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House of Representatives

Mr. Speakertook the chair at 2.30 p.m.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Address in Reply

Debate resumed from the 29th May (vide page 431) upon motion by Mr. W. H. Groom : -

That the following Address, in reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor-General, be agreed to by this House: -

May it please Your Excellency: -

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

Uponwhich Mr. Joseph Cook had moved, by way of amendment -

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

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## Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- The State of Queensland is in a very unfortunate position to-day, and will doubtless suffer inconvenience for some years to come, through the great error of judgment which was made by the Ministry of the day in not allowing her to be represented at the second great Convention which drafted the Constitution under which this Parliament has been elected. Many of the inhabitants pf Queensland, and, indeed, many of her public men and the writers in her press, are to-day in comparative ignorance as to what transpired at the Convention, and at the meeting of Premiers which was held subsequently. Western Australia, by being represented in the Convention, was able to obtain concessions which are of vast importance to her, and if Queensland had been represented she also might have done so, and secured the existence of her great sugar-producing industry by maintaining, for a time at least, the existing conditions of labour. We were, however, placed at a disadvantage, because the head of the Government of the day determined that we should not be represented at the Convention, primarily - and I say it unhesitatingly - because he was not a federalist.

An HONORABLE Member. - Why did not the honorable gentleman advocate it 1 Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON.- I did advocate it, mid it is because I have advocated federation that I am here to-day. Although I was not a member of the Government, I did all I could, by reasonable and respectful remonstrance, to secure the representation of Queensland at the Convention. But I wish to ask the House for its kindly consideration and liberal interpretation of our circumstances on other grounds than the fact that we were not represented at the Convention, whenever within the next year or two questions affecting our great State arise to be dealt with; though I have not come here to advocate, as some who have already spoken have done, the confinement of our political vision to the particular State from which we each come. I am here to advocate the taking of the broadest views possible, to secure the good of the whole Commonwealth without forgetting any part of it. I do not intend to refer to the various matters mentioned in the Governor-General's speech in the order in which they occur there; I shall deal with them as they occur to me, and, as I am still suffering from bronchial trouble, the state of my health demands that I shall be brief. In the first place, I should like to advert to what has fallen from the lips of some honorable members in regard to the proposed Inter-State Commission. It has been alleged by some that, if the commission is appointed, its powers and authority will be practically null and void. Others say that the commission will have nothing to do. Others, again, say that what it may do is likely to be harmful, while others allege that the purposes for which it was intended that the commission should be created cannot be given effect to under the provisions of the Constitution. I assert, however, that the appointment of an Inter - State Commission was regarded throughout Australia as essential to federation. It was intended that the commission should harmonize the rates of freight charged on the railways of the

different colonies, and that the policy of " beggar my neighbour " which has been adopted by Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales should be abolished at once and for ever. Has it not been a scandal that the New South Wales railways should have been carrying goods to Riverina, and taking away productions from that district in competition with the railways of Victoria 1 Is it not u fact that the same State has addressed itself to the reduction of rates and the establishment of favoritism in regard to railway charges in connexion with the trade on her northern borders 1

An Honorable Member. - Queensland has been doing the same thing.

Mr Conroy

- The stupid politicians here would not let New South Wales produce come into Victoria. They drove away trade from Melbourne.

Mr McCay

- We do not call other people stupid.

Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. - The Inter-State Commission was, I thought, to be appointed to remedy these parochial evils. I think, however, that the members of the commission should number five instead of three, so that each State may be represented upon it.

An Honorable Member. - There are six States in the union.

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Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. Tasmania is not very much interested in this matter; but all the States which are interested should be represented. It is quite time that the InterState robbery and thriftlessness to which I have referred should cease. The railway authorities of the States have in the past been carrying produce at rates lower than the actual cost of haulage, in order to compete for the trade of their neighbours; and I hope that the Government will take steps to appoint an Inter-State Commission to carry out the purposes for which that commission is provided for in the Constitution, and will see that all necessary powers and authority are vested in it. A minor matter to which I wish to refer is the choice of a site for the federal capital. It has been suggested that the federal capital should -be built somewhere out in the wilderness, amongst the gum-trees which surround Mount Kosciusko; but I think we should not be in a hurry to choose a site. When the Premier of New South Wales was over here the other day, I and other honorable members had a conversation with him about the matter, and we ascertained that he did not regard it as one which should be unduly hurried. It has been contended that the question of climate is a strong reason for selecting a particular site; but I hold that nearness of population should be a much more important consideration. Most of us come from warm latitudes; very few of the members of either the Senate or the House of Representatives come from cold climates. 'If Providence spares me to continue a member of this Parliament, I do not want to be sent to a cold climate. I should like the federal capital to be situated somewhere near the sea- - -within an hour or an hour and a half's journey, by the most modern and expeditious electric tramway from some lake or harbor - so that our families may live near the sea when the severe winds of summer are blowing. We all acknowledge that the population of Victoria is at a stand-still. To use the phrase of a squatter, Victoria is stocked up; it cannot carry any more people. But Victorians need not grumble at this, because their sons and daughters are almost countless in Queensland, and it is their energy and capital which have been the means of making Queensland a second Victoria. In Queensland we have the men and women and the money too. They have valiantly battled with the wilderness in Queensland, as the people in the mallee scrub have also battled with adverse conditions. They are the right sort of people for Queensland. With their capital and their indomitable enterprise and perseverance they have contributed largely to establish the position Queensland at present occupies among the Australian States. As to the federal capital, there is a beautiful piece of land available near Armidale, not very far from the Queensland border. The climate is lovely, and there is every comfort, with plenty of fishing and shooting for those who are fond of sport. It is a moderate distance from Port Macquarie. I think that land should be reported upon before we finally adopt any site for the capital. Though Victoria is alleged to be, standing still in the matter of population, New South Wales has not taken such a very big jump after all. One honorable member last night went back 30 years, and spoke of the early condition of Victoria. I never heard anything so nonsensical. There is no comparison whatever between the position of "Victoria now and then. The comparison was founded

upon a most unjustifiable juxtaposition of circumstances. Take the condition, of Queensland when, on leaving Victoria, I entered it in 1861. I do not think that State had 35,000 people then. She now has over 500,000, thanks to Victoria, and to her liberal system of immigration.

Mr Conroy

- Immigration forced on her.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- No, voluntary immigration.

Mr Conroy

- Many persons were driven away from Victoria.

Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON.- I am as intimate with Victoria as is any man living. I have been in most parts of it. I was many years ago at Cooper's Creek, where Burke and Wills were lost; and with regard to Australia generally, I have read nearly every book on the exploration of the continent, including the works of Sir John Forrest; so that, where I have not been myself, I have had the brains of explorers to rely on for my information. Consequently, I am speaking as a man as intimate with Victoria and New South Wales as I am with my own State. I am likewise thoroughly, familiar with the conditions and history of South Australia. I touch upon this point for the purpose of saying that I believe the people of Queensland are in no hurry about the adoption of any particular territory.

Mr McDonald

- That is not so; let the honorable member speak for himself.

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- I am speaking for the largest constituency in the State.

Mr Fisher

- I represent the largest constituency in Queensland, reckoning the numbers of electors. <page>484</page>

Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. There might be a difference of a dozen or two in the honorable member's favour. I hope influence will be brought to bear on the Government of New South Wales to send Mr. Oliver or some other gentleman to report upon the beautiful territory to which I have referred, with its excellent climate, and with so much Government land available. In the near future, the population of Queensland and New South Wales will be almost double that of Victoria and South Australia. Consequently, we must look to the future in this matter. The Governor-General's speech says -

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

With that paragraph in the speech I cordially concur. It is simple and to the point and it represents public opinion in Queensland. Whatever may be the prevalent opinion in Victoria and New South Wales, the declaration made in the Governor-General's speech is exactly what the people of Queensland desire. There are some who, through their representatives in this House, want to discontinue the use of the labour of the South Sea Islanders instanter. What harm has kanaka labour done to Australia? On the other hand, has it not done much good for the other States? Have we not sent sugar to Adelaide and brought back flour and wheat? Have we not sent sugar to Victoria and brought back oats, hay, and other produce? The ramifications of this question are so important that to strangle kanaka labour instanter, would be to hurt, not only Queensland, but also the other States. The shipping trade would also be injured. The importance of different ports of call would be diminished, and a vast difference would be made to labour in many directions, - in the production of coal, for example, and in connexion with the vest mercantile marine we have upon our coasts. I should like to inform honorable members that there was not a single patch of cane grown in Queensland when I became one of the colonists of that State in my youth. I have grown up with the industry and have constantly watched it. I have had two or three of the islanders in my own employment. They were shipwrecked men; and I found them docile and cleanly, and their habits were as correct as I could desire. They took their baths as regularly as any white man. In their work they were competent, and their habits were simple. The legislation in Queensland narrowed down the employment of kanaka labour on the plantations to very little indeed. The few who are now employed cannot trouble us much. A kanaka is not allowed, for instance, to drive a horse and dray.

### Mr Mauger

- I saw them doing it a few clays ago.

### Mr McDONALD

- PATERSON. - Then somebody in authority must have winked at it. Why did not the honorable member give information, and cause a prosecution to take place ?

# Mr Mauger

- I saw no less than five kanakas doing it.

### Mr McDonald

- It is repeatedly done.

### Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- Of course, we have what are called free men in Queensland. They are able to obtain a ticket or some evidence that they are not to be compelled to return to the islands, and they are as free as I am to live at their own homes. The abolition of the kanaka traffic is not as simple as it appears to be. Why has there not been competition on the part of white men so as to put an end to the necessity for employing kanaka labour 1 Many of the planters would prefer to employ white labour.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Would white men work for ?6 a year ?

### Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- No, I do not say they would work for that rate of wage. The crassest ignorance prevails concerning the kanaka traffic. Take the evidence of the Royal commission, of which my honorable friend the member for Darling Downs, the ex-Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, was chairman. The evidence brought before that commission showed clearly that the planters would rather employ white men, and that they employed the nigger or the islander only because they lost by the white labour.

  Mr Higgins
- That was in the southern portion of Queensland, was it not south of Townsville? <page>485</page>

### Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- There is not much sugar country there. You might as well go to the Melbourne Botanical Gardens and try to grow bananas at a profit. The whole of the sugar area is on the coast, within high-water mark, and these hot climates are totally unsuitable for the labour of the white man. What did Captain Cook do when he was going up the coast? He called it a second India, and named one of the capes India Head; and he was right in his judgment. Why does not the white man contend for a white Ceylon, or a white Mauritius? One speaker last night said that Australia will have to annex the islands of the Pacific. What should we do with the islands if .we annexed them, if we had not a particular class of labour to employ there? I am as anxious for the gradual abolition of this class of labour as is any honorable member, but I say unhesitatingly that it is most un-British to annihilate it by legislation as is suggested by some persons. In Victoria, for example, persons are calling out for a white Australia. What do they know about it % I believe the demand for a white Australia was a political trick to catch votes in tile populous centres of the States. The cry was raised by politicians who were doubtful whether they could win their seats, and they imposed upon certain people. It is rare to find in Melbourne a man who has even been to Sydney. How can such people understand the sugar industry of Queensland 1 Do they think when they reach Brisbane that they have really entered Queensland 1 Why, Sir, they are only at the gate of the paddock. When viewing the trades procession in Melbourne from the steps of Parliament House I saw that there were black skins helping to hold up some of the flags carried by the eight hours men.

An Honorable Member. - Perhaps they were coloured for the occasion.

# Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- No; they were not blackened for the occasion. The next remark I have to make is that the conclusion of our Queensland people is, that in abolishing coloured labour we should begin where the Asiatic is thickest, and where competition is keenest. We should first take action in Little- Bourke-street, in Melbourne, and in Lower George-street, in Sydney. That is my own opinion, and that of many hundreds of working men who voted for me. I had to face a strong labour constituency, and I got many votes from working men. The respectable wage-earner, for whom I claim to speak, is the man who delights to live in a little cottage of Lis own with some land, attached to it, who is proud of his children, and who, at the end

of his day's work, goes home, has his bath, and turns out into the fine clear night air of Queensland to enjoy his rest. They are the class of men who voted for the retention of the kanaka for a reasonable period. An honorable member said the other day in regard to this question that he had had certain facts from Mr. So-and-so, who had been there. I beg honorable members not to take the opinion of any one man, or any half-dozen nien. I sincerely hope the Government will not introduce a Bill until they have appointed a Royal commission from both sides of the Chamber, whose duty it will be to let daylight into the whole question and bring up a report in which the full truth will be told. Then let this House and the other Chamber judge for themselves.

Mr Fisher

- This House is the Royal commission that will decide the question.

Mi:. MACDONALD-PATERSON.- How can this House be a Royal commission? Is it not the duty of the Government towards members of this House to place us in possession of the latest information from all sides, and to throw all possible light upon the question? We ask that daylight may be let into it. I am not afraid of that, and if that course were taken all Queensland would be prepared to abide by the result. Every planter in Queensland would be quite willing to abide by the result of such an inquiry, and I strongly urge upon the Government that that course should be taken.

Mr McDonald

- Why not abide by the referendum just taken 1

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- No referendum was taken on the question.

Mr McDonald

- Practically, there was, and we secured . three senators at the head of the poll by big majorities. <page>486</page>

Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- The fiscal question occupied no mean position in the discussion by press, public, and politicians, in Queensland, notwithstanding the statement of the leader of the Opposition that the Tariff did not move that State. The question, has moved Queensland very much, indeed, but in a strong silent sort of way very strong, notwithstanding, the apparent want of agitation and public prominence'. One of the principal reasons for this is that we have- had a drought in some of our regions for from five to seven years. Where there were millions of sheep and cattle, there are now none. Even native dogs and rabbits have diminished, and the people have fled to the coastal regions to wear out their old clothes and live on credit. Year after year we were hoping, against hope, and having been a commercial man for many years, I have invariably felt the strongest interest in every movement connected with commerce and shipping in. Australia. I have had particular sympathy for those with whom I have been so long associated in Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales. The cloud that is over us just now indicates a terrible disaster. As to how it has been brought about, I quote several merchants with whom I have had conferences within the last six or eight weeks. Those merchants have stocked up as usual, thinking the volume of business would, when the rain came, be as before; and so they have been going on from year to year. Their stocks are now immense - far and above what are commensurate with the wants of the country. Hence they are in great difficulty, and I suppose the renewal of bills and continuation of credit has been resorted to; but in the meantime they are in very great straits. They are over supplied, and I had a letter this morning expressing anxiety as to what the federal duties may be, and the fear that if the Tariff be less than the existing Tariff in Queensland, it will operate most disastrously to holders of stocks in that State. I am in favour of the Tariff being promptly dealt with, and I am also of opinion that the Government should adopt a half-yearly date as from the 1st July next, or thirty-three days hence, when the duties shall begin, or else leave the matter over until next session and let the duties commence on the 1st of January. The merchants of Brisbane and others who have large stocks in the provincial towns and on the coast, do not want the Tariff for years if they can possibly prevent it. They wish naturally to be able to clear their stocks. Their fear is that the duties will be less than those imposed at present in Queensland.

Mr McDonald

- More provincialism.

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### Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- -I am giving reasons for the early operation of the uniform Tariff. I do not believe it is going to be a very low Tariff - I know it cannot be a low Tariff- - and there will be a good free list, or I misjudge the Government and this House. Pig iron, for instance, is an item on which a duty cannot be put, seeing it is the bed-rock of all industry; and there are a host of other things which must be on the free list. Any idea of a uniform Tariff of 10 per cent., or 12\(^-\) per cent., or 15 or 20 per cent., is nonsense. The Tariff must be a graded Tariff. I remember trying to obtain a copy of the American Tariff, and ultimately I borrowed one from Colonel Bell, United States consul at Sydney. It was as thick as a family bible, whereas the Queensland Tariff could be put on a sheet of foolscap, and so, I believe, could the Victorian Tariff: But I was very much impressed with the manipulation and scientific mode of dealing with certain articles in the American Tariff. For instance, a log of timber which comes into the United States is charged a certain duty, but if that log be squared, the original duty has to be paid, plus a duty on the labour of squaring it. If the log caine in as flitched timber, the duty has to be paid on the original log, plus duty on the labour which brought it into a flitched state. I hope, however, we shall have nothing of that kind in the Commonwealth Tariff, and that the clause on this subject in His Excellency's speech fairly represents the decision of the Cabinet. I am sure they do not want to mislead us. In the speech we read : -The fiscal proposals of any Federal Government must be largely dependent on the financial exigences of the States.

That is a truism; it goes without saying. Then we read: -

The adoption of the existing Tariff of any one of these States is impracticable, and would be unjust. It would be extremely unjust to adopt either the Victorian Tariff or the New South Wales Tariff; and I refer to those States because we have had no discussion about the Western Australian, the Tasmanian, the South Australian, or the Queensland Tariff. The whole debate seems to have been a haggle as to the development of the two former States under their respective policies. Further we read -

To secure a reasonably sufficient return of surplus revenue to each State so as fairly to observe the i intentions of the Constitution, while avoiding the unnecessary destruction of sources of employment, is a work which prohibits a rigid adherence to fiscal theory.

Even free-traders will admit that. In my opinion, free-trade means no Customs house at all; have as much direct taxation as you please, and there are hundreds of ways of taxing people. But if we are to retain the Customs house, the Tariff must be such as will realize from luxuries as much" as possible without diminishing consumption; duties should at the same time be placed on certain articles, the introduction of which will assist the employment of labour. As to free-trade in New South Wales - I am at liberty to give names to any honorable members if they be wanted - for the last 30 or 35 years I have had buggies built at two establishments. They were of particularly excellent workmanship, and could be relied on. One of these manufacturers the other day said to me - "We had 160 men and boys employed under the Dibbs Tariff, and they increased to 250, but now we have not sixteen men and boys employed, and we are simply a repairing shop for American rubbish." I will not refer to other things, such as boots and shoes, but will only mention, as an instance, that in Queensland we have factories which produce every month scores of buggies as good as any produced elsewhere in the States, and better than those produced in America. I never come to Melbourne and go to St. Kilda but that I admire, for their splendid style, the two-wheelers and four-wheelers I see on the road. In my opinion, a better article is got here for less money than in America; and that is the result of the development caused by reasonable protection; whereas the coach-building and carriage-building industry in New South Wales has gone bung - -it is dead. I will not trouble the House with any more observations about the Tariff.. I have said sufficient to indicate that I am, what may be termed, a moderate protectionist. But I am inclined to be very conservative in the number of the articles we protect; I do not want any "hothouse " plants started here. I am not in the secrets of the Ministry; but I am sure the majority of the House, when the Tariff is introduced, will approve of it. A clause in His Excellency's speech expresses the hope that a common penny postage system and a common telegraph rate will be established in the Commonwealth; but I have not the slightest hope of either, and do not think either practicable. We must have the zone system for telegrams. If the cost of the telegraph wires and the different establishments in towns were capitalized and taken at 3 per cent., it would be utterly impossible to obtain the necessary interest if a shilling were charged for a telegram to any part of Australia and the same is the case in regard to penny postage.

#### Mr BATCHELOR

It would increase the business very largely.page>488</page>

## Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- It would increase the business very little indeed, because we have not the distribution of population that they have in Canada and the United States of America. Our telegraph rate in Australia is not one-third of that charged in the United States; and the charge is lower here than on the Continent of Europe, where it is impossible to get telegrams sent any distance for 3s. the ten words and 3d. per extra word. Indeed, you could not get such messages sent in Europe for twice the money. As to penny postage, I would beg the Government to give the Post and Telegraph department a run of a couple of years at least, and watch the result of Commonwealth administration before any attempt is made to alter the rate. The telegraph rate should be altered and modified, but the postage rate should be twopence. I remember when the postage rate was 4d. between the States; but my reason for adhering to the present rate of postage is that I think the accounts, if not false, misrepresented the facts. When Postmaster-General for some years I tried to get power to alter the system of accounts, but I was not able to do so. I called attention, however, to the fact that the interest on loan moneys expended by the department - I do not know how it is in other States - are not debited at all. In regard to the railways of Victoria, or those of any other State, the Government can say - " Well, we have earned 3? per cent., and we know that these railways cost 3^- per cent, on the average." But in the Post and Telegraph department of Queensland, I have not found any debit of interest on the cost of the thousands and thousands of miles of telegraph lines and the buildings in the capital and provincial towns. Although the cost appears on the general vote of the Treasurer, the interest never appears on the departmental accounts, so that any honorable member looking at the report of the Postmaster-General or the Under-Secretary, can see only a statement that the loss for the year had been, say, ?166,000, the further loss that lies in the background, represented by the total interest on the moneys expended, being omitted. If we work out the Commonwealth Post-office returns and accounts in the same way as is done in Queensland, the Commonwealth will be building the fabric of cheap postage on an unreliable foundation. This brings me to the great Inter - State railway, which is projected by the member for Swan, and I think I can deal with that measure almost in a sentence. In my opinion, the proposal is fatuous folly, and I wonder the Government have not kept it in check. I suppose it is because the member for Swan has not got used to the collar team, and because the Premier was good enough to overlook the impetuosity of the honorable member's manly character. I believe the cry for a transcontinental railway has done very well in Western Australia, serving, as did the cry about kanaka labour in other colonies, like a trumpet to tickle the ears of the voters. But sane financiers who understand this country will simply say the member for the Swan may blow his trumpet as long as he pleases; he will not get Parliament to approve of the project.

