to-day prepared to defend. What defence have we there for our cable communication ? A rifle club, probably, consisting of 25 members. At that port there is practically no defence for our only means of communication with the old world by cable, and thus there is every temptation offered to these foreign people to come down upon us. Does any honorable member imagine for an instant that because we insist upon preventing an influx of those people to the north end of Australia, Great Britain is going to cast us adrift ? Does any one imagine that Great Britain's interest in our commerce - and above all in our bonded debt which constitute the crimson thread of kinship and the golden thread as well - will not induce her under any circumstances to defend with all her might and power the interests of Australia ? Are the interests of Japan to be compared with those of Australia ? I admit that if it had been possible to frame a Bill which would effect the absolute prohibition of undesirable aliens upon the lines suggested by the Imperial authorities, I should have liked to see such a measure. But the Imperial authorities have not dictated any set terms. The danger of the experiment which the Government would have us make lies in our absolute knowledge that it would be much easier for us to secure our demands now than it will be within two or three years. The Imperial relations to-day are not strained with any of the powers affected. Even with Japan she is upon friendly terms. We need have little fear if this Bill were sent home in the form proposed by the honorable member for Bland that the Imperial authorities would flout the expressed wish of Australia and send the measure back. I doubt whether such a fear exists even in the minds of the Prime Minister's colleagues. It certainly is not entertained by the Attorney-General, and judging from the tone adopted by the Minister for Trade and Customs during recent interviews in regard to diplomatic relations with the British Government upon the question of the passage of the Commonwealth Bill - as to some clauses concerning which there was a great deal of heat engendered. I do not think that he is very frightened of the vetoing of this Bill. At any rate I am prepared to try the experiment. I do not think there will be anything lost. Even if we have to wait a little time, we still have State legislation in force, and also the executive authority to protect our own shores against undesirable people. I shall certainly vote with my colleagues on this side of the House in support of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. I have not yet said anything in reference

to the educational test, nor as to the danger with which these people menace us in regard to the introduction of diseases. There is no doubt that the Chinese do introduce certain loathsome diseases which are much to be dreaded, into European communities. We had an experience at Port Darwin of the introduction of small-pox and leprosy - several bitter experiences indeed. From my connexion with the Board of Health there, I happen to know that there was great anxiety among the small European community concerning the introduction of these diseases. Upon the question of education, I say that there are no more ready, adaptable people in regard to the acquisition of education in any portion of the world than are the Chinese and Japanese. I have seen instances at Port Darwin of Chinese youngsters, who at the school outstripped over and over again all their European fellow scholars. These Chinese children attend the public school there, and I have seen instances of Chinese boys who, within two or three years, could read fluently, write a good hand, and were very fair arithmeticians. The Japanese are even more adaptable than are the Chinese. The Chinese also master trades in very much less time than do Europeans. I can quote an instance of a Chinese lad who was taken on at a battery at Pine Creek as an assistant to feed the battery. Subsequently he was taught to drive the battery, and finally he - could turn out a shaft for the battery, or could file out the inside of the cylinders when they became worn. Within twelve months he was running the battery, having had his wages increased from £1 to £4 10s. per week. It cannot, therefore, be said that Chinamen are not adaptable, and that they would not soon learn any language, in order to pass any test that we might subject them to under the Bill. It is perfectly true that at Raffle's college at Singapore, and at a large number of colleges in China and Japan, the English language is being taught. These people know that the only outlet for their increasing population - and they are essentially traders and artisans - is away in Australia, and that they must learn the English language in order to go out there to work. Therefore, if we adopted the educational test, we should find it an absolute failure. With regard to the amendment of the honorable member for Bland, I should have liked to find some other way out of the difficulty ; but I infinitely prefer that amendment to the suggestion of the honorable and learned member for Indi, which does not treat the question in a straightforward way. I am therefore determined to support the proposal to put this measure in such a form that it will tell the English authorities, and all others, in distinct and unmistakable terms, that Australia has decided that this country shall not be over-run by Asiatics, but kept, as far as possible, for the white races. I feel sure that when the authorities in Great Britain really understand the importance of this question, and the strength of feeling of the people of Australia, they will yield to our desires. They will realize that if we have in Australia a white population increasing year by year, the Empire will have a stronger arm to help her in time of trouble than if we developed a hybrid population. I shall support the amendment indicated by the honorable member for Bland.

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Mr E SOLOMON

- I shall not take up much of the time of the House in speaking to this very important question. I have statistical information derived from official records which I think will show that the figures quoted by the Premier as to the influx of aliens into Western Australia are entirely wrong. In common with other honorable members I have pledged myself to go as far as I can towards securing a -white Australia. In Western Australia we have felt, in a most acute form, the evils attendant upon the introduction of aliens into ' our midst, and great trouble has been given to the municipal authorities and to those in charge of our various public institutions. A large number of aliens have found their way into our hospitals, asylums, and other public institutions, and have become a charge upon the community, and even where we have managed to get rid of them, they have had to be sent away at the expense of the Government, and the State has never benefited in any way by their introduction. In dealing with this matter I prefer to take a straight course, because I think that by adopting that method we shall steer clear of. difficulties far more effectively than in any other way. We should let the English Government see at once that we are united in the determination to secure a white Australia. The clause as it stands in the Bill is a blot upon the Commonwealth, and it would have been far better for the Government to have declared straight out what they wanted. The Government profess to desire to keep out all Chinese and other Asiatics, and if that be true they should make their intention plain on the face of the Bill. In New South Wales they have shown us the advantage of direct legislation in dealing with the Chinese trouble. The law in that State provides that only one Chinese shall be brought in for every 300 tons of a vessel's tonnage, and imposes a poll tax

of £100.

In Western Australia some years ago we passed an Act providing that vessels should not bring in more than one Chinese for every 500 tons, but we found that that did not answer, and we then introduced more stringent legislation, which is still in force. In June last, certain information was asked for in the Senate with regard to the introduction of aliens into Western Australia. It was desired to know the number of Asiatics imported into Western Australia under the imported Labour Registry Act since 1894, the number of Asiatics returned to their own countries, and the number of agreements or renewals of agreements in force under that Act. The return that was supplied showed that in the "Victoria district the number of aliens imported was 53, and the number returned about 30. There are certain agreements in force in Western Australia which would no doubt be affected to some extent by the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland. In Derby 256 aliens were imported, whilst none were returned, and only two agreements were cancelled. In the Onslow district 27 were imported and none returned. In the Broome district 19 were imported and none returned. So the report goes on, and it is shown that in all 567 aliens were imported and only 32 were returned. In the Fremantle district 201 aliens were landed, but no record was kept of those returned. This tends to show that the administration of the Act - which contains a provision similar to that now proposed in clause 4 - was bad, and that it would be far better to at once pass a stringent law which would not leave any door open for bad administration. With regard to the figures quoted by the Prime Minister, I have before me the monthly statistical abstract made up to August 1901, which is compiled by the Registrar General - one of the best officers we have in Western Australia. Under the heading of "Nationality of immigrants to and emigrants from Western Australia during the seven months ended 31st July, 1901," I find that during the five months ending 31st May, there were 158 Malays, 50 Chinese, 53 Manilamen, 13 Afghans, 13 Indians, and 3 Japanese, admitted into the State, whilst comparatively few left. During the seven months ended 31st July - that is, two months afterwards - the number of Malays landed was 194, Chinese 80, Manilamen 68, Javanese 19, Afghans 16, Indians 15, Japanese 9, and Assyrians 2. Altogether there were 403 arrivals, and the departures number 319. So that during seven months there was a net increase in the alien population of the State of nearly 100. I think we may assume that a good many of these men did not pass a proper test, and as they are allowed to go away under certain conditions, and to come back again, we cannot take into serious consideration the departures as against the arrivals. All these facts go to show that notwithstanding that we have a provision in our Act similar to that in the clause now before us, these aliens manage to find an entry into the colony, and some more effective method will have to be devised for excluding them. The feeling of the people of Australia is unanimously in favour of keeping out coloured aliens, and it is high time something was done to restrict their immigration, because they are arriving here in increasing numbers as time goes on. I have noticed a great number of aliens arriving in Melbourne lately, and it would be interesting to know who brought them here, and for what reason they have come, because I have seen them walking about almost bootless, and in a generally disgraceful state. I do not think it is necessary for me to take up the time of the committee any longer. We have heard every phase of the question discussed, and I have been delighted with the many eloquent speeches delivered on both sides of the Chamber. It was not until I had heard both sides that I came to a decision ; and now, with due consideration for the conditions of the whole of the Commonwealth, I have come to the conclusion that, having pledged myself to a " white Australia," it is my duty to support the amendment of. the honorable member for Bland.

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Mr PAGE

- I made a speech on the second reading, and had not intended to say anything further, but for some remarks last night by the honorable and learned member for Parkes, who desired to make out that the alien and the kanaka were a declining factor in Queensland. I find, however, on reference to " Coghlan," that, according to the census taken in Queensland on . the 31st October, 1898, there were in that colony 8,051 Chinese, 8,617 Pacific Islanders, 3,247 Japanese, and 1,438 Javanese and people of other Asiatic races. The honorable and learned member for Parkes forgot to tell the committee - whether he did so designedly or through ignorance it is not for me to say - that although the sugar production in Queensland has almost doubled in nine years, the number of aliens who have come into Queensland, apart from kanakas, are some 10,000 or 12,000. I have not had time to put my finger on the statistics, but I am as certain as that I am standing here that there are more than 10,000 or 12,000 aliens, other than kanakas,

engaged in the sugar industry. When an honorable member rises to lay a case before the committee, the least he can do is to be honorable, and to tell us the whole of the facts. The honorable and learned member twitted the labour party - or "a certain section of the House" as he is pleased to call us - with not touching the kanaka at all ; suggesting that we are afraid of the coloured gentleman. But when the time comes we shall show whether we are afraid to touch the kanaka. I had not intended to go very fully into the Pacific Islanders Bill when it was introduced, but I certainly intend to do so now. I shall rake up everything I possibly can, and if other members from Queensland do not see fit to put this matter in its true light before Parliament, I am one who will do so. We all know that the black man is a curse in an industrial sense. I have said on the floor of this House before that in the old country freetrade and liberalism are synonymous. But what have we seen in the first Commonwealth Chamber ? We have seen that freetrade and conservatism are synonymous with some of the honorable members who sit on the front opposition of the bench.

Mr Conroy

- There is only one.

Mr PAGE

- I wish there were only one.

Mr Kirwan

- There are conservatives on the other side of the House.

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Mr PAGE

- But those on the other side have nothing to do with us. I pride myself on being a free-trader, but when I hear a pronounced free-trader like the honorable and learned member for Parkes -and I am sorry to say I quoted him during my election campaign - say that the blackfellow is equal to, if not better than the white labourer, I ask myself what white man could ever vote for such an advocate? If the honorable and learned member had only seen half of the vice that is created by contamination with these coloured races, he would have a different tune to play on his pipes. Whether we are for or against this measure, we all know that combination with the lower races does not bring those races up to our level, but takes us down to theirs. I have been through the slums in Melbourne, and bad as the curse is in Queensland, thank God we have not got it as the people have it in Melbourne. The honorable and learned member for Parkes said that they had the curse in Sydney, but that the municipality was to blame for not making these people keep their places clean. Can the municipality stop these aliens from contaminating our children? I would ask the honorable and learned member how he would like to see a black man married to his daughter or to his sister? If he is so fond of the black man, let him take the black man into his family circle. We all know who suffers from the contamination of these black races. It is the children of the poor who suffer, and so long as I have a tongue in my head I will use my voice in the effort to lift them out of the mud in which they are at present. Queensland is no better than any other colony in this respect, but the condition of affairs is not so bad as it is in Victoria ; and if by ridding the Commonwealth of these people we are doing a good thing for Queensland, we are doing a still better thing for Victoria. We must not forget that these women, although they are being degraded in the slums of Victoria, have been somebody's darlings. Somebody has called them "dear," and if they have "gone down" some of those parsons who keep talking about the goodness of the black man in Queensland, ought to go into the slums and do the Christian work of lifting them out of the mire. Instead of trying to bring more of these aliens here, we ought to be trying to get rid of those who are already in the country, and the honorable and learned member for Parkes "nettled" me a little when he talked so glibly of these coloured gentlemen. The majority of honorable members are quite willing to get rid of the blackfellow ; indeed, I think it is the almost unanimous wish of the House that he should go. There are only two men who have dared to get up in the chamber and advocate a "black" policy. Whether these honorable members have briefs from the agents who are introducing the black-fellows, I do not know, but I can quite understand one of them advocating such a policy, because in Tasmania I heard a very funny little story. At one time, butter was scarce in Tasmania, and a gentleman allowed his servants to have anything they liked so long as they did not touch butter. Butter was "tabooed," and we all know that when anything is "tabooed" we find it is the very thing we want. This gentleman, I am told, summoned one of his servants for eating butter instead of dripping, the pantry door having been left open. The Minister of Customs said there were some very

curious justices of the peace in the Commonwealth, and it was one of these curious justices who fined this servant girl 10s. for eating butter instead of dripping. Now, I can understand such a gentleman as that girl's employer advocating a "black Australia," for no white man would ever do the thing he did. I would recommend the honorable member for Parkes to take my remarks to heart, and see whether he cannot alter things a little for the white people before he advocates the admission of black people. I hope that we shall soon go to a division, because I am very anxious about this question. "We shall see whether those who have been advocating a "white Australia" mean a "white Australia," or only a piebald one. My vote goes and always will go for a "white Australia," which I hope will be carried by a large majority.

Mr EWING

- Any person who has followed this debate must have come to the conclusion long ago that there is no need to make a long speech at this period. I do not say that because any fault is to be found with the very able, argumentative, and instructive speeches that have been made. No doubt these speeches were necessary, but from every side of the House, with hardly an exception, has come the same story - whether from the Government side, from the Opposition side, or from those honorable members who occupy corner seats. There is always the fear of the Asiatic, and a sense of responsibility with regard to a "white Australia." That being so, there is no need for me to reiterate the basis or principles on which the question rests. There never has been a doubt in my mind with regard to the mandate of the people. The mandate given by the people of this country to every honorable member here at the last election was perfectly clear. That mandate was absolutely for a "white Australia," and I am quite satisfied that no honorable member desires to liberate himself from the promise he then made. The question which remains for us is as to the best method by which that mandate can be carried out. I am quite sure about the mandate, and it was a mandate given by an intelligent community to presumably intelligent men. It was clearly that there should be no delay. We have to use our intelligence and judgment to bring about the desired results, and we must not, as is proposed by the honorable member for Bland, lose the substance by pursuing the shadow. As that honorable member and other honorable members on the opposition side of the House know perfectly well, the result of the amendment, if carried, would be to delay the whole question, and to create with the Empire complications, which no man desires to see.

Mr Reid

- I think it will avoid that.

Mr EWING

- I have no fault to find with the opinions of any honorable member I state my own openly, and I think it is remarkable that any loyal man in the British Empire should choose what is admittedly a great democratic occasion to create difficulties between the Commonwealth and the Imperial Government, when for the first time we have to approach them in regard to any great question.

Mr Higgins

- The whole question is whether there is any great difficulty.

Mr EWING

- I take it for granted that the English statesmen know their own business. If the honorable and learned member were in Air. Chamberlain's place, and made a statement with the authority of the position he occupied, I take it for granted that he would expect it to be accepted as correct.

Mr Reid

- The Attorney-General said nothing of that sort. He said there might be some delay in explaining to the other powers why the British Government had to assent to the Bill.

Mr EWING

- I do not think there is any honorable member who is not aware that the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland will not be acceptable to the British Government, because it will produce international complications.

Mr Reid

- No ; it will not.

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Mr EWING

- Surely the objection is not a whim % These British statesmen are engaged in the great and important work of governing the greatest nation in the world. Our own Governments are doing comparatively

unimportant work. The great Government at home tell us that the proposal contained in the honorable member for Bland's amendment is inimical to the best interests of the Empire. Some honorable members say it is not, but we have only their word for it. I should like the right honorable and learned member at the head of the Opposition to prove it. I feel confident that honorable members are making a serious mistake on this occasion, and will endeavour to show that they are. I shall seek, as briefly as possible, to make passing reference to one or two matters which cause me to take up a definite attitude. I am free to admit that if an honorable member desired only temporary popularity, his vote would be found on the other side. I am quite confident that any honorable member desiring to choose the easier path would speak on the other side; but every one of us has serious and final responsibilities to the whole British people. Those responsibilities weigh as heavily upon me here as they would do if I were a member of the House of Commons. That ought to be our attitude upon all such questions. We have ceased to be provincial, and we should leave provincial ideas behind us. It is incumbent upon every loyal man - and I believe that a considerable majority of honorable members are loyal - to endeavour to do nothing that would complicate the great Empire of which we form a part.

Mr Thomas

- Why not say that all of us are loyal ?

Mr EWING

- I take it for granted that we are all loyal.

Mr Kirwan

- What about the loyalty of the Empire to the interests of Australia?

Mr EWING

- I will deal with that in a moment or two. Some honorable members have said that if Great Britain does not give us what we desire, Australia will go on her own. There have been a number of veiled hints that we will cut the painter. I am of opinion, however, that any man who speaks even in a veiled way of severing our connexion with the mother country is either a scoundrel or a fool.

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson. - He is a traitor.

Mr EWING

- Yes ; he is also a traitor. He is a fool, because he has no idea of cause and effect - he has no sense of proportion ; or he is a scoundrel who seizes upon an opportunity of this kind in order to lay the foundation of a mine that must eventually destroy part of the obligations that hold the Empire together, and in the end absolutely destroy Australia itself. If we were a nation of 20,000,000 or 40,000,000 of people, able to maintain our own ; if Australia had a navy able to protect her shores from the ravages of the enemy, and an army capable of defending her territory, there might be something in it. But where is our army ? Where is our navy? It is the British Army and the British Navy that we depend upon, and it is the British Army and Navy and British statesmen we flout with an amendment such as that which has been proposed. A good deal that has been said with regard to the education of Asiatics appears to me to be overstated. No doubt they are becoming educated, but every honorable member knows that Australia has nothing to fear from the educated alien. The right honorable the leader of the Opposition will grant that.

Mr Reid

- I do not agree with the honorable member at all. I object to the educated coloured races just as much as I do to the uneducated coloured races.

Mr EWING

- I am dealing in a practical way with the danger that threatens us. The leader of the Opposition has the same casual knowledge and information with regard to these people that I possess, and we know that the coloured aliens who come here are not educated. They are the off-scourings of the different Asiatic peoples. If it is the uneducated coloured aliens who are coming here, the educational test will stop them.

Mr Poynton

- Is it not a question of racial trouble ?

Mr EWING

- I think it is. Racial hatred is the essence of the whole matter.

Mr Reid

- Not hatred ; it is only the antagonism of oil to water.