Mr Poynton

- Does the honorable member profess to know what is both under and over the land there t Mr McDONALD
- PATERSON. I do not; but I say that if the railway is to be constructed it must be constructed by the States owning the land, whatever its value may be. South Australia and Western Australia must combine and make it a joint-State incubus.

Sir John Forrest

- Would it not be well for the honorable member to reserve his judgment until he gets full information ? Mr McDONALD
- PATERSON.- I am talking of a principle. I wish it to be distinctly understood that my conviction and the conviction of many others is that the Commonwealth must not begin to make railways at this period of its history. If the construction of this railway is to be the price of Western Australia coming within the Commonwealth arena, then I have a proposal to make on behalf of Queensland.

  Mr Povnton
- How would it do to establish the federal capital midway between the two States? Mr McDONALD
- PATERSON. That is not the topic under consideration at the present moment. The argument of the Minister of Defence is that the railway will give us our mails so many hours earlier; but, in these days of

cheap cable rates, merchants and others are not so particularly anxious about saving 48 or 50 hours in the delivery of their letters. The importance of such a saving has, to a great extent, vanished during the last ten or fifteen years. But, in coming from Brisbane to Sydney, a person travels twelve hours in the train before reaching the border; and, when he gets there, he is farther from Sydney than when he started, so that, if the object of the proposed line be to connect the principal cities of two States by a direct route, then Brisbane must have a trunk line also. One travels from Brisbane for nearly fifteen hours before one gets within the distance from Sydney that Brisbane is travelling by steamer through the southern passage. There is a railway that will never carry many passengers. It h a wearisome journey--Sir John Forrest

- But it does carry a large number of passengers.

### Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON

- I know that Queensland is losing a good many thousands of pounds a year upon it, and New South Wales must be losing a lot more, because the former State has less mileage.
- Surely that is not an argument against the Western Australian railway. Mr MACDONALD-PATERSON
- It is not an argument for it. If the primary purpose be to facilitate speedy transit by the shortest route between the capitals of the various States, the work I have suggested is equally - indeed, it is more entitled to consideration than is the Western Australian line, because it would pass through far better country. It would go through a settled country with plenty of population. I shall conclude my observations with a reference to the Federal High Court.. Some honorable members have decried the early establishment of a federal High Court. I look upon it - and I am sure the great majority of the common sense men of this country also regard it - as essential that this Court should be established as early as practicable. The people look to its establishment as an essential, and they want it established early. I hope, therefore, that when it comes to a question of voting, the Government will have a good majority in support of their proposal. In conclusion, I wish to express my grateful thanks to honorable members for the kindly attention they have given to my somewhat disjointed observations, but being somewhat out of health, I have treated the various points as they occurred to me at the moment. I think, however, that what I have said will give scope for thought, and I trust that my remarks will not be productive of want of harmony between myself and any honorable members who do not quite agree with my views. On the contrary, we are all here, I trust, as loyal Australians - loyal to our own respective States, but essentially loyal to the Commonwealth of Australia - and I hope that the result of our deliberations will be creditable alike to the Commonwealth of Australia and to the various States that have sent us here.

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### Mr V L SOLOMON

- At the risk of continuing this debate somewhat longer than has been anticipated by some honorable members,

I desire to add my few remarks, which will not be more lengthy than I can possibly help, to those of the many able speakers who have preceded me. I desire first to congratulate the honorable member for Darling Downs, who moved the adoption of the Address in Reply, and the honorable member for Corio, who seconded the motion, upon the very able, tasteful, and tactful terms in which their speeches were couched. I also desire, as an old colleague of your own, sir, in the South Australian Parliament, as one who has been very frequently opposed to you politically, to congratulate you upon the high office to which, by the good will of this House, you have been called. I am sure that no honorable member will ever regret the choice made of our Speaker, and that you, sir, will - as you have done in the smaller arena of State politics - always uphold what is right and what is dignified in the best traditions of past parliaments. We have heard a great deal during this debate upon the leading paragraph in the opening speech; for I suppose the line of cleavage between the Government side of the House and the opposition side will be that of the fiscal policy. A great deal that we have heard has consisted of a comparative examination of the advancement made respectively by the States of New South Wales and Victoria. As a comparative outsider belonging to one of the numerically smaller States, I have listened to the arguments on both sides with a very great deal of interest. With such able speeches before us as those of the honorable member for Bendigo, the honorable member for Wentworth, and the honorable member for Parkes, who

spoke last night, I feel that it is somewhat difficult to decide as to the merits of the question as between the different States, and to arrive at a conclusion as to whether the difference in their fiscal policies has been either the sole element in their relative successes, or the principal one. But I am satisfied of this, after some fifteen years or more of experience in the State from which I come - South Australia - that all the prophecies made by the protectionists at the time the present protectionist policy of that State was introduced - prophecies as to the advancement which that State would make and the increased employment which would be found for its people, have been absolutely belied. However, I do not intend to repeat the many able arguments that have been used on both sides of this House by speakers who have made a closer study of the fiscal problem than I have had an opportunity of doing. There are plenty of other subjects touched upon in the address from the Crown which call, I think, for our attention and for careful debate. But, before I leave the guestion of the fiscal policy, I must say that I am at a loss to understand many honorable members who profess to see no difference between the policy announced by honorable members on this side of the House, who are distinctly in favour of a revenue Tariff and a revenue Tariff only, and the policy announced by the Prime Minister at Maitland, and since incorporated in the Governor-General's speech, of a revenue Tariff in the first place and a semi-protective Tariff in the second. The honorable member for Northern Melbourne professed himself utterly unable to distinguish any difference between the policy of the Government and the policy of the Opposition. This is the same old herring that has been drawn across the fiscal, track by certainly every, protectionist speaker who has addressed himself to the subject - the same little bogey that has been put up at every meeting where protectionists were advancing their theories - at least, at every meeting that I have attended or of which I have read reports either in my own State or in Victoria. These gentlemen say that there is no more difference between the policy of a low Tariff - and we are forced to a low Tariff by the financial necessities of the States - and that of the protectionists, whose modified policy was announced by the Prime Minister, than there is between tweedledum and tweedledee. Now, why a clear-headed equity lawyer, a clear-sighted intelligent man, like the honorable-member for Northern Melbourne, should state that he, above all others, fails to see any difference between these two policies is beyond my comprehension. Mr Batchelor

- Will the honorable member explain it"? <page>490</page> Mr V L SOLOMON

- I think I can explain the difference as it presents itself to my modest intelligence fairly clearly. Up to a certain point there is undoubtedly little difference between the policy of the Barton Government and the policy of the free-traders on this side of the House, who are forced for a time to advocate a revenue Tariff policy. Up to a certain point the difference is indeed slight. That point is this: Under the Barton policy, it is admitted that through the Customs and Excise it is necessary to raise a sum amounting in the aggregate to something like?8,000,000 or ?8,500,000 in order to preserve the solvency of the States, and in order that they may receive back from the Federal Government a sum as nearly as possible equivalent to that which they now obtain through their Customs revenue. On this side of the House, the revenue tariffists free-traders if they could be, but revenue tariffists by force of circumstances, say - " We also admit that the Tariff of federated Australia should be such as will yield a sum of ?"8,000,000 odd, or an equivalent to the amount at present produced by the varying Tariffs of the different States." Up to that point there is no difference, or little difference, between the policy of the Government and that of the Opposition. But, having reached that point, our courses absolutely diverge. There the free-traders and revenue tariffists say - " We stop; " and there the protectionists say - "Having taken this ?S, 000, 000 out of the pockets of the general taxpayer for the purpose of the States, we will proceed to enable the owners of factories, those who are interested in the various industries which have been bolstered up for the last 25 or 35 years, to make a further demand upon every taxpayer in the Commonwealth, by giving them a protective Tariff, which, to be of any use, must to a very great extent be prohibitive." So that, to put it as clearly and in as few words as possible, the difference between the two parties in the House is that we on this side propose to tax the people of the Commonwealth only to a point sufficient to yield the revenue required for State purposes, while the Government policy is to tax the people, not to obtain revenue only, but to protect industries which, at this late period, should require no further assistance, and in that way to take an unknown amount out of 'the taxpayers' pockets to put it into the pockets of the manufacturers.

Sufficient has been said about the policy of fostering new industries. Somewhat later we heard in the State Parliament of South Australia the old cry that was heard in Victoria 30 years ago - that protection would provide employment for a greater number of our people. But ft close examination of the statistics of South Australia for the-past 10 or 15 years shows that this statement which was made so earnestly, and I believe honestly, by those who advocated protection, has not been borne out. The taxation of the people has increased, but there has been no corresponding increase in employment. But there is one point with reference to the fiscal question that has not yet been touched on either by a member on the Government side of the House or by a member of the Opposition, and it is a point which was carefully avoided by the Prime Minister in making his utterances. The right honorable gentleman when advocating a modified system of protection - I refer to the occasion when he hauled down the protectionist flag to half mast pointed out that there were certain industries which it would be horrible, and almost scandalous, to cease to protect. He said, to quote the report of his speech which was telegraphed to the leading newspapers of Australia, that he and all his colleagues were protectionists - I think this was before the honorable member from Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, became a member of the Ministry and he continued -In all the States there has been more or less protection of all the industries that have sprung up, and' men are earning their living by them. Capital is invested in them; labour is invested in them. Even in New South Wales there is still a duty of .-?3 per ton on sugar to protect that product of our own soil. Are Ave to abolish this protection now, and begin the union by ruining our northern farmers?

A very pretty sentiment for a gentleman seeking election at the hands of the people of New South Wales! But what a piece of misleading political twaddle it was to tell the northern farmers of New South Wales who are engaged in growing sugar-cane that the Government intend to continue protection for the sugar industry, and at the same time to omit to allude - and I desire to especially emphasize this point - to the necessity for imposing an excise duty upon colonially-grown sugar. Did not the right honorable gentleman know that while New South Wales produces from 16,000 to 17,000 tons of sugar per annum, Queensland produces 120,000 tons per annum? Did he not know that to protect the northern farmers of New South Wales an excise duty must be placed upon sugar, as otherwise the Queensland sugar, directly a uniform Tariff is imposed by the Commonwealth Parliament, will swamp the local production of New South Wales.

Mr Ewing

- Does the honorable member believe that ?

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I shall quote figures which will induce the honorable member to believe it, too, and no doubt he will have an opportunity to refute my figures if he is able to bring others to beat them. In the year 1898, which is about the date of the latest statistical returns, the production of sugar in Queensland amounted to between 116,000 and 120,000 tons.

Mi'. W. H. Groom. - Our production of sugar last year was 163,000 tons. Mr  $\mbox{V L SOLOMON}$ 

- In 1898 Queensland exported to New South Wales 49,000 tons of sugar, and under the New South Wales Tariff a duty of ?3 a ton was paid upon that sugar, producing ?147,000 of revenue. Queensland in the same year exported to Victoria 49,000 tons of sugar, which, with a duty of ?6 per ton, produced ?294,000 of revenue. She also exported to South Australia 15,000 tons of sugar which, with a duty of ?3 per ton, produced ?4.5,000 of revenue, so that the revenue produced by the importation of Queensland sugar into the other States of the Commonwealth amounted to ?486,000. This is no trifling matter, and should not have been passed over without remark by the Prime Minister when he was dealing with such an important question as the fiscal policy of the Commonwealth. I have concluded that at the time of making his speech he had no intention to impose an excise duty upon sugar, though sugar must be considered by free-traders as a fair revenue-producing article. '
- Would the honorable member impose an excise duty upon colonial wines ? Mr V L SOLOMON
- I thank the honorable member for the interjection, and I shall deal with his question presently. That the Prime Minister, when speaking at Maitland, had no intention to impose an excise duty upon sugar, appears to me to be manifestly proved by the fact that in his calculation of the financial necessities of the

various States he included a sum of a little over ?1,000,000 as the amount which would be lost by the establishment of intercolonial free-trade, and included in that amount is the whole of the sugar duties. The Commissioner of Customs is indulging in one of his characteristic smiles.

Mr Kingston

- I was wondering if the honorable member recognises the difference between a customs and an excise duty.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Had the Prime Minister intended to impose an excise duty upon sugar he would not have included the ?486,000 obtained from sugar duties in the ?1,000,000 set down as the loss to be incurred by the establishment of intercolonial free-trade.

Sir William McMillan

- He said in another speech that he would not agree to an excise duty.

Mr Kingston

- -Must not there be a loss of ?1,000,000 by reason of the removal of intercolonial customs duties.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Not if excise duties are imposed upon sugar.

Mr Kingston

- I am not referring to excise duties.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No doubt the Minister of Customs, when occasion makes it necessary, can carefully discriminate between customs and excise duties; but when I am dealing with customs duties I include all duties which produce revenue through the Customs house, and include both customs and excise duties; and I think that every speaker who has dealt with the question in this Chamber has done the same.

Mr Kingston

- Let the honorable member look at " Coghlan."

Mr V L SOLOMON

- We have had quite enough of " Coghlan," and of " Mulhall," too. I am inclined to think a great deal of the policy set forth in the speech of the Governor-General may be described as mull all. The import and excise duties cannot be separated.

Mr McCay

- Under the provisions of the Constitution they have to be separated.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- When the Prime Minister told us that the loss of revenue by the establishment of intercolonial free-trade would amount to ?1,000,000 per annum, he included the amount of revenue derived from the duties now imposed upon sugar, and that shows me that, however much he may have tried to disguise his policy in regard to the question of excise, it was not his intention to propose an excise duty upon sugar. That fact was probably an inducement to our friends in Queensland to enter the Federation. I put it to the House whether it is a wise or a fair thing to admit Queensland sugar duty free, when at the present time it contributes nearly?500,000 to the revenue of the various States.

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Sir John Forrest

- In Western Australia there is no duty upon sugar.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Sugar is one of the few things which Western Australia has forgotten to tax..

Sir John Forrest

- And tea, too.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- In Western Australia they put a duty of from 10 to 15 per cent, on mining machinery.

Sir John Forrest

- No; the duty on mining machinery is only 5 per cent.; it was 3 per cent.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- In Western Australia when they lower their duties they generally make up for them by charging higher railway rates.

#### Sir John Forrest

- Our rates are lower than the South Australian railway rates.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- In Western Australia they discriminate in their railway charges between beer brewed at the Swan Brewery and beer brewed in the other States, and in the same way they discriminate generally between their own productions and those of the other States

Mr Mahon

- So does Victoria.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am inclined to think that even free-traders and revenue tariffists will agree that, although the policy enunciated by the Prime Minister does not provide for the imposition of an export duty on sugar, it will be necessary to impose excise duties upon sugar and upon colonial wines, too.

### Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member did not say that on the hustings at Angaston.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I was not asked the question, and amongst the things which I have learned since I have been in public life, one is not to express opinions which the people have not asked for. I do not say that there should be a heavy excise duty on colonial wines; but the time is fast coming when our revenue from duties on wines, spirits, and intoxicants generally, will be greatly diminished by the operation of intercolonial free-trade and the increased production of colonial wines, and it will then be absolutely necessary to place excise duties upon colonial wines precisely in the same way as we now place excise duties on colonially brewed beer. What argument is there against the imposition of excise duties on colonial wines, from a revenue stand-point, which would not apply equally to the excise duties we now levy on colonial beer?

### Mr Kingston

- The true free-trader requires equal excise and customs duties.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- That is another of those delightful little red herrings which have been so frequently drawn across the track that they are now nearly worn out. The free-trader recognises the necessity for revenue equally with the protectionist. But I am not going to be drawn aside by queries from the sequence of the speech I intend to deliver to the House. The point raised by the Minister for Customs is one upon which I might be drawn into a debate for half-an-hour. I am satisfied by saying that while a free-trader, and while other free-traders sitting around me are-

# Mr Kingston

- The honorable member likes a little protection for local wine.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is not a question of protection, but of revenue. It is a question of not losing the revenue upon your Queensland sugar, and the same question will arise as colonial wine becomes more largely used. It will be a matter of not losing the revenue on colonial wine as the consumption of imported wines and spirits decreases. The reason we put on an excise duty in South Australia was that the revenue was falling off, owing to the consumption of colonial beer, and having brought the import duties on spirits and wines almost up to breaking point. The first thing the Government of the day did, having to make up the deficiency in revenue, was to impose an excise duty of 2d. or 3d. per gallon upon all beer brewed within the State. That brought in a revenue of some ?13,000 or ?14,000 a year. In the same way the excise on colonial wine will have to be seriously considered at the hands of this House, unless we are to get into a terribly difficult position with our State finances.

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Sir John FORREST

- There is no free breakfast table at the hands of the honorable member, at any rate.

Mr.V. L. SOLOMON. - I did not know that beer and wine were regarded as necessaries for the breakfast table in the State the right honorable gentleman represents. It is difficult to know what are the absolute necessities of life. I have heard some argue that sugar and tea were absolutely necessary, and I have heard others say that whisky and soda were more necessary. I will leave the Minister for Defence to

decide that point. I know there is an enormous revenue in his State from wines and spirits. I think the revenue per head of the population is something like three times that of the other States of the group excepting perhaps Tasmania.

Sir John Forrest

- We are so much richer there-

Mr V L SOLOMON

- In that remark the right honorable gentleman is entirely wrong. The enormous excess of adult male population compared with the total population of the State accounts for a great deal of it. Sir John Forrest
- And the spending power of the people.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- That has something to do with it, no doubt. The question is one that can be dealt with in detail when the Minister for Customs brings down the Tariff. I have observed that a question has been raised as to the legality of imposing duties immediately the Tariff resolution is introduced in this House. I very much regret that such a point has been raised. It is absolutely necessary, to prevent trouble, that we should have some means of imposing the duties immediately the resolutions are introduced, even though the payments may have to be made after the Tariff is passed. That has been the course of action adopted in many of the States. Certainly it has been the practice in South Australia ever since I have had anything to do with parliamentary life there, and it is a course of action which must commend itself to any reasonable man. Now, one word as to the time when this Tariff is to be introduced. I think it must be admitted by honorable members on all sides that the sooner the question is settled the better it will be for commerce throughout the whole of the States. Commercially everything is in a state of disorder. Business men are not stocking up as they usually would. The revenue from Customs in many of the States is falling off slightly, owing to the fact that the business community are waiting to know what rate of duty they will have to pay on the various commodities in which they deal. It is, there1 fore, of the very utmost importance that this Bill, which, I believe, the Minister of Customs has been busily engaged upon since the 1st of January, should be introduced at the earliest possible moment. I do not think it is possible for this Parliament to give proper attention to the various other matters included in the Governor-General's speech until the Tariff issue has been settled. I am hopeful that when the Bill is introduced it will be brought as closely as possible to the ideal of the revenue Tariff advocates on this side of the House, and removed as foi- as possible from the ideal of the Victorian protectionists, who have not yet ceased to clamour for further assistance for their local industries.

Mr Chapman

- Plenty of honorable members besides Victorians are protectionists.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No doubt that is so. A question of great importance is that of the appointment of the High Court of Australia. We have had it from some honorable and learned members, including the representative of South Australia, Ma-. Glynn, and the honorable member for Northern Melbourne, that there is no necessity to hasten the constitution of the High Court. Mr. Glynn has taken that attitude on the ground of economy, and also because, as he. contends, there will be few appeals to the tribunal when established. He has urged that the High Court might well be constituted by the appointment of the Chief Justices of the various States. At the first blush that proposition has something to recommend it, but when it is carefully looked into, and when the great functions of the High Court are considered, it seems to me that it would be somewhat unwise to appoint the Chief Justices to constitute it. Probably they would have to hear appeals from the courts below, in cases in which they have taken part. Again, the Chief Justices in some instances have not taken a strong interest in federation, have not studied . the will of the people and the will of the Convention in regard to the provisions of the Constitution. It would be a mistake to appoint such men to the High Court. The members of that body will have to decide most intricate and delicate questions arising out of the Constitution. They will have to decide questions which cannot be satisfactorily settled by the Inter-State Commission, and questions which will he relegated to them by the various Supreme Courts of the States.

Mr Kingston

- Appeals from the States will go to the High Court.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- Precisely so. We shall look to the High Court for the clearest and most equitable and common-sense expositions of what Australia and the Convention meant by the various sections of the Constitution Act. Mr Glynn
- The Court of Appeal in England is constituted similarly to the place I have suggested in regard to this High Court. It is the Judges of the other courts who constitute it. I am not now speaking of the Privy Council, of course.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- What the honorable member says may be true.

Sir William McMillan

- The High Court of Australia will be more than a court of appeal.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It will be more than a court of appeal, because it will have to decide, not only questions of private litigation, not only matters in dispute between capitalists and private litigants, not only questions in which large capital will be involved, but also the rights of the different States in their relations with the Commonwealth. On that ground alone, I think the highest and most intelligent tribunal should be elected. Not that I desire for an instant to reflect upon the intelligence of the Chief Justices of the States. I hold those gentlemen in the highest honour. But I think we should separate the tribunal appointed to decide upon federal questions entirely from the Chief Justices, whose interests are centred in the courts of the States over which they preside.

Mr.Glynn. - The honorable member will find that the majority of the appeals will go home, and will not touch the High Court of Australia.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Next in importance in the list of promises is a Bill to create a commission for the execution and maintenance of the provisions of the Constitution relating to trade and commerce. It is intended to confer wide powers, judicial and administrative, on this body, so that in the exercise of its authority the interests of each State may be secured, consistently with those of the people of the Commonwealth as a whole. On this point I was surprised -more than surprised, I was pained - to hear the honorable and learned member for Northern Melbourne, who is an equity lawyer of prominence, telling us that the Inter-State Commission will have little or no work to do when established, and no power to do it. Sir, it would be a sorrowful reflection that, after the deliberations of the Federal Convention, in which the ablest lawyers of Australia took part, a portion of the Constitution of such grave importance to the whole of the States as that dealing with this Inter-State Commission should have been made unworkable, and that the eminent men who framed the law should have blundered in their drafting. It would be regrettable to find that they had left it in the position which the honorable member for Northern Melbourne describes as next to chaos. The honorable member for Northern Melbourne told us that under the Constitution the Inter-State Commission will have little or no power to adjudicate on questions with reference to tapering the rates on our lines of railway, and no power to deal with rates which do not affect the transit of goods over boundaries between States. The sections which deal with this question were discussed at the Federal Convention at considerable length, and were drafted and redrafted not once; or half-a-dozen, but a dozen times at least, and if there was one point in which we were deeply interested - although those of us who were laymen in the Convention stood by and listened to the able lawyers who specially took part in the discussion - it was as to the constitution of the Inter-State Commission, and the powers of that body to control the trade and commerce of the States - the power to prevent any preferential or differential rates injurious to adjoining States - and to deal with questions arising out of the control of rivers. All Australia was, I think, pretty well satisfied that the work had been accomplished, and the first note of doubt and warning in regard to those sections comes from one of the ablest equity lawyers in the State of Yictoria.
- No; the sections were questioned in the Convention at the time.
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Mr V L SOLOMON

- The debate in the Convention extended over a considerable period, and I have taken the opportunity

within the last few days of reading the Hansard report very carefully, and refreshing my memory. The sections were drafted and re-drafted, until at last it was considered by the legal members that the interests of the States as to rival railway rates, which every one said should be abolished, had been thoroughly conserved. For my own part, I am not inclined, with all due modesty and submission, to agree with the conclusion of the member for Northern Melbourne; and on such an important point I may be pardoned for dwelling a few minutes. Section 101 provides -

There shall be an Inter-State Commission, with such powers of adjudication and administration as the Parliament deems necessary for the execution and maintenance, within the Commonwealth, of the provisions of this Constitution relating to trade and commerce, and of all laws made thereunder. Then section 102 provides -

The Parliament may by any law with respect to trade or commerce forbid, as to railways, any preference or discrimination by any State, or by any authority constituted under a State, if such preference or discrimination is undue and unreasonable, or unjust to any State; due regard being had to the financial responsibilities incurred by any State in connexion with the construction and maintenance of its railways. But no preference or discrimination shall, within the meaning of this section, be taken to be undue and unreasonable, or unjust to any State, unless so adjudged by the Inter-State Commission.

These latter words seem to me most important in the section, and, skipping section 103, which is merely a machinery provision, and coming to section 104, we find that by inference, and very strong inference indeed, that it is there laid down that the powers of the Inter-State Commission shall include the control of railway rates where they are unjust to an adjoining State, unless such rates are for the development of that State. Section 104 is as follows:

Nothing in this Constitution shall render unlawful any rate for the carriage of goods upon a railway, the property of a State, if the rate is deemed by the Inter-State Commission to be necessary for the development of the territory of the State, and if the rate applies equally to goods within the State, and to goods passing into the State from other States.

As one who represented the State of South Australia at the Convention, I took a very great interest in the question of the powers of the Inter-State Commission as to the control of railway rates in New South Wales, South Australia, and other States, especially in view of the fact that the State of South Australia had, by capital and enterprise, developed on the borders of New South Wales an immense mining industry. I refer, of course, to the Broken Hill district. I would draw the Attorney-General's careful attention to a point which I wish made clear to honorable members, and would ask him whether, if the contention of the honorable member for Northern Melbourne be correct - that New South Wales can establish tapering rates on her existing railway lines - and she could, if she were to extend her line to the Barrier,' charge preferential rates in the face of the section which provides that rates must not be unjust to an adjoining State. I have reason to know that some honorable members representing New South Wales, though, perhaps, not in this Parliament, have indicated that, because the Barrier district is within the New South Wales boundary, that State has a perfect right, having extended her railway from Cobar to Broken Hill, to establish what rates she pleases in order to trap the traffic.

Sir John Forrest

- Certainly she would have.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am sorry to hear that remark, which I consider a little premature. Would New South Wales have the right to trap the traffic, which is now going by its natural channel to Port Pirie - a traffic which has been developed by the State of South Australia - and take it into New South Wales over twice or, perhaps, three times the mileage at a low rate of freight.

Mr Glynn

- That would not be a developing rate.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am about to deal with that point. Under such circumstances - and I quote this as an illustration of the point I want honorable members to consider - I think the Inter-State Commission would undoubtedly have a right to declare whether it would be fair for New South Wales, having constructed a line from Cobar to Broken Hill, to take the traffic which now travels over 200 or 300 miles to Port Pirie, and divert it over a route of 600 or 700 miles to Lithgow, or any other place in New South Wales, at a freight which would

absolutely not pay the Railway department, and would, at the same time, be a distinct injustice to the State of South Australia, which has already developed the border district, and provided the natural channel for its traffic. If so, our federation on this point is a delusion and a farce.

Sir John Forrest

- New South Wales could do now what the honorable member suggests.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I venture to think that New South Wales could not do it now, and I am sure the opinion of the Minister for Defence is not a well considered one.

Sir John Forrest

- I say that New South Wales could do so under the Constitution.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- With all clue respect to the right honorable gentleman, I invite the special attention of the Attorney-General and other legal members of the Government - and there are enough of them surely - to the particularly difficult point which has been raised by the honorable member for Northern Melbourne. I now come to a question mentioned by one or two previous speakers- - first of all, I think, by the honorable member for East Sydney - as to the right of the Government to include in its numbers and its deliberations two members other than the seven provided by the Constitution. I have carefully looked into this question, and I have arrived at the conclusion that no such right exists. If outside of this written Constitution - which is a very definite one, and is not like some of the Constitutions in the States - the Government are entitled to appoint two honorary members of the Cabinet to assist in their deliberations, but who hold no portfolio and are not in any way responsible, who cannot be questioned by this or the other House, and whose position is a mere sinecure - why can they not increase their present majority by the appointment of another half-dozen. Some years ago in South Australia, under a provision of the Constitution very similar to that of the Federal Constitution in this respect, there was a similar case in which the Government chose to appoint additional members in the Legislative Council; and I think I can recall the memory of the Minister for Trade and Customs to the fact that he was one of those who speedily assisted in putting a stop to such appointments.

Mr Kingston

- That is another thing.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is not another thing. It was under a precisely similar Constitution providing for a limited number of members. The Commonwealth Constitution provides distinctly under section 65 -

Until the Parliament otherwise provides, the Ministers o? State shall not exceed seven in number, and shall hold such offices as the Parliament prescribes, or, in the absence of provision, as the Governor-General directs.

Could there be anything more "clear in the Constitution than that enactment? Mr Kingston

- Are the two gentlemen referred to Ministers of State administering departments 1 Mr V L SOLOMON

- No.

Mr Crouch

- That is the limitation in the Constitution.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No, the number is the 'limitation, as shown by the words of the section I have read. As the Minister for Trade and Customs has interjected, I would ask him what offices the member for Tasmania, Sir Philip Fysh, and Senator

O'Connor hold - what offices they have been directed by the Governor-General to hold? Mr Kingston

- Are they members of the Cabinet administering departments?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- They are members of the Cabinet, and distinctly Ministers without portfolio. Mr Kingston

- Is not the limitation the administration of a department ? Mr V L SOLOMON
- He is a first-class man.<page>497</page>Mr V L SOLOMON
- That assurance would, of course, satisfy me, coming from the honorable member. I repeat that I have no knowledge of Mr. Fegan's abilities or of his claims, but I do know that undoubtedly he was appointed. Undoubtedly he was appointed by the responsible Minister, and unquestionably also the Prime Minister approved of the appointment. We have had that admitted by himself. We have also had in addition, unless the reports in the newspapers are not reliable, the statement that the appointment was fully justified by the Prime Minister. Not only was the appointment justified, but the Prime Minister approved of Ministers being permitted to appoint their own permanent secretaries from either inside or outside the public services of the different States. The Prime Minister said he did not recognise any necessity to study the State civil service in appointing the officers of a new Government. He said -

There seems already to be a widespread opinion that every appointment in the Federal Public Service is to be made from the ranks of the public servants in the different States. That is not a good doctrine. There may well be cases in which there are strong and good reasons for appointing persons outside the existing public service. I know of no principle or precedent which limits the appointments in a new public service to those who already hold positions under the various States.

Well the sooner the Prime Minister alters that view the better for the States. We know now that this Federation is going to be a little more expensive and a little more extravagant than any of us anticipated at the conclusion of the Convention, and more extravagant certainly than any of us represented to our constituents. And if there is any one reason why positions in the federal service should be filled from the State services it is that the reduction of various departments of the States will necessitate considerable economies in the service of the 'States. If there are able men in those services- - -whether they be in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, or any other State - I think the feeling of this House will be that they should be first selected, irrespective of any question of private friendship or of political consideration. If we allow this thin end of the wedge of other considerations outside of efficient public service to be inserted in, we shall have what we have had in some of the other States - I am not going to particularized them - we shall have political billets made for political supporters, and political billets made also for dangerous political opponents.

Sir John Forrest

- Do they do that in South Australia?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not want to be drawn aside by any interjection from my right honorable friend, for whom I have the very greatest respect. I dare say that South Australia is about as clean as is Western Australia, although I do not know that that would be saying much. However, I think it is a very happy thing that this appointment of Mr. Fegan has been put aside. It is a happy tiling that it has been the subject of comment

in this House, because I think and hope that the result will be to teach whatever Ministry may be on the Treasury benches that appointments of that kind must not be made until every possible avenue of the State services has been searched for fitting men. I now come to the question of the federal capital. I am. not certain, after the comfortable provision that has been made for honorable members of the Federal Parliament in Victoria, after the kindness and courtesy which we have received at the hands of the people of Melbourne and of members of the State Parliament, that there need be any tremendous hurry about the selection of a site for the future capital. I am not at all sure that we are very anxious to borrow a few millions of money which will be a burden upon the general tax payer for the purpose of building palatia establishments for our various federal departments. But I do think that the suggestion that the whole of the members of the two Houses should go on a kind of picnic, to visit the various sites-

Mr Kingston - Who suggested that?

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- It was suggested by some honorable member yesterday. It has been suggested both inside and outside this Chamber. I am inclined to think that that would involve a very large expenditure, and if we are to study the solvency of the different States we have to consider the question of economy in such matters. I think it would be quite sufficient if a reasonable number of members of both. Houses were appointed a commission to investigate the question. I have no desire to visit these beauty spots myself. Judging by the photographs of them I might be induced to stay at one of them. A reasonable number of members of both Houses might be appointed a commission and might place before this Parliament recommendations as to the best site for a federal capital. Many questions will have to be considered in looking into this matter, and as to some of these a large body of men, say 100, could not obtain information, whereas a small committee could obtain all the information necessary.

For example, there are the questions of what land, the property of the Crown, is available, what land -would have to be repurchased from private -land-owners, and the price at which it would have to be purchased. All these, in addition to a host of other questions, which I need not (mention in detail, could be much better dealt with by a moderately -sized commission than by the whole Parliament, and certainly the work could be much more economically done. There is one point' which I- notice has been omitted from the speech of the Governor-General, and which was included in the Frame Minister's speech at Maitland. I refer to the question of the non-alienation of the federal territory. I do not know why on such an important point, which has been made the subject of discussion on various platforms, it should have been left to the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley, to. table a motion. I do not know why - -after having dealt with it and declared a policy in regard to it at Maitland - the Government have not included it ' in the opening speech as a part of their policy. There is no doubt in my mind that the electors, so far as the State of South Australia is concerned, are at one with the suggestion that was made by the Prime Minister at Maitland, and which has since been embodied in a motion by the honorable member for Tasmania, Mr. O'Malley - the suggestion that the federal territory should not be alienated, but that the experiment of perpetual leases with . periodical re-valuations should be attempted. I come next to a subject in which I have taken a great deal of interest for the past twenty years. It is a question I have had more opportunities of looking into, perhaps, than have many honorable members - the question of the restriction of coloured labour in the northern portion of Australia. A residence of some sixteen years in Port Darwin and its neighborhood, and periodical visits to the northern portions of Queensland, have convinced me that the northern portion of Australia - I do not allude to that part south of Townsville, but to that portion extending from the 1 3th or 1 4th degree of south latitude down to the latitude of Townsville cannot be cultivated for sugar cane or other tropical products without the assistance of some form of cheap labour, and not only some form of cheap labour - because I am not inclined to burke the question in that way - but some form of coloured labour which can stand the climate. It becomes a question for this Parliament) as the matter is placed within the Constitution, to say whether the whole extent of that country, the northern, portion of this .great island continent, shall be allowed to remain unutilized for tropical .production, or whether some form of black labour :shall be introduced.

An Honorable Member. - What does the honorable member suggest 1 <page>499</page>

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- If the honorable member will exercise Ms soul in patience for a little while, I will tell him. I think I may claim to have looked into this question pretty fully. I was one of the first in Australia to assist in putting a stop to the tremendous influx of Chinese into Port Darwin at the northern end of this continent. At the time of which I am speaking, the South Australian Government had let a contract to a firm of railway contractors for the construction of a line, with optional labour, which meant, of course, Chinese labour, and they had introduced 6,000 .or 7,000 Chinese to do the work, so that the country was being overrun with Chinese labourers. At that time I was deputed by the people of the Northern Territory to bring this matter under the notice of the various Governments, and I had the honour to present petitions to the Governments of the different States - to Sir Henry Parkes in New South Wales - and to address public meetings on the question - asking for their intervention and assistance in prevailing upon the South Australian Government to stop the influx of a class of labour which was entering into an undesirable competition with our European population. The result of this agitation, in which I am proud to have had a hand, was that the Chinese Restriction Bill was passed, and the influx of the Chinese was stopped. But now it is not so much a question of the introduction of black labour as a question whether tropical agriculture shall become, at any rate as regards the cultivation of sugar cane, a dead industry in the far northern portions of the continent. Let me deal first of all with the abolition of kanaka labour. I say at once, as the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Poynton, said yesterday, that of all the races that I have seen employed in Northern Australia/ - Malays, Japanese, Javanese, Chinese, and South Sea Islanders - the South Sea Islanders offer the least menace to a European community, because they are, or should be, controlled by the Pacific Labour Act, which limits the extent of their employment. It is no fault of ours if that Act is not administered as it should be administered. There can be no question that the result of the employment of black labour in Queensland during the past few years has been to open avenues of profitable employment for many thousands of Europeans as well - carters, machinists, farmers who grow fodder for the horses, and a hundred other classes of labour. The employment of kanakas in the sugar industries of Queensland has given work to thousands of Europeans, and has led to the investment of between ?8,000,000 and ?10,000,000, the returns from the industry last year amounting to nearly ?1,500,000. The Government policy in regard to the black labour question has been indorsed by a majority of the representatives of Queensland, and it would be improper for us to deny their right to speak on the subject, because they have been elected upon the fullest franchise that Queensland has ever had. Queensland has said emphatically that the traffic in black labour must cease, and I think some of the constituencies demand that it shall cease instantly. I may say at once, however, that I do not quite agree with that demand, and that I think that the gradual abolition of black labour proposed by the Government is a fair and upright policy to pursue. The Government policy is fair to those who have invested millions of capital in the industry, and to those who ask for the cessation of the traffic. But the paragraph in His Excellency's speech which deals with this subject, is a somewhat difficult one to understand. It says -Bills for the firm restriction of the immigration oE Asiatics, and for the diminution' and gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands will be laid before you.

The reference to the gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands appears to me not to go so far as I should like the Government to go. In my opinion, the Government should provide, not for the immediate stopping of the traffic, but that the number introduced in the future in any one year, and it should be on a gradually diminishing scale, should not under any circumstances exceed the number returned to the islands. It would not be fair, perhaps, if so many hundred were imported last year, that so many should be imported this year unless a corresponding number, whose time of service had expired, were sent back. If the policy of the Government is modified to that extent I shall, in view of the expression, of opinion which we have had from the representatives of Queensland, assist in the passing of this legislation. I suppose we must make up our minds to the fact that the northern part of Australia is not to be utilized for tropical agriculture, because to speak of tropical agriculture being carried on by white labour between the 13th and 14th degrees of south latitude is to speak on a subject which one does not understand. I have employed a great number of labourers in various occupations, but chiefly in mining, in the northern parts of Australia during a long period of years. In mining occupations the trained European who is fairly healthy, can do a reasonable day's work; but it is impossible for a European, who is exposed to the burning rays of the sun, and to the steamy heat of the wet seasons, to engage in tropical

agriculture, and it would be cruelty in the extreme to ask such a man to do it. I am afraid, therefore, that the industry of that part of the country must be confined to mining and to pastoral occupations. In dealing with this question I should like to touch upon the position which has been occupied by the Northern Territory of Australia for years past. I alluded, just now to the fact that I had a hand in bringing into force the enactment which restricts the immigration of Chinese into the Northern Territory. But since the passing of that Act, the Northern Territory has gradually decreased in commercial importance, South Australia having to make up u yearly deficiency, which has increased from ?50,000 per annum in the past to ?100,000 last year. Over ?1,000,000 can be set down as the loss due to the restriction of the introduction of black labour for the development of that part of the country. As the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Glynn, said a few days ago, South Australia during the last twelve or fourteen years has loyally and staunchly done its best to carry out the idea of a white Australia by closing Port Darwin the back door to the East - against the immigration of undesirable races. But the whole cost of this policy has fallen on South Australia, and it seems to me that if the idea of a white Australia is to be carried out in its integrity, and we are to be absolutely debarred from developing a portion of our State by the employment of the only labour by which it can be developed, the cast should not fall upon South Australia alone, with its 360,000 people, but should be distributed fairly among the 4,000,000 people who form the population, of the Commonwealth. It was suggested when the Convention was sitting, and has been suggested since in the State Parliament of South Australia, that the Northern Territory, which has been governed, or misgoverned, by South Australia ever since 1866, should be handed over to the Federal Parliament, because the Federal Parliament is better able to cope with the problems involved in its development than is a small State like South Australia. There are many reasons why the Commonwealth should take over this large tract of country; and, seeing that the Minister of? Customs is a representative of South Australia, I am surprised that the subject has not received more attention from the Government. The idea is not a new one. It was put forward long before the Western Australia railway was talked of, and it might well occupy the best intelligence of our members. South Australia has managed the affairs of the Northern Territory for over 30 years, at a dead loss of something like ?2,800,000; and, as I have already stated, nearly half of this loss is attributable to the fact that the labour which is necessary for the development of the country has been kept out of it - not in the interests of South Australia alone, but in the interests of the whole continent. South Australia's deficit in connexion with the administration of the Northern Territory last year was close upon ?100,000; and we have no reason to think that, with the accumulated interest upon our bonded debt, the annual future loss will be less than ?100,000. It is only fair, therefore, that we should say to the Federal Parliament - " Decide at the earliest moment possible whether you will take over the Northern Territory with its liabilities, which are not large, and its very valuable natural resources and advantages, or whether you will force the only alternative course which can be taken, and allow South Australia to ask the Imperial Government to resume the country, and recompense us for the loss which we have incurred in its administration," because we cannot afford to go on losing ?100,000 a year. I do not doubt for an instant that the Imperial Government would readily accede to any such request. But it would be a very bad thing indeed

for federated Australia if South Australia were forced into the position of having to hand back the Northern Territory to the Imperial Government, with the possibility of the establishment of a chartered company there for the development of the Territory under conditions which the British Government would not consider at all unreasonable, namely, by the employment of black labour from India, - our own fellow subjects. It cannot be doubted that such a course would not be for the benefit of federated Australia.