Mr EWING

- We grant all that, but we want to avoid these people. We know that that is absolutely the basis of the whole question. That is not, however, the point we are arguing just now. The question is whether, without injustice, or without making the work of the British statesmen more difficult, it is possible to bring about the result we desire. All the rest is taken for granted. We know that education is spreading among Asiatic people, but not nearly so rapidly as some honorable members have asserted. In my opinion there is nothing to be feared from the educated Asiatic. He is not coming here. The man we desire to keep out is the uneducated coloured alien, and if we can exclude him we shall do all that is necessary for the time being. How does the case stand ? Every one admits that the Government measure is effective.

Mr Poynton

- We do not admit that.

Mr EWING

- If any further proof of the effectiveness of the educational test is wanted, after the speech delivered by the Prime Minister, I am not able to give it. The Prime Minister's speech ought to be enough to satisfy any reasonable man.

Mr Kirwan

- What about the statistics quoted by the honorable member for Fremantle 1

Mr EWING

- It is impossible for me to believe that there is any reasonable man who does not know that the educational test will be effective so far as Asiatics are concerned. It is impossible not to believe, if we get rid of party bias, and an obtuse way of viewing the question - if we look at the case fairly, and take into consideration the class of coloured aliens- coming here - that the educational test will stop them.

Mr Spence

- Chinese are educated in their own country.

Mr EWING

- Yes, but the honorable member must remember that the test is to be in a European language. Time does not permit one to go into every detail. The honorable member knows that the statistics with regard to the education of the Chinese and Hindoos affect the better class of the people who can do well enough at home without coming here. The charge against the Government measure is that it is temporary. I am prepared to grant that it is not a permanent cure, that the future may hold difficulties and trouble that will not be dealt with by the Government scheme.

Mr Page

- Then why not vote for the amendment?

Mr EWING

- because I do not see, looking at the history of fill time, that there is any such thing as permanence in law. Looking back at the evolution of nations, the progress of peoples, and the gradual tendency towards higher civilization, we see the whole pathway strewn with wrecks of laws and institutions which have become useless. The time may come - perhaps it is not far off - when this law, being of a temporary kind, but having answered its purpose - having enabled us to gain our end without injustice to British statesmen - will go into the waste-paper basket. The fact that it is a temporary measure carries with it no condemnation, so far as I am concerned. Would it not appear to be a reasonable thing to vote for the Bill"? Why do we vote for any Bill ? We vote for it as we vote for everything in politics - not because it is the best, but because we think it is the best possible. This Bill is the best, possible, and every one knows that.

Mr McDonald

- I do not.

Mr EWING

- Every one believes that it will be effective.

Mr Thomas

- The honorable member for Parkes says it will not be effective, and that is why he is going to vote for it.

Mr EWING

- Every reasonable man out of political circles believes the Bill will be effective.

Mr Thomas

- The honorable and learned member for Parkes says it will not.

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Mr EWING

- I am not responsible for a large number of opinions that we hear. I am responsible only for my own. If honorable members believe that the Bill will do good, and that it can be passed into law immediately, will it not be as well for them to pass it as a first step towards securing our object? One cannot get to the top of a ladder except rung by rung, and similar progress must be made in regard to the securing of reforms. I believe that the Bill will be effective, and that it is a measure which is obtainable, while the provisions of the amendment are not. I implore honorable members to consider for a moment or two, before giving a vote upon this subject, the weakness of Australia. When the Defence Bill was being debated, the first line of defence that was continually alluded to was the British navy. It was said then that Australia was safe under the power of Great Britain. When we spoke of the countless hordes of Asiatics looming upon the horizon, we were told that we need not bother about them, because the old red ensign of Britain floated between us and them, and we were therefore safe. But the honorable member for Darling proposes that we Australians should put a ring-fence round Australia, so as to secure the government of a democratic people on democratic principles - with a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and so on. But any fence or barrier put up by Australians, and unprotected by Great Britain, would be swept down at the first brush of conflict.

Mr Fisher

- The honorable member has a very poor opinion of Australians.

Mr EWING

- I know the size of the Japanese navy, and I know that without the protection of Great Britain not a ship could leave an Australian port if Japan wished to prevent it.

Mr Spence

- But the Government of Great Britain do not object to the amendment.

Mr EWING

- Our power, our strength, our only hope is Great Britain. But honorable members say - " We are going to run Australia on Australian lines. It may complicate the affairs of the Empire, but we do not care."

Mr Spence

- We do not believe that it will complicate the affairs of the Empire.

Mr F E McLEAN

- We want to preserve the whole of Australia for people of British race.

Mr EWING

- The British Government suggest a certain method of obtaining what we require, and are we to say - " We shall not adopt that method. We are Australians first, and the complications of the Empire are of little importance to us "? What we have to learn first of all is that our alliance with Great Britain is a responsible one. We cannot, in the piping times of peace, flout those who govern the great mother country, and jeer at the British flag, and then, in time of war, crawl under that flag for protection. I stand by the Empire, because surrounded as Australia is by hundreds of millions of yellow men, she is powerless to play a lone hand. Without the protection of Great Britain, she would be absolutely submerged and destroyed. Honorable members wish us to have an ally, but they are prepared to get that ally into a mess, and then expect her to fight for us.

Mr Page

- At any rate, England will have to protect the interests of our bondholders.

Mr EWING

- I do not think that the honorable member takes that view of the connexion between the mother country and Australia. It is not a question of money ; it is a question of nationality and blood, of kith and kinship. It is therefore incumbent upon us to deal fairly with the mother country. If one were disposed to be ungenerous it might be said that there are persons in the community who would like to use this great occasion to do injury to Great Britain, and to produce complications which her statesmen desire to avoid, or to create a permanent grievance in the minds of Australians against the mother country. I have been in places where people would have no hesitation in saying that. But I refrain from saying anything that might

be objectionable to honorable members. It appears to me to be reasonable to pass the Bill, because it will bring about the result we desire to attain, and any person voting for it will be voting for a speedy and successful determination of the question before us. Any one who votes for the amendment, however, votes for delay, and possibly for the deferring of the settlement of the question for a very considerable time. We should approach the consideration of all these matters as loyal citizens, and not as petulant children. Whatever friction there may be between ourselves and the mother country, we should not permit ourselves to forget that with the assistance of the British Empire a white Australia is possible for ever, while without the mother country behind us the future has nothing but the blackness of despair. Honorable members may talk about fiscal policies, labour movements, democratic reforms, and all that sort of thing, but what would all our efforts amount to if Australia had to play a lone hand against the Asiatic races? Whatever might be my views, I would never give a vote which would complicate the relations between us and the mother country. Every member of the Federal Parliament should consider that he has as much responsibility towards the mother country as if he were a member of the House of Commons. He has, of course, his duty to his own community, and he must be loyal to those who elected him, but he should at all times endeavour to bring about the results that it is desired to obtain in a way which will least complicate our relations with the Imperial authorities.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- I am sure that every honorable member thoroughly appreciates the loyalty of the honorable member for Richmond, and would go to the same lengths in declaring his attachment to the British Empire. During his speech I made an interjection, which I may be permitted to enlarge upon for a few moments, to the effect that, after all, it is our loyalty to the British Empire, and our admiration for British institutions, that makes us so anxious to preserve the British character of our population. I think that the honorable member was fighting a bogey. He was trying to overturn some kind of red republicanism or some movement in favour of separation, which has no existence in fact. I am afraid that he has not followed very closely the debates either upon the second reading or upon this clause, because, if he had done so, he would know that there has been no nonsensical talk about such matters in this Chamber. He admitted at the outset it was all a question of method - that we all desire to obtain a white Australia by protecting our people from contact with inferior alien coloured races - and that the whole question is whether the proposal of the Government or the amendment of the honorable member for Bland will operate the more effectively to secure that object. If we desire to prevent the influx of alien coloured races into Australia, is there any good reason why our intention should not be stated in the Bill? Can it be urged that offence would be taken by foreign powers, and that complications such as the honorable member for Richmond foresees and dreads are likely to arise from the acceptance of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland? I do not think that that is possible. The Home Government have made certain intimations to the Government of the Commonwealth with regard to their wishes upon this matter, and what they say is entitled to profound consideration and respect, but we must not overlook the fact that the Commonwealth Parliament is charged with the grave responsibility of making laws for this Commonwealth. We do not claim any separate power of legislation; we claim simply the right to legislate for part of the British Empire, knowing perfectly well that our enactments must receive the Imperial sanction. I believe that, having given the greatest consideration to the representations of the Imperial Government, we should emphatically declare our minds and will upon this subject, trusting that they will sanction the legislation which we enact, and that the serious complications which have been hinted at by the honorable member who has just resumed his seat will not ensue. Is it not clearly understood by the Japanese residents in Australia, and by the Japanese Government, too, that the Bill as framed by the Government is directed towards the exclusion of Japanese from our territory? Are the Japanese so unintelligent or so unobservant as not to know the purpose of this measure, indirect as its methods may be? Are they likely to take greater offence if we state our intentions in plain language, and declare at once who the people are we wish to exclude? There are arts of diplomacy which are altogether beyond my comprehension, but I cannot imagine how any Government would be fooled or bamboozled by the roundabout methods proposed in the Bill. I do not see that the Imperial Government are likely to be led into any serious complications by the passage of this Bill if it embodies the amendment moved by the honorable member for Bland. I think that the honorable member for Richmond, in his desire to perpetuate the British connexion, and to show his fervent loyalty to

the Empire, has altogether forgotten the fact that our prime duty is to pass legislation for the good government of the people of Australia. Why have we united as a Commonwealth, why have we been endowed with this great Constitution, why have we been conceded all our great liberties of self-government, if not to work out our own destinies according to our own judgment, subject always, of course, to the Imperial sanction or veto of the measures which we pass ? I suggest that we should run the risk on this occasion of submitting this measure to the Imperial Government in the form which we believe will be most likely to carry out our wishes and to prevent the influx of coloured aliens. I do not think the Government themselves imagine that there is any prospect of the Imperial veto of a measure of that kind.

Sir John Forrest

- It would take some time.

Mr F E McLEAN

- Assuming that it does take some time, I do not think that an influx is likely to take place at such a rate as to cause alarm whilst the laws of the States remain operative.

Sir John Forrest

- It is not pressing, then.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- The Minister is attempting to put the plea of urgency in an unfair way. It is far better to have this matter settled upon right lines even if we have to wait a little time in order to secure such a settlement. We have laws in some of the States which to some extent will prevent the influx of these undesirable aliens during the period which would probably elapse before we obtained the more effective legislation. A little delay at first is worth risking in order to get a measure passed which will effectually accomplish what we desire. When the Prime Minister quoted the action of the New South Wales Legislature he forgot to mention that he himself, upon a score of platforms in that State during the recent federal campaign, told the people that when we were a united Australia we should be able to speak with a very much stronger voice to the Imperial Government than we could hope to do as isolated States. One of the very strongest arguments used in New South Wales and Western Australia in favour of federal union was that it would enable the democracy of these lands to protect itself from that contact with inferior people which was taking place through inadequate laws. Let us take, for example, our Chinese Restriction Acts. In New South Wales we had operating a Chinese Restriction Act, which was practically a prohibitory measure. As a matter of fact, it has almost entirely prohibited the influx of those aliens. The weak spot in connexion with it was that the laws of all the States were not so drastic as the laws of New South Wales, and we were thus unable to prevent Chinamen from occasionally coming across the border from adjacent States. The Customs authorities in New South Wales have been told repeatedly that their law was as perfect a prohibitory measure as could be devised. There were other States, however, from which these aliens could not be prevented from coming, owing to the lack of uniform legislation. It was held out to the people of New South Wales as an inducement to enter upon federal union that, under federation, we should have uniform legislation and administration, and that if any difficulties presented themselves similar to those which have been suggested this afternoon, Australia, being a strong Commonwealth, would be able to induce the Imperial Government to pass such legislation better than would an isolated State Government. Hence, when the Prime Minister quoted the New South Wales Legislature as having passed a drastic measure which did not receive the Royal assent, he forgot that one of our main objects in federating was to place ourselves in a position to be able to deal effectually with the very question with which he was dealing. Having considered this matter fully since the second reading debate, I have no hesitation in recording my vote in favour of the honorable member for Bland. I believe that the honorable member simply seeks to perfect the measure introduced by the Government, that the Government would be improving their own measure, and making a better name for themselves in connexion with the democratic legislation of this Commonwealth if they could, even at the eleventh hour, see their way to accept the amendment. They must recognise that it is not an unfriendly amendment. It is not conceived in a spirit of opposition to their measure. The desire underlying the legislation proposed by the Government has the commendation, approval and support of every honorable member of this Chamber. There have been one or two honorable members who have sounded a discordant note, but that note after all has only tended to emphasize the strong voice of approval with which the general principle has been received in all parts of

this House. We find that alike on the Opposition, the Government, and the labour sides of this Chamber the strongest approval of the proposed legislation is manifested. The people of Australia are too thoroughly determined to have this coloured immigration cease and to protect the British character of the population of this Commonwealth to tolerate any factious opposition to a measure of this kind.'

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- In the interests of the Empire.

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Mr F E McLEAN

- We occupy these lands, not for ourselves alone, but for the great British people. We are just as proud of the Imperial connexion as is the honorable member for Richmond, and just as anxious to maintain it. One of the best ways in which we can show our loyalty to the Empire is to hold these lands for the British race, and to save them from contamination. If we allow the working classes of this country to be brought into unfair competition with Asiatic races, if we permit the morals of the people and their stamina to be corrupted and depraved by the influx of these undesirable people, we shall indeed be proving recreant to the trust which the British Government have reposed in us. They have conceded to us a great territory and endowed us with a free Constitution. Under that Constitution, we are bound in honour and loyalty to hold these lands for the British race, and to save them from the contamination and degradation which must inevitably result from a wholesale influx of alien races. This amendment is designed as a friendly one. It is put forward to strengthen the object which the Government themselves have in view. We credit the Government with the utmost desire to stop this immigration. We do not impugn their motives. No note has been sounded questioning the motives of the Government in the framing of this Bill. On the contrary we credit them with the most sincere desire to uphold the British character of our population. The objection to their method is simply that it would not be effective, and that it would be better and more honorable, and more in keeping with our high pretensions as a Commonwealth, if we said clearly and emphatically what we mean, as does the honorable member for Bland in his amendment. I had not the opportunity of hearing the speech of the Prime Minister this afternoon, but I really do not see what all the quotations from the New South Wales parliamentary debates have to do with the question which we are now discussing. I can conceive no more idle way of occupying the time of this Chamber than that of reading over and over again debates which have taken place in the State Parliaments in days gone by. If we are going to allow our discussions to gravitate to that level ; if we are going to quote the Hansards of days gone by on every occasion, we are not likely to achieve much in this Federal Parliament. Unfortunately there is no Hansard to record the utterances of the Prime Minister during the Federal campaign. I am satisfied that, if I only had an official record of the speeches which he made on that occasion, I could quote a dozen instances in which he declared that if we were a united people we should be able to speak in such a way that Downing Street would listen to us, and we should achieve our ends. I regret that the Government has not seen fit to accept the amendment.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

-I cannot help feeling, in connection with this debate, that if ever a great question were dragged in the political mud, this question has been dragged there by honorable members on the Government side of the House. Throughout the debate, remarks by these honorable members have been punctuated by references to the want of loyalty on the part of those who take a view opposite to theirs, and so far as I am concerned nothing could be more offensive than to suggest that because I choose to take a different view on this question - the greatest question of all - therefore my loyalty is defective. Nothing could be more insulting than a suggestion of that kind. I venture to say that when any circumstances have arisen which have afforded a real test of the loyalty of the people of Australia, members on this side of the House, who feel strongly on this matter, have always responded' right loyalty to any appeals made to their attachment to the Home Government ; and I say further, and very deliberately, that that cannot be stated of some of those who have thrown out these taunts of disloyalty. The question of loyalty to the Empire ought never to be considered in connexion with a question of this kind - -or, at any rate, not yet. This is not the time when the greatest question that could be raised in a constitutional assembly, namely, the loyalty of honorable members, should be introduced. We are all loyal ; and there is no man in this House

who has risen to speak on this question, whatever view he may have taken, who would not go to any length in his defence of the Empire if it should ever be endangered. There is no honorable member who holds strong views upon this question who is not prepared to do anything - in his power to preserve the connexion of this continent with the great Empire of which we are so proud. I say, therefore, that the discussion is degraded by the introduction of the question of the loyalty of Australia to the Empire. Australia is loyal - if honorable members in this House desired to be disloyal they dare not be so. I have yet to learn, however, that any one desires to express the slightest suggestion of disloyalty in the consideration of this question. The Prime Minister tried to side-track the discussion by a reference to our relations to the Empire ; but I contend that that issue has never yet been considered seriously, and I do not believe the time will ever come when, in the discussion of this subject, we shall be called upon to consider what are our relations to the Empire. It should be assumed all through the discussion, right to its ultimate point, that we are loyal citizens of the Empire, that we are actuated only by motives which have regard to the solidity of the Empire, and to the continuation of our connexion with it. And, therefore, to suggest defective loyalty on the part of those who take a view different from those on the Government side of the House is to degrade a big question and to place it on a level of debate that it ought not to occupy. It is very singular that all these suggestions of disloyalty should come from the Government side of the House. The honorable and learned member for Indi, in suggesting his amendment last night, said in effect that those who differed from him took a defiant, if direct, attitude. It has also been stated that some of us were trailing our coats before the British Government, and we have also been accused of shaking our puny fists in the face of Great Britain. Why should all this twaddle be uttered in connexion with this debate ? Has any one suggested anything beyond loyalty as far as the Empire is concerned ? I have heard of nothing, but on the other hand I know of no man on this side of the House who does not feel the pulsations of loyalty to the old country quite as fully and as strongly as do any of those honorable members who believe in the indirect method of dealing with the exclusion of aliens as proposed in the Bill. We shall not begin to properly discuss this question until we entirely dismiss from our minds any question of disloyalty to the mother country. When the Prime Minister was discussing this question I wondered whether it was the same right honorable gentleman whom I had heard speaking throughout New South Wales during the federal referendum. One of the strongest points that right honorable gentleman was wont to make in his advocacy of the Commonwealth Bill was that it would give us a larger voice and larger powers, in our relations to the mother country, in dealing with these questions. He used to say, " If you want a white Australia, this Bill will give it to you. You have not got it now, but this Bill will give it to you by conferring upon you greater powers in your relations with the mother country."

Mr Piesse

- Because it gave power to make uniform laws.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Prime Minister meant more than that, and he said more. What he said most unmistakably was that we would be able to speak to Great Britain upon this question of the purity of our race, with a much stronger voice, and be able to make our wishes and wants known much more effectively than we could possibly do as disunited States. That was the great point then urged by the right honorable gentleman; but now he says that we can do nothing except follow in the train of the action already taken by the States. He says that to take a further step onward in connexion with this matter would imperil the relations of the Empire at large, and he suggests, as other honorable members have done, in the most offensive way, that to propose anything more than has been done by us as isolated States would be to indicate a want of loyalty to the Empire. The voice we now hear is a very different voice from that we were accustomed to hear throughout the length and breadth of New South Wales in advocacy of the Commonwealth Bill. The right honorable gentleman went out of his way unnecessarily, and gave himself a great deal of trouble to hunt up musty old records of New South Wales with reference to this question, and I wondered whether the right honorable gentleman had fumigated these records before dipping his nose into them. I am sure that if he does not take care he will pick up some germ that might be fatal to him. Why did the right honorable gentleman go to so much trouble to dig up the utterances of honorable members made under a set of circumstances so different from those which now present themselves ?