Mr Fisher

Is this a threat?<page>501</page>Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not think the words I have used could be construed by any ordinarily intelligent man into a threat. South Australia cannot afford to keep up that large area of country any longer. She cannot afford, with the added expenditure involved in the payment of her proportion to the Federal Government, to continue holding the Northern Territory, with a loss of ?100,000 a year, and thus bear the cost of protecting the whole continent against black and coloured labour at that end, which is nearest to China, India, Japan, and the Malay Peninsula. One of three courses must be adopted. The first is that the Federal Parliament

might reimburse South Australia for her loss upon the Territory.. The second course is that the Federal Parliament might take over that portion of the continent and administer it. The alternative is a desire on the part of some of the South Australian people - a desire which has been frequently voiced in the local Parliament, and which has even been tabled in the form of a motion, subsequently withdrawn - that we should get rid of this incubus round the neck of small State, involving a loss of ?100,000 a year. It will be asked: Why should the Federal Parliament take over that property which has evidently been a loss to the State Parliament for so many years? I will answer that objection in advance. While the Federal Parliament, with its vast powers and great command of money, could undertake great national works for the development of the pastoral and mineral resources of the Northern Territory, and could construct a line of railway for opening up that vast tract of country, it would be impossible for a small State like South Australia, with its limited revenue and restricted financial position, to afford such immense works. Closely connected with this point; comes the guestion of the suggested railway to Western Australia. I must say at once that, when I found this line in the Government policy, as announced by the Prime Minister at Maitland, I opposed the suggestion emphatically. From what I know myself about the country to be bridged by this projected railway from Port Augusta to Western Australia, and from my reading of the exploration of Giles, Lindsay, the South Australian Government geologist, Mr. Brown and others who have travelled there the traffic which would be developed would scarcely pay for greasing the wheels of the rolling-stock. Although the Minister for Defence says in very definite terms that he has been promised this railway for Western Australia as an agreement precedent to coming into the federation-

Sir John Forrest

-I did not say so.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Well, next door to it.

Sir John Forrest

- Yes, next door to it.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- So much so, that the right honorable gentleman was emphatic in his statement that he was not going to "play any longer in our yard " if we did note construct the line. Similarly, the Minister for Customs some time ago admitted that there had been some backdoor influence at work.
- Mr Kingston
- He did not say anything of the sort!

Mr V L SOLOMON

- It may be that there had been some half promise, which should not have been made on behalf of this Parliament.

Mr Kingston

- I wrote a letter on the subject which was put before the South Australian Legislative Assembly. Mr V L SOLOMON
- If a half promise was made by the Minister for Defence or any other prominent politician, it was perfectly unjustifiable. No one had the slightest right to attempt to bind the Federal Parliament in regard to such a question.

Mr Kingston

- Where has such an attempt been made?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The tone of the speech of the Minister for Defence the other night was that he was suffering under a great wrong, and that he had been fooled completely.

Mr Glynn

- All that was said was that the railway had received sympathetic consideration.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Then I can only say that the indignation of the right honorable gentleman was but poor fireworks after all. He could not have meant it, because he had no right to be so indignant about the question unless there was some cause for indignation.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- I have a great deal of right.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Of the advantages or the disadvantages of the projected railway I do not intend to say much. The principle is laid down that Western Australia is entitled to the line as means of defence. Defence from what? As a means by which to carry bodies of troops when Western Australia is assailed by a foreign power? Surely Western Australia, with her population of 180,000, who, as we have seen recently, are capable of sending fine bodies of troops to South Africa to assist the mother country; with her enormous number of male adults, strapping fellows, on the gold-fields, capable of being enlisted at any moment does not want the assistance of a few regiments of soldiers to be carried over a railway line for a thousand miles from Port Augusta. The arguments relied upon on the grounds of defence are absurd. I do not care what military authority first thought of it, I say it is an absurdity to build a line of railway to cost, at the very lowest estimate, ?5,000,000, over a barren sandy tract of country.

Sir John Forrest

- There is very little sand; the honorable member knows nothing about it.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I only take the reports of those surveyors, Giles, Lindsay, and hosts of others, who have travelled over the country.

Sir John Forrest

- It is south of Giles's track considerably.

#### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Of course, the line is to go down to Eucla, and then go the other way again. To build this railway at a tremendous expense over a barren tract of country, taking it south of Giles's track down to the coast over a patch of country which we, in South Australia, know is practically worthless for a pastoral or agricultural population, to take this line down to Eucla and then start again-

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Sir John Forrest

- The track is nearly straight down to Eucla.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I am not going to dispute about the track now, but I say that if there was any justification for this line, apart from considerations of defence, you should take it over a tract of country which might possibly be developed for its mineral resources, and from that point of view might make the line pay. But the course proposed to be taken is certainly a great deal further to the north. It is proposed to construct the line on a direct track from Port Augusta, taking in. the Tarcoola country, and so on to the Western Australia border. But I am not going to discuss that until we have areport from those capable of reporting upon it. If, as the Minister for Defence says, this country is capable of development-

Sir John Forrest

- I said nothing of the sort.

# Mr V L SOLOMON

- The estimated revenue, according to the right honorable gentleman's own engineer-in-chief, is something like ?320,000 a year. That is one of the reasons upon which we are asked to approve of a railway of this kind. But I should like to compare that estimate of revenue with that of our leading engineers in South Australia. I have in my hand a parliamentary paper relating to a proposed railway to the Western Australian border. It is dated July, 1897, and is No. 37 of the South Australian parliamentary papers. Here we have the authority of Mr. Pendleton, the South Australian Commissioner of Rail ways, with regard to the facts I will mention. Mr. Pendleton estimates that the 553 miles of railway to the border would cost ?1,903,000. I ask the Minister for Defence to pay attention to these figures. This is the estimate for about half the distance of the suggested transcontinental railway.

Sir John Forrest

- Say ?2,000,000 in round figures.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Mr. Pendletonsays that, taking everything into consider ation, he estimates that the receipts would probably amount to ?85,000 per annum.

Sir John Forrest

- Is that on a line going all the way through, or stopping at the border?

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- This is an estimate of the cost of a line to the border, but the estimate of receipts was subject to the line being taken through.

Sir John Forrest

- What year was that?

Mr.V. L. SOLOMON.- The report is dated 1897. I will read the whole paragraph, so that it may appear in Hansard in its proper form : -

It is difficult to make even an approximate estimate of the revenue to be received; but after discussing the matter very fully with the General Traffic Manager and Controller of Accounts, and on this assumption that the Western gold-field will prove fairly permanent, I think that if the West Australian Government would continue the line from the border to connect with their system, the receipts would probably amount to ?85,000 per annum, and the existing lines would benefit from the increased traffic to the extent of ?27,000 per annum, less ?9,000 for working expenses, equal to ?18,000. If the line was to stop at the border, of course the expected revenue would not be anything like as here anticipated, but with a through line to the gold-fields there is every reason to think that not only a large passenger, but a good traffic in merchanise and live stock would result.

Then he goes on a little later to say -

As regards the working expenses, the revenue estimated for could be earned by the running of four trains each way per week, and on that basis I put the annual expenditure at ?50,000. It will thus be seen that the excess of earnings over working expenses on the new line represents 1.84 per cent. on the capital cost, or if the net additional on the old line is included, the revenue is ?53,000, representing . 2.79 per cent. on capital cost.

Then he puts it that the interest at 3 per cent. would be ?60,000, so that the general revenue would be taxed to the extent of ?7,000 by the construction of the line.

Sir John Forrest

- How much?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- ?7,000.

Sir John Forrest

- And the honorable member is making a fuss about ?7,000 a year.

An Honorable Member. - It is a favorable report.

Sir John Forrest

- Kalgoorlie is 400 miles on the way east.

Mr.V. L. SOLOMON.- Will any one tell me that passengers will travel overland a distance of 1,700 miles, when they can go almost parallel by sea, in the fine steamers of the Orient and P. and O. companies in pretty nearly the same time 1

Sir John Forrest

- The train will be three times as fast.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- To propose the 3ft. Gin. gauge for practical purposes on a transcontinental line, is, I say emphatically, and without fear of contradiction, a farce.

Sir John Forrest

- It is not proposed.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The proposal is to continue the line from the Port Augusta line, which has a 3ft. Gin. gauge, and join it with 'the lines of Western Australia, which are also of 3ft. 6in. gauge; but if this transcontinental line is for passenger traffic, it will have to be constructed on 4ft 8 1/2in.. gauge at least. It will be necessary for the

rest of the line in South Australia to be brought to the same gauge, and, under these circumstances, the estimate of ?2,000,000 for the 553 miles of railway is very much under what it ought to be. Mr Poynton

- There are two important things the honorable member is forgetting. The report was written before Tarcoola or Mount Gunson mine were discovered.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- While admitting that, I would ask what, so far, has been the result of the development of either Mount Gunson or Tarcoola to encourage the construction of this line of railway?
- Mount Gunson has the largest deposit of ore of any mine in Australia.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I have heard the same thing for the last six or twelve months, and as yet we have not had 50 tons of ore from Mount Gunson. We have heard Tarcoola praised - and I have put a trifle into the mines there myself - but as yet there has been no return.

### Mr Poynton

- That is explained by the fact that it is S7 miles from a railway, and it does not pay to cart the ore over that distance.

#### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not think the Federal Parliament has much to do with the development of Tarcoola or Mount Gunson, which are 200 miles distant from the existing line, and which, if the work were warranted, should necessitate the State Parliament constructing a line to Coward Springs, less than 200 miles away. The Federal Parliament has no necessity to approve of the construction of 1,000 miles of railway for that purpose.

### Mr Poynton

- That means 200 miles further to get to Adelaide.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I know the honorable member, as the late representative in the South Australian Parliament of the district of Flinders, which would be greatly served by this particular line, has a decided predilection for the work.

# Mr Poynton

- I have, as one who looks forward to the development of all resources inland.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I look at the guestion from an entirely national standpoint.

An Honorable Member. - A parochial stand-point.

### Mr V L SOLOMON

- Not a parochial stand-point at all. .Tam as much interested in Kalgoorlie and Tarcoola as, perhaps, any member of this House, and if this railway were to be of the advantage to South Australia that it would be to Kalgoorlie and to other places, I stand to win a great deal more than does any other member of the Federal Parliament. But recognising the financial position of the State I represent, I am not, at the very inception of federation, going to countenance any public works which are not likely to become reproductive, or, at least, return sufficient to repay interest on the cost of construction.

### Sir John Forrest

- - - Why not wait for the reports t

# Mr V L SOLOMON

- The Minister for Defence must recognise that the time for discussing a subject like this just as fully as honorable members may desire, is when it is before the House as a portion of the policy of the Federal Government.

Sir John Forrest

- If the honorable member knew- the facts, which he does not-

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### Mr V L SOLOMON

- I will not say I am as ignorant of the facts as the honorable member, but I dare say I know nearly as much of the subject as most members of the House. It is a question I have studied very closely since the

Maitland speech of the Premier, and when it is placed before us by the Government as a national undertaking, I am rather inclined to compare it with another and a truly national undertaking, that would merit the consideration of Parliament. I am inclined to make the comparison, and give members of the House a little certain information about another district which should be served.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member may know more about that.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Perhaps so. I am alluding to the subject to which I referred just now.

Mr Poynton

- I would like to ask the honorable member a question.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not mind one or two interjections, but I would like to interject myself now and then.

Mr Poynton

- Do I understand the honorable member to sa}T he would not undertake any public work except it will pay interest, and in. addition the cost of production and working expenses.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I certainly would not lay down such a hard and fast line as that, for there are other considerations which undoubtedly must be taken into account. I heard no other consideration advanced even by the Minister for Defence, who represents Western Australia, to show why we should go to the expenditure of such a large sum of money for this purpose.

Sir John Forrest

- - It would make federation a reality; that is one of my arguments.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I alluded a few moments ago to the desirableness of the Federal Government taking over the Northern Territory, and I pointed out that South Australia as a State had very reasonable claims to consideration in this matter. I also pointed out the danger to federation of South Australia being forced into the position of abandoning the Northern Territory, or handing it back to the Imperial Government. When honourable members talk about a railway as a national work to join all parts of this great federated continent, I venture to think they have forgotten there is a line of railway constructed from Adelaide in the south, to a point called Oodnadatta, in the centre of Australia, or nearly so, and that at the northern end of the State there is a line of railway from Palmerston to Pine Creek, a distance of 150 miles, and that a line of railway between these two points, for a distance of 1,100 miles, would serve to join the whole of the southern portion of the continent with' the northern territory of South Australia. I have heard nothing to recommend the tract of country to be tapped in Western Australia.

Sir John Forrest

- What is there in the north?

Mr.V.L. SOLOMON.- I will tell the Minister for Defence what there is in the north if he will be patient. I have heard nothing to recommend a transcontinental line to the West as a national undertaking, except the suggestion that it may be useful for defence purposes. But there is a tract of country which South Australia proposes to hand over to the Federal Government, 1,100 miles in length, 500 miles in width, and containing 335,000,000 acres of land.

Sir John Forrest

- Where the honorable member said a white man cannot work.

Mi-. V. L. SOLOMON.- I do not like to flatly contradict the honorable member, but what I said was that a white man could not work at tropical agriculture, though he could work at other industries, such as mining and pastoral pursuits.

Sir John Forrest

- I beg the honorable member's pardon.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- This tract of country is bordered on the east by Queensland and a portion of New South Wales, and on the west by Western Australia. It has magnificent pastoral country on the west at Victoria River and Kimberley, and on the east in the Herbert River country, known as the Queensland or McArthur River table-lands, and this pastoral country is admitted by most who have seen it to be quite equal to the best

pastoral country in Australia. In Central Australia, a short distance from the present railway terminus, at Alice Springs, we have large tracts of mineral country, with quartz reefs, which have been developed during the last two years with the assistance of a Government battery, and which have been proving in every instance highly payable. A little further north, travelling along the telegraph line, we have the Tennant's Creek district, which has been highly favorably reported upon by the Government geologist, Mr. H. Y. L. Brown. A little further north, to the Pine Creek terminus of the existing railway, there is a belt of mineral country as rich as any in the whole of Australia - bar, perhaps, Kalgoorlie.

- Why has not that tract been worked 1

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- Will the honorable member cease his running fire of questions, and allow me to put my case 1 The district of Pine Creek, down nearly to Palmerston, abounds in gold reefs, copper lodes, and tin lodes, and although the population of this vast tract of country has consisted of very few thousand people for the last 20 years-

Sir John Forrest

- Mostly Chinamen!

Mr V L SOLOMON

-Mostly Chinamen, as the right honorable member says. Over the whole tract of country there have never been more than about 2,000 Europeans, and yet during the eighteen years from 1881 to 1898, gold to the valueVof ?.1,487,000 has been produced by this handful of population. In addition there have been produced ?48,000 worth of silver, 23,000 worth of tin, and ?55,000 worth of copper - a total of ?1,670,000 worth of mineral in the period I have mentioned. These figures are from the sworn records at the Customhouse, and do not account for the tens of thousands of ounces of alluvial gold taken out privately by individuals when there was an export duty on that mineral.

Sir John Forrest

- Has the honorable member the returns for last year ?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- No, I have not; but I believe the return for last year was ?60,000 or ?70,000 worth. But population in this tract of country has been gradually decreasing, and naturally the output of minerals has also somewhat decreased. In regard to the difficulties in the development of those minerals - the reason for winch the member for Swan is so anxious to know - I would say that; while to his particular country - and I say "his." advisedly - European labourers and others can get from any of the other States to Western Australia for a charge of two or three pounds, and reach a place where there is ample opportunity to obtain employment, any man seeking to get to the Northern Territory has to choose between travelling. 2,000 miles or overland travelling nearly 4,000 miles by sea, at the lowest cost of about ?1 2; and, should he have any bad luck, he cannot get from the North under another ?12. Then, again, the distance of the northern, mining district from the directors and shareholders in the various companies which have provided the capital, has proved a very big drawback. When they get to water-level, about 250 feet deep, the inflow of wetter is very much like an underground river. When I tell honorable members that, with a 60-in. rainfall in the tropical portion of that country, at 300 feet from the surface it requires at least two 12-in. draw lift pumps to cope with the water, they will understand what expenditure is necessary in machinery to enable that country to be developed.

Mr Deakin

- Is it all the same?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Pretty well all. There is a 60-in. rainfall all through the northern end.

Mr Deakin

- Is 60 inches the average?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- About 60. It ranges from. 55 to 60, and sometimes reaches 70 inches. I have touched upon the mineral resources of the country, but only in regard to the small portions of it with which we are most acquainted. Those who have passed over it from end to end know that there are very large tracts of country that white

people have scarcely ever been near - tracts which give every promise of being equally rich in mineral wealth, provided that they can be approached by rail.

Mr Deakin

- Would it not be a shorter route across from the Queensland country?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- I do not think so. Undoubtedly, this main trunk line would be capable of being tapped either from Western Australia or Queensland.

Sir JOHN FORREST

- Where would we tap it from Western Australia?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Across from the head of the Victoria river.

Sir John Forrest

- There is no railway there.

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Mr V L SOLOMON

- It is the place where a railway is wanted, and the honorable member generally puts them there. This tract of country is 500 miles in width, and I may here remind honorable members that from Adelaide to Port Darwin we have our duplicate telegraph line by which the whole of Australia obtains its European: intelligence every morning. At Port Darwin we have a harbor with a rise and fall of 26 feet high-tide springs, a harborsome- 6 miles in length by 4 miles in width, capable of sheltering the whole British fleet, and manoeuvring, them, too, without the slightest fear of a collision. On the shore of this harbor we have the two cables landed connecting. Europe with Australia. Some honorable members talk about the defence of Western Australia with its 160,000 or 180,000 people. Is it not more of a national undertaking that a railway should be constructed across this tract of country to join the southern half of South Australia with the northern, so that we may be in a position to protect that telegraph line which is of vital importance to the whole of Australia, and to protect those two cables on the shore?

Sir John Forrest

- What about the Broome end?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- That is a useless thing, that' is generally broken down1 when we want it, hence the duplication of the South Australian line a little while ago.

An Honorable Member. - They all break down too often.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- -Since the duplication of the overland line, there has hardly been a stoppage in the traffic The telegraph line, duplicated right through the continent, is surely worthy of protection! The cables landing at Port Darwin are also worthy of protection. The geographical position of Port Darwin renders it. highly suitable as a harbor of defence and a coaling station, and it should have been selected, if justice had been done to it, before Thursday Island. Within six or seven days' steam of that port is China, within seven clays' steam is Japan, and within four and a half days is the Malay archipelago. Will honorable members say that a railway to this port for defence purposes, for our interests in telegraphy communication, and to connect Pout Darwin, which is nearest to the position from whence we may expect trouble and danger - the East - is not more justified and more entitled to a place in the policy of the Barton Government than is this railway to Western Australia?

Sir John Forrest

- There are no people there.

Mr V L SOLOMON

- The construction of this railway would bring people. The fact that there are few people there constitutes all the more reason why this port, where we have such large interests in regard to our geographical connexion with the East, should be made accessible by rail. Why China or Japan could, to-morrow, if they wished, pour in tens of ' thousands of people there, snap their fingers at the handful of whites, and take possession of our telegraphs. Are not these interests worth)' of more consideration than the construction of this railway to Western Australia 1

Mr Deakin

- Is there any coal there?

Mr V L SOLOMON

- So far, coal measures have not been discovered,, but the Rev. J. Tennyson Woods, a very noted geologist, many years ago, when visiting this country, reported upon the extreme probability of the discovery of coal measures in the Victoria River district, where the sandstone formations are very-similar to those in some portions of New South Wales.

Mr Deakin

- The distance is 1,1.00 miles, as against 1,000 miles to the West? <page>507</page>

Mr V L SOLOMON

- Not quite 1,100. There are many other subjects in the speech which I should like very much to dwell upon-, but I fear that I shall have to do so very briefly indeed. The question of old age pensions has been dealt with so clearly by honorable members that I think it is now admitted that it can be placed on the shelf for many years before there will be a possibility of tills Parliament being able to deal with it. Regarding the question of adult suffrage, I may say that for many years I was one of the staunchest opponents of the proposal in South Australia, for the reasons which honorable members have heard over and over again, and which I have no desire to recapitulate. My principal objection to the proposal was that the women of the country had never asked for it. But I was defeated on the guestion, .and adult suffrage became law in South 'Australia, and, as far as my experience of its working, is concerned, I have been convinced for some time that there is not the slightest harm, in it. Many of those difficulties which wethought would flow from adult suffrage have not arisen; in fact, we might as well have given the man two votes in nine cases out of ten. . The system has only resulted in the duplication of votes in nine cases out of - ten-, with the exception that the wives and daughters of a certain class of, the community, go to the poll more willingly than the wives and daughters of other sections, who have to be dragged there in carriages. Of- course, in South Australia, we have the absent voters' law, which, however, is not very much availed of. I am satisfied that there is a great deal in the contention that the franchise for both Houses of the Federal Parliament should be the same throughout the whole of- the Commonwealth. Whatever States may choose to do in regard to the particular franchise for their State Houses, I still think that we are justified, if it will not involve too much friction with the other States, in-suggesting and supporting a proposition for the adoption of a universal adult suffrage for both houses of the Federal Legislature. On the question of defence, I am at one with the Government's proposition, that Australia should rely principally on its citizen soldiery, upon its volunteer corps, and its cadet corps, as the future defenders of our coast. The only thing about which I have some grave misgivings is as to what this defence business may cost, and I do urge upon the Government and upon the Minister for Defence, to recollect that in this Federation we have no special patent means of making money. We are not likely to receive showers of gold from the heavens day by day for any extravagant proposals, as the children of Israel received manna in the wilderness. Any expenditure necessary for federal defence has to be contributed by the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. Under these circumstances, I trust that when the defence Bill comes before the House, it will contain such reasonable clauses as will pro-vide for the ample defence of Australia without extravagance in regard to highly paid officers or a large body of regulars. Speaking of the rest of the Government programme, I wish to remark that there is a very great deal in it with which I am in entire sympathy. While opposing the Government policy of protection as strongly as I am able to do, in regard to machinery legislation, and all matters that will tend to the happiness and prosperity of the Commonwealth without doing injury to any individual State, I shall be found willing to give them very hearty assistance.

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Mr McCOLL

- Like other honorable members who have spoken, I feel a certain amount of diffidence in presenting any views I may have in regard to the matters referred to in the Governor-General's speech to this House. I also feel a high sense of the honour it is to be a member of this first Commonwealth Parliament, and to take part in this its first debate. I join with the honorable member for Parkes in congratulating the House generally upon the tone of nearly all the speeches that have been delivered. We have had some of very marked ability, and very few indeed which have been characterised by any acrimony or bitterness in tone.

We are making therefore, I think, a very excellent start, and I trust that as honorable members become more acquainted with each other, and get a greater knowledge of the different States, we will improve even on the good start we have made. The matter which dominates me as a member of the House, is one upon which I feel a very great and keen sense of responsibility not only to myself, but to the House generally. We are here starting a new nation, with a territory of 3,000,000 square miles - as large an area as Europe - and the immediate future must depend very largely indeed upon how we make a start. Therefore, I feel that we need all the wisdom we can possibly have, we need consideration for each other, and we need moderation in the expression of any views we may put forward; we need toleration; and for myself I feel that I need a very great deal of education in regard to the various matters which will be discussed. We do not want any cocksureness. Speeches have been delivered by honorable members sitting on the opposite side of the chamber who seem to be cocksure in their opinions. These honorable gentlemen do not seem to think that there can be any modification or refutation of their views; but I hope that if they listen to what is said by honorable members on this side they will see that there is a very great balance of truth in the views which we hold. We must recognise that a very great responsibility has been laid upon the shoulders of those who compose the Commonwealth Ministry. If our responsibility is great, a still greater responsibility has been laid upon them. We should recognise that they feel this responsibility, and should give them our generous assistance. I would, therefore, very strongly deprecate any carping criticism. These gentlemen have a great task to perform, and I hope that honorable members will give them their hearty and generous support, and that there will be no party or personal squabbling. It seems to me that the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor-General is a very honest one. Its statements are .to some extent indefinite; but has any honorable member ever known a speech of the kind which was more definite. These speeches contain only the outlines of the proposals which are to be made by the Ministry, and, as they have a good many fathers, they must express a good many views. Ex-Ministers who have prepared similar speeches know how difficult it is to frame them, and will probably agree that the speech before us is quite as definite as any they have heard before. It seems to 7ne that, looking at the present position of matters in the various States, our first duty is to reconcile the interests of the States. We are practically all of one race and, of one religion, and, though our interests are somewhat diverse, we have this great advantage, that we have no feuds, and nothing in the shape of racial hatreds or enmity between one part of the Commonwealth and another, to deal with. We have no past wrongs to right, and there should be no bitterness between the residents of the different States. When we consider how other federations - the federation of the United States, of Canada, and of Germany, for instance were formed in the face of conflicting interests, bitter racial hatreds, and differing religions, and remember how much better situated we on this continent are, we should be ashamed not to try to make this the greatest federation on the face of the globe. But that can be done only by translating the term " Commonwealth " into action by recognising the rights, the interests, and the duties, not only of our own State, but of all the States of the union, both great and small. The great duty which devolves upon the Government and upon Parliament is the duty of developing our country. We have an enormous territory some 3,000,000 square miles, nearly one-sixth of the globe - we have good soil and a genial climate, and we have within our borders resources which should lead us to the very highest point of development. Our advantages are as great as those possessed by the United States when they federated, and we have not their drawbacks. We have a country of magnificent distances and opportunities, and I hope that the House, instead of wrangling over theories and abstract questions, will apply itself as soon as possible to the development of our territory. We have our land to cultivate, our rivers to lock, our mines to develop. and we must give employment to our people. But I noticed that a very important omission was made, both from the Prime Minister's Maitland speech, and from the Governor-General's speech, nothing being said about this need for development. I communicated my views about the Prime Minister's Maitland speech to the Attorney-General, so that he knows what mv mind is on the subject. We must develop our country. AVe are going to impose upon the people a certain amount of extra taxation, and we must do all we can to let them earn as much as, and a great deal more than, will make up for this extra charge. It is stated in the Governor-General's speech that inquiries will be made with reference to the practicability of certain railway proposals; but there is another question which has not been referred to during this debate, and which should have the early attention of the Government and the Parliament, and that is the utilization of our great rivers, our streams, and our water-courses. I represent a district in the northern part of this

State, where the people have been suffering for seven or eight years past from a serious and prolonged drought. One can scarcely estimate the losses of stock and crops which have occurred through the drought, or the loss which the colony has sustained by the removal of a large number of people beyond her boundaries; and when we go further north, and consider the condition of things which has prevailed in the western districts of New South Wales for the last five or six years, we find that what has occurred there is, if possible, even worse than what has occurred in our own State. During the "last five years over 30,000,000 sheep have perished in New South Wales for want of water, and the losses of stock through drought during the last fifteen or twenty years must have been so great that I am sure they would have paid, five or six times over, for such works as would have absolutely prevented them. Therefore I say that this matter should have the early attention of the Government. I do not say that we should start at once to construct water conservation works; but we should immediately set about making inquiries as to the possibilities of the utilization of our streams. We have streams in the north which for a great part of the year are noble rivers. They arena navigable for five or six months in the year, but, for the rest of the time, the steamers are laid up, and the men are idle. There are no natural obstacles to the locking of these rivers, so that they may be made nanavigable for the whole year, and will give us a supply of water for the irrigation of the surrounding country, and I think that the Government might at once take in hand the collation of all the information that has been gained on the subject by the various States. I am speaking now not only for the State of Victoria, and the State of New South Wales, but for every State in which water' conservation can be carried out. Both States have already done a great deal in this matter. They have sent engineers through the country, and have collected an enormous amount of information. This information could be tabulated, and the gaps filled up, so that when the time comes for the Commonwealth to take action, as it must surely come if we are to develop the country, no time will be lost in carrying out works which will be of incalculable benefit to the community.

Mr Sawers

- Is not that the function of the State Parliaments?

Mr McCOLL

- I am not sure how far the Commonwealth can go in the matter, but I think we shall have to follow in the lead of the United States in regard to it. There they have been for years fully seised of the enormous value of their streams and water storage areas, and have utilized them to the fullest extent, making thousands of miles of desert to bloom and blossom as the rose. In the United States they have been carrying on a hydrographic survey over every portion of their territory. They are getting the fullest information with regard to every point, and they are taking advantage of this information as fast as they can. In this way they are settling their people on the land, and are creating what we require in this country, absolute permanence of occupation, because they give the settlers a good permanent water supply. I do not know how far the Commonwealth can go in that respect.

Mr McCay

- We have the necessary powers.

Mr McCOLL

- If we have not the necessary powers, no doubt they could be obtained with the unanimous approval of the people of the continent.

Mr Glynn

- In the South Australian House of Assembly a motion has already been carried in favour of an Inter-State system of locking.

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Mr McCOLL

- Coming from the districts which I represent, and knowing the circumstances of the country further north, I press this matter upon the consideration of the House with all the force I can. There are other matters connected with navigation which no doubt we shall take in hand by-and-by. I do not see why this great continent should not in time carry its goods in its own ships. England started its merchant navy by giving Government assistance, and we shall probably have to do the same thing. Another matter which I would press upon the attention of honorable members, and especially upon those who represent agricultural districts - as many of us do - has to do with the production of wheat. We know that no protection that we can give will be of very much service in assisting those who are engaged in growing wheat; but I think we

might form ourselves into a body for the purpose of getting information as to what can be done to further assist agricultural interests in the matter of production, in the matter of exportation, and in providing agencies for the sale of our produce in the old country. I am aware that in carrying out these suggestions we shall require the co-operation of the States, but I trust that we shall start our career by endeavouring in every way to gain the confidence of the State Governments, and to obtain their hearty cooperation in all that we may try to do for the benefit of the people. If we do that, we shall find that it will make largely for economy, because by working together we shall save expense, and it will also make largely for progress, because by co-operation we shall do what we could not do by working single handed. I do not know what policy the Commonwealth may indorse in regard to assisting the production of the country, but in Victoria it has been the aim of successive Governments to assist every class of producer as much as possible. There are many here perhaps who deprecate paternal government, and who think that all ventures should be undertaken without State assistance; but I do not agree with them. We see in these colonies, in New Zealand, and in other parts of the world, that it is the Governments which bring themselves into close touch with the people in all their industrial undertakings that are pushing ahead. In Victoria we have helped our farmers in every way possible. We have given them cheap' land at low rents, and we have endeavoured to open up the country by the malting of roads and the construction of bridges and railways. We have also helped the people very considerably in the matter of providing a water supply. We have given bonuses for the production and export of commodities and for placing them in other markets. These bonuses have been a very marked and significant success in this State, more especially those relating to dairying. In times of fire, of flood, and of drought, we have assisted the producer through his difficulties, and encouraged him to go on. We have assisted the miner by giving rewards for the discovery of new gold-fields, and by means of prospecting votes. We have cut tracks, tested ores, and brought water to the miner. We have helped the manufacturers in the same way, by placing duties on the articles which they produce. The effect has been to stimulate industry generally; so that when we are twitted with helping only the manufacturers, and when certain gentlemen, for their own ends, endeavour to stir up strife among the classes, and try to make the miners and farmers believe that only the manufacturers are helped, they are saying that which is not- correct, because we have endeavoured to help all classes so far as we possibly could. We can join with the other States, however, in an endeavour to place our products on the home markets, not separately or in rivalry, but by bringing them together, having a sort of Australian temple of commerce, where we can display the products of the whole of the States under one roof, leaving each State to push its wares, as it best can in its own way. I trust these matters will engage . our attention as soon as possible. I do not propose to address myself to many points in the Governor-General's speech, but I desire to refer at some little length to the fiscal question. We have been told that the speeches on the other side have somewhat demolished the arguments ?of honorable members on this side of the House. That is not the case. We have not replied to .all the arguments of honorable members opposite, because many of them were really not worth replying to. There was too much cock-sureness about them. Anything we have said was always received with a "no," or a cry of " nonsense," or something of that sort. But there are a few points which have not been put to the House, and I will deal with them. I have never been a fanatic upon the fiscal question. I have been prepared to accept what appeared to me to be the best policy for this - State and for Australia. Probably no one in this House has been more free from any prejudice or any interest in either -of the two fiscal systems than I have been. I have given the matter the very fullest and gravest consideration, endeavouring to see whether my advocacy of protection was sound, wise, and calculated to advance the interests of this great continent, or whether, after full consideration of the whole question, I might not come to the conclusion that it would be better to revert to the policy '6f my honorable friends opposite, and adopt free-trade. I must say, Sir, that after all my reading, and my practical knowledge of affairs in Parliament for the last 15 years, I am led to the belief that the policy of protection is the proper one; for Australia, and that the policy -of free-trade would work its ruin. The district I represent is not a manufacturing district. It is a farming district. Beyond ia little -mining, every constituent I have outside of the townships is an .agriculturist. At the election I had pitted against me a gentleman who termed himself the leading freetrader of Victoria. He canvassed the district for six solid months both night and day. I had only a little over six weeks for the purpose, -but I beat him by a very substantial majority among the class of people whom .we have been charged with shackling and preventing from carrying on their industries. !But while I believe that protection is the best policy, yet at the present time every man of common sense must know that we can have no extreme policy of any kind. We are absolutely bound by the conditions that exist. I myself believe that when the Tariff that we have to pass as soon as possible is disposed of, both sides will claim the victory. The protectionists will be satisfied that they have got a very fair modicum of protection, and that the industries which have been established will not be injured by the new duties. On the other hand, honorable members on the opposite side of the House will congratulate themselves >and shake hands all round because they will have prevented, as they will term it, duties of 40, 50, or 60 per cent, being imposed.- I think it probable that we shall end in that way. Our sympathy should be extended to the Minister of Customs in the very difficult task that is before him. I do not suppose that any Minister of Customs in any State of Australia, or probably in the world, has had a more difficult task than to bring down a Tariff reconciling the conflicting interests of these various States, dislocating trade and industry as little as possible, and injuring the interests of the States in -as small a degree as may be. We must work for -the benefit of all the States. I was -in full sympathy with the honorable member for Tasmania. Mr. Piesse, yesterday, when he pleaded for his State, the Cinderella of the federation. We want to see the smallest -of the -States receiving as-full and ample justice as does the largest and the richest. The leader of the

Opposition made a very excellent speech last week, but it was marred by the tone and manner in which he referred to the Victorian Tariff policy. He spoke of " charity " towards Victoria. There was no necessity for the right honorable gentleman to do that. We do not want "charity," " as he termed it. We are quite prepared to light to get all the justice that we require. He said that he should have to make inquiries, because charity officers always made inquiries. It seemed to me, as the right honorable gentleman was speaking, that he looked the very personification of a political Bumble waiting to say " No " to Oliver Twist's request for "more." However, Victoria has not come to that state yet. I have no doubt we shall get a Tariff satisfactory to Victoria, and I am convinced that it will not be many years more before we have not only a small majority, but by far the greater portion of this House, in accord with the policy we shall adopt. The key-note of the speech of the leader of the Opposition was disappointment. He affected to pity Victoria. He affected to triumph over the Government because of its position. But the real note of his speech was nothing but bitter disappointment. With regard to the policy of protection, I feel that if ever it was justified it is justified at the present time. Hitherto, five or six States' have been working under policies of protection, whether they would all call it by that name or not I do not know. But one reason why this policy has not been the success it might have been, is that we have been too much circumscribed and have not had a sufficient outlet for our productions. We have had too small a market. We have been working in too narrow a sphere. But now we shall have 4,000,000 of people to work amongst upon this great continent. We shall have to open up, develop and supply the continent with produce. The whole population will be customers for our goods. Therefore it would be a turning back upon the best interests of the country if we refused to adopt the policy of assistance for manufactured goods at the present time. Mr G B EDWARDS

- Why not go further, and take in the whole world 1 Mr McCOLL
- My ideas are not so extensive as are those of the honorable member. I am content to deal with the work in hand. I know very well that the policy of Victoria has kept back federation for years. What have the representatives of other States, especially of New South Wales, said? "If we break down the barriers all around New South Wales, Victoria, by reason of her superior position in regard to her industries, is bound to get greater advantages for some years to come."

  Mr Glynn
- How does the honorable member reconcile the leadership of Sir Henry Parkes with that statement1! Mr Poynton
- Does the honorable member think that Victoria can ever compete with New South Wales in that respect

### Mr McCOLL

- I shall have something to say upon that directly. Many comparisons between New South Wales and Victoria have been placed before us. Those comparisons have all come from the opposition side of the Chamber, and have been replied to from this side. They begun with the great speech of the leader of the

Opposition and were followed up by his would-be lieutenant, the honorable member for Parramatta - whose amendment, by the way, seems now to be "lost to sight."

Mr Deakin

- It is still "to memory dear."

Mr McCOLL

- The leader of the Opposition took .the trouble before the elections to travel through the various States. He came to Victoria. He addressed a large number of meetings. He did me the honour of paying a visit to my constituency, and addressed meetings in two of the largest centres there, with this result - that in both of them I had a majority; in one a fair majority, and a large majority in the other.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The honorable member only had a small majority altogether. <page>512</page>

Mr McCOLL

- It was a majority of nearly 600 votes. Considering that I was unable to visit 59 polling places out of 100 I was very well satisfied. The result of this mission to Victoria was that she has sent 22 members to support the Government; and the 23rd is only sitting on the opposition side because he is afraid that the duties will be too high. Otherwise he would be here. He probably will be here before long. Were New South Wales not ahead of Victoria it would be wonderful. She is twice the age of Victoria and four times the size. New South Wales has enormous natural advantages in her wealth in land, coal, and iron which Victoria does not possess. New South Wales has three times our flocks and herds, and I can only tell our friends from New South Wales that if Victorians had had control of that State for the last twenty years, instead of the men who have been there, it would have been in a very different position from that it is in at the present time. As the member for Brisbane lias pointed out, it is the Victorians who have gone to Queensland, who have largely helped to develop that great country. I do not intend to go into many comparisons. I will deal with only one or two, because we have had these comparisons adnauseam in the press and in the House for some time past. We have been told over and over again that the manufacturing industries of New South Wales are equal to those of Victoria. It is said that New South Wales has, without protection, established industries, and that the industries and the number of hands employed in manufactures in that State are equal to the industries and the number of hands employed in Victoria under protection. But is that a fact 1 In 1899 the total production in New South Wales was valued at ?38,579,000, and in "Victoria ?30,870,000. I will take three natural industries in both States and see what the balance is. First of all, in New South Wales the pastoral industry represented ?14,527,000; mining ?6,081,000, and forests, ?639,000, or a total of ?21,247,000. In Victoria the pastoral industry represented ?7,219,000; mining ?3,579,000; and forests ?201,000, or a total of ?5,991,000. If we deduct these three industries, which no one will deny are purely natural industries not affected by the fiscal policy in any shape or form, it leaves the manufacturing productions of New South Wales at ?17,332,000, as against the Victorian production of ?19,871,000.

Mr Deakin

- With a smaller area and a smaller population.

Mr McCOLL

- With a smaller area and a smaller population. With regard to manufactures - in which we were told New South Wales is on an absolute level with Victoria, even if the former State does not surpass the latter - we find that factories in Victoria number 3,027, as against .2,912 in New South Wales, and that the hands employed in Victoria number 60,070, as against 55,646 in New South Wales.

Mr Poynton

- How many men are amongst those employed 1

Mr McCOLL

- Never, mind about the men employed.

Mr Poynton

- What is the improvement for ten or fifteen years 1

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Mr McCOLL

- Will the honorable member kindly ask me another question? Classed as factories in both States are the

#### industries

Of meat preserving, sugar mills, sugar refineries, saw mills, smelting works, and docks and ship workers, and I do not think that any of these industries owe anything whatever to the Tariff. Meat preserving in New South Wales employs 1,509 hands, as against 747 hands in Victoria; the sugar mills in New South Wales employ 1,038 hands, as against 240 hands in Victoria; the refineries employ 450 hands in New South Wales, as against 307 here; saw mills employ 3,004 hands in New South Wales, as against 1,467 here; smelting works employ 3,339 hands in New South Wales, as against 71 here; and the docks. and shipping yards employ 1,240, as against 110 in Victoria. In those six industries there are employed in New South Wales a total of 10,580 hands, as against 2,942 hands in Victoria; and when we add this difference in favour of Victoria we find a total of 4,326. It is shown that Victoria has in purely manufacturing industries 1.1,962 more hands employed than are employed in New South Wales. These figures are from the New South Wales statist, and there is no -going beyond them. Honorable members from all parts of Australia must have been .greatly struck by that magnificent Eight Hours' Day procession of workmen a week Or 'two ago. Nothing approaching that procession could have been shown in Sydney ; and when we remember that in the same procession the friendly societies brought out their thousands of members, numbers of whom would otherwise have been with the workers, it may be imagined what a magnificent gathering it would have been, had it been a trades' procession only and representative of the manufactures of this city. New South Wales has had other advantages beyond those enjoyed by Victoria. As the honorable member\* for Gippsland pointed out New South Wales for the last ten years has had from land, loan revenue, minerals, and wool, ?100,000,000 over and above the sum Victoria has had from those sources, and she has been bolstered up in her finances by the way in which she obtained loans and by the way in winch she used the money. During the term of office of the present leader of the Opposition as Premier of New South Wales - and I think the honorable member for Parramatta was associated with him in. his Government, and, therefore, I am not chary of making reference to the matter in the absence of the leader of the Opposition - that State obtained in loans ?9,500,000 as against ?1,350,000 obtained by Victoria. New South Wales received in rents and purchase money for land ?12,000,000 as against ?2,700,000 received by Victoria. But the worst feature was that the New South Wales loan money was not spent on productive works, but on works of an unreproductive character, thus saving the pockets of the people in regard to taxation, and making it appear that New South Wales was in a very fine financial position.