Sir John Forrest

- What is the difference?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I fancy that the difference between the federation and an isolated State is a slight one.

Sir John Forrest

- Not as it affects the countries we are legislating for - not as affecting New South Wales.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I understood that this charter that we took so much trouble to construct, and which the Home Government so readily gave its assent to, was to confer upon us larger powers of self government; but now, forsooth, when we are proposing to exercise these powers of government, and take another step forward in the treatment of a big question which goes down to the very vitals of our national existence, we are told that we should be making a retrograde movement which would imperil the Empire, and that therefore we must not move. Whatever the honorable member for Wentworth may have said in the year 1896, his attitude in regard to these aliens has been always accurately and definitely defined. A book on the aliens question, written by Mr. Arnold White, contains a report of an utterance by the honorable member dating back eleven years.

Mr HUME COOK

- More musty documents.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Of course; the debate has been brought down to a musty level, and I want to say in justification of the honorable member for Wentworth that his attitude was made very clear in a memorable speech on the hustings in East Sydney, when he said that although the people of New South Wales might have acted irregularly, they had taken a decisive step which was necessary to prevent the country from being overrun by alien hordes. His attitude has been consistent on that question right down to to-day. On the other hand, we have only to look back at some of these musty documents in order to find much greater inconsistencies in the utterances of some honorable members on the Government side of the House, than those which have been pointed out in the case of the honorable member for Wentworth. It could be shown from these documents that members of the present Government were among the loudest in their denunciations of these frippery proposals, as they were called, and that they clamoured for some strong action that would convey to the British Government what we wanted and that we meant what we said. We are told that the present Acts are effective. We have been told by the Prime Minister that the operation of the Act in Western Australia has been effective in stopping the inflow of Asiatic immigrants, and the Minister for Defence echoed and confirmed that statement. All I can say is that the honorable members who quote this Act as satisfactory, have a very poor idea of what effectiveness is in regard to the alien question. I find that the figures tell a different tale from that spelt by the Premier and the Minister for Defence.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Forrest. - But the honorable member does not know all the facts.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I know the facts as recorded in the monthly tabulated statements.

Sir John Forrest

- They require explanation.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- They do require explanation, and that is precisely what I am going to give.

Sir John Forrest

- I shall give an explanation directly.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I shall explain the figures.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member knows very little about them.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am very much obliged to the right honorable gentleman ; I know that I know a little about the figures, and no doubt we shall hear more on the question when he speaks. I find that for seven months of this year there was an influx of alien immigrants to Western Australia to the number of 403.

Sir John Forrest

- How many went away 1

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The right honorable gentleman asks me how many went away. But did the Act drive them away 1

Sir John Forrest

- A great many of those immigrants were domiciled in Western Australia, and were returning.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Does the Act drive those alien immigrants away 1

Sir John Forrest

- No.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The Act permits them to come in; and they go away for reasons with which the Act has nothing to do.

Sir John Forrest

- There is an Imported Labourers Registration Act as well.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- It seems to be assumed that the Act has some effect in driving away aliens already here. But there is nothing in the Act which makes it undesirable for these people to remain when they come, and it permitted them to come in to the number of 403 in the space of seven months. That does not seem a very large number ; but everything is relative. We have to take those figures in relation to the population of Western Australia, and we find that there was an inflow of 403 as compared with a population of 180,000 in that State. If we apply that proportion to the whole of the Commonwealth, we have an inflow under the strict English test as applied in Western Australia, of 17,000 aliens in the year. I do not know what honorable members on

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the other side of the House mean -when they say it has been an effective Act. I believe that the same ratio may be applied to the rest of the States, and that hundreds and hundreds of these people, who come in, are not accounted for in the tabulated statements. It is difficult enough to count our own people who are domiciled in a particular place, but it is infinitely more difficult to account for those migratory people whose habits of life lead them to meander over the continent. In my opinion, the figures understate the case so far as aliens are concerned, and I have no doubt that thousands of people of the kind find their way here every year, of whom no account is taken. But tailing the tabulated statements as applied to Western Australia alone, I say the facts disclosed are sufficiently alarming, and are a sufficient warranty for taking the drastic step we propose. But we are told that we must not offend India. The question of offence is one which we must consider in relation to the rest of the actions of the Government. I cannot conceive of anything more offensive to those people - if anything at all will give them offence - than the statement of the Attorney-General the other evening, when, in the most fervid and emphatic way, he said that the prohibition of those races was our goal, and that we intended to clear out of the' country those who were in. Not only are we going to prevent those people coming here, but, according to the Attorney-General, we are going to do something to lessen the number already in the country. Could anything be more offensive to those people than a declaration made in that unmistakable way? Does the Attorney-General suppose that the Japanese cannot read 1 Does he suppose that those educated Indians, of whom we heard so much to-day from the lips of the Prime Minister, cannot read ? Does he suppose that they will read only the lines of the Bill and not the lines of the accompanying speeches ? These people are good judges of human action and of motives which prompt people to take definite lines in life, and they will be able to see who is taking the more manly straightforward course - those who tell them that the line is drawn at their entrance here, or those who tell them that they are to be got out of the country if possible, but that that is going to be done in a roundabout, sinuous, and in what is termed a polite way. If anything could give offence to those people it is the direct and absolute utterance of the Attorney-General and the Premier that prohibition is the goal, and that if this sinuous, tortuous, and supposedly-polite way will not keep them out, we shall take more drastic measures in order to bring about the desired effect. I do not see much difference between the amendment of the honorable and learned member for Indi and that of the honorable member for Bland except that the former is more offensive. The

latter proposes to provide in the Bill that these people may not come here, whereas the honorable and learned member for Indi proposes to take power by this Bill to say at some subsequent time that these same people may not come. The difference seems to be very much in favour of the course suggested by the honorable member for Bland, who puts the whole of these people in the same category without naming them, whereas the honorable and learned member for Indi will at some future time single out a particular race and take specific action against them. A more invidious and offensive way than the latter one can scarcely conceive.

Mr Isaacs

- There is nothing of that in my amendment.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member takes power in his amendment to say at some future time that a particular race shall not be allowed to land here.

Mr Isaacs

- Any person.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Any person or class of persons. If, therefore, the Japanese came here in large numbers, the honorable and learned member would discuss them by themselves on the floor of the House, and would take action against them by means of a proclamation. Would that not be more invidious than grouping -all those aliens together in the Bill 1 Could anything possibly be more offensive to this supposedly friendly ally of Britain than on the floor of the House to discuss reasons why these particular people should not land here ? After all, such an amendment is only postponing the action which it is proposed to take to-day in a straightforward manner. Will not the same difficulty arise in connexion with the mother country at this later period, which is supposed to be in waiting for us now, if we carry the amendment of the honorable member for Bland ? Will the relations of the Empire be in such a state at that particular time in the future as to make these people less sensitive than they are to-day ? We are hoping and believing that Japan is going to remain the friendly ally of Britain in the future. At any rate, I hope she will remain so, and I believe it is wise for Britain to cultivate friendly relations with that country. I believe those friendly relations will continue, no matter what may be the fate or the terms of this Bill. I have yet to learn that the honorable member contemplates in his amendment a time in the future when we may be able to stand up, and, as has been said, defy the mother country in a way we may not do now. We take power in the Bill simply to enact a resolution of the two Houses, while the honorable and learned member proposes to get a resolution of the two Houses, and deal with it by way of proclamation at some future date. So far as the method of securing the exclusion of aliens is concerned, that proposed in the amendment of the honorable and learned' member is much more invidious and offensive than that prescribed in the Bill. The honorable and learned member for Parkes last night made a most peculiar speech. He demonstrated to the House, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there is no black labour problem at all, and the figures he quoted, taken in connexion with his utterances as a whole, would lead us to the conclusion that we are now wasting our time. He appeal's to think that there is no black - labour problem, and no fear of invasion by alien hordes, and that we should do better by leaving this question alone, and getting on with the Judiciary Bill. But the whole argument of the honorable and learned member was beside the question. . It is not a matter of what we consider in this House, but a matter of what the people of Australia consider. We had to pledge ourselves very definitely to the people of Australia during the recent elections that we would lose no time in dealing with the race question ; otherwise many of us would not have been here, and others would have been in our places with much more pronounced views. It is the belief of the people of Australia that this is the opportune moment at which to deal with this question. It is believed deep down in the hearts of the people of Australia that we cannot deal with this matter too promptly, or, indeed, too drastically. Let this Bill be submitted to the people of Australia to-day, as it has been submitted to this House, and the Prime Minister would see by the larger vote of the larger constituency, of which we here are only the representatives, whether the people prefer the amendment of the honorable member for Bland or the proposal in this Bill. I venture to say that the Prime Minister would be overwhelmingly beaten in the country, and, therefore, it is of the highest moment that we should lose no time in effectuating the proposition we have before us in the manner which most nearly accords with the wishes and sentiments

of the people of Australia. Which after all is the more straightforward course? To tell the people what we mean in a polite way ? Is that insulting ? Or is not the more insulting, more tortuous course suggested by the Bill, and in the language .of those who have spoken in support of the measure? And I say again that our relations to the Empire and our loyalty to the Empire are beside the question. To introduce these matters is only a degradation, and they have no right to be imported into a discussion of this kind. But the honorable and learned member for Parkes told us there was no such problem.

Mr BRUCE SMITH

- I said it was very much exaggerated.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable and learned member said that the matter would right itself, and then he went on to what I regard as the most peculiar part of his utterance. He is supposed to be a hater of shams, and I believe he is. I believe he has the courage of his convictions, and anybody who knows him knows that he says what he means. His utterances last night therefore came on me with some surprise. He admitted that there was a fear, which, however, he contended was absolutely baseless, in the minds of the people of Australia regarding the influx of these alien races. He considered it to be his duty to meet and allay that fear by a Bill of this kind, although he believed it to have no shadow of foundation. That is a very peculiar attitude for an honorable member who is known to have the courage of his convictions to the almost surpassing degree that the honorable and learned member for Parkes has, to take up. So much did the honorable and learned member endeavour to belittle the problem before us that he went out of his way to be unfair. He said a great deal about the virtues of these aliens, but he ignored their vices, and he had not a word to say about the virtues of our own people. He knows, however, as well as we do that they have vices and certain qualities which make it undesirable to have them in our midst. I shall not stay now to say what those troublesome qualities are, because we have had the story told over and over again in this House. We are all agreed that we should, as far as possible, keep these people out. While the honorable and learned member for Parkes told us what were their incomings and outgoings he had nothing to say about the number of those who are in Australia at the present time. I believe that the figures before the last census was taken showed the number to be 90,000, and, no doubt, when the computation of the recent census is completed, it will be found that it is now not less than 100,000. Is not the presence of so large a number of undesirable aliens in our midst a serious trouble in itself? Should we not be considering means, not to open the door to the admission of more of them, but to get some of them to leave our shores ? They are coming here, according to the honorable member, at the rate of 700 per annum, and those who are here are increasing. Therefore, the longer we delay the settlement of this matter, the greater will be our future trouble. It is our bounden duty, in pursuance of that highest of all forms of loyalty - loyalty to our own race and people and Empire - to take prompt and vigorous measures to try to decrease the number. I am not advocating the bundling of these people out, though such a course would not be in dissonance with the practice that has sometimes obtained even in England itself. This is no new problem that we are facing, and no new power that we are proposing to take, because England before to-day, when menaced by the inflow of undesirable peoples to a much less extent than we are, has enacted measures to give to the executive the right to bundle them out in any way it saw fit. Therefore, I do not think that England would take strong exception to our dealing with these people in a drastic way, if we made it plain that their numbers were a menace to us. While they are here they have a right to our shelter and protection, and the treaties of which we have heard so much give them that right. Since we must give them shelter and protection, we should be careful how we let them come in. The Attorney-General the other night said that he did not think there would be any trouble with the Home Government. He said that he believed that we could get all we want, and therefore he argued that we should not ask for it. He said that if we persisted in our demand it would be granted to us. But we were told that if we ask for what we want we shall endanger our connexion with the mother country, and it will involve her in international complications. Why should that be so ? The Attorney-General told us that if we, a comparatively small portion of the British Empire, approached Japan and India by proposals for treaties, the Governments of those countries would consent to keep their people at home. Did not the honorable and learned member give his case away when he made that admission? If the people of those countries would take no offence if we asked them directly to stay at home, why should they take offence if

we passed a Bill prohibiting their immigration here? I do not understand the honorable and learned member when he says that we should not pass a Bill openly prohibiting alien immigration. The problem is a sufficiently large and menacing one for us to pluck up courage, and, as was suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi, in no defiant manner, but with firmness, mingled with courtesousness, ask that these people be compelled to stay at home. What analogy is there between the position of affairs four or five years ago and the position of affairs now ? At that time the States were isolated, and dealt with this problem each in its own fashion ; but now we say that we are a nation, and we have taken upon ourselves the power to deal with the subject of immigration and emigration. What is the use of that power if it is not to be exercised to better purpose than it was exercised by the States ? How have our powers of selfgovernment been enlarged if we cannot go a step further than the States could go without imperilling the relations of the Empire ? The Prime Minister told a different tale to the people of New South Wales when the acceptance of the Convention Bill was under consideration. But suppose there is a little difference with -the old country, have we not the right to hold opinions differing from those of the statesmen there? Are we to dance only as they pipe ? I decline to believe that my loyalty to the Empire should make me dumb in regard to this the greatest of all questions affecting our nationhood. It is our duty to look after the interests of this portion of the Empire, and while we are glad to have the protection of the British fleet - and I hope we shall always have it - we can carry out our responsibilities to the people of this continent better than the people at Home can do. We have more knowledge of the subject than they have. Therefore, if we stand quietly by, and let Great Britain do what she thinks best, regardless of the effect of her action upon Australian interests, we shall not be acting as loyal citizens, but shall be playing a part which, later on, will land us in strange difficulties. Does any one believe that if the States had federated before Germany obtained control of Samoa she would ever have been allowed to have it? That is the sort of thing that will happen again, however, if we allow England to look after the relations of the Empire, and do not insist upon our rights and privileges when they are likely to be affected. Could we have been accused of disloyalty if we had said to England - " You must not let Germany have control of Samoa " ?

Mr McDONALD

- Paterson. - Do not forget New Guinea.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am obliged to the honorable member for the interjection. Mr. Chamberlain would have allowed what is vulgarly termed a "land grab" to take place in British New Guinea but for the strong protest that we made at this end of the world.

Mr McDONALD

-paterson. - I am not referring to the miserable item of a land grab, but to the position of Germany in New Guinea.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I know that a matter of 200,000 or 300,000 acres is a miserable item to the honorable member. I venture to say, however, that there will be no more of these chartered companies in Australia, unless I mistake the feeling of the people. I do not regard the attempted land grab as a miserable item, and in my opinion we cannot do a greater service to Australia than by preventing the introduction of any of these chartered companies. Then, again, with regard to the New Hebrides, honorable members know that the French took possession of those islands when there was actually a treaty in existence providing for their neutrality.

Great

Britain allowed that to be done, and one could go on reciting many similar instances. Let us take the most recent of all suggestions,' namely, the proposal to deport Boer prisoners to Australia by the thousand. No doubt that would have taken place if there had not been a protest.

Mr Sawers

- Why should it not take place ?

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Because we do not want them.

Mr Sawers

- The honorable member is very loyal.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- I am so loyal that I do not want to see these disloyal hordes landing here. I do not want any English-haters in Australia. On the other hand, the honorable member is so loyal that he would allow Australia to be overrun with these people.

Mr Sawers

- Nonsense.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Why does the honorable member say that? He knows the facts as well as I do, and he was just as strong in his remonstrances as was any other honorable member when he heard of the proposal to deport the Boers to Australia. If we had been separate States and only able to deal with the question in a fragmentary way, does he think that the Boers would not have been sent out by the Home Government? At all events I am glad that we have a united voice, and that we are able to speak -with regard to matters affecting our patriotism and the peopling of our continent in a way that we could not do before. But, if we are going to be timid and hesitating in the expression of our purpose, it seems to me that we shall not get the benefit that we thought we should obtain when we entered into the federal bond. I want to raise no note of defiance to the old country, but I do want to show the Home Government as strongly, as insistently, and as firmly, yet as graciously as I am able to do, that these people should be kept away from us as far as possible by legislative enactment. If our proposal gives rise to any difficulty with the Japanese or with the Hindoos, then when that difficulty appears I shall be prepared to try and meet it with the Home Government. I am not prepared, however, to stand by and open the door to these alien races because of a fear that there may be a difference of opinion at some future time with regard to this matter, as it affects the relations of the Empire with India at the worst. We are only making a problem; this is not the time to solve it. There is no warrant at all for supposing that if we insist, as we should insist, upon this matter being dealt with in a direct and straightforward way, it will give rise to the slightest difficulty in London. I do not believe that Japan would be so vitally offended by our attitude in this respect as to break off her treaty relationship with Great Britain. She has everything to gain by reason of the treaties which exist between her and the old country. Great Britain is the great predominating partner in these treaties. She can give Japan that protection and help and assistance, both diplomatically and materially, that it cannot return to her. There is, therefore, not very much reason to fear that because of some action taken in a far-off portion of the mighty Empire the British relations with Japan will be ruptured. There are a thousand good reasons why Japan should cling to her treaty relationship with Great Britain. I do not think we shall be making any great trouble for the mother land if we simply say at the outset of our career that we want to keep our race pure; and that the only way to keep it pure is by excluding these coloured people from our shores. We should say, once and for all in a bold and firm way, that we want none of these Asiatics in Australia such as we have had in times gone by. Having regard to all the points at which we are menaced, to the countries close to our shores which are inhabited by people of a different race from ourselves and to the earth-hunting spirit which permeates those nations; and having regard to the scattered condition of this Empire, away as we are from its heart and from its ready methods of defence except for the fleet upon our shores - it is of the utmost importance that we should take every precaution to guard our country and the purity of our people. We may adopt this attitude without being accused of disloyalty. To me there is no more offensive way of discussing such a matter as this than by raising the question of loyalty. Such a question ought not to be imported into the debate. There is only a difference of opinion between us as to what is best and most politic to be done. I believe that the most politic and what will prove eventually to be the most straightforward course - the course least liable to cause friction - will be found to be the straightforward one of telling these coloured aliens once and for all that they cannot come in uninterrupted streams to our shores. If we do that, even Great Britain will recognise in the future that we have taken up a wise and prudent stand which will prove helpful and vital to the Empire as a whole.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I do not propose to detain the committee by making any remarks of the length indulged in by the honorable member who has just resumed his seat. But, inasmuch as the debate has been protracted to a most extraordinary degree, and will probably be protracted still further, I think that although I intended

originally not to say anything in committee, I may as well enjoy the privilege to which I am entitled. I desire to say that I have listened with a very great deal of interest and pleasure to a large number of able speeches on the Opposition side of the committee in support of the amendment, both before it was proposed and since it has been put before us. I see nothing whatever, however, in any of the arguments which have been presented to alter the opinions that I formed on the 7th August last, when the right honorable the Prime Minister brought down this Bill and presented it to the House with his explanation of its provisions. The opinion which I then formed was that the scheme for the restriction of undesirable immigrants as embodied in the Bill was one which would be effective, and that under that scheme it would be quite possible for us to realise the ideal towards which we all aspire," namely a "white Australia." I listened to the speech with which the Prime Minister favoured us on that occasion with profound interest, and I have read it since. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that it is an utterance which was well worthy of the great occasion upon which it was made, and worthy of the very important subject with which it dealt. It is an utterance which will stand to his credit throughout the history of the Commonwealth. I am proud also to have heard the deliverance with which the Prime Minister favoured the committee this evening. In that speech he stood firm to the principles to which he gave utterance on the 7th August. Had he not done so he would undoubtedly have failed in the duty which he owes to the House and the country. Whilst none of us have any reason to doubt the bona fides and the honest intention with which the amendment has been proposed by the honorable member for Bland, I must say that I regard with a considerable amount of suspicion the persistency with which it has been supported and pressed by honorable members on the front and back benches on the opposition side of the committee. I cannot understand that persistency unless it be intended thereby to cause some discredit or some injury to the Government.