Mr Glynn

- Does that apply to the whole ?9,000,000 ? Mr McCOLL

- No. From 1895 to 1899 New South Wales used loan money for unproductive purpose to the amount of ?3,485,497 -my figures come from the New South Wales statist - while Victoria during the same term used for the same purpose - a bad purpose I admit, and we were offenders to some extent - the sum of ?724,920 only. Members on the other side, knowing that no extreme policy is possible, endeavour to drive the Government to extremes, and twit them with not standing out for protection, and with not showing their faith in that policy by putting on heavy protective duties. But do the members of the Opposition not recognise that they are on the horns of the same dilemma themselves, because they are not prepared to stand by the policy of free-trade, but are sheltering themselves under the title of " revenue tariffists?" The leader of the Opposition said he had come to Victoria to give us some plain speaking, and that he was going to give us the naked truth only; but honorable members will get as much plain speaking from the Government side of the House as from the other. The leader of the Opposition boasted here of the financial position of New South Wales under his regime, and of the condition in which he had left the finances when he resigned office. I have shown the way in which New South Wales loan moneys were used, and though I do not know the whole details of the transactions which took place in New South Wales during the regime of the right honorable gentleman, I do know that the leader of the Opposition presents the only case of a Treasurer of an Australian State being called to account, and having a committee of public accountants, quite disassociated from politics, inquiring into his finances and bringing in a damaging report. We need safe men in the Commonwealth, and especially we need safe men to guard our finances at the present time. I believe we have those safe men. We do not want Micawbers, and will not have them at any price. The leader of the Opposition, and those who think with him

expressed great sympathy with the farmer, and proposed to knock off the "shackles" which they say are fettering the farming industry. But in what way did the honorable member's Government treat the farmers of New South Wales? They knocked off the modest 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. duties, which had been imposed by the previous Dibbs Government, and called upon the farmers to pay a land tax instead. For the three years 1897-8-9, there were imported into New South Wales no less than ?6,800,000 worth of farm, dairy, and orchard produce, the great bulk of which could have been produced by the farmers of that State, but which they did not get the chance of producing, because of the fiscal policy. On fourteen articles of ordinary farm products in common use - potatoes, oats, barley, onions, hay, chaff and straw, butter, cheese, flour, preserved milk, oatmeal, dried fruits, currants and raisins, bran and wheat - which any farmer could grow, there was imported into New South Wales in three years ?3,939,951 worth. That was the friendship shown to the farmers; that is the way in which farmers were assisted by the leader of the Opposition and his Government.

Mr Poynton

- And yet Victorians went over there to farm.

Mr McCOLL

- That point I will deal with by-and-by. We hear free-traders talk free-trade at random, but we have never yet, in any Australian State, had a free-trader with the courage to put his principles into practice. Without having regard to. existing conditions, protectionists are asked why they do not insist upon protection if it be a good thing; but why have free-traders, in all these years, not had the courage to put their principles into practice in the form of pure, unadulterated free-trade? Because they knew that the people would not stand it, because they knew it would spell ruin to their various States.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

Would they stand protection carried to its logical point?
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Mr McCOLL

- From the manner in which gentlemen on the Opposition side speak, one would think there were only two States in this union. The whole of the debate hinges round New South Wales and Victoria, and honorable members seem guite to forget that there are four other States who are as much entitled - no matter whether they are great or small, thickly or sparsely populated - to the consideration of this House as are the two States to which I have referred. What are the condition of Tariff matters in these States? At the risk of being somewhat wearisome, I desire to place my facts clearly before honorable members. I have before me the items of the various Tariffs of the States, and I find on looking at them that the Tariff of Victoria is by no means the highest Tariff in Australia. I wish to point out that in 5 per cent, ad valorem duties - I am referring not to classes in the Tariff, but simply to the Tariff items - South Australia has one, Tasmania one, Queensland eight, and Western Australia 77. In 7? per cent, duties, Tasmania has one item only. In 10 per cent, duties Victoria has 19 items, South Australia 126, Tasmania 25, and Western Australia 78. In 12| per cent, duties there is only one item, and this is in Victoria. In 15 per cent, duties there are 20 items in the Victorian Tariff) 66 in that of South Australia, 47 in Queensland, and 310 in Western Australia. In 20 per cent, duties there are 30 items in Victoria, 25 in South Australia, 394 in Tasmania, and 61 in Western Australia. In 25 per cent, duties there are 43 items in Victoria, 93 in South Australia, 5 in Tasmania,, and 289 in Queensland - and honorable members heard the honorable member for Brisbane tell us to-day that any Tariff lower than the Tariff in force in Queensland at the present time would be absolutely destructive of Queensland industries. In the 30 per cent, duties we have 21 items in Victoria, and none in the other States. In the 35 per cent, duties there are 12 items in Victoria, and none in the other States; whilst in the 45 per cent, list there is one item in Victoria, and none in the others. With regard to fixed duties, we have 330 items in Victoria, 54 in New South Wales, 250 in South Australia, 182 in Tasmania, 292 in Queensland, and 125 in Western Australia. Everything in Victoria and New South Wales which is not marked as dutiable is absolutely free, but in the other States it is different. In South Australia the Tariff specifies what is dutiable and what is free, but over and above the items specified there is a drag-net duty of 10 per cent. In Tasmania, which is represented by that extreme and ardent free-trader, Sir Edward Braddon, who, I believe, brought forward the particular Tariff operating there, there is a. drag-net duty on all articles not mentioned of 20 per cent. In South Australia it is 10 pei'

cent., in Queensland 15 -per cent., and in Western Australia 15> per cent. Victoria obtains from her Tariff about one-third of her revenue. New South Wales one-sixth, South Australia one-fourth, Tasmania one-half, Queensland one-third, and Western Australia also one-third. Therefore, when we> hear Victoria quoted as having such an enormously high Tariff, we can point to these facts to show that the Victorian Tariff is below the Tariffs of the rest of the States. I have given the various averages, and I have been at great care to get my figures correct. I got them from our own Customs department, and thoroughly satisfied myself as to>their accuracy. The average rates for all the States, taking fixed rates, ad valorem and-, free, deducting re-exports and taking the net customs revenue, is 18 ? per cent., and that includes New South Wales, with its enormous free list. Eliminating bullion and specie the rate is 20 per cent. Taking the total imports of each State and the gross revenue, the average is 15 per cent. The Victorian, ad valorem duties average 20'32 per cent.. The fixed rates, including liquors and tobacco, which are of course very high, average 43 per cent. The ad valorem and free combined in Victoria average 3-16 percent. The average percentage on all, taking; the total value of imports and revenue collected, is II-4 per cent, but deducting the exports of all goods other than Victorian, and taking the net revenue for the year, we find that the Victorian Tariff is 14-4 percent., as. against the average of all Australia of 18? per cent. - When we remember that in A7ictoria we have imports to the extent of IS millions, of which 12 millions comes in&qt; absolutely free of duty, honorable members must see that an average duty of even 10 per cent. - to say nothing of 15 per cent., as some propose - would tax the people much heavier than the Victorian Tariff does at the present time. Looking at the circum-I stances, not only of Victoria, but of those off the other five -States, which have the Tariffs I have .-mentioned, J ask any reasonable man how it .is possible for their policy to be reversed? It is not within the bounds of possibility that we can .reverse that policy. I am sure that the gentlemen on the other side of the House, when the .full Tariff statement is placed before -them, will themselves come to the conclusion that it -will be impossible to reverse our policy and go back to the one which they indicate. There is, of course, a fear in the minds of moderate men that we may go too far. I do not think that that is possible. I think there are sufficient honorable members in this House in favour of a. fair and common-sense policy to carry the proposals of the -Government as shadowed forth in the opening speech. Another matter that has been referred to, and which our friends on the Opposition side quote with a very particular satisfaction, relates to the population as revealed in the late census returns. But our population has been very unfairly put, it seems" to me, both on the public platform before the election and in this House. Comparisons have been made between the condition of Victoria at the time when she had her largest population, and her present position. Some honorable members in their comparisons have gone back to 35 years ago, when the production of alluvial gold had reached its greatest extent, and when we had an enormous population from all-parts of the globe. Then again, they refer to the period of ten years ago - in 1890 - when we were just on the crest of the wave in regard to the boom, when industry was particularly active, and when we had an enormous influx of population from till the other States. They take these two periods and compare them with our position at the present time. Now, we know, that a great many people have left this State. Our miners have gone to develop Western Australia, and some have gone to Broken Hill.

Mr O'Mallev

- And Tasmania.

Mr McCOLL

- And they have gone to Tasmania in large numbers. I have always been extremely thankful that in the condition of affairs that prevailed after the boom burst, there did open up in Broken Hill, Western Australia, and Tasmania, mines which afforded employment to our people. Some farmers, it is true, have left Victoria and have gone to New South

Wales. But did they go because New South Wales was a free-trade country? They did not want free-trade; what they wanted was land. Victoria constitutes only one thirty-fourth of all. Australia. It is a little bit of a .place, a cabbage garden, as it has been called, 'only one-fourth the size of New South Wales, and it is a 'fact that after the introduction of the Land Act of 1869, the great bulk of good arable land in Victoria was taken up. Families:,vent on to that land some 30 years .ago, young men -starting life with a few children. They went on -their 3.207-acre blocks. As the children grew up, they had to get out of their holdings so as to secure more land, because the land they held was not sufficient 'for 'their 'families.

Throughout .the whole of Victoria, because their area was insufficient, these men have been selling off and going where they could get .good land at ,a .fair ;rent. They went to New South Wales, because Parliament liberalized the land laws there some years ago, allowing selectors to obtain .land, on very .fair terms. Adjacent to my own district I can remember -some ten or 'twelve families who out-grew their holdings, went into New South Wales, and took with them .for the -purpose of selecting land f from ?1,000 to?2,000, , if not more, per family. That is why we are losing population. Of course, we must remember that when a unit of our population leaves Victoria to go to New South Wales it counts two in that State's favour. What .has been the action .and the policy of the New South Wales Government with regard to these Victorian settlers? Have they given them, as they desired, .facilities for trading with the State they had left? No. The Government have forced these settler against their will to send their trade to Sydney. I ask who developed Riverina 1 How much capital did the people of New South Wales put into the development of the Darling district? Who developed the agricultural and sugar growing industries of Queensland? Who developed the mines of Broken Hill and Western Australia?

An Honorable Member. - South Australia

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Mr McCOLL

- To a -considerable extent South Australian capital was used for the development of those mines, but Victorian citizens and Victorian capital had a great deal more to do with it. Our people left Victoria, not because they were tired of our fiscal system, but because there was more room for them elsewhere. I have for years anticipated that New South Wales- would forge ahead of Victoria because of her larger territory and greater natural resources. Victoria is a very small part of- Australia. Our area- is- a limited one; and very little of our good land is left. Therefore, as- our population grows, it is- only to be expected that it will go where it can get land. To jeer at Victoria' because of her loss of population in the unseemly manner which has been adopted in this- Chamber is no more fitting or wise than it would' be to- jeer at Great Britain because her population has not increased in the same ratio as has- that of the United States. The honorable member for Parkes last night referred to what he termed the unlimited prosperity of New South Wales; but we have not evidence that the prosperity there is- unlimited. In 1899 in New South Wales there were 3,843 persons out of employment, and in February of this- year there were 6,400 unemployed on the books of the Government. To be unemployed has become a fine art in New South Wales; and they have a Government department there to look after the unemployed' - a thing we have never had to do in this State. The creed' of the free-trader is cheap goods, cheap money, and the handling and not the making of goods. There are some- who look at these questions from a moral or ethical' standpoint, and' of course there is no arguing with- them, because they would stick- to their theories; even if the adoption of those theories led to the- destruction of their State and of every- one in it. But, to my mind, the fiscal question is not an ethical question at all; it is- a question of business expediency: The policy which will suit a country at one time may not suit it at another, and the policy which suits one country may not? suit' another; Each country adopts' that policy which it considers most likely to foster its- interests. Free-traders- want cheap goods, and, as ii corollary, they want cheap labour. T doubt the sincerity of" free-traders: who profess to be- so anxious as the honorable member for Parramatta appears to be to create a white Australia as- soon as- possible. It has- always been claimed by free-trade writers- that freedom to spend your money as you like and on' whom you like, and. to employ what labour you like, is an absolute right. That contention can be proved by reference to the article" on free-trade in the

Encyclopaedia

Britannica.In that article the following statement is made: --

When the safety or morals of the public justify to a larger or smaller extent the supervision of the State over the free choice of industry, the concession of that free-trade in colour- which puts the minimum of hindrance on the field of employment and the character of employment which the producer selects, is-quite as important to the well-being of a State as the concession of

Orfree agency to its capital and a free market for its products.

That statement shows that cheap labour is an absolute corollary to tie doctrine of free-trade. Buskin said that "free-trade for England means all tie trade," and that is- what it meant at the time he .made the statement. England tried- to grasp all the trade of the world, and therefore adopted the policy of

free-trade.

Mr Kingston

- England- had no competitors when she adopted free-trade.

Mr McCOLL

- Another fallacy which, like all free-trade statements,, is constantly repeated, despite the logic of facts, is that protection increases the price of every article to which it is applied. That is not a fact. Although protection increases the price of some articles, it does not increase the price of- other articles: Where protection is -applied reasonably .and- wisely to the manufacture of articles the raw material- of'- which is produced within- the State, the result is to cheapen those articles to the consumer; but if duties are imposed without discrimination, for the advantage of every one who chooses to ask for them, you must have a state of affairs which would justify. the statement which I am refuting,

Mr Mauger

- But that is not the case in1 Victoria.

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Mr McCOLL

- In the majority of instances it is not the case in- Victoria. I am not an extremist. My views in' regard to protection are largely such as were enunciated by the honorable member for Bendigo last' night. I believe in moderate, reasonable, and discriminating protection. Tie honorable member for South Australia, Mr. Poynton, thought fit to unearth an old Hansard, and to guote from it some remarks made by the Attorney-General in i"S93; Of course, the" honorable member was quite justified in doing that; but I suggest that the practice is- not one that we should encourage; not that T fear 'any references which may be made- to speeches- which I have delivered in this- Chamber or put' of it, but because I think that if we rake amongst the musty records of Hansard for the past fifteen or twenty years, we shall never get on with the business of the House. o? this practice is generally indulged in, we shall require to consult sets of Hansards from all the States to find out what men's opinions were, not in regard to the conditions under which they have been elected to this House, but in regard to the conditions under which they were elected to other Parliaments perhaps fifteen or twenty years ago. The honorable member for South Australia twitted the Attorney-General with inconsistency because of certain remarks which he made in 1893. But what are the facts. While I was a Member of the Parliament of Victoria: the Victorian Tariff underwent three revisions. In 1893 duties were weakly conceded by the Government then in power to a small section of the House who clamoured for them in a most unreasonable way. Although I am a protectionist, I set my face against the imposition of a great many of those duties as strongly as the most ardent free-trader in the Chamber, because they seemed to me unreasonable and unwise, and likely to fail in their object, and thereby discredit protection, and diminish the revenue of the State. I considered that instead of proving a blessing, the proposed duties would be a curse to Victoria, and would hurt the cause of protection more than anything else that could be done.

Mr Deakin

- Under the circumstances of the colony at that time.

Mr McCOLL

- Yes. The debate on those duties did not conclude until the Government had promised to appoint a Royal commission to inquire into the state of our industries and the working of our Tariff. To show how justifiable were the protests made by the Attorney-General, myself, and others, who considered themselves sound protectionists, I may mention that when, after sitting two years, that commission, a majority of its members being protectionists, brought in its report, it recommended that 31 duties on the Tariff should be left as they stood, that 25 duties should be increased, and that 86 should be reduced. After a long and protracted discussion, extending over several months, when every item in the Tariff was carefully reviewed and fought over - more carefully, I think, than the items in the proposed Commonwealth Tariff will be dealt with - 81 duties were reduced, 21 were increased, and 23 new duties were imposed. We have been told that in Victoria protection has run mad, and though it did run mad here for a year or two, we have come to our senses, and are now clothed and in our right minds. It is a policy of reasonable and moderate protection that I intend to support in the settlement of the Commonwealth Tariff. To show that we have not an unreasonable Tariff in Victoria, I may state that out of our ?1S,000,000 worth of imports ?12,000,000 come in free. Would not an all round 15 or even 10 per cent,

duty tax the people infinitely more than an average of 14-4 per cent., which is the amount of our present duties? It is difficult to account for the venomous antagonism to manufacturers shown by some free-traders. Men come to a new country like this; they put their money into industries; they run the risk of those industries not being a success; they have no guarantee from the State that they will succeed, but all they ask is to be put under fair conditions with regard to those engaged in the same industries in, other parts of the world. Yet they are hounded down as robbers who are imposing burdens on the people of this country for their own sole benefit. I have not found those manufacturers of ours to be so enormously wealthy as has been said. They have made a living, but that is about all. I do not know that they live in mansions or palaces. The people who live in such places are the bookmakers and the' merchants.

Mr Mauger

- And the importers.

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Mr McCOLL

- Quite so. We know that the importers as a body are not particularly favorable to protection. The merchants want to buy a thing for a shilling, and sell it for ls. 9d. Then their minds are easy and they have their stocks to fall back upon. Our manufacturers have been spoken of as " marauding bands," and the employes in our factories as paupers. That is the language of honorable members who come to this State to endeavour to arrange a Tariff that will be satisfactory to all. classes in Australia. It seems to me that this country will not grow if we are to be content with simply making raw material. Surely, if we can take the raw material which we produce, and make it worth ten times its original value by working it up into finished articles, it is better that we should do that here than send the niaterif.il to other parts of the world to be manufactured?

Sir William McMillan

- Is not that done in New South Wales?

Mr McCOLL

- To nothing like the extent that it is done in Victoria. We heard last night that the "wages fund" would go only a certain length, but we want to increase the "wages fund."

Mr Higgins

- There is no such thing as a "wages fund."

Mr McCOLL

- -We want to make our " wages fund," if there be such a thing, larger, and to keep the work in our own colony. It seems to me the height of absurdity to send raw material from this State to be made up, and then import it back again for our use. Suppose that in a certain district we raise produce to the value of ?100,000. For raising that produce we need implements and other tilings. If we send for these things to foreign countries, what is the effect? We get them, but we lose a portion of the ?100,000, which goes to build up the industries of other places, and which finds employment for the people there. But if we can supply the goods for the raising of that ?100,000 of produce from the labour of our own people, if we have those goods made up in our own country, "we have two capitals working; we have two sets of men engaged; and we have two profits making. We keep the capital in the country, make the double profit in the country, and we are enabled to send out of the country for goods which we cannot produce here, to a larger extent than we could otherwise do.

Sir William McMillan

- Is that what the honorable member means \>y having your cake and eating it? Mr McCOLL

- It seems always a puzzle to free-traders that under a protective Tariff imports do not decrease. They do not decrease because the country is making more wealth, keeping its money within its borders, and sending out more goods than it otherwise would do. The honorable member for West Sydney said in his speech last week that protection in America cannot have been a success because they are importing ?137,000,000 worth of goods of one kind and another. The reason is that they are wealthy enough to import and pay for those goods. Another reason why we should endeavour to encourage industry is that we are thus enabled to keep control over our own trade conditions. In this new country, we do not want to have our working men beaten down to the rates of wages that are received in other countries - England

as well as elsewhere. If we have free-trade we have no control over labour - no control over the production of the articles we use. But if we produce them in our own country, we can fix a fair rate, we can control the market and the trade conditions, and regulate the employment of labour so that men get a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. I hold that no country in the world is so prosperous as where the people are fairly remunerated for their employment. My honorable friends opposite would ask what competition it is that we have to fear. A friend of mine, who is well known in commercial circles in Melbourne, desired to open up business with Japan. We know there are hundreds of thousands of cotton spindles working there. The Japanese are taking up the various branches of western industry. They are adept and clever, and will, before many years, under their new conditions, prove formidable competitors to all their western rivals. My friend instructed his agent to make inquiries as to the rates of pay in Japan as compared with those for corresponding positions in Victoria. He found that engineers in Japan received lis. a week for doing work for which from ?4 to ?4 10s. a week was paid in Victoria. Workmen receiving from 25s. to 40s. per week in Victoria were paid from 5s. to 7s. a week in Japan, and those receiving 15s. to 27s. per week here received from 2s. 6d. to 4s. a week there. My' honorable friends opposite would open our. ports and our people to competition like that, from a country only three weeks sail from our shores.