Mr Thomson

- Some honorable members on the opposition side are going to vote with the Government.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- It is quite true that there may be some who intend to do so, but I cannot understand the persistency with which the amendment has been pressed, when the Prime Minister has intimated now for the second time that the Government can not accept it. It is a recognised principle of Constitutional law and practice that a Government brings down to the House its measures of policy, and that it must stand or fall by those measures. If an amendment be brought forward and carried against the Government, what must be the result? Either the proposed measure must be laid aside or the Government must give way. There is no other alternative. Do the Opposition expect by pressing this amendment to a division and carrying it, to force it upon the Government? Supposing it be carried, is it desired or expected that the Government will give effect to an amendment to which they disapprove? It would be absolutely impossible for such a thing to be done; it would be absolutely inconsistent with the principle of responsible Government.

Mr Watkins

- They have done it before.

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I do not know of any instance in which the Government have done such a thing under similar circumstances. They have informed the House that they cannot accept the responsibility of this amendment.

Mr Reid

- Is it to be assumed that, because of that, honorable members must give up their own convictions?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- Notwithstanding that statement by the Government, the amendment is pressed hour after hour with persistency upon persistency, and with what object? Undoubtedly the object - if object there be - is either to discredit or dislodge the Government. I hope I am wrong in that impression, but it is one that has grown upon me during this debate. If I am in error I am very sorry for it. But, whilst I approve of the principle verbally expressed in the amendment, I cannot support it, for the reason that I find in the Government scheme provision is made for the exclusion of aliens, which, in my opinion, will be equally effective in the amendment, and perhaps more so - provision which will be consistent, not only with the domestic policy of the Commonwealth, but also with the relations of the Commonwealth to the Empire, and of the Empire to the outside world. We have heard a great outcry against the supposed deficiency of the Ministerial

scheme of immigration. It is said that it is not drastic enough. It is urged that it is not strong enough, and that there are not sufficient provisions in it to exclude undesirable immigrants. A careful examination of the Bill it appears to me will disclose that, whatever its defects and imperfections may be, it is one of the most advanced measures of the kind that has ever been presented to any Legislature in the world. I challenge contradiction upon that point. Let me invite the attention of the committee to the restrictive immigration laws at present in force in the United States of America. We may reasonably expect to find in force in the United States - a democratic community - restrictive immigration laws of a liberal and democratic character. Yet what do we find? Section 1 of the American Immigration Act of 1891 makes provision for the exclusion of all idiots, insane persons, paupers, or persons likely to become a public charge, and also any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with the money of another, or who is assisted by others to come in under a contract to perform labour. The last named provision, having reference to assisted immigrants and immigrants coming in under contract to perform labour, is one which is absent from the present Bill, but which it is proposed to insert, and to which the Government are willing to adhere. With regard to the remaining portions of the American immigration restriction law, honorable members will see that they are not so stringent as are the proposals in this Bill.

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Mr Reid

- Are those the only restrictions in the American law?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- They are the only restrictions of a general character. It is quite true that there is a Chinese exclusion law, to which I shall refer presently. I am 'Speaking now of the general immigration restriction law of the United States, which is applicable to the whole of the world. Honorable members will observe that that law does not contain what is known as an educational test. But in 1896 Congress passed a Bill for the purpose of applying an educational test to intending immigrants in which provision was made that they should be required to write out a certain number of lines of the Federal Constitution. That educational test was passed by Congress almost unanimously in 1896. I mention this fact to show that the principle of an educational test as a bar against undesirable immigrants was approved by the American Congress. Although that Bill was passed it did not become law because it was vetoed by the President upon the grounds that it was of too restrictive a character and that it was objectionable, because it might exclude persons whom it was desirable to admit, even though they might not be able to pass the test. If the American Congress in its wisdom has affirmed the principle of an educational test, I think we ought to regard that as strong demonstrative evidence that such a test is a sound one, and that under certain circumstances it would be successful in excluding undesirable immigrants. Although the American immigration restriction laws do not contain an educational test, they contain a pauper or means of support test. The clause relating to this test has really been the backbone of the immigration laws of that country. It has been under that provision that most of the undesirable aliens have been excluded. I invite attention to some of the results of the operation of that pauper test in the United States. In 1897, the total arrivals numbered 230,832. Of that number there were debarred and deported at the expense of the steamship companies not less than 1,880 persons. There were deported under contract to perform labour in the United States, 328. Other prohibited aliens numbered 1,289. There were persons who would become public charges returned to the countries whence they came totalling 263. Under the comparatively meagre provisions of the American law, therefore, there were excluded - showing how these apparently simple tests may be successfully applied under proper administration - 1,880 persons. In 1898 the total arrivals in the United States numbered 229,299. Of that number there were excluded under the provisions which I have mentioned, 3,229. The debarred aliens under contract to perform labour numbered 417, paupers totalled 2,261, unhealthy persons 258, idiots 1, insane 12, and convicts 2. "Within the year the public charges returned 199. These figures show in the most striking manner how the restrictive immigration laws of the United States have operated. If to the public charge test and the other tests which I have mentioned were added the educational test, honorable members can form an opinion as to how strong and effective in their restrictive powers would have been the laws of the United States. If these laws have been so successful, in America, why may they not be made equally successful here, especially when coupled with the educational test?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The geographical position is utterly different.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I do not see how the geographical position affects the question at all. Passing away from the United States, I invite the attention of honorable members to the fact that a law substantially similar to that which is now proposed by the Government has been operating in New Zealand, under the able administration of Mr. Richard Seddon, one of the greatest democrats Australia has ever produced. We have had no complaints from him as to its inefficacy or failure. On the contrary, Mr. Seddon has exercised the immigration law of New Zealand, including the educational test, the pauper test, and the health test, with wonderful success ; and I need scarcely remind honorable members of the recent memorable occasion when he defied even Austria to persist in sending Austrian immigrants to the gum-fields of New Zealand. If such a law has been successful in New Zealand and the United States, I ask honorable members whether there is not an equal probability of its being successful when applied right round the coastline of Australia. 1 Complaint has been made as to the failure of this class of law in Australia. It may be that such a law has not come altogether up to expectation, but I would point out that there has not been one complete cordon of restriction right around the continent. There has been a gap here and a gap there, and is it any wonder that these undesirable aliens have been able to creep in through these gaps, and, having found entrance to one State, that they have wandered across the frontiers, and gained admission into other States ? But when we have one uniform federal law based upon a common system of tests, may we not reasonably expect a fair and substantial measure of success ? At any rate, there are such reasonable hopes of success as to justify the expectation that the Government scheme will realize the predictions of its framers. I was reminded a few moments ago of the fact that in the United States they have not only general restrictive immigration laws, but a Chinese Exclusion Act. Now, that Act of itself affords an argument of very great strength indeed in support of the Government plan of operations. Allow me to remind honorable members that the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed by Congress on 13th September, 1888, was not enacted in defiance of China, but in pursuance of a treaty agreement with China. It was the result of very long negotiations between China and the United States Government, which led to the conclusion that the United States Congress should be at liberty to pass laws for the general exclusion of Chinese laborers. That shows the course of diplomatic action which was taken by the powerful republic of the West and ought we not as a democratic community to accept the example set for us and follow it ? Why should we endeavour to force upon any Power an exclusion law, naming or describing its subjects, before we have made reasonable efforts, either directly or through the British Government, to negotiate an exclusion treaty? I believe that if this Bill, as proposed by the Government, be passed, and negotiations be entered into between the Federal Government and the Imperial Government, in time and with patience, and by means of diplomacy, it might be quite possible for the Government of England to negotiate a treaty with the Government of China, and also with the Government of Japan, on the same lines as those which became the foundation of the American Chinese Exclusion Act of 1888.

Mr Page

- What about the coolies ?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I apprehend that the coolies are fairly and substantially provided for by the Bill before the House. That reminds me that I can convey to the House the testimony of Mr. MoOre, the representative of the Government of Natal at the recent Commonwealth celebrations, with reference to the operation of the Natal law. I had the pleasure and honour of meeting that gentleman, and I took the opportunity of asking his opinion, as a member of the Natal Government, as to how the Natal law had operated, and he assured me that it had worked most successfully in excluding coolies from that colony.

Mr Barton

- He told me the same thing in so many words.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- I understood that, as the right honorable gentleman so informed the House a few nights ago. Mr. Moore told me that the education, pauper, and health tests in the existing Act in Natal had had the effect of

keeping out droves of coolies. Those coolies who could not comply with the requirements of the law were politely told to go back to the places from which they came, and the steamship companies who brought them to Natal were forced to return them at their own expense. Mr. Moore assured me that the Natal Act had been a successful piece of legislation, and that the only regrettable circumstance about the whole thing was that it had not been brought into operation sooner. Thus we have the testimony of the Government of the country in which this educational test originated, and in which it is still in force. We also have evidence of its successful operation in New Zealand, and we may depend upon it that Mr. Seddon would have been the first to cry out in favour of stronger and more drastic legislation if the existing Act had not been successful in his colony. We have a gathering volume of evidence that the scheme embodied in this Bill will be successful in excluding undesirable aliens including the coloured races, and I appeal to honorable members who are in earnest about this great question not to fight merely for a few words, but to accept the scheme which is recommended by the responsible Ministers of the Crown in this Commonwealth. Surely these responsible Ministers are entitled to some respect - their opinion and their advice is entitled to some weight - and although it might be the popular thing to support the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland, we ought to be actuated by a sense of our responsibility as legislators, and not vote merely for a placard. On this occasion, as I hope on every other occasion, I shall resist the temptation to vote merely for a placard. It is true that courage may be required to take the step that the Government have asked us to take. The easiest course would, undoubtedly, be to vote for the amendment, but here we are endeavouring to maintain the position of the Government as responsible advisers of the Crown. They are the committee of advice who are supposed to lead this House in its measures of legislation, and when they fail to lead the House they will have to go. Therefore, I ask honorable members not to place the Government in a false position.

Mr SYDNEY SMITH

- The honorable member is raising the party question.

Mr Barton

- What have the Opposition being doing all the time?

Sir JOHN QUICK

- I ask honorable members to consider the position of affairs - the position of public business - and say whether it is desirable to give a vote which would inflict discredit upon the Government, and show that they are not worthy of the confidence of the House. We have heard a great deal about what we ought to do as a Commonwealth in the possession of new federal powers, and, no doubt, we have every reason to be proud of the enlarged powers which have been granted to us under our new Constitution. I am sure that every member of this House is proud of the grant of power with which we have been endowed by this great instrument of government, but along with the grant of power and the grant of trust there runs a corresponding responsibility, and let us not, as an infant Commonwealth, in the possession of our newly acquired power, presume to do what we would not presume to do if we were an independent republic. If we were an independent republic to-day, would we dare to depart from the beaten track of international courtesy and international comity. It may be that there are those who lightly regard what is known as international comity, but as a young community, as we grow, we shall begin to realize the importance of that word. Comity means friendship, and it means more than that - it means commerce - and we know what the commercial life of a nation means now ; no nation can expect to live self-contained.

Honorable Members. - Hear, hear.

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Sir JOHN QUICK

- It must expect to live as one of a family of nations, and as such we must show respect, courtesy, and kindness towards our neighbours, and towards those powers with whom we expect to live in amity. We cannot to-day do more as a Commonwealth than we could expect to do as an independent republic ; and although conscious of our power and although knowing full well that we could pass a Bill containing an amendment referring to the people of Asia and Africa by name as undesirable immigrants, I ask why, if the great republic of the West and the great Dominion of Canada have not done that, we as a young Commonwealth should think of leading the way with such an innovation ? Canada has not done it, although Canada has been troubled with the Japanese nuisance more even than Australia. British Columbia has been worried considerably by the Japanese for some years past, and local laws have been

passed for the exclusion of the Japanese, but the Dominion of Canada has vetoed no less than fifteen Acts of Parliament that were passed by the Legislature of British Columbia, for the reason that these Acts were contrary to the comity of nations, and contrary to the principles of law and administration recognised by the Dominion of Canada. In conclusion, I would remind the House of the attitude assumed by that great statesman, Sir Wilfred Laurier. In March, 1900, a proposal was submitted to the Canadian Parliament to impose a poll tax, with a view to prevent the influx of Japanese into British Columbia, and Mr. Mills, the Minister for Justice, then stated, on behalf of the Government, that it would not be in the interests of Canada to adopt hostile legislation against Japanese immigrants. In the Canadian House of Commons in June, 1900, the Government were urged to secure the passage of a law similar to the Asiatics Immigration Law in Natal, in order to prevent the influx of Japanese into British Columbia. Sir Wilfred Laurier then said -

It is a matter which we must treat, very delicately. I would direct the attention of the House to the fact that Great Britain, being engaged in war at the present time, and in view of the possibility of complications arising in China at any moment, it would be unwise for us to do anything to jeopardize our friendship with the Japanese Government.

Those are the principles of a statesman - a French-Canadian statesman of Canada - who had the courage and patriotism to advise the Parliament of

Canada in that way when a demand was made similar to that which is made now. He had the courage of his opinions, and told the House of Commons of Canada that it was not desirable that they should pass any law which would be regarded as unfriendly by the Japanese Government, and thereby imperil the friendly relations between Japan and the mother country. If we find a French Canadian Premier showing such courage and such a fine feeling of patriotism as that, shall we, as Australians be less patriotic, and shall we rush into a position or assume an attitude which Canada has refused to assume? I am quite sure that Australians, and this newly-born Parliament of Australia will not, in any eager desire for experimental and sensational legislation, do what has not been done by the great republic of the West or by the Dominion of Canada.

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Minister for Defence

Sir JOHN FORREST

. - I desire to say very few words in regard to this very important matter. The reason why I rise to speak upon it is that during the long time that I was at the head of affairs in Western Australia, I had a good deal to do with restricting the introduction of alien people. I had the honor and pleasure of introducing and passing through the Legislature of that State, towards the end of 1897, the Immigration Restriction Act, based almost entirely on what is known as the Natal Act, which also forms the basis, to a large extent, of the measure before the committee. I do not know that I need inflict on the House at any length the views that I hold in regard to this great question, but I find from the Western Australian Hansard that, in introducing the Immigration Restriction Bill, on the 15th November, 1897, I said -

The influx of coloured people into all the colonies of Australia has been a matter which has caused grave anxiety to the people of the various Australian colonies. There has always been a difficulty in dealing with the question, and that difficulty, I am sure, is recognised by every one in this House, and every one in the colony who takes a reasonable and moderate view of the question, and has any regard to the responsibility which attaches to dealing with the question.

In closing the debate, I made some further remarks, and the reason I give these quotations is to put myself on good terms with honorable members, and to let them know at once what manner of man it is, in regard to this question, who is now speaking to them. I said -

We desire that this country shall not be overrun with races whose sympathies, and manners, and customs, and religion are not as ours. There is another reason, and perhaps this is a very strong reason, that these peoples we wish to restrict are so close to us. There are millions of them, and if we do not place some restrictions on them, they will overrun the country, and, instead of being a British country, this will be an Asiatic country. We do not want that. I am sure of this, and I have some reason to speak with confidence, that the British Government and the British people do not wish that to occur. They are in sympathy with us, and all they want is to find some means of placing the restriction so that it will not tread too harshly on the susceptibilities of the great nations, which they are in friendship with, and from which

they derive a considerable amount of power and wealth. I think that altogether we will do wisely in passing this Bill. I do not object to even more restrictive measures than the Bill proposes, because I want to preserve this country, as far as possible, to a white race. At the same time, I am not prepared to aim a blow at any class, and if we avoid that, and leave it to administration, we shall act wisely and not get the mother country into any trouble or difficulty. We do not wish to incur the displeasure of any race by naming that race in the Bill.

Those are the views I held in 1897. In regard to the debate that has taken place on the Bill before us, it seems to me that every phase of the question has been stated and re-stated over and over again. I hope I shall not err too much in that direction, because I desire my words to be as few as possible. I wonder if any one in the House has counted how many times we have heard the term "white Australia." The honorable member for Maranoa is looking at me, and I know that he used the expression pretty often. An onlooker might come to the conclusion - though, perhaps, I am wrong in this - that there are two parties in the House, one in favour of a "white Australia," and the other in favour of a "black Australia." I do not think the debate could have been carried on more keenly if that had been the case, though we know very well that it is not so. We are all agreed, so far as I have heard, as to what we require. We want to preserve this Australian Continent for a white race. Some people may say that all kinds of white people are not desirable. I have heard of even white people being considered a nuisance, when they come in numbers too large, and interfere with industries or with labour, or in any way touch the pockets of a considerable section of the community. Whether people are white or coloured, we may depend upon it that if they touch our material interests we will not like them very much. The only question we have to decide now is the best way of acting, so as to obtain the object we are unanimous about. The plan proposed by the Government will certainly have an advantage over any other plan which has been proposed, in one respect it will give results more quickly.

Mr Higgins

- Questionable?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I would tell the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne that is not questionable, and he knows it. He knows very well that in regard to a Bill like this, which affects other nations, if it is anything out of the way and its provisions have not already been agreed to by treaty or concert, it is ridiculous to imagine that it will be assented to off-hand. The Prime Minister has told us that such a Bill could not possibly be assented to, and I am really surprised that an astute lawyer like the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne should express an opinion to the contrary. The plan proposed by the Government will, at any rate, be effectual at once. I can speak with authority, and my right honorable colleague the Minister for Trade and Customs, who was Premier for South Australia at the time, is also able to speak with authority if his memory is as good as mine. I tell the House that a despatch came from the Secretary of State to the Governor of South Australia, a copy of which I obtained when I was about to introduce the Immigration Restriction Act in Western Australia. That despatch said that if legislation were passed based on the Natal Act, the Governor of South Australia was authorized to assent to it in Her Majesty's name. On the strength of that despatch, the Governor of Western Australia assented to the Bill in that State as soon as it passed the Legislature. The Government plan will give results at once, and we believe that it will be effectual. If it is not effectual, no one will be more ready, am sure, than the Prime Minister, and I shall assist him, to make it so. But it will be effectual, and I shall tell honorable members the reason directly. Besides the inherent force of its provisions, there is a bigger power to make it successful, to which I shall refer later on. To those who are clamouring loudly, and those who are clamouring less loudly for a "white Australia," is it a small matter that within a few days from now we can put this Bill into operation in every port in the Commonwealth? Assuming, for a moment that the measure did not carry out completely what every one of us desires, I would ask whether it would not be a good deal better than having no such law? Is the Bill not a good deal better than having delay until next year probably? And, take my word for it, it will be next year at least before the Bill is assented to, if it is not carried in its present form. It takes a long time to send letters to England and receive replies, and these important matters cannot be dealt with by telegraph. I speak with some experience of the delay in regard to important communications with the mother country.

Mr Reid

- The right honorable gentleman would not put up with that sort of thing, surely ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I had to put up with it. What I want to impress upon honorable members is that we can have this measure at once in operation throughout the Commonwealth. There will be a cordon round Australia, which no one shall pass through unless under the provisions of this Bill. But by the other plan we should have to wait, and the mischief we all desire to put a stop to at once would be going on all the time.

Mr Watson

- I thought the right honorable gentleman said the evil was being reduced.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- I believe that . in some places where the Act is in force, the numbers of these aliens are being reduced ; but they are not being reduced in Victoria and Queensland, where the Natal Act is not in force. I would ask honorable members whether we are really in earnest in desiring that this ingress of Asiatics and undesirable persons shall be put a stop to. If we are, let us take the method -which is ready to our hand. Do not let us look about for something that is more difficult to get. Let us take what we can get, and if it is not sufficient we can ask for more. I cannot understand how any man who considers himself a diplomatist should refuse to take the course that is offered to him. If under one plan the Bill has to be sent home, and we have certainly to wait some months before the Royal assent could possibly be given to it, then I say we ought to try the other plan which we have ready to our hand. We have a weapon which it must be admitted will prevent those people coming in to any large extent, even from the point of view of those who are opposed to the plan I am advocating. Although we have this means at hand, are we to say, "We will not take the ready means which we know we can exercise at once, because we want all or nothing." It reminds me of the beautiful story of Naaman, the leper, who, when he was told to go and wash in the Jordan, said, " Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them and be clean ? " Naaman would not at first take the simple plan offered to him, but must have the beautiful rivers of Damascus, which he thought were better to wash in. That is the attitude honorable members are taking up in regard to this question. They will not take the means which can be put into operation at once, but would rather let this great evil exist for months and months, and perhaps longer, because they are determined to have all or nothing. That is a very good plan to adopt if we do not care very much about the matter. If we do care about it, however, the best plan for us to adopt is to take what we can get, and when necessary to ask for more. Supposing that honorable members become reasonable and show that they are really in earnest about this matter, what will happen ? This Bill will be passed and assented to, perhaps next week, by the Governor-General. It would then come into operation, and there would be nothing to prevent the Government from entering into negotiations with the Imperial authority with a view to obtaining what honorable members desire.. The Government could point out (that a great many honorable members do not think this measure sufficient to prevent alien races from coming here. If it does not prove as effective as we believe it will be, we shall be able to obtain, not at the point of the bayonet, but by ordinary correspondence and negotiation, all that we desire. We shall be able to secure it by mutual agreement and goodwill. That is the attitude that I take up, and it seems to me to be so reasonable and so practical that I cannot understand any body of men, anxious to secure the exclusion of coloured races, refusing to adopt that course. We must remember that, while we may feel ourselves very independent at the present time, while some may not care a jot for anyone - that is not my feeling, but it may be the feeling of some - the more consideration we extend to other people the more consideration will be shown to us. We should not forget the fable of the lion and the mouse. It is not always that the strongest can ignore the services of the weakest. A time may come when the smaller and the weaker party may be of great service to the stronger one. Some seem to think that we are so strong that we are able to dictate terms in this way, but the time may come when we shall be glad of the assistance of those who are not so great as we are at the present time. The right honorable the leader of the Opposition said this evening that we had not received a statement in unmistakable terms of the attitude of the Imperial authorities. Any one who reads the correspondence will see, however, that we have had it in unmistakable terms from the Secretary of State* for the Colonies, on many occasions, that there is great difficulty surrounding the placing of what is called the colour line in an Act of Parliament. Have we not had experience of that difficulty? Some people would have us believe that New South Wales

as an individual State was not worthy of consideration in comparison with the Commonwealth. New South Wales, however, has everything within it that goes to make up Empire. It has a large population ; it is richer than some of the kingdoms of Europe, and we may depend upon it that the greatest consideration has been given to her wishes in the past by the home authorities. We know, however, that the New South Wales Immigration Restriction Bill of 1896 with the colour line was vetoed and that only recently a Queensland Bill containing a provision in regard to the colour line was also refused the Royal assent. At the conference of Premiers which took place in London in 1897, and which I attended as the representative of Western Australia, we were told by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the words that have been published, that the British Government were eager to do all that was possible to meet the aspirations of the Australian people. This is how Mr. Chamberlain reported the conclusion arrived at by that conference -

On the question of the legislative measures which have been passed by various colonies for the exclusion of coloured immigrants, a full exchange of views took place, and though no definite agreement was reached at the meeting, as the Premiers desired to consult their colleagues and Parliaments on the subject, Her Majesty's Government have every expectation that the natural desire of the colonies to protect themselves against an overwhelming influx of Asiatics can be attained without placing a stigma upon any of her Majesty's subjects on the sole ground of race or colour.

It was agreed that we should try and meet the views of the Imperial Government, and no one at that conference was more willing and anxious to do so than my right honorable and learned friend, the leader of the Opposition. It is all very well for him now to say that the measure which he introduced in the New South Wales Legislature in 1897 was merely a tentative one, because of the fact that Federation was close at hand. I know, as one of those who took part in the conference, that we practically agreed, as far as we could bind our colleagues and our Parliaments, that we should introduce restriction Bills of the kind referred to when we came back.

Mr Higgins

- The conference agreed to it?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Certainly we did, and with the exception of Queensland, where a change of Government took place, such Bills were introduced in all the Australasian colonies. That shows what was in our minds at the time. I introduced a Bill on the lines of the Natal Act when I came back, and carried it through the Western Australian Parliament. Yet the right honorable the leader of the Opposition would have us believe that the measure he introduced was merely a tentative one. At that time, however, no one could foretell whether Federation was going to be accomplished or not. So far as the leader of the Opposition is concerned, I would say that the Bill of 1897 was introduced by him in the New South Wales Legislature in substitution of that which had been vetoed previously, because it contained the distinct colour line. It is useless for the right honorable gentleman to come here and make such excuses for a deliberate act. We have heard a good deal about the British race during this debate. I yield to no one in my pride in being able to say that I am a citizen of the British Empire. I was born in this country, and should, perhaps, have a love for it greater than my love for the mother land. Still, the allegiance that I feel within me to the mother land is quite as great as that which I feel towards my own home in Australia. I know very well that we owe our existence as a people, our liberties, and everything that we hold most dear, to the fact that we are part of that great and glorious Empire. There are many honorable members in this House who were born in the old country - who were nurtured and brought up in that great old land. It appears to me, however, as a public man, after many years of experience, that those who were born in this great island continent of ours have a greater love for the mother land than those who were born there.

Mr O'Malley

- They do not suffer as much as the other fellows have done.

Mr Barton

- But the honorable member is under the mother country here.

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- Certainly, at the beginning of our nationhood it should be our first aim to assist the statesmen of the mother land. They want assistance and help, because the burden of management of the affairs of the

great British Empire on which we are told the sun never sets must be a very heavy task indeed. Surely, instead of trying to increase them, we should make the burdens of its Government less. It has been said on the hustings by the leader of the Opposition, and it has been declared also in this House on many occasions, that we have different powers from those which were exercised in the past by the Legislatures of the various States. I do not object to that statement particularly because I believe it is a good thing for a man to think well of himself and of the institutions to which he belongs. My opinion is, however, that legally and constitutionally this Parliament has no power of sovereignty greater than that exercised in the past by State Legislatures. There is not a single word in our Constitution to show we have greater powers of sovereignty than that formerly possessed by the individual States. We have no doubt the advantage of more strength. The fact that we are able to hit harder, that we represent the whole of Australia, that we have more money and people than we possessed as individual States, will result, no doubt, in more attention being given to us. We are united now, and therefore we can demand to be heard and to receive more consideration. In all matters of Government and diplomacy, if a party is not strong and important it cannot expect to receive such attention as would otherwise be extended to it. I know something of the working of the Australian restriction measures based upon the Natal Act, and I have never met any one who has had experience of the Natal Act or of that in New South Wales who considered that they have not worked fairly well. I am quite willing to believe that the Western Australian Act may not have been administered as strictly perhaps as it might have been.

Mr Higgins

- By the right honorable gentleman's Government ?

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Yes.

Mr Watkins

- And yet the right honorable gentleman asks us to trust him again 1

Sir JOHN FORREST

- It was fairly well administered, but it might still, I think, be better administered. More attention might have been paid perhaps to the working of the Act, and we might have been provided with statistics as to those who were rejected or passed under it. I have reliable information which I can give to the House. I desire to point out, however, that in Western Australia it is very difficult to obtain definite information in regard to the working of this particular Act by merely reading the statistics, because there is in operation there an Imported Labour Registry Act, which allows a ship for every 500 tons registered to bring in one Chinaman under agreement to labour in the tropical parts of the State north of latitude 27°. I suppose that under that Act 50 or 60 come in during the year. They are under agreement to be returned at the end of their engagement. There might also be some Chinese ashore from ships or from pearling lug gers who would increase the number upon the census, but who would not be permanently resident there. I am in a position to inform the House, however, that, in regard to that portion of Western Australia lying south of the 27th parallel of latitude, no coloured alien can be admitted unless under the terms of the State Immigration Restriction Act. That particular part of Western Australia contains more than nine-tenths of its total population, the bulk of the other one-tenth being engaged in squatting, mining, and pearling pursuits in the north-western portion of the State. The Western Australian Restriction Act was assented to towards the end of 1897. Since 1st January, 1898, very few coloured aliens have been able to gain admission to that portion of Western Australia in which nine-tenths of the total population live. It is enacted, of course, that a man who was previously domiciled in that part of the colony may obtain a permit to go away and return within a reasonable time. Within the three years and nine months that this Act has been operating, only 398 coloured persons have been admitted to that part of the State. During the same period 778 coloured persons have taken their departure. Of the 398 persons who have been admitted, 226 had permits to return. They were people who were previously domiciled in Western Australia, and who were allowed to go away to Singapore or China, or to wherever they belonged, and were given the right to return. I am not going to argue about the wisdom of granting these permits. The Government have full power to say to these persons, " If you go away you shall never return." But when the matter came before me I said, " These persons are not desirable residents, and I do not see any logic in keeping them here. While they are away we shall be rid of them, and there is a chance that they may never come back." We granted these permits under very strict regulations, which cannot be evaded, but during the period

referred to 226 of them returned. Therefore only 172 persons came in under the provisions of the Immigration Restriction Act. Consequently, only 172 coloured people were added to the population, whilst the total coloured population was reduced by 350. This is absolutely reliable information, and I can show honorable members the telegrams relating to the matter which I have received from Inspector McKenna at Fremantle.

Mr Mahon

- What means has he of judging? He has been at Kalgoorlie for the past three years.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- He has the records, most of which come to Fremantle.

Mr Mahon

- Do these people not go to Geraldton 1

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Sir JOHN FORREST

- He has the returns for Geraldton also. It must be remembered that, during the period I have mentioned, Western Australia has been more attractive to the Asiatic than has any other part of Australia. There have been immense gold discoveries there, and we may depend upon it that the Asiatics have been very anxious to gain admission to that State. Western Australia is closer to Singapore than any other part of this continent, but, notwithstanding its proximity, under the operation of this Act only 172 coloured people gained admission there, whilst 552 went away and have not returned. There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. It is this : that notwithstanding the strength of this Act in Western Australia, there is a greater power than that to restrict the introduction of these coloured races. I wish to point out that so soon as this Act becomes law and the liabilities and penalties are in force, shipowners will refuse to give passages to those undesirable immigrants. Unless there is unmistakable evidence that a man has a permit to return, or that he has an undeniable right of admission, the shipowners will have nothing to do with him. This fact provides almost a greater security than does the Act itself. If there is one thing which the ship-owners dislike it is to be hauled up before the police court. So soon as they find there is any chance of their not only being mulcted in damages, but of being put to the expense and trouble of returning these aliens, they will refuse to bring them. When I was in Western Australia, if any question arose about a man having been brought there who ought not to have been so brought, the ship-owners responsible would come at once and say - " Let us take him back. It is all the result of a mistake. We will do anything to get rid of this undesirable person rather than figure in the police court as having broken the law." So soon as this Bill becomes an Act, not only will there be a cordon drawn right around Australia by it, but the ship-owners will have nothing to do with the shipment of these undesirable persons. I wish to refer to the statement of the leader of the Opposition last night that he brought in a Bill similar to this merely to tide over an interval until the accomplishment of federation. I have heard it remarked that sometime after he introduced or framed this Bill he did not work his hardest to attain federation. Moreover, he did not say at the time of its introduction that it was a tentative measure. In fact, he used all the arguments that might be used now about the danger of a more drastic measure being refused the Royal assent. I was reading just now the speech of the right honorable and learned member, and really I thought the sentiments expressed were my own. The very sentiments which I would express to-night were expressed by him in 1897 to the Legislature of New South Wales. I sat with the right honorable and learned member at the conference at Westminster in 1897, and I know that we were all at one in our desire to meet the wishes of the Imperial Government if we could attain what we wanted by the means now proposed. We heard Mr. Escombe, the Premier of Natal, say that the Natal Act accomplished its object. From all I have heard of the working of that Act, I can only conclude that it is a good one. It has done all that was desired of it, and the only criticism is that it was introduced too late. That is what they say in Natal. I do not know why the right honorable and learned member should have been so bold, and almost ferocious, last night. I can assure honorable members that at Westminster he did not assume that defiant tone. He seemed even more humble than I was myself. I have said all that I wish to say, and I hope I have said nothing but what is reasonable. I trust I have shown that I am absolutely in sympathy with the general desire of a very large majority of the people of Australia that we shall not mix with these undesirable aliens. Indeed, we do not want any more colour in our race, at any rate of a black kind, than we have already. That, however, does not make me unreasonable or like a spoilt child towards a kind and

generous mother, which I thoroughly believe the Imperial Government is to us. The British Government desire to help us. They are in sympathy with our aspirations in regard to this matter. If we read Mr. Chamberlain's letters and speeches we do not find one word in opposition to our desires. He does not say that he would not act as we desire to act if he were in a similar position. I know that he would. We are confronted with a great danger in having these millions of people in such proximity to our shores. It is quite right that we should take time by the forelock, and that we should be up and doing rather than wait till the danger has developed into a great trouble and difficulty. I am quite in sympathy with that, but it affords no reason why we should not act at reasonable people who are in real earnest about the matter. If we really believe that this alien immigration is a great danger, let us take action in regard to it at once, and if we cannot do everything we want, let us do what we can. That is practical and is English, and as a Scotchman I can certainly say that it is Scotch. Let us take a certain course which we are sure we shall be able to follow, and not run round after an idea which we may not be able to carry out for months, or even not at all. If we may judge from the experience of the past we shall have a great deal of difficulty in getting what is sought by the honorable member for Bland, because a similar proposition has been vetoed before. It is not fitting that we should act towards the British Government like a lot of spoilt children. Moreover, that is not the way in which we should treat the mother country which has done everything she could to assist us in connexion with the establishment of this Commonwealth. Such an attitude on our part would not be a fair one, and we should not try and gain our wishes in regard to this Bill by other than conciliatory means. "We have no right or reason for adopting a "stand and deliver" attitude. Let us take what has been offered to us, and what we know we can get at once. If that does not prove effectual, I promise honorable members that I shall be one of the first to assist in getting something better. I agree with the Attorney-General that there is no reason at all why this Bill should represent our ultimate effort. We believe that it will be effectual, but if it is not, we shall do our best to secure the passage of legislation that will accomplish the desired end. We should not forget whilst we are talking about this matter, and whilst letters are going backwards and forwards between here and England, that the evil of which we are complaining is going on every day, and that if we are earnest and practical men we should take the means that are at our hands, and in a few days adopt measures which, if they will not actually stop the introduction of these undesirable people, will to a very large extent be effectual in doing so.

Mr HUGHES

- I only desire to say two or three words with reference to this amendment. I am very certain that the speech of the right honorable gentleman who has just sat down, if it has not convinced all men, has removed any lingering doubts he may have had himself, because the right honorable gentleman spoke with the air of a man who thoroughly believed what he was saying. I do not propose, however, to traverse the arguments of any honorable members; I simply wish to ask one or two questions. The question as to whether it will be a good or a bad thing for us to have this or that has already been thrashed out, but two points remain to be considered. I want to know, and I think other people also desire information upon the point, what the effect will be if we carry this amendment? I would not have asked that question if the honorable and learned member for Bendigo had not drawn a most vivid and painful picture of what might happen if we did such a thing. I can only suppose that he drew that picture moved by a sense of what he himself believed would inevitably follow. We are to understand - if we can derive anything at all in the way of certain knowledge from what the honorable and learned member said - that if we carry the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland, the Government will resign. I did not gather that from what the members of the Government have said. They stated nothing of the sort; in fact, if I may be permitted to say so, they said everything but that. The members of the Government have said everything that it was possible for a Government to say on this question except that if they were defeated they would resign, and I think it is only fair that those who, like myself, would hesitate very considerably indeed, if they thought that voting for this amendment would have the effect of precipitating a crisis, should be told directly by the head of the Government what the effect of the vote will be.

Mr Barton

- Honorable members have had that stated as distinctly and honestly as any man could put it.

Mr HUGHES

- I certainly did not understand that. What I understood was this: - First of all the Attorney-General, when

he spoke on the second reading of the Bill, said that if the House carried the amendment the Government would with great reluctance embody it in the Bill,, and that His Majesty would with still greater reluctance assent to it. I admit that in all these speeches it is impossible to get one clear cut declaration of principle without a dozen qualifying phrases.

Mr Barton

- Will the honorable member indulge me for one moment while I explain 1

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Mr HUGHES

- The right honorable gentleman says that no ambiguity characterizes his speech, and I accept his statement. The right honorable gentleman said that he would not assent to any such measure as would embarrass the Home Government, but at the same time the despatch quoted by the right honorable gentleman stated that the Home Government would, if we insisted upon it, assent to the Bill in a form such as it would take if amended according to the proposal of the honorable member for Bland. The Prime Minister said that he would not feel called upon to. advise the Governor-General to assent to the Bill, but so far as I am concerned, I do not know whether it would be a constitutional thing for the right honorable gentleman to give any such advice. As far as I know, it would be an extraordinary departure from conventional usage to do any such thing, but for him to do what he hinted lie would do, namely, advise His Excellency not to assent to the Bill, would be a monstrously unconstitutional act.