- It is England, not Japan, that the honorable member wants to shut out from competition. <page>519</page>

## Mr McCOLL

- I do not believe in the sympathy towards the workers professed by free-traders. It is free-trade Pharisaism. Listen to what "Parson Lot," Charles Kingsley, said concerning the Manchester School of Economics a few years ago: -

Next you have the Manchester school, from which Heaven defend us. For all narrow, conceited, hypocritical, and anarchic schemes of the universe the Cobden and Bright one is exactly the worst. To pretend to be the workman's friends by keeping down the price of bread, when all they want thereby is to keep down wages and increase profits, and in the meantime to widen the gulf between the working men and all that is time honoured and chivalrous in English society, that they may make the men their dividend slaves (that is perhaps half unconsciously, for there are excellent men .amongst them) is the game of the Manchester school.

That was Charles Kingsley's pronouncement upon the, policy of my honorable friends opposite; A. revenue Tariff.' makes no distinction as between the factory that em ploys 1,000 hands and that which employs only five. It- makes no distinction, as to different industries, whether they are large or small, whether-- they are successes- or hothouse growths. it imposes the same checks upon -all. It regards no distinction between raw and made- up -materials, suitable and unsuitable industries-. Is there, then, any. other way to develop this country except under tie policy of protection? I do not desire to make a long.historical speech; but it is necessary to ask.: what is the history ofl this question? The honorable member for Parkes said last night that free-trade was only part of the struggle for liberty and freedom, which had been carried on in Great Britain since the time of the-Norman conquest. Well, tie honorable member is a learned man. He is much superior to myself in that respect, but I- venture to say that I do not know- where he- has- read history to justify him in coming to that conclusion. Those who have read English, history know that up, to the" time- of.- Edward, I. the industry- of England was entirely in the hands of foreigners. Tie- raw material was not allowed to be made up in England; but was exported to the continent; and, came back in, the shape of manufactures. Only the coarsest of, cloths and, the rudest of implements were-made in. England; Repr.frsentations were, however, made to Edward I., who is justly, known as the father of English commerce. He stopped the exportation of raw material, compelled . the wearing of English goods, and imposed those Sumptuary Laws of' which we have heard. He gave England' her first start in. her career of protection,, which ended, in 1846. So it: went on until the time of Elizabeth. Protests were then made as to foreign imports, and the monopolizing of the markets by foreign people. Queen Elizabeth, through her Chancellor, Lord Bacon, imposed a. protective Tariff- - I" think it was in 15'59 - and from that time to 184.6. England was under> a protective policy, and; continued so without wavering- or- sign of change. So English industry was encouraged by the putting on of duties and the prohibition of the exportation of raw material from the country. It was further encouraged some 100 years later by bringing in the rigorous Navigation Laws, which prevented free-trade in shipping, and

compelled English goods to be brought in and taken out in English bottoms. Those laws-further compelled the colonies to trade in English ships. Under such rigorous enactments, combined with her prolonged protective policy at home, England remained for over 300 years without a> change, and during that- time her- condition: greatly altered. From being almost a purely agricultural country she became- tie great workshop of the world. When honorable members say that English industry was built up by free-trade, they are simply misleading.and deluding their hearers. It was, built up under protection. When honorable members taunt us with having said, in the beginning of protection in Victoria, that import duties were only required to enable our industries to- obtain a start, I would remind them that, whereas we have had protection for only 30 years, and have had only a narrow and limited market, and no room forexpansion, England had protection for over- 300 years before her freetrade policy was adopted: When her fiscal' policy was changed, was -free-trade adopted for ethical or moral reasons? No; she adopted freetrade because; as Ruskin has said, free trade for England meant all the trade. England wanted all the trade and she got it. The Napoleonic wars had devastated-Europe and crushed out almost every manufacturing industry on the continent. England then became alive- with manufacturing, industries. But when the war. ceased and the continental nations began to put their houses- in order and to revive- the industries which had- been crushed- for- years, they adopted - what policy? A- policy of freetrade? No. They adopted a, policy of, protection, one and all of them. England1 saw that she could not carry, on .aprotective policy herself- and yet have free-trade with those continental nations, so she- adopted free-trade herself\* and tried to get those nations to follow her. She was aided in that policy by a- few years of bad crops at home. The potato and wheat-crops-had been, failures for. 3'ears. But more than that, she was aided because machine labour was taking the place of hand labour. Steam was introduced as a factor in industries in the 1830's.. Steam-ships began to travel over the oceans of the world. Railway trains began to run.

Steam was applied to machinery, and the expansion was so great that England was in a position to throw off every shackle- and, open her ports to the whole world, because all the nations of the world together could not successfully compete with her. Not only that,, but she was helped by the discovery of gold, first in California and afterwards in Australia; and. at that time her position became absolutely unapproachable and unassailable. Has she kept that position 1 Has she progressed under free-trade in the same ratio as the nations which adopted protection- have progressed 1 She has not done so; but, compared with those nations, she has gone back considerably. I will give a few figures showing, the comparative positions of the United States, France, and Britain in 1840-1 and 1896. In 1840 the total wealth of the United States was ?7S2,000,000, or ?46 per inhabitant; while in 1896 the total wealth was ?16,350,000,000 or '?234 per inhabitant. In 1841 the total, wealth of France was ?3,240,000,000,- or ?94 per. inhabitant; while in 1896 it was ?9,690,000,000, or ?252 per inhabitant. In the United States the increase per inhabitant in the 56 years was ?188; while in France the increase for 55 years- was ?158. In 1840 the total wealth "of Britain was ?4,100,000,000, or ?154 per inhabitant; while in 1896 it was ?11,806,000,000, or ?302 per inhabitant; and the increase per inhabitant in. Britain was ?148, as against ?.158 in France, and ?186 in the United States. These are not my figures, but they can be found in the Dictionary of Statistics -of' Mulhall, and I will give the page if honorable members care to look for. themselves: I will take the total trade, internal and external, of the United States, Britain, Germany, and France for 1896, and the figures- can be found on, page 388 of Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics. In that year, the internal and external trade of- the United States was ?3,31.1,000,000; of. Britain, ?1,884,000,000; Germany, ?.1,501,000,000; and France, ?1,324,000,000; and it wall be seen that the free-trade State occupies the second place in the list. Now, I will take the imports and exports, and see how they stand relatively. The imports into Britain from British possessions for 1897' and 1S98 were ?94,018,933, and from foreign countries, ?357,010,027, or a total of ?451,028,960. The exports of British products were ?23"4,2.19,70S, and foreign and colonial products, ?59,954,410, or a total export of.?.294-, 174, 118, making a surplus of imports over exports; ?156,854,842; or adding re-exports, foreign and colonial, amounting to ?59,954,410, which ought properly to be included, a total of ?216,809,252. It is understood generally by politicians and economists that a country which is importing, more than it exports, is living on its capital, and is going to the bad. England is able to allow her imports to exceed exports because she is in an exceptional position,, as the great money lender and the great carrying, country of the earth. Her circumstances are entirely different from ours. But, although she may be the

great money-lending nation, and receive goods in payment of interest" for money lent all over the world, the time is coming, and is coming very fast, when her people will not be satisfied -with the exports being so low, because they will clamour for employment, which they cannot' get from the interest earned in other countries. In the United States, 1897 and 1898, the domestic exports were ?206,401,520, and imports ?123,209,930, or a difference in her favour of ?83,191,590. This shows that in the trade with the' United Kingdom for- the year ending 30th June, 1898; America sent 43-93 of her exports to the United Kingdom, and only 1.7-67 of her imports came from the latter. In 1897 Germany exported to England to the amount of ?26,189,469, and imported from England ?2.1,602,42,6, showing, a. balance in. favour of-Germany of:' ?4,587,043. It will be seen, therefore, that England is not holding- her- own relatively with the protected countries -of the- world. It is always urged by our friends on the other side that protection; cannot go hand-in-hand with agriculture. But what are the facts 1 I will take the increase in manufacture and agricultural products in France, Britain, Germany; and the United States, Britain being a-free-trade State, the continental States strongly protectionist; . and - the United States almost prohibitive. In 1840,1 in France, manufactures represented ?264,000,000, and agriculture, ?269,000,000, and in 1896, the manufactures in that country represented ?596,000,000,- and agriculture, ?.416,000,000, showing an increase in 56 years of ?.479,000,000, one half of which was an increase in agricultural production. In Britain, in 1840, manufactures represented ?387,000,000, and agriculture, ?218,000,000, while in 1896 manufactures represented ?876,000,000, and agriculture had only grown ?12,000,000, as against a growth of over ?200,000,000 in France. The total increase in the 56 years in Britain was ?501,000,000 or some ?20,000,000, more than in France; but there was only ?12,000,000 growth in the shape of agriculture, showing that whatever free-trade did for Britain it certainly ruined that industry. In Germany, in 1840, manufactures represented ?150,000,000, and agriculture ?170,000,000, while in 1896, manufactures had grown to ?690,000,000, and agriculture to ?41 7,000,000, or a total of ?787,000,000, as against ?501,000,000 in Britain. The United States is the protected country we are told we must beware of, but 50 years ago that country was almost on all-fours with Australia to-day. In 1840, manufactures in the United States, represented ?96,000,000, and agriculture ?184,000,000, while in 1896, manufactures had grown to ?1,980,000,000, and agriculture to ?772,000,000, or a total increase in the 56 years of ?2,472,000,000, as against ?501,000,000 in Great Britain. It will be seen that the free-trade State comes third in this case, and is beaten by protectionist States "hands down," so to speak. I will now refer to a recent writer who has published a work entitled " Drifting." The writer's name is not given, but he is evidently well acquainted with the position of affairs at the present time, and, moreover, his work right through is that of a man who, whatever his politics may be, is sincerely patriotic. He is one who looks at things, not through coloured glasses, and who does not bury his head in the sand, as too many do to-day, but looks at facts as they represent themselves to him. He shows that in the fourteen years from 1884 to 1898 Britain fell off in her exports of 36 characteristic English productions from ?94,000,000 to ?65,000,000, and that in regard to 22 other productions characteristically English, the importations into England increased from ?35,000,000 to ?55,000,000, showing that England lost in this way in that period ?51,786,638. In her trade with the Australian States, leaving out Western Australia and Tasmania, and dealing only with New Zealand and the other four divisions, England declined during that period over ?7,000,000, while the trade of Germany and the United States with Australia increased by ?3,000,000. So that not only in the old country, but in her colonies, Britain is getting cut out of her business by protective States. Much was made by the member for West Sydney and other speakers about the "terrible curse of wealth monopoly" in the United States, and of the great gulf which was said to be growing gradually between rich and poor - the terrible destitution in those places because of the many millionaires. But what are the facts as regards the old land 1 I feel that in quoting these figures I am performing a difficult task, because naturally, one does not like having to do it. Still we have to show what the real position is, although we do not wish to say a word against the old country. We are every one of us heartily loyal. We love the motherland with all our hearts, but our affection does not blind us to the truth or to our own interests, because after all our skins are nearer than our coats. What is the case in England as regards the gap between the rich and poor? I will not take the statements of economists, of doctrinaires and theorists, but I will take men who do not at all resemble that class, who never go near the poor, and who would not let them touch the hem of their garments. What does Cardinal Manning say in the Nineteenth Century of 1890? He saysThere is no doubt that free-trade, freedom of contract, buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, are axioms of commercial prudence. They are hardly worthy of being called a science. Nevertheless this freedom of trade ' has immensely multiplied all branches of commerce and developed the energies of all our industrial population. But it has created two things, irresponsible wealth which stagnates, and the starvation wages of the labour market. This cheapest market is the market of the lack-lands, penniless, and helpless. In four of

Our western counties wages are so low that men come to London by thousands every year, and being here, crowd the dock gates and underbid the permanent working men, who have already reason not to be content with their hire. We have these two worlds always and openly face to face, the world of wealth and the world of want; the world of wealth saying in his heart - "I sit as queen over all toilers and traders," and the world of want not knowing what may be on the morrow. Every city and town has its unemployed; millions are in poverty. Agriculture languishes; land is going out of cultivation; trades are going clown; mills and furnaces are working half-time; strikes run through every industry. Is there a blight upon our mountainous wealth? At this day we have 3,000,000 poor who in the course of the year ore relieved in some way by the poor laws.

What about the gulf between the rich and poor now? What about the position in the old country? Can it be worse?

## Mr Poynton

- Why, John Burns says that the condition of New York is worse than the condition in the East end of London.

## Mr Deakin

- He does not live in New York, and he was there only a few weeks. <page>523</page>

# Mr MCCOLL

- What did Carlyle write? He said that he would not care if he could only bring the English working man up to the standard of the London Cab horse, because then he would have food and clothing and be cared for. What are the facts revealed in Mr. Charles Booth's book about East London? Out of a population of 908,000 there are 17,000 paupers, 11,000 homeless, and 100,000 starving. The casual labourer earns 18s. a week, and is in a state of chronic want. The very poor earn from 18s. to ?1 per week, and of these there were 203,000. In receipt of regular wages of from 20s. to 30s. per week, there are 377,000. In the higher class, who receive from 30s. to 50s. per week, there are 121,000. In the lower middle class, which comprises shopkeepers, clerks, ite, there are 34,000; and in the upper middle class 45,000; making a total of 908,000. For all London the estimate of paupers, homeless, and starving, and the very poor is 993,000 people. Of the 31j000,000 souls in Great Britain, exclusive of Ireland, there are homeless, starving, and in workhouses and asylums 1,905,500; on the fringe of want and misery there is another 1,000,000, or 3,000,000 altogether - one-tenth - the submerged tenth of General Booth. It is work, work, always work that they want. What- does Booth sa)r? -

The Divine curse is to them the most blessed. of benedictions - "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread," but alas for these forlorn sons of Adam, they fail to find the bread to eat, for society has no work for them to do. They have not even leave to sweat.

Going away from England, what has been the history of the growth of industry in every country in the world which has risen to anything like a high commercial status - which has increased in industry? With the exception of one people - who started their industries many hundreds of years ago, when there was practically no competition - namely, the Flemings, I make the statement that not one country in the world has grown in commercial and industrial prosperity under a policy of free-trade. I make this bold statement, and will be glad if any one can answer it. I have not been able to find an answer to it myself. I repeat, that with the exception of the Flemings, some 500 or 600 years ago, not one country has risen to commercial prosperity under a policy of free-trade, but one- after the other has adopted protection. England I have already spoken about. Let us take the case of Germany. In 1879 Germany adopted the policy of protection. For some 60 or 70 years before she had had an intermittent policy. She had adopted protection and had gone away from it. But in 1879, after the Franco-Prussian war, when Bismarck met the Reichstag, he said - "We will have to change our policy. We are hero a conquering nation, in receipt of an enormous indemnity from France; but France today, because of protection, is in a better and sounder

financial position than is Germany." He thereupon carried a policy of protection by a majority of 110 votes, and Germany has maintained that policy to the present day. The same policy is enabling her to run very closely on the heels of Great Britain in all industrial enterprises. In 1877, Russia adopted a similar policy, and she has adhered to it ever since. In Austria and Hungary it was adopted in 1882, and a large number of British firms, finding themselves shut out of the Austrian market, shifted their plants over to Austria, and opened out their industries there. I would ask - how can we expect manufacturers in other countries, who can get work done for cheaper wages, with all their manufacturing implements in order, and with money at 2? per cent., as against 4 per cent, here - -how can we expect them to come out here, and start industries which would find employment for the people, when they can have their goods admitted as cheaply as they are admitted now? France sometimes went back to a revenue Tariff - almost to free-' trade, but not quite - but for many years she has maintained a consistent protective policy, and is rather prospering under it, so that to-day half the people in France depend on agriculture. Italy, in 1887, adopted a Tariff of revenue and protection, and there 70 per cent, of the people are engaged in agriculture. In like manner, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal have been, and are all, highly protected at the present time, and they have no intention of changing their policies. In Europe, with the exception of Turkey, Britain, and Holland, which has adopted a revenue Tariff, every other country is at the present time; highly protected. America, of course, has gone to extremes. America can afford to do so, because she had her enormous- resources, and she had her enormous population. People flocked to her from tie old land, and America took them in and found for them in some way; but the time is-coming, I believe, when America will want to expand, and will follow the example- set by England in 1846. She will, probably adopt a free-trade Tariff, because she will be in a position to do so. Take the case of Canada, and what- do we find? Canada put on her first duties in 1849. In 1856 she increased them to 15 per cent., and in 1858 to 20 and 25 per cent. There-were several fluctuations- of" the Tariff up to 1879, and scientific protection' was then brought in. Two years- after the adoption of this Tariff, the deficit of ?1,000,0.00 had been wiped off; and' there was a surplus of ?600,000. As showing that under protection imports- do not fall off, I would point out that in 1'879 the imports into Canada represented a value of ?16,392,8S5, whilst in 1897 they were valued at ?-23,853,722. The exports in 1879 were worth ?14,29S-,250, and in 1897"they represented ?27,590,051. The imports for home consumption in I'8-79 were valued at ?16,068,321, whilst in 1-8-97 they represented a total value of ?22,258,805. That goes to show that; under a protective policy, every one of those countries has prospered more, relatively, than, has Great Britain,, and her- prosperity has not been owing to free-trade, but owing to her position as the great creditor and, carrying nation of the world. We are told that the protection of- distance is sufficient for our manufacturers here, without any other protection in the shape of duty. But what are the freights, and will it pay these great manufacturing combinations and proprietorships to transfer their industries to this Commonwealth, when they can send their products here at the rates I shall mention? The rate from England, by sailing, vessels; for pig iron, ranges from I.Ss. 9d. a ton to 45s. per ton. For chemicals; ttc., and rough goods, the rate is 30s. per ton, and for fine goods, 32s. 6d. per ton. As to steamers, the Peninsular and Oriental Company charge 70s. all round; and 80s. for fine goods, such as lace, books, &c. FromGerman}', the freight of steamers ranges from 20s. 9tl. per ton, for metals to 23s. per ton. Asphalt and ores are carried by weight, and from 34s. 6d. to 41s. per ton measurement is charged, the former amount being for rough goods; and the latter for fine. From New York, sailing vessels carry goods at 25s. per ton, and steamers-at 39s. per ton. These freights are less- than- are charged to carry the same class- of goods on the Victorian railways for a distance of 100 miles. And yet, in spite of low interest, low wages, and the fact that the industries of other parts of the world are fully established, free-traders- say that distance is sufficient' protection to our industries, and that protective duties are not required.

Mr O'Malley

- Distance is no protection at all.