Mr Barton

- I never said a word about any such thing. I said I would give no advice at all, and that I had no right to give advice in such a case.

Mr HUGHES

- If the right honorable gentleman did not say that he would advise His Excellency to reject the Bill, did he say that he would advise him to assent to it ?

Mr Barton

- I said I could not advise him either way, and it is unfair to put that complexion upon my words.

Mr HUGHES

- Are we to understand that the right honorable gentleman will act in one way if the amendment is adopted, and in another way if it is rejected ?

Mr Barton

- I offered to make a statement, but the honorable member was afraid to listen to me.

Mr HUGHES

- I have it in my recollection that the right honorable gentleman stated what I have said. It is a question of fact, and no useful purpose can be served by dwelling upon it. If it be as I say, the statement will be found in the columns of Hansard. I have it in ray mind that it was stated that although this amendment would be fatal to the Bill, that is to say that the Government proposed to drop the Bill if the amendment were inserted, it would not be vital to the existence of the Government ; but now we are suddenly confronted with another position altogether, because it is proposed to make this question vital to the existence of the Government. What I wish to know is, when this was so decided. The Prime Minister expressed considerable astonishment at an apparent change of opinion on the part of the honorable member for Wentworth ; but I know of no change of opinion on the part of the honorable member that was demonstrated by reference to Hansard. If, however, a charge of inconsistency can be laid against the honorable member for Wentworth, what are we to say of the Government who never gave the shadow of a hint that this was to be a vital question as far as their existence as a Ministry was concerned, until they saw sufficient reason for believing that they had a majority. It is absolutely unfair to hold a threat over honorable members, and say that unless something happens - that unless the amendment is rejected - the Government will resign ; especially when we were told conclusively long before this that nothing would happen, except that the Bill would be laid under the table of the House - that the Government would abandon the Bill, and that was all. I have done with that particular matter, but I should like to ask another question. This afternoon the Prime Minister mentioned something about a despatch that he had received, and upon which he had written a minute with reference to the instructions or wishes of the Home Government in respect to legislation in general. He told us that whereas the ordinary Legislatures of the Continent are subject to have legislation of a certain class reserved for the

Royal assent - that is to say, for instance, that Bills affecting marriage and trade are reserved - in the case of the Commonwealth there is no special reservation, but the Governor-General has power to reserve any Bill, irrespective of its character, for the Royal assent. The Prime Minister, however, said that, in addition to that, there were certain instructions, and that the wishes of the Home Government had been communicated to His Excellency the Governor-General.

Mr Barton

- Why does the honorable member say that, when I never opened my mouth to that effect at all 1

Mr HUGHES

- I understood the Prime Minister to say that certain instructions were sent out which indicated the wishes of the Home Government to His Excellency the Governor-General.

Mr Barton

- That was never said.

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Mr HUGHES

- If that was not what was stated, I should like to know what we are to gather from the statement of the Prime Minister. He certainly gave us to understand that in certain circumstances he would not be prepared to advise His Excellency the Governor-General to assent to the Bill.

Mr Barton

- I explained that what restrained His Excellency the Governor-General was the necessary question of Imperial cohesion.

Mr HUGHES

- I put it to the right honorable gentleman whether he did not concur entirely with the instructions or desire conveyed in the despatch, and whether as a matter of fact this debate has not been so much waste time? Apparently the Government had made up its mind, the Imperial Government had made up its mind, and the Governor-General had made up his mind.

Mr Barton

- And still the honorable member pretends to say that he does not know what the Government means.

Mr HUGHES

- It is a very simple thing to say that I do not know what the right honorable gentleman means. If he hints that that shows any lack of perception on my part, I might tell him that it is not very easy to understand what the right honorable gentleman does mean.

Mr Barton

- I return the compliment.

Mr HUGHES

- In this particular case, however, the position was very clear, because we had the despatch and the minute, and the minute shows complete concurrence with the contents of the despatch.

Mr Barton

- It does.

Mr HUGHES

- In the face of that does the right honorable gentleman say that that does not bind him to a certain extent in this action ?

Mr Barton

- I say it does bind me.

Mr HUGHES

- Does the right honorable gentlemen say that it binds his Government 1

Mr Barton

- Yes.

Mr HUGHES

- Does it also bind the House ?

Mr Barton

- Not unless the House agrees with the Government.

Mr HUGHES

- Then it is a conditional compact that the right honorable gentleman has made. I ask how can we

approach this matter from an independent and constitutional stand-point when the right honorable gentleman agrees, without consulting the House at all, to do certain things- - when he indorses the action or desire of the Home Government.

I do not say that it is net eminently proper that that desire should be indorsed by him, but we are by no means bound by any such action.

Mr Barton

- Certainly not ; if honorable members do not agree with me they can turn me out.

Mr HUGHES

- I am glad to have an assurance that we shall not be held by any compact if we do not consider it binding on ourselves.

Mr Barton

- No; honorable members will only be helping to turn me out.

Mr HUGHES

- I want to know whether the right honorable gentleman will give an assurance to the House, first of all,, that the attitude he takes up is that we shall vote on the Bill undeterred by this latest of bogies, the fate of the Government. It is distinctly improper to introduce at the last stage of the debate a threat that if we do not vote against a certain amendment, or if we do not defeat a certain amendment, the Government propose to regard it as vital, not to the Bill as formerly, but to their own existence - a contingency which they never hinted at before. Secondly, I want an assurance that this compact, or whatever honorable members like to term it, is not to be held as. binding on the House in any sense or degree. Beyond that I have nothing to say. I am perfectly certain that every honorable member has made up his mind as to what is the right and better course for him to pursue. As to what is the better course, I am satisfied that the course which the Minister for Defence says we are ultimately ' to pursue, is the one which I believe we should pursue now.

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Mr A PATERSON

- The first time the magnitude of this Asiatic pestilence really arrested my attention was. under the following circumstances : - I had. been making a little unostentatious tour through a central section of Queensland, and when I arrived home I found, standing at the back gate of my house, a vegetable cart owned by a Chinaman and driven by a Chinaman. There was trouble in the domestic establishment that day. I said, " Why is this? I shall lose my election if this sort of thing goes on. I shall go down to the grave unwept, honoured, and unsung, instead of speaking in the halls of Parliament. This must be altered." The reply which was made to me was this : "It is all very well for you to talk in that strain, but we live 6 miles from town, and how on earth we are to get vegetables from any one excepting .a Chinaman I cannot tell." I said - " While the world standeth I shall eat no soup made from vegetables grown by Chinamen ; you mus get vegetables grown by Europeans." The result was that the custom of the establishment was transferred to a German, with which arrangement I was perfectly satisfied. But I may tell honorable members that it broke me all up when I afterwards found that the German bought his vegetables from a Chinaman. While this question has its humorous side, it also has a very painful aspect. How is it that we ever allowed Chinamen to interfere so much with our trade as to put them in the position of being able to dictate to us ? I am afraid we must confess that the fault belongs a great deal, tq ourselves. After that occurrence, I walked about with my eyes open, and I very soon made the amazing discovery that the people who supported the Chinamen were not the bloated capitalists - they were not the curled aristocrats or the sleek prosperous shopkeepers - but they were men who held themselves forth as the saviours of the working men, and who called themselves by the name of " democrats." I am happy to think that the democrats whom we have in this Chamber are men of a very different stamp, and are -actuated by an earnest desire to put an end to this objectionable alien traffic. The Government propose to exclude the objectionable races by an educational test. The honorable member for Bland takes the bolder course of excluding them by name. The issue lies between these two proposals, and I must confess to having had some difficulty in coming to a decision as to which side I should support. If I believed that the amendment had any chance of attaining the object I am aiming et, and which I believe we are all aiming at, I certainly would vote for it. But as a plain, practical man of business I want to accomplish our object - I want to get what we are aiming at somehow, anyhow. I do not want to wait ten

years for it, but I want it now. If we carry the amendment the chances are that when the Bill reaches home it will be vetoed. There can be no doubt but that the chances are greatly against the Bill being carried in that shape, but if we adopt the gentler course, England will give a willing and prompt consent to our wishes.

I was asked by my constituents whether, in the event of the Barton Government bringing in such a Bill as the present to give us relief from this intolerable burden, I would support the measure. They knew very well I was an opponent of the Government on the fiscal question, but I said I did not care what kind of Government it was - it might be composed of millionaires or of old-age pensioners; of parsons, lawyers, or anybody - if they promised to give us the measure we wanted, I would certainly support it. This is no party question at all. A good deal of ridicule has been heaped on the educational test. It has been pointed out by more than one speaker that the Bill is just an incentive to Chinese and Japanese to learn the English language in order to gain access to Australia. There is something in that suggestion, but I do not think there is much. I appeal to every honorable member in the House - and I dare say many of them know personally many more Chinamen than I do - whether they know any Chinaman who can now write 50 words of the English language. Is there a decent proportion of Chinamen who can do that, even amongst those who have been ten or twenty years in the country? The educational test will be as good a means of keeping out these objectionable people as could be devised by the human intellect without coming into conflict with the Imperial power. I look on the test as a moral anesthetic. We have to pull a booth out of the wolf that would destroy us, and we want to do it painlessly if possible; and the educational test gives an excellent means. We do not want to come into conflict with England over this important question. We do not want to go like roaring lions with our tails erect and our manes flying in the air, and come back silly calves with sore heads. I am just as anxious for a "snowflake" Australia as any one in the House. It appears to me from the utterances of several honorable members that they doubt the sincerity of the Government on the question - that they do not believe the Government are honest in this matter. Are we to seriously believe that the Prime Minister is less sincere than the leader of the Opposition?

Mr BARTON

- The charge of insincerity arises from a little self-examination in some cases.

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Mr A PATERSON

- Are we to believe that the Attorney-General, who is a tried and staunch democrat, as all Australia knows - although he is streaked, a little with the black thread of protection - is less sincere than any man in the House in bringing in this measure? I cannot believe it. One point that was made on the other side was very well put by the honorable member for Kennedy, who stated five cases where the Royal assent had been given to Queensland Bills relating to the prohibition of the employment of aliens on certain railway and tramway works, and to the limitation of those aliens to alluvial mining. But surely those cases deal with altogether a different matter. The limitation in Queensland was put on for one specific purpose. It was simply for the protection of wages, whereas the Bill before us deals with a far more important question. It deals with the protection of blood, and if we can get that protection we shall be fools to refuse it. What would be thought of me if I went back to my constituents and stated that I had refused the offer of the Government simply because, while it offered what I wanted, the offer was not made in the shape I liked? I should say my constituents would be entitled to call me extremely foolish. I candidly confess that up to the time that the honorable member for North Sydney addressed the committee I was rather disposed to vote for the amendment, but the speech, so eloquent of common sense, put the point very clearly. He showed us that the honorable member for Bland does not propose to alter the form of the Bill; that although he ridicules the education test he nevertheless accepts it. The honorable member swallows it whole, the only difference being that he proposes to insert a provision which may possibly meet with the assent of the Imperial authorities, but in regard to the rejection of which there is great danger. As a Scotchman myself I always prefer the substance to the shadow. I want to get something, and if we can get this Bill passed I believe that it will accomplish all that we desire. I should just like to add a few remarks with regard to certain phrases that are frequently used in this committee. I am quite an infant in politics, and I am not sorry for it. There are some forms of procedure, and certain phrases are used in this House which I have been utterly unable to comprehend. One of these terms is "party spirit." The first occasion on which I heard that phrase used was when an honorable member stood up and said that he

approached the subject under discussion without any feeling of party spirit, only looking to the good of the Commonwealth. I thought to myself - 1 1 What a splendid fair-minded fellow he must be. He is making an excuse for leaving, the Opposition on this occasion, and he is going to vote for the Government." To my astonishment, however, the honorable member made a determined and bitter attack on the Government. I must say that I have learned better since. Whenever I hear the ominous words, "party spirit," used by an honorable member, I know very well what is to follow. I can tell honorable members, however, that I approach this question really without any feeling of party spirit, and to show my sincerity I am going to vote with the Government.

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Mr O'MALLEY

- After listening to the many eloquent speeches for and against this amendment which have been made during the past two nights, it does seem to me that the intimidation and bulldozing that is going on has frightened a great many honorable members. My honorable friend the Government whip has fairly scared the life out of a number of honorable members. It is a manifestation of brute force and frightened necessity. I am going to enter my solemn protest against this kind of conduct. This is a democratic show. We have heard a lot about frightening the old country. We have heard a lot about the method that we are going to adopt ; but I want to say that my friend the Argus pointed out to me the true solution of this great question when it said that this firm was " John Bull and Father," not "John Bull and Son." The Australian firm is " John Bull and Father," and the John Bull part of the firm is going to run the show. I want to come to a vote as soon as possible, but I desire to point out here that, to all intents and purposes, we are a sovereign people in the Southern hemisphere ; to all intents and purposes we have every legitimate Constitutional right possessed by a free Southern people. If we have not got that power, then all this great blow and talk that we have had lately is an utter farce, like one in Barnum's circus. I was one who helped to stump South Australia and Western Australia for Federation. We talk a great deal of freedom ; of the right of self-government of a glorious free people ; of a sovereign democracy within a sovereign monarchy. But what do we find to-night? We find absolutely that despatches have been sent out from Europe, and that we are told that we can go thus far, and no further. If honorable members are scared of their souls, I am not. I went to Tasmania, and within one year of taking up my residence there I was second on the poll for that State. I can get in again. I am here in this chamber as one independent man, and I am going to speak my mind, irrespective of the consequences. No party and no syndicate has a mortgage on what little intelligence God has given me. I am the sole proprietor of myself, and I am going to speak for King O'Malley as one individual free man. How does the case present itself to me ? The whole thing reminds me of a scene I witnessed on the Western plains of Texas. A number of us cowboys were catching big Mexican bulls with our lassos, and branding them. One of the boys asked an Irishman how they would deal with such work in Ireland. " My friend," he replied - " you cannot teach me anything of that business." Almost immediately the cowboy threw a rope round the neck of one of the biggest bulls he could see, and slipped the other end of it round the man's waist. Away went the bull like an express train, jumping ditches and fences in great style, and when one of the cow-boys asked the man - " Where are you going ? " he replied - " How in the name of Heaven should I know? Ask the bull." Mr. Chamberlain in this case is the bull at one end of the rope, and the Government is the man tied at the other end of it. There is no doubt about it. I do not object to a fair vote upon this question, but we are not going to get a fair vote upon it. I have the most profound respect for the Government. I believe in the general sincerity and honesty of the Government, and I am going to support them. Still I have a right to question the tactics I have mentioned, when I do not believe in them. I want to show that in a democracy governments are simply political conveniences. They are the absolute servants of the people and not their masters. The rights of the people rise above them as the Australian Alps rise above the valleys. Governments are entitled to their legitimate rights, but the rights of the people are sublime ; and governments are only good and useful while they protect the rights and preserve the interests of their own people. That is the way in which I regard this question. Is it proper that the rights of the Australian people should be sacrificed upon the altar of foreign compromise? In my opinion the Asiatic immigrant is nothing more or less than a coffee-coloured, copperheaded viper in the bosom of the Commonwealth, and if we do not kill that viper, that viper will kill us. I am voting against the Government on this occasion.

Mr Deakin

-As on every other occasion.

Mr WILKINSON

- In view of the emphatic way in which I expressed myself on the second reading of this Bill, I feel it necessary to add a few words on this occasion. I suppose that no State pronounced itself more emphatically than the State of Queensland for the principle of a white Australia, and no one has ever declared himself more thoroughly in favour of it than I have. This seems to me to be a case in which the longest way round may be the shortest way home. We desire to put an end to the immigration of coloured aliens, to whom we all object, as early possible. The question that has been exercising my mind for some time past is how this may be best and most speedily accomplished. Having listened to the debate and weighed the arguments without prejudice, and without fear of the Government whip or of any one else, I have come to the conclusion that the best and most speedy way in which to accomplish our object is that proposed by the Government. For that reason I am reluctantly compelled

Mr Reid

- If it is the best course why "reluctantly"?

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Mr WILKINSON

- I am reluctantly obliged to vote against the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland. I believe it to be the straightest way of dealing with the matter, but I am also satisfied that it would delay the attainment of the object for which we are striving. In the meantime we have only to look round in order to see that the figures which have been quoted by the Prime Minister in regard to coloured immigration must be incorrect. These coloured people are rushing into Australia in hundreds. I question the Prime Minister's figures. I know that so far as Queensland is concerned they are not correct. We know that Thursday Island, which forms portion of Queensland territory, has simply been handed over to the Japanese. The question is whether we are going to delay action because of some little quibble, or whether we are going to take the more moderate course, and put a stop to the immigration of these people at an earlier date than we should otherwise be able to do. It has taken me some time to make up my mind upon this matter. I know my action will be called in question, but above a seat in this House and above all other considerations is my desire to see brought about the consummation which we have all earnestly striven for - a white Australia. I shall be able to explain my course of action to my constituents, and I have no hesitation whatever in saying that where one of the strongest democrats Australia has ever seen leads the way I am not ashamed to follow. I have discussed this matter with the Minister for Trade and Customs, whose lead I intend to follow, and whose name will carry weight when I go back to my constituents. Where he leads, I am certain that no Australian democrat need be ashamed to follow.

Mr. REID (East Sydney). - I have not risen to make any sort of reply to the very temperate remarks which the Prime Minister uttered with reference to myself and the proceeding!; of 1897. I cordially appreciate the thoroughly fair manner in which he has dealt with that matter so far as I am concerned. Therefore I have no sort of complaint to make. Nor am I going to enter into that branch of the subject at all, except to make one remark. The Prime Minister quoted a sentence of mine, which I wish to repeat. I stated that if the Natal Act proved unsatisfactory, we could go to the British Government with irresistible force for the Bill which I had previously introduced. My object in rising to-night is to show the House that this Government have deliberately placed themselves in a position with regard to the Imperial Government which absolutely precludes them, as long as they hold office in Australia, from taking the course at which I then hinted. Whilst I have the most profound respect for the personal honour of Ministers, and wish my remarks to be understood as absolutely free from any personal reflection, I think the public, as well as honorable members of this House, will learn with astonishment that the Government are absolutely committed by an official minute to the policy of Mr. Chamberlain. I was rather surprised at the novel spectacle of an unbending Government. It was the first exhibition of that sort of firmness which we wish always to see characterizing Ministers in reference to great questions. The Ministry have put themselves before this House and the people of Australia in their action during the past few days as influenced, not by any love for this particular Bill, nor by any love for the particular methods recommended by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but by the fact that it offered the speediest method of dealing with this difficulty. Yet, three months before the Bill was seen in this House, the Federal Government of Australia officially assured the Imperial Government that they were absolutely in accord with the principles and policy of the

Imperial Government upon this question. Now we can understand why a Government tied to the heels of the Imperial Government by an official despatch found it impossible to compromise with the honorable member for Bland. They had put themselves in such an attitude with reference to Mr. Chamberlain that their own self-respect compelled them absolutely to refuse to accept the amendment submitted by that honorable member in any shape or form. We were led to believe that they did so, free and unfettered, from a sense of public duty which impelled them to take that course. It is my duty to point out to this House that the Government were compelled to take that course because they had pledged themselves to Mr. Chamberlain. I am going to show the House, by a minute of the Prime Minister, which he himself has read to this committee, the truth of what I have stated. I commend the thoroughly straightforward conduct of the Prime Minister in reading that minute to the House. My only regret is that his colleague, the Attorney-General, when he made his speech, must have absolutely forgotten it, because we are able to see now how it is that the Government are bound - not to us, but to His Majesty's Ministers in London - and bound so deeply and finally that it was impossible for them to deal with the honorable member for Bland except in the unyielding way in which they did. On the 14th May Mr. Chamberlain sent a despatch to the Governor-General which is a very short one, and which I will read. It is as follows : -

My Lord, - I have the honour to forward for the information of your Excellency's Government copies of two despatches which I have addressed to the

Governor of Queensland relative to the reserved Bill of the Legislature of that State entitled "A Bill to amend the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts 1893 to 1895."

I trust that your Government will join with His Majesty's Government in deprecating legislation of the character of the provision in that Bill to which His Majesty's Government have felt bound to take exception.

The Attorney-General quoted from the despatches which were enclosed in that despatch of 14th May in order to show the committee the attitude of the Imperial Government upon this question. Those despatches clearly set out that attitude. I can sum up the essence of the despatches in two sentences. It is practically that the Imperial authorities cannot countenance any attempt to impose a disqualification based upon the place of origin. That means based upon a distinction of race and colour. Honorable members will notice that the amendment of the honorable member for Bland clearly makes that attempt. Mr. Chamberlain goes on to say -

Any attempt to impose disqualifications on the base of such distinctions,, besides being offensive to a friendly power, is contrary to the general conceptions of equality which have been the guiding principle of British rule throughout the Empire. Disqualification by educational tests such as are embodied in the immigration laws of the various colonies, is not a measure which the Government of Japan or any other Government can take exception in behalf of its subjects.

What is the alternative method, what is the chain of measures which Mr. Chamberlain suggests if our present legislation should fail ? It is to be found in the following words : -

If the particular tests in these laws are not regarded as sufficiently stringent, there is no reason why more stringent, and effective ones of a similar character should not be adopted.

That I presume means provisions similar to the educational test, and laws which do not embody a distinction of race or colour. I have not the Cabinet minute relating to this matter, but I have the minute by the Prime Minister which he read this afternoon. His reply to the appeal of the Imperial Government is in these words -

Minute to His Excellency intimating that I am quite in accord with the principles and the policy laid down in the two despatches of which copies are transmitted, and that this Government does not contemplate the proposal of any legislation likely to conflict with the views which the Secretary of State has expressed.

The Prime Minister explained this afternoon that every one of his colleagues was equally responsible with him for this minute, from which I infer that they -were personally responsible for it.

Mr Barton

- That is a Cabinet minute practically.

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Mr REID

- Exactly. By a Cabinet minute, the Cabinet as a collective body of responsible Ministers authorized the Prime Minister to make that statement. I wish honorable members to realize the significance of the

admission. The Imperial Government puts its policy and its principles before the Federal Government of Australia, and the latter, humbly, dutifully, and respectfully intimates to Mr. Chamberlain that his policy and his principles are those of the Government of Australia, and that its legislation shall not conflict with his views. Now we understand the hollowness of the pretence of the Attorney-General, when he spoke a few days ago, and said that the Government were not adhering to the lines of this Billowing to any love for its particular method for effecting their object. We know now that three months before he made that statement he had bound himself, and every one of his colleagues had bound themselves to the Imperial Government, not only not to bring in any legislation other than this, but as men of honour to refuse to be parties to any legislation such as that sought to be enacted by the honorable member for Bland. Now they are fighting for their Ministerial lives. There is no way of retreating from the position they occupy in reference to the Imperial Government. They dare not accept now this provision based upon a distinction of race and colour - they dare not accept it because now the hand that moves us is the hand of Mr. Chamberlain. Let us look at the singular train of events which follows from this circumstance. Because the Government have committed themselves to the British Government upon this matter .they have to stand firm. They dare not retreat. They have cut off all avenues of Parliamentary compromise in this Chamber - these are all blocked. This complication follows because the Government have committed themselves ; and hence we have honorable members like the honorable member who has just spoken, who had strong convictions one way, but who is now one of the puppets of the Imperial Government. Although as a representative of the people, by his public utterances in this Chamber he was bound to vote for this amendment, he and some others have swallowed their convictions.

Mr Wilkinson

- I will answer for that.

Mr REID

- No doubt the honorable member will, but it is of very little use for the honorable member to answer for his action when he is mere political mud.

The CHAIRMAN

- Order. I am sure that the right honorable member will see that that remark is entirely disorderly.

Mr REID

- I am not referring to the honorable member now but I am referring to a time when his constituents will show their opinion of him by refusing to re-elect him.

The CHAIRMAN

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

Mr REID

- I withdraw it absolutely, because my intention is not to be personally offensive to the honorable member. I merely referred to the fact that when votes on great occasions work mischief, the mere fact that the member who has voted wrongly is discredited by his constituents after he has recorded a vote which may change the policy of the nation, is of very little account. A singular turn has been given to events by the manner in which the Federal Government has taken counsel with the Imperial Government as to the lines of the legislation to be submitted to us. The Government have left themselves in an absolutely helpless condition, and it is a very grave thing in the political history of this new Commonwealth that a Federal Ministry should commit itself to the Imperial Government in an official Cabinet minute in such a way that when they come to this Parliament to take counsel with it as to the best method of dealing with this Australian question, they should be bound absolutely to a certain course instead of having their minds free, to some extent at any rate, to be influenced by the debates in this Chamber. What sort of pass has this Chamber come to when Ministers submit measures in that way ?

Sir John Forrest

- The right honorable member need not speak so loud. We are not deaf.

Mr REID

- I only wish the right honorable member had been a little deaf when the Right Honorable Mr. Chamberlain put his hand upon him.

Mr Deakin

- In 1897.

Mr REID

- In 1897 I told Mr. Chamberlain that if the Bill which it was then proposed we should pass did not answer, I should hold a position of irresistible force when I asked him to agree to a Bill on lines similar to those of the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. The Prime Minister himself quoted the statement that I then made. I said that my right to come to him again would be irresistible if the Bill then proposed did not prove effective.

Mr Barton

- And yet the honorable member was indignant with the Attorney-General for saying the same thing.

Mr REID

- No. What I am indignant with the Attorney-General for is that he should get up in this Chamber as if he were a free Minister of the Crown.

Mr Deakin

- So he is.

Mr REID

- Well, men are bound by their obligations, and Ministers are bound by their Cabinet minutes. Ministers standing here professing to deal with the amendment of the honorable member for Bland as free agents, influenced only by the weight of the arguments put before them, did not tell honorable members that they had officially announced to the Imperial Government that they were hand-in-hand with them as to their principles and policy in dealing with this question of a white Australia. But, just as we quite believe that the Treasurer honestly forgot all about those allowances, so I quite believe that the Attorney-General honestly forgot about this minute.

Mr Deakin

- No.

Mr REID

- I say that the Ministry ought not to have waited till the eleventh hour of this debate to make an announcement. If the Prime Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, had stated that this communication had passed with the Imperial Government, we should have known that every word that Ministers uttered were echoes of the promises made by them to Mr. Chamberlain, and which they were honorably keeping.

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Mr Watson

- But which they need not have made.

Mr. REID. - Not only need they not have written such a minute, but it will require very serious consideration on my part whether the action of the Government in binding themselves to the Imperial Government, as to a measure which they were going to submit to this Parliament, does not call for some serious consideration upon its own merits. That, however, is not the present question. The matter before us is this : That Ministers were honourably bound, I think, to have made the statement we have had to-night when the second reading of this Bill was moved. Why make the statement at all ? If the Prime Minister thought that it ought to be made, why make it at the eleventh hour when the debate is practically over ? This communication to the Imperial Government is not a matter of slight importance - except to those who move in a mysterious way - because if we had been aware of it, we should have known what to do. Did not the Attorney-General lead us to believe that 'the Bill was only one of a chain of measures, and that that chain of measures would be long enough to extend to the point of the amendment proposed by the honorable member for Bland, if necessary? Is there an honorable member sitting on the Government side of the House who did not believe that the Attorney-General, in speaking of introducing a chain of measures, if necessary, meant that the Government were prepared to go as far as the honorable member for Bland if the occasion arose? But after having committed themselves to this minute, so long as they are a Government they can never introduce a Bill providing for what the honorable member for Bland has outlined in his amendment.

Sir William Lyne

- ^Nonsense.

Mr REID

- The honorable member could do it, no doubt, but I do not wish to be led into an altercation with the

Minister, because his voice revives unpleasant memories, and I do not desire to rake up matters connected with the local politics of New South Wales. For the same reason I am passing by the remarks of the Prime Minister regarding utterances that have been made in connexion with New South Wales politics, ' because I think we ought to forget our little political fights in the States.

Mr Higgins

- Is not' the right honorable gentleman straining the minute by saying that it is a promise with regard to the Immigration Restriction Bill.

Mr REID

- I am very much obliged to my honorable and learned friend for asking me that fair question. I do not think that I am straining the meaning of the minute, because the principles and policy of the Imperial Government are set out in the despatch which the Attorney-General quoted. It is perfectly clear from the despatch that the principles and policy of His Majesty's Government are absolutely opposed to the colour distinction, but Mr. Chamberlain says that if this educational test is not enough the Imperial Government are quite prepared for further tests of a similar character.

Mr Ronald

- That is for a higher standard.

Mr REID

- The educational test may range all the way from the first primer up to some high work on education. If the schoolboy's primer is not stiff enough, His Majesty's Imperial Government are quite willing that the book for the 5th class should be used, or, if that is not enough, we might stipulate for a University matriculation examination. All these successive measures, however, are to be of a similar character. The distinction of colour or race is absolutely opposed to the principles and policy of the Imperial Government. Now, the Federal Government says it is quite in accord with the principles and policy of the Imperial Government as expressed in these despatches, and what can such an indorsement mean ? Can it mean that men who are quite in harmony with the right honorable Mr. Chamberlain can still propose a disqualification on the ground of race or colour ?

Mr Higgins

- Mr. Chamberlain was speaking of people already in the country - in Queensland - but we are dealing in this Bill with immigration.

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Mr REID

- That is exactly the question that the Cabinet are dealing with in their remark, that " the Government does not contemplate the proposal of any legislation likely to conflict with the views which Mr. Chamberlain has expressed," and whether the Sugar Works Bill, or the Bill now before us is in question, the views apply to both equally. Does the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne think for a moment that the Federal Government were addressed seriously about the provisions of the Queensland Sugar Works Bill? Does my honorable friend wish us to go to that pitch of absurdity, and to suppose that the views of the Imperial Government expressed in the despatch had reference only to a dead Sugar Works Bill which had been disallowed '? Only a very able equity lawyer would take up ii position of that sort. Mr. Chamberlain is so anxious about the Federal Government of Australia that he cannot' leave it alone. It was a proper thing to send these despatches ; but why should Mr. Chamberlain - Trust that your Government will join with His Majesty's Government in deprecating legislation of this character ?

Why, I ask again ? Why should not the Government of Australia be left to deal with Australian matters in consultation with the Parliament of Australia? Why should the Government, before introducing measures of a national character, send that Cabinet minute to Downing-street, to state that whatever they do they will not give offence to Mr. Chamberlain, and will not conflict with the views he expresses ? Is it not a wonder that, amongst the galaxy of experienced ex-Prime Ministers who sat at that Cabinet table, this simple and sensible reflection did not occur to them - that Mr. Chamberlain was asking them to enter into an understanding with the Imperial Government which would involve a departure from their . constitutional duty to Australia ? And now we understand why my right honorable friends stand to then guns. The honorable and learned member for Bendigo, with that solemn air with winch we are getting familiar, spoke of the manner in which the Prime Minister had twice said that he would stand or fall by this provision.

When that honorable and learned member spoke he did not know that the Prime Minister had to stand or fall by it, because Mr. Chamberlain would want to know whether he was the Mr. Barton who forwarded this Cabinet minute.

Mr Barton

- Just as he wants to know whether the right honorable gentleman is the Mr. Reid who spoke at the London conference.

Mr REID

- He has no right to know that. I am not the Prime Minister binding the people of Australia with the Imperial Government. I am not handing over the executive power of Australia to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. I have not yet arrived at that pitch of confidential relationship with Mr. Chamberlain. My colleagues who were present with me at the Premiers' conference in London know well that I spoke in no unmeasured terms before Mr. Chamberlain as to my views on this question.

Sir John Forrest

- The right honorable gentleman was not so loud then.

Mr REID

- My right honorable friend was not so dense then as he is now, since he has taken to the study of military evolutions. I ventured to point out to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that if he had 500,000 Japanese landing in London there would be a commotion throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. I ventured to remind him that it was easy for him to take lofty ideas about Imperial statesmanship when he had not the responsibility of governing a vast empty continent within easy reach of the hundred millions of Asia. Since then this matter has arisen to a position of most serious importance. Although the straight cut might be the best cut, since Ministers cannot take the straight cut honorable members opposite have to take the crooked cut after them. I say that the practical effect of the minute to Mr. Chamberlain is : that the Ministry have had to take up this unyielding attitude, and their supporters have had to swallow their convictions.

Mr Piesse

- No.

Mr REID

- Well, put them in their pockets for a minute or two while the division bells are ringing ! I want to endeavour, so far as I can, to tear this sham proceeding to pieces. We have had Ministers getting up one after the other and speaking upon the question. The Minister for Defence got up to-night and made us believe that it was 'a matter of no sort of consequence to the Government which way the question was settled, and that the method proposed was simply being hit upon because it was the most speedy method of getting this Bill through. Surely he knew that the Prime Minister had bound the Government to introduce or support no measure in conflict with Mr. Chamberlain's views as expressed in these despatches? Surely the right honorable gentleman was aware of that ? We have here the spectacle of Ministers piloting a great national measure through this House, tied hand and foot to the Imperial Government by their own minute to Mr. Chamberlain; that is to say if, as I am sure they will, they respect their obligations.

Mr Sawers

- They concur.

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Mr REID

- Concurrence in views and principles expressed by a Government generally means assent to them.

Sir John Forrest

- What about the right honorable gentleman's own attitude in New South Wales ?

Mr REID

- If my right honorable friend and his colleagues wish to live on anything which I did in New South Wales in 1897, they are living on very stale food, and they must in their desperation have become accustomed to gnawing a very ancient bone. I should have thought that statesmen of the first rank, as my right honorable friends all are, would have based their claims for power not upon anything I ever did. I must ask my right honorable friends to remember that when matters are being tried with reference to the action of the Government it is worse than silly to plead not guilty, on the ground of what some one else did three

or four years ago. If it were true it would be a bad plea; but it has the disadvantage, I think, of being untrue.

Sir John Forrest

- Not at all.

Mr REID

- But if I had done it a thousand times that does not justify the first Government of Australia in anticipating the discussion in this House on this question by conveying to the Imperial Government the expression of view that they can be perfectly easy - that " whatever happens we shall see that Australia does not do anything to interfere with your views." That is the position which Ministers may take up if they like. They have chosen to take it up, but I hope it is the first and last time that Ministers will announce the principles of a measure about to be submitted to Parliament to a Secretary of State for the Colonies. I believe it is the first time, and I hope it is also the last time that a Ministry, before inviting Parliament to consider its measures with a view to moulding them into the best possible shape, will put themselves in such a position with the Imperial Government that they must adhere to what they introduce. This is a matter which I have ventured to lay great stress upon, because from my point of view it is of no slight importance. Passing away from that, there is a complication which we have to consider before we divide. It arises from the fact that we have practically before us for our consideration a second amendment. In point of fact we have three courses, practically, to decide upon whilst we are going to a division. There is the Bill, improved by the substitution of the word "English" for the the word " European " ; that is one course.

Next, there is the course suggested by the honorable member for Bland ; and then there is the course suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi. I think the course suggested by the honorable and learned member for Indi is not equal in efficiency to the course suggested by the honorable member for Bland. This is not a matter, in its essential features, to leave to the varying waves of parliamentary feeling in two Chambers. If you wish to create complications with foreign powers you cannot more effectually do so than by sudden, parliamentary decisions affecting the flow of international law. This Bill, whatever it may be when passed, will become a measure of international law in this sense : that all the nations of the world reading it, as they will and ought, will say - " This is the policy of Australia, and all those who can satisfy that policy are entitled to admission by the law of Australia." But if you provide an educational test, and when 300 or 400 men come here who are prepared to comply with it, you, by hurried resolutions in both Chambers, throw Parliament into a discussion of grave international questions under circumstances which suggest serious disadvantages, foreign powers may well say - " We respect a nation which puts its mind on its statute-book; we respect a nation which, intending to shut our people out, has the honour and courage to say so in its laws ;" but a nation enters into a sphere of wrong-doing which creates international difficulty if the moment the law is satisfied there is a transformation scene, and these unfortunates are shut out by a further enactment. It creates a situation which may easily give rise to irritation amongst other powers. Every man on those benches, I believe, if he studied his own will and conscience, would at once vote for the amendment of the honorable member for Bland.

Sir Malcolm MCEACHARN

- No.

Mr McDonald

- A number of them have said so.

Mr REID

- There are a few, and I think most of them have something to do with shipping.

Sir Malcolm Mceacharn

- That is very ungenerous.

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Mr REID

- Do not take the offensive aspect ; I want to explain how it is. I can understand the genius of commerce being absolutely opposed to these distinctions. I have no sort of contempt for men who hold these high broad views. I only think, as the honorable member for Maranoa said, that if some of these men were camped beside their own houses honorable members might take a more vivid view of the difficulties of having such people in Australia.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- I am quite with the right honorable and learned member there.

Mr REID

- I am very glad to hear it.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- But I would do it in a very different way.

Mr REID

- Very well; but I am now discussing the proposal of the honorable and learned member for Indi. It is infinitely better than the Bill itself ; but I think it is not so good as the amendment of the honorable member for Bland. The question is - Have we the courage to say what we mean ? The question is - Has the Government of Australia, has the Parliament of Australia, the courage and manliness to put into black and white the law which it really wishes to pass? The fact is that there are some whose nerve fail them at this dreadful vision of the Empire of Japan. Their courage halts ; they prefer this equivocation instead of a straightforward declaration of the national policy, and they cover their want of courage by an affectation of loyalty.

Sir Malcolm McEacharn

- As the right honorable and learned member did in 1897.

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Mr REID

- Then I was wrong in doing it. It is a singular thing that the honorable member seems to .differ from me so much. The fact that I did it in 1897 ought to show him that I was wrong in doing it in that year, and that therefore Ministers are wrong in doing it now. The high intelligence of my honorable friend fails him if, when we are addressing ourselves to a matter in 1901, he thinks it a worthy reply that the speaker did something like it four years before. However, I do not wish to deviate from the point I am stating. This affectation of putting on men who will vote for the amendment a stigma of disloyalty is worthy of the course that is being pursued by the Government and their supporters. When men have a crooked line to follow, their strongest argument is derived from some supposed duplicity on the part of those who -advocate a straight course. They cannot find fault with straightness ; that would shock the moral sense of the community. But, since they cannot find fault with straightness, they impute to those who wish the legislation of the Commonwealth to go straight, some feeling of unworthy disloyalty. These attempts are idle. I believe there is not a man in the chamber who is not a loyal subject. In matters which lie at the heart of the well-being of Australia, the first subject we should direct our attention to is the welfare of this continent. When people speak of Britain as being imperilled by this amendment, one would think that the force of bathos could no further go. One would think that the height of folly had been transcended when a Prime Minister speaks of a great empire like that of Britain heaving an aggrieved wondering sigh when this Bill, with the honorable member's proposal in it, goes into Downing-street. What bathos is this ? Downing-street does not heave sighs as a rule - certainly not after four o'clock. It seems to me that honorable members have become so infected by this fear of Japan - because that is all it is - that they have become jappanned even in their arguments. The fact is that Great Britain has already told Japan that in regard to the colonies - not the Commonwealth, but the colonies, and even Newfoundland, the smallest of all our self-governing communities - " We can make a treaty with you, of course, but these communities are for this purpose independent of us. We cannot answer for them ; you must negotiate with them." That is the agreement arrived at in the treaty of 1894 between Great Britain and Japan. Is it not ridiculous to talk of menace in reference to Japan ? To do so seems to me to reach the height of absurdity. But it is useful as an argument for those who are advocating a crooked course.. The fact is that the safety of Great Britain amongst nations depends on the recognition of the fact that Australia is in her own affairs independent. That is the lesson which Great Britain had to learn one hundred years ago. That lesson need not have been learned, and Great Britain might have been left stretching across the globe with both arms. But there is one thing that Great Britain knows well, and has loyally acted upon. I am not to sneer at Mr. Chamberlain and the British Government. I consider that the treatment of Australia by the British Government has shown magnificent generosity all .through. I am prepared to be equally generous with the old country, except on matters of race taint. I " draw the colour line." I do not shrink for a moment from taking up the position which was assumed by the honorable member for Wentworth. That honorable

member did not take up that position in order to show that he is disloyal. He is as loyal as any of the gentlemen who will obey the party whip of the Government to-night ; but in a manner which was fearless, acknowledging the generosity of the British Government, he spoke in a perfectly straight way ; and I say that to talk about a difficulty with the British Government over this amendment is the merest moonshine. What was the Attorney-General's objection to this amendment ? It was that there might be some little delay owing to Great Britain having to explain to some feudatory prince in the back blocks of India, how it was that the Royal assent had to be given to this Bill. That might, the Attorney-General said, cause a little delay, but only a little, and he admitted that, after a little explanation the Bill must pass. And that is the fact. Are we going to treat this matter firmly, Or are we going to leave it a festering sore? Are we going to have a straightforward policy, which the people has sent us here to enact, or are we going to drag a chain over a festering sore in the hope that it will solve all our difficulties ? With a strong feeling of loyalty to the mother country, I have a profound belief that the mother country will be saved a multitude of difficulties if we exercise our inherent power in the manner which we intend. I believe that the chapter will be closed with this act, and that no further irritation can take place. In the interests, therefore, of peace - in the interests of the British Government, as well as in the interests of Australia - I implore the committee to do now and at once that which we must do sooner or later.

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Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

. - I do not rise for the purpose of endeavouring at this hour of the night, and at this stage of the debate, to answer a tithe of the arguments which the honorable member has addressed, nor would I, if I could, seek to rival his rhetorical flights and his eloquent enunciation of his views. Fortunately, in regard to the principal point which he had to make, my story is simplicity itself, and may serve in the future as an illustration of the wisdom of taking a little thought before launching out into dread anticipations and interpretations of marvellous portents. The honorable and learned member, in his theory as to the action of this Government, and as to its commitment to Mr. Chamberlain - as to our derivation of this Bill from that source and our accepting it meekly when handed to us - has overlooked one important consideration. He has forgotten his dates. When this Government was first formed, and met in Sydney, in January, we determined to place a "White Australia," as it was briefly termed, as the first plank of our political platform. We determined to give effect to this by a series of measures relating to aliens within our borders, to aliens outside our borders, whom we desire to keep permanently outside, and by other measures flowing from these. We had the advantage of having in the Government some who had been colleagues of the leader of the Opposition at the conference in London in 1897. We needed no despatch from Mr. Chamberlain to remind us what the request of the British Government then preferred had been. We needed no information as to the speediest manner in which the influx of aliens could be checked. It had been laid down for us in the communications made by Mr. Chamberlain in 1897, and which have since been printed. The Government determined in January that, so far as the exclusion of aliens was concerned, its first step would be to take a development of the Natal system, and apply that in such a manner as we believed would be effective to secure the absolute prohibition of their entrance, with the determination that, if it did not prove sufficiently effective, to add to it in the same direction, or in some other direction if need be. We met again in Melbourne in May, and drew up our Bill. At the time when this despatch was received from Mr. Chamberlain, if my memory serves me, I had already drafted this measure, and laid it before my colleagues. When, therefore, Mr. Chamberlain's letter came, repeating the requests he had made to the Premiers in 1897 - that we should, if possible, avoid the introduction of the race and colour test and adopt an educational test in as stringent a form as we thought necessary - our policy had been determined for five months, and our Bill was drafted. The intimation conveyed in the Cabinet minute was simply that the Government, having drafted its Bill and determined its policy, was about to submit a proposal which would not clash with those requests which Mr.

Chamberlain had repeated in the despatches. If the right honorable and learned leader of the Opposition reads that minute, he will notice that it points very plainly to what the intimation was, namely, that the Government did not contemplate the proposal of any legislation likely to conflict with the view which the Secretary of State had expressed.

Mr Higgins

- That did not bind the Government not to modify it afterwards.

Mr DEAKIN

- Not in the slightest degree.

Mr Reid

- Why was the minute written, if it meant nothing 1

Mr DEAKIN

- The Government had decided upon adopting this particular method, for the simple reason that it was the speediest method that lay to their hands. Why not say so 1

Mr Reid

- I am quite in accord with the principle and the policy laid down in the despatches, but that is more than talking about a speedy method.

Mr DEAKIN

- What decided the Government in the first instance, before the receipt of the despatches, was that this was the speediest possible method by which the end could be attained. Having decided that, and having drafted our Bill, when Mr. Chamberlain's despatch arrived there was no reason why we should not inform him that the measure we had drafted and were about to submit happened to be in accordance with his views. Then the Prime Minister, in writing the minute on which the communication to the Secretary of State was to proceed, said that he was quite in accord with the principles and policy laid down in the two despatches. What was the principle laid down 1 What was the principle and the policy ? The principle, as I took occasion to say the other night - and the right honorable gentleman did me the favour of reading a portion of the quotation I then used - was that the British Government sympathizes entirely with our object. What was our object 1? Prohibition - not merely regulation or restriction. The British Government sympathizing with our object, which was prohibition, suggested a means - the educational test. Surely we were as entitled to express our agreement with their suggestion as we have been found ready to express our disagreement when we have found it necessary.

Mr Conroy

- Did the Government send a copy of the Bill to Mr. Chamberlain ? 15 s

Mr DEAKIN

- The Secretary of State for the Colonies obtains no copy of a measure about to be laid before this House until the House has had an opportunity of seeing it. All that it was courteous and possible to do at that time in acknowledging this despatch, the Bill having been already drafted, was to say that what we contemplated at that time happened to be in accordance with the wishes to which he had given expression in connexion with the Queensland Sugar Works Guarantee Bill. That is the explanation of that minute. The British Government having agreed in its prior despatches in sympathizing with our aim of prohibition, the question of means was secondary. When we alluded to the principle and policy laid down in the despatch, we were referring to the principle and policy which have prohibition as their end.

Mr Reid

- The British Government do not in the despatches.

Mr DEAKIN

- Yes, in the early despatches.

Mr Reid

- Those were not the despatches referred to in the Premier's minute to the Governor of Queensland on the Queensland Sugar Works Guarantee Bill.

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Mr DEAKIN

- It repeated in very much the same language and exactly to the same effect what had already been communicated to the right honorable gentleman and his colleagues in London. The principle and policy we agree to are - first, the principle of prohibition, and the policy of first exhausting the educational test as the means, of arriving at prohibition. As this means was suggested by the Imperial Government it was due, we thought and think, by us to the Imperial Government, to adopt it as a recognition of all that Australia has received at their hands. If it was criminal, having drafted our Bill, to acknowledge a suggestion from the Secretary of State, what was the inconsistent position of my right honorable friend, when he and his colleagues in London, having passed their Bills, having committed themselves to a

policy, at the suggestion of Mr. Chamberlain, reversed that policy, and submitted fresh proposals of legislation, taking not a forward, but what they considered to be a backward step. I believe they acted with wisdom and judgment, and in the best interests of Australia. But if they acted with such wisdom and such judgment upon the immediate and direct initiative of the

Secretary of State for the Colonies, when the people of Australia had supported them in carrying measures of a much more drastic character ; if they were justified in so reversing their work and altering the policy which they had themselves perfected, simply at the direction or suggestion of the Secretary of State for the Colonies - if that was wise and just in 1897 how can it be criminal for us in 1901, when we have drafted our Bill and settled our policy, to let the Secretary of State for the Colonies know that our opinion happens to be in accord with his ?

Mr Conroy

- Members of this House had the right to a copy of the Bill. I wanted to get a copy of it five months ago.

Mr DEAKIN

- I have only one more word to say. The right honorable gentleman, of course, cannot touch any question which he does not adorn, or without tempting us to follow him; but I am going to resist the temptation. I have only one reply to make to the right honorable gentleman. He asks why we have not the courage to say what we mean. Have we not had the courage to say what we mean ?

Mr Reid

- Not in the Bill.

Mr DEAKIN

- Are Bills a means of expressing what we mean 1 Acts are commands ; they are not as a rule declarations or proclamations. The right honorable gentleman, as a professional man, knows that many of the most important Acts on our statute-books, if read by an uninformed layman, would convey to him little indication of the important purposes they are intended to fulfil.

Mr Reid

- That is the Bills the honorable gentleman draws.

Mr Barton

- The honorable gentleman is thinking of Ins own taxation legislation, which nobody can understand.

Mr DEAKIN

- We are often taken to task in Parliament, and not improperly so, for putting placards, as they are termed, in Bills, in order that he who runs may read upon the very face of the measure what the intention is, and may not require to pierce through a tangle of clauses, to discover it by implication. That putting in of placards is always professionally condemned, and judicially discouraged. From the right honorable gentleman's argument - and he has only repeated one that has been used frequently during the debate - one would suppose that the object of a Bill is not to 'do something, but to say or declare something.

Mr Higgins

- It is just as well, if we want to prohibit, to say that we do so.

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Mr DEAKIN

- Exactly ; but I am pointing out what is the purpose, intention, and character of the measure. We say that the purpose of the measure is to take the longest stride towards prohibition we believe it to be possible to take, so as to instantaneously secure the adoption of the measure. We say that frankly. We have never placed upon any stronger ground the superiority of this method of procedure over any other - the practical ground, that by this means we obtain a large measure of prohibition - something less perhaps than absolute prohibition, but all must admit, a large measure of prohibition, and we obtain it at once, and obtain it without tying our hands in the slightest degree. If I did not dwell upon the terms of this minute in addressing the House, it is because neither my honorable colleagues nor myself ever assumed or understood that minute to impose any restriction whatever upon our' future administration or legislation. We informed the Secretary of State what was contemplated at the time, having actually drafted the Bill to give effect to it, but in no way placed upon our hands, or even upon our little fingers, a single shackle to prevent us fulfilling our will to the fullest extent at the first opportunity. We submit this Bill to the House with confidence, because it affords the simplest and most direct method of attaining our end. To say that it is an indirect means, "to say that it partakes of duplicity, to say that it deceives, is to suppose that these

debates have been idle and fruitless, and that the absolutely unanimous chorus from both sides of this House in favour of a "white Australia," are or will be unregarded. It is in this House we say what we mean and desire. It is in this House we give the fullest expression to our opinions. In this House without bated breath or qualification, we declare the purpose and aim of this measure. But the measure itself is a practical means by which something is to be done, and we give it the shape which will be most readily indorsed and accepted. If there were some other shape more effective which would have been as readily indorsed and accepted, we should have adopted that, but nothing will restrain us, nothing will withhold us in the future, if this proves insufficient, from following the same road, or any other road that will enable us absolutely to exclude all undesirable aliens.

Mr GLYNN

- I am not going to detain the committee by a speech at this late hour, but I wish to make a few observations upon one or two points that have not, up to the present, been dwelt upon. The Attorney-General has twitted the right honorable the leader of the Opposition with inconsistency in not carrying out the resolution which had been come to by the Premiers' Conference in 1897. The Attorney-General has twitted the leader of the Opposition for having reversed the policy which he adopted, on the suggestion of Mr. Chamberlain, when he introduced an Immigration Restriction Bill in the New South Wales Parliament.

Mr Deakin

- I did not intend to do so.

Mr Kennedy

- It was just the opposite.-

Mr Deakin

- I said the right honorable member was perfectly consistent.

Mr GLYNN

- What was the object of the Attorney-General's remark that the right honorable and learned member had changed his front ?

Mr Deakin

- I was only referring to the right honorable member's criticism of the Government.

Mr GLYNN

- The position is really that, in 1897, an arrangement was come to by the Premiers with Mr. Chamberlain that they should consult the Australian Parliaments upon the point. Five of the Australian Parliaments were afterwards consulted, but only three of them passed Bills on the lines of the Natal Act. Victoria did not pass the Bill, South Australia rejected the Bill, and I remember that, at the Premiers' Conference, which took place in March, 1898, on the return of the Premiers from London, Sir Hugh Nelson dissented from the proposal that Bills on the lines of the Natal Act should be introduced.

Mr Higgins

- We tried to pass a Bill in Victoria, but it was rejected by the Upper House.

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Mr GLYNN

- The promise that was made in London was that an attempt at an Australian concert to pass Bills on the lines of the Natal Act should be made. That attempt was made. A Bill was introduced in, but rejected by, the South 15 s 2

Australian Parliament. A similar Bill was rejected also by one branch, at all events, of the Victorian Parliament, and Sir Hugh Nelson, at the conference of Premiers in March, 1898, dissented from the proposition that such Bills should be introduced. There is another reason why I think we should take -a definite step upon this point. Up to the present we have been dealing irregularly with this matter. The Imperial Government have not had a decided policy upon the Chinese question. In 1887 the suggestion of Lord Knutsford was that a Bill excluding Asiatics should be passed by the Australian Parliaments. The proposal made by him was that instead of inserting the word " Chinese " in the Restriction Bills the word "Asiatic" should be used, and the conference which took place in Sydney drafted a Bill to be introduced into the Australian Parliaments, the first part of which recited that " Asiatics " should be the persons excluded. I cannot see for the life of me how we shall be departing from the traditions, and the policy of the English Government, in now making colour the principle of exclusion, in view of the fact that Lord

Knutsford was prepared in 1887, as I have said, to adopt Asiatics as the basis of exclusion, with the possibility of a large suspension. The Imperial Government has changed front considerably upon this question. In 1860, by the treaty of Nankin, Great Britain absolutely bound China to make provision for the emigration of the Chinese to Australia. It was one of the conditions of that treaty that the Emperor of China should cause a proclamation to be posted throughout the Empire expressing the permission of the Govern* ment of China for the emigration to Australia of members of the Chinese race, and that facilities for Chinese to enter into contracts to come to Australia should be afforded. Nine years afterwards, when the Parliament of Queensland passed a Bill on the Chinese question, the Royal assent to it was not granted at home. A despatch came from England stating that the British interpretation upon the convention of 1860 was not only that the Chinese Government was to permit emigration to Australia, but that Australia was not to prevent Chinese from landing. In 1887 we were called to account by the British Government for our attempted breach, by the Chinese Restriction Acts, of the true obligations of the colonies. At one period we find the British Government encouraging the emigration of Chinese and seeking to fasten the obligation on the colonies to accept them. Now we are told that if we make any attempt to apply a strict colour policy the British Government will not assent to it. If our clear intention upon this matter is put before the British Government the better it will be for the Imperial Government and for Australia. As the question of a white Australia has been raised, although some honorable members may consider that it is prematurely precipitated by the amendment, I consider that it is the duty of those who believe in the principle to vote for that amendment.

Question - That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted - put. The committee divided.

31

AYES

36

NOES

Majority 5

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Amendment negatived.

In Division :

Mr Conroy

- I would point out that Standing order 294 provides that an honorable member shall vote in accordance with his voice. I notice that the honorable member for Melbourne Ports is sitting upon the other side of the House, and upon looking up Hansard I find that on this very question he stated that he would vote for the amendment, and he also expressed the hope that the honorable member for Wentworth would vote with him.

Mr McCay

- That is not a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. - The honorable member for Werriwa is altogether misapprehending the standing order.

The meaning of that rule is that when an honorable member gives his voice in calling for a division, he must vote in accordance with his voice.

Progress reported.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Order of Business

Mr. BARTON(Hunter- Minister for

External Affairs). - I wish to intimate to honorable members that we shall proceed with the Immigration Restriction Bill to-morrow, and perhaps also with the Property Acquisition Bill, with the exception of those clauses which have been the subject of recent telegrams. I understand that there is a general desire on the part of honorable members that after this late sitting we should meet at 11 o'clock to-morrow. I therefore move -

That the House at its rising adjourn till 11 a.m. to-morrow.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Tariff

Motion (by Mr. Barton) proposed -

That the House do now adjourn.

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Mr CONROY

- I believe a statement has been made by the Prime Minister to the effect that the Tariff will be brought down on 8th October, but so far I have not learned that he has submitted the Tariff Bill to Mr. Syme of the Age, and we have the word of the honorable member for Melbourne Ports that it is necessary to submit any intended legislation to that gentleman before it is proposed. Unless the Prime Minister gives me an assurance that the Tariff has been so submitted I do not know that we can accept his statement that it will be brought forward upon the date mentioned.

Mr REID

- At this late hour of the night I do not think that Ministers should be pestered with any unreasonable questions. At the same time I should like to ask the Minister for Trade and Customs whether he has yet received the Tariff framed by a conference of manufacturers some months ago, and if so whether any of those manufacturers have interviewed him with reference to the Tariff?

Mr Barton

- He has it mixed up with Senator Pulsford's Tariff.

Mr REID

- I really think that the Minister ought to reply to my question.

Mr Kingston

- At this late hour, is it a time for airy persiflage?

Question resolved in the affirmative.

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23:59:00

House adjourned at 11.59 p.m.