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Mr McCOLL

- We find that in neutral markets the manufactures of protected countries are outrivaling British manufactures. Free-trade apparently means equality of ' conditions ; but does equality of conditions exist where there is freetrade? The shackles upon industry in Great Britain are not protective duties but tie

freedom of her ports. The writer of Drifting says -

Now, what is free-trade? or let us rather say, what ought free-trade to he? Free-trade, iu its fullest sense, in its ideal meaning? The term "free-trade" in itself has a certain charm to the ear; it sounds ideal, and it is ideal, or, rather, it is an idea that ought never to have been formed into the much abused and much misunderstood term "free-trade;" that misrepresents its real1 meaning. Free-trade is an equal opportunity for all to trade in perfect freedom on an equal footing, without favour and without restriction, with each other, unhampered . and unassisted, so that: the ablest shall have the best chance and may prosper. Slavery has had its day; so has freetrade. Free-trade, means at present slavery for England; it means that foreign nations are free to import unrestricted their own goods and to shut out ours. But it meanseven- more than that. It means an invitation and a grand opportunity for our foreign rivals to ruin our own-trade and industries, and, therewith, the. working classes, without any fear of retaliation. In these States we have adopted a policy of paternalism, and we are not now, at the bidding of the free-trade party, going to adopt the policy of laissez faire. We are not going back upon the policy- which has- made New Zealand, and is -making our own State. AVe have a great country, but it is valueless without population. AVe cannot get population unless people can obtain employment here, and they cannot obtain employment unless we have industries, and these industries, if the country is to grow, must be of a diversified character. AVe cannot get such industries unless we adopt the policy which has been adopted in every country in the world, the policy of giving Government assistance. We have to test our policy by the experience of other countries not by mere theories. We have to take the practical results that we see around us in contemporary history, and that are to be .gathered from the history of the past. We have not to follow the ideas of schoolmen who never did a hard day's work in their lives, and who have always earned their livings with their coats on their backs. We know the class of men who are advocating free-trade, and we must decide whether the country is to exist b)' exchanging its productions with foreign countries, or whether it is to live mainly upon its domestic industries. We must have foreign exchange, but we shall have all the more to exchange if we can increase the worth of our productions. We do not want our main factor of industry to be the employment of our people in connexion with foreign exchange. We have as the alternative to the highest development of our resources, and the fullest employment of our own people, the sacrifice of our home industries for foreign exchange. What we should aim at is the giving of employment to our people by establishing diversified industries, and in this way achieve the improvement of the home life of our people, and their social and moral development. Is the question one of ethics .or one of expediency1? We are told to follow the economists, and the honorable member for West Sydney asks what economist ever advocated protection? I could give him the names of a dozen economists who have advocated protection, though I admit that the English text books on the subject are out of date and out of print, and that for the last 60 years free-trade has been glorified, while protection has been trampled under foot. The University professors who teach our young men are free-traders. They have been suckled on the doctrines of Adam Smith and, English as they are, they will not open their eyes to the actual condition of affairs. Just as people who are born' Wesleyans remain Wesleyans all their lives, so these people, having been born freetrader's, are always free-traders. But we are not in a position to follow their lead. We must think for ourselves. We cannot follow the economists; we must adopt the! lessons of experience. With the exception; of the Flemings, no people ever rose to prosperity under free-trade, and there is no prosperous country in the world, except England, at the present time, which has adopted a -free-trade policy, and England is not advancing at the

England, at the present time, which has adopted a -free-trade policy, and England is not advancing at the same rate as protectionist nations. Lord Salisbury said lately that the wars of the future will be Tariff wars, not naval and military wars: and Tariff wars can ruin a country as surely as .any war carried on by the -expenditure of shot and shell. A free-trade country which has to fight against protected countries is like a naked man standing ivp against men who are clothed in coats of mail. Germany puts a duty of IOd. a bushel upon our wheat and 2d. a pound on our butter; and yet free-traders say that we should open our ports, and let German manufactures come into our markets free of duty. The honorable member for Parramatta would say that to refuse to do this is to be guilty of defective loyalty. But it is not. We must be loyal and true to ourselves. The only instance of defective loyalty that I have been witness to during the present debate is the action of the honorable member in moving an amendment upon the Address in Reply in the face of the protest of his leader, and in not withdrawing that amendment when he knew that his leader disapproved of it. I wish now to make an allusion or two to the question of white Australia, and

with these remarks I shall conclude my -speech. I am strongly-with the party who desire to see a white Australia created. The teachings of history from the time the Israelites entered Canaan, and were told to drive out the nations which were then established there, and suffered because they did not do so, prove that, whenever a nation has allowed free ingress into its country to coloured people of a lower type moral and physical deterioration has ensued. I do not care what industry may be threatened, or how many millions of money are invested in it, we want to .keep Australia for people who will live and think and work under the some conditions as ourselves. We find that, whenever races of a lower type are admitted into .a country, they sink down to a condition of slavery or serfdom, and that this condition of things breeds a lazy aristocracy, and demoralised the whole community, by leading to the physical, moral, and even religious degeneration of the people. We do not desire to do injustice, and we do not desire to act with undue haste; but we require definiteness. We desire to see the land cleared of these races which are now polluting it. I have not been into the northern parts of Queensland, hut honorable members who have been there relate stories of the physical, and moral pollution which has occurred where alien labour is . employed in the cultivation of sugarcane that are horrible to think of, and which I could not repeat. We want to put a stop to that state of affairs, and we can do so only by preventing the importation of alien labour. I fear that I have taken up more time than I should have done, but I had to put my case fully, and I thank honorable members sincerely for their kindness in listening to me so long. I hope that my words may not be spoken in vain, and I shall be only too glad if my statements can be answered and refuted by honorable members on the other side.

## Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I rise with much trepidation to speak in this debate, because it is the first time that I have addressed an assembly like this, in which I know there are many able men who have distinguished themselves in the Parliaments of the various States. I have therefore to crave considerable indulgence from honorable members for the remarks which I am about to utter.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear. <page>526</page>
- Mr HENRY WILLIS

- A cheer coming from the Attorney-General, especially when it is given to a member of the Opposition who is prepared to vote against the Ministry on the fiscal question at the earliest opportunity, gives one some encouragement. I take it that the fiscal question must be considered by this Parliament at a very early date; but it seems to me that honorable members desire to set it on one side rather than face it as they have been in the habit of facing it in the several Parliaments of their own States. There is, however, a great deal in the Governor-General's speech which I shall be able to support. No doubt those measures which are of the greatest importance will be dealt with first; but there is one measure which I think is worthy of .consideration at a very early date, and that is the acquirement of territory for the erection of the federal capital. If a Royal commission were appointed to take evidence and to visit the several sites in New South Wales which have been recommended, its report would be of great advantage to the members of this Assembly in enabling them to come to a decision on the subject. It may be necessary, as has been hinted by a member of the Ministry, that Members of Parliament should visit these sites as a body, in order that they may be able to form an opinion as to 'their suitability, and I am inclined to think that if they did so, they would find the information thus obtained of great advantage when they were asked to give a vote on the subject. In justice to New South Wales, that part of the federal compact which provides for the establishment of the seat of Government in that State should be carried out faithfully, expeditiously, and without unnecessary delay. The statement is made in the Governor-General's speech that a measure to provide a uniform franchise for the election of representatives to the Commonwealth Parliament, by the adoption of adult suffrage, is under consideration. That is a measure which I consider of very great moment, and it is one upon which I hold very decided opinions. I believe in the extension of the franchise to all adult subjects within the Commonwealth. As the women have intelligently used the franchise in New Zealand and South Australia, we have every reason to suppose that the result of their voting in other States will not be less satisfactory It is also said that there is to be a "firm restriction of the immigration of Asiatics." This matter, according to the statement of the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. V. L. Solomon, is one of grave importance, and we should deal with it very earnestly. We

are told that in the Northern Territory there is practically an Asiatic colony. There is certainly a Chinese colony there. We also know that the Japanese are very numerous on Thursday Island, and are making their way to northern Queensland. They are likewise to be found in other parts of Australia, in Geraldton, Western Australia, for instance. I remember some years ago that the traffic in that class of labour in those parts was so great as to cause serious concern to the people of South Australia. The present Minister for Customs wrote to the press and took a very active part in bringing under the notice of the people the extent of the traffic in coloured labour, and the evasion of the law with respect to the engagement of Asiatics. I happened to be in that part of the country at the time, and was able to confirm what had been said by others on the question. The matter is one that should be dealt with early, and the Government will have my support in so doing. We are told that-

The diminution and gradual abolition of the introduction of labour from the South Sea Islands is a matter under consideration. It would appear from what is stated by the Prime Minister that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the gradual abolition of this traffic; for the reason that all the agreements do not terminate at the same time, and so that those persons whose agreements terminate early may be enabled to employ fresh labour from the South Sea Islands. It is desired that the new agreements should terminate with the agreements longest in existence. This, it is pointed out, is a matter of justice to those who have to compete with the large planters, who have a considerable number of kanakas upon their fields. I am of opinion that the traffic should be stopped at once, for the following reason. Under intercolonial freetrade there is to be an uniform Tariff. When that takes place the sugar growers of northern New South Wales will have to compete with their European neighbours and with the planters of northern Queensland, who will have the advantage of the kanaka labour. As a representative of that part of the Commonwealth I am of opinion that it is only just to New South Wales that all the sugar-growers should start fairly together. Otherwise the effect of the policy of Government will be to stamp out in northern New South Wales industries that have been established at considerable expense. Immense sums of money have been invested in them, and only white people work in the plantations. At present they work them successfully, and there is no agitation in favour of the assistance of kanaka labour, such as the Queenslanders are so desirous of continuing. But it will be found, in regard to this question, as on several other occasions in the history of Australia, that where there is inferior labour to be imported, whether that labour be convict labour, or Chinese labour, or kanaka labour - where capitalists can employ that labour at a nominal figure - they are very loth indeed to part with it. But it is better to stop the traffic at once, than to run the risk of introducing into our country an inferior race of men to compete with white labour. The surrender of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth is stated to be under consideration. I am of opinion that the Northern Territory should be taken over at the very earliest opportunity. With very great interest I listened to the speech of the honorable member for South Australia, Mr. V. L. 'Solomon, who has lived in the territory, and is conversant with every detail connected with it. He told us that South Australia has spent upwards of ?2,000,000 in keeping up the Northern Territory, and has, with very great enterprise, thrown a railway into the interior, a distance of something like 833 miles. Parliament should consider the enterprise of South Australia in that respect, and the Northern Territory should not be allowed to continue to be a loss to the revenue of that State as it is now, to the extent of something like ?100,000 a year. If we take that asset from South Australia, and take with it the liabilities we should relieve that State to the extent of something like ?100,000 a year. That is a proposal which I shall be able to turn to some good account by way of argument later on in my speech. We are told that -

The construction of a railway connecting with these eastern communities the vast and isolated State of Western Australia has been under the consideration of the Cabinet.

I take it that this indication to Parliament is merely a feeler, to ascertain whether the Government will be able to get sufficient support in the construction of this railway. Although the Minister for Defence is at present in favour of the. line, he has not always been in favour of it, and I think it likely that in a few months' time he will cease to have any liking whatever for it. I think so, because there will be a report submitted by the expedition which has gone out to the interior, which will corroborate what was said by the right honorable gentleman when I was a boy, when he traversed that country. It was about 27 years ago. He said then that it was a cheerless, barren, inhospitable country. I have here by my side a map which shows that there is a very great deal of sand there, and the land has been stated in interjections by

the right honorable gentleman himself, in the course of discussions on the question, to be such as could not be cultivated. It will not produce any revenue in that respect. I am glad to find that the right honorable gentleman agrees with what I am saying as being a repetition of what he implied in his interjections. If there is to be no revenue from that part of the territory, how is the line to be made to pay? We are told that the revenue is to be raised by carrying cattle and produce to Kalgoorlie. Now, I take it that the Minister for Defence is a statesman of much astuteness. He is well aware that if the railway from South Australia to Kalgoorlie is constructed, it will knock on the head a proposal for a railway to Eucla and the establishment of a port there.

Sir John Forrest

- The rail way will go past Eucla.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The right honor- able gentleman said it was a straight line. In fact, I understood it was to be as straight as one of the lines in Russia the route laid down with a ruler. If so, it would not run to Eucla.
- To go to Eucla would be only a few miles longer about 40 miles. Mr HENRY WILLIS
- I agree that by going round a little distance you could go to Eucla, The people of Kalgoorlie will be satisfied to have a railway constructed by the State of Western Australia to Eucla, rather than have this matter set aside by the Federal Parliament. Give them a port at Eucla, and you will find that the construction of the large works at Fremantle and along the Swan River as far as Perth most expensive and injudicious works, if I may express that opinion, when a natural harbor exists at Owen's Anchorage will be unnecessary. If you spent some money on the bar there you would have a harbor to be proud of I know that countrywell.

Sir John Forrest

- The honorable member does not speak as though he knows it. Mr. HENRY WILLIS. - The point appears to be that they must not have a harbor at Eucla. I am not in favor of this proposed railway. I believe that the railway to Eucla constructed by the Western . Australia State is the natural outlet for produce being taken to and from that part of Western Australia. The trade for which South Australia is competing can be carried by water at a cheaper rate than that at which it is possible to Garry it by constructing a railway. The construction of the railway to the border would traverse a distance of 468 miles. To Eucla it would be a little further. According to the map submitted to the Convention in 1898, from Port Augusta to the border of Western Australia is a distance of something like 553 miles. I doubt whether South Australia will spend her money on the construction of such a line. If it is to be built for the sake of the trade, that can be secured by the construction of a line by Western Australia down to Eucla.

Mr Kirwan

- I think the honorable member is confusing Eucla with Esperance.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Esperance will answer quite as well.

Mr Kirwan

- Eucla would not answer at all.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It would not answer because as wise men they want one thing at a time, and just a transcontinental railway. As far as my vote goes they will not get it, because, as the Minister for Defence has said, it will mean a deficit of ?20,000 a year.

Sir John Forrest

- That is a fearful sum of money, is it not?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member for South Australia, Mr. V. L. Solomon, said there would be a loss of ?330,000 a year, and that, in my opinion, is more like the loss that will take place.

Mr Solomon

- I said the member for Swan stated the revenue would be ?320,000 a year.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The member for Swan said there would be an absolute loss of ?20,000 a year.

Sir John Forrest

- I said there would be a loss of ?20,000a year at the beginning. <page>528</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- South Australia, as far as I am concerned, shall have her railway, but it will be a true transcontinental railway, and not what I should call an InterState railway, such as that the member for Swan is in favour of I am in favour of giving South Australia a railway from the terminus at, I think, Oodnadatta down to Pine Creek, a distance very similar to that from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. If this line to the north were constructed, and the Government took over the Northern Territory, there would be achieved all that is claimed for the line advocated by the Minister for Defence. That honorable member says that if the railway to Kalgoorlie were constructed, several days would be saved in the mail service, and thus we should also be able to convey our soldiers to Western Australia for purposes of defence. But if the true transcontinental railway were built to the north, it would also be of use for purposes of defence, and, further, would enable us to bring the mails across the continent, through Siberia, and thus save something like ten or twelve days on the present English mail contract time. Considering all the benefits enumerated by the member for South Australia, Mr. Solomon, I shall give my support to the completion of the transcontinental Une to the Northern Territory in preference to the line advocated by the honorable member for Swan.

Mr Kirwan

- Will the honorable member not wait till lie has heard the report about the Western Australian railway? Mr HENRY WILLIS
- I shall wait to hear the report, and if it can be shown that it is a work advantageous from every point of view, I shall be in favour of the line, but I will not vary my decision to give my vote in favour of a railway to the Northern Territory. The enterprise of the people of South Australia is to my mind greater than the enterprise of the people of any other of the Australian colonies, because years ago they constructed the transcontinental telegraph line, when the people of other parts of Australia were afraid to touch the project. It may be said they now receive some reward for their enterprise, but it must be remembered that this was an enterprise that had failed repeatedly. If the South Australians had not been men of real "grit," devotion, and determination, this line would never have been constructed, and Australia would not have held the position she holds to-day.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The telegraph line pays 20 per cent.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It is said by the member for Parramatta that the people of South Australia are making 20 per cent, out of the telegraph line, and I am glad to find they are; but, at the same time, we know they are losing ?100,000 a year in keeping the Northern Territory going. I find it stated in the speech of his Excellency the Governor-General -

Estimates of expenditure will be submitted to you in due course, and will be economical. They will, however, safeguard the efficiency of the services of the Commonwealth.

Further on in the speech we read -

The fiscal proposals of any Federal Government must be largely dependent on the financial exigencies of the States.

When the Premier spoke at West Maitland, just before or about the time he completed the formation of his Ministry, he told us that the revenue necessary for the

Commonwealth would be something like ?8, 000, 000. The financial exigencies of the States were estimated at ?6,000,000, and the probable expenditure on the services taken over, and new federal expenditure, at something like ?2,000,000. Turning to the proceedings of the Australian Federal Convention held in 1897-8, it will be seen that the probable expenditure for services taken over was estimated at ?1,086,700, and the probable' new federal expenditure at ?245,825. Here we have ?1,332,525, and if we give the Premier a margin of something like ?167,475, it will take ?1,500,000 to manage the services and provide for the new expenditure of the Commonwealth. It was estimated that the expenditure under the "Braddon blot " would necessitate the raising of ?6,000,000, and not ?8,000,000, by the customs Tariff; and this I would like honorable members to take notice of. Under the "

Braddon blot " the ?1,500,000 allowed, according to tie estimates put on the table when the Convention was sitting, would enable the Government to carry out their responsibilities on a Tariff of ?6,000,000, rather than on a Tariff of ?8,000,000. The financial exigencies of the States may be so arranged by the Treasurer that the existing Tariff of the State of New South Wales, with certain modifications, as indicated by honorable members who have addressed the House from this side, will produce sufficient revenue for the needs of the Commonwealth.

Mr Deakin

Mr Deakin

- What does, the honorable member say about the figures of the member for Tasmania, Mr. Piesse ? <page>529</page>

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I shall refer to those later. The revenue from imports and excise duties per head of the population in New South Wales for the year 1899-1900 was ?1 5s. 7d., and the Premier, in his speech, subject to correction, said it was ?1 5s., or more. The Premier says the Tariff would raise something like ?6,000,000. This would reduce the taxation now levied on the people as follows: In Victoria, there would be a reduction of 13s. 5d.; in Queensland, ?2; in South Australia, 9s. Id.; in Western Australia, . ?3 3s. 7d.; and in Tasmania, ?1 4s. 3d. If tie Northern Territory be taken over by the Federal Government, South Australia will be relieved of a considerable loss which she now incurs by reason of having control of that part of the continent, and approximately the wage-earners, by such a reduction, would be relieved within the five States mentioned of something like ?2,000,000 of taxation.
- We will have to find some other means, because money is needed for the maintenance of the services. Mr HENRY WILLIS
- I was quite prepared for that interjection, and -I am glad it has been made. The financial exigencies of the States may be adjusted by direct taxation within those States. There may be an increase in the probate and stamp duty, in the land and income taxes, and in the dividend tax, in four at least of the States; and, for reasons that are patent, if Queensland and Western Australia adopted a land tax it would be a very excellent experience for those States and greatly to the advantage of Australia. I am dealing with this 'part of the question because I find free-traders are inclined to take it for granted that there may be a Tariff of ?8,000,000 or ?8,500,000, whereas by forcing on the States the necessity for economy within their borders, and raising revenue by taxation from those "springs of revenue," which the Premier desired should not be dried, we might from those sources realize sufficient to make ends meet. An honorable member for Tasmania interjected, "What about Tasmania?" But if Tasmania is in such straits that she must be assisted, it would be better for that State to receive a subsidy than that her condition should be a drag on the whole of the Commonwealth. It would be better that "Tassy," as one honorable member put it, should receive, as I believe she would be willing to receive, a subsidy, if it were the opinion of Parliament that there should be introduced a policy that would not bear heavily on the whole of the Commonwealth. \* The adoption of such a policy would be both practicable and just, and the masses of the people would be benefited by federation in a way which would strongly appeal to them, seeing that they have been told that federation is to be a great blessing. If the people of this great continent can be shown that it is practicable to bring in a free-trade Tariff - a Tariff that will reduce taxation per head of the population, and not only in ah. indirect way through the Custom House removing the possibility of those persons who receive what is called "protection," increasing the cost of living by something like 33 peicent., as is the case in America, then

Australian federation will have a real meaning .and .will afford that benefit which the people have expected to obtain. I find in His Excellency's speech -

To secure a reasonably sufficient return of surplus revenue to each State so "as tq fairly observe the intention of the Constitution, while avoiding the unnecessary destruction of sources of employment, is a work which prohibits 'rigid adherence to fiscal theories.

A free-trade Tariff is practicable, and, if the Government believe that protection would be better, that policy is also feasible under the Constitution. When the question of federation was before Australia, I fought under the Premier's leadership, and he said repeatedly in my hearing, and within hearing of thousands, that it would be possible to have either a free-trade or a protectionist Tariff under the Constitution.

Mr Deakin

- Hear, hear,

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- lam glad to hear the Attorney-General say "'hear hear," and, in passing, I would ask him why he, as a protectionist, has not adopted a straight-out policy of protection, and allowed us to take up the position of a straight-out opposition; so that if it' be well for the people of Australia that a protective policy should be introduced, the Government may be supported, or if the people think there should be a free-trade policy, the Government may be ousted, and that very readily, too. Will protectionists support the Government in" introducing a revenue Tariff, when they have it from the Attorney-General himself that a protectionist Tariff is possible? That the Government can raise sufficient .revenue by a protectionist Tariff to carry on the affairs of the -Common wealth' and return, as may be inferred from the. Attorney-General's interjection, to every State the amount-

Mr Deakin

- No ; the honorable member is mixing the two tilings together.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- Carrying on the affairs of the several States, as indicated in my earlier remarks.

Mr Deakin

- No; it is not possible.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable member says it is not possible. I say to him once more that 'he would throw back on the States 'the raising of the sum that would be sufficient-

Mr Deakin

- That is the policy the member for Wentworth repudiated.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It matters not who has repudiated it. Why should it not bs adopted 1

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member's party would repudiate it.

Sir William McMillan

- When the time comes.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The member for Wentworth says - "When the time comes," but I fail to see that the time is not now, because we might enable Tasmania or Western Australia, or any other needy State, to make ends meet, if it is in the interests of Australia that we should have a free-trade Tariff. The honorable member who preceded me stated that all the raw material of this continent should be manufactured here, and that through the goods being manufactured here all the money would be kept in the country and all the labour in the country would be employed, so that everybody would prosper. Now if that policy is to be carried to its logical conclusion, I think we should have a policy of prohibition. If we introduced even a prohibitive Tariff we could carry on the affairs of Government just as we might carry them on under a free-trade Tariff which raised ?6,000,000 of money. Protectionists believe that a prohibitive Tariff would protect the artisan, and provide work for every craft. But if they believe a little protection to be good, would not a great amount of it be better?

Mr Deakin

- The honorable member means, on the principle that if one breakfast is good for a man, so much the better would it be if the same man had six breakfasts?

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- The honorable members who preceded me said that prohibition would be better stall. Is that not contended by all who have advocated protection in the local Legislature here? Honorable members have been told that the staple products, such as wool, leather, tallow, would be manufactured into finished clothing as harness and soap.

Mr.Deakin. - Tallow manufactured into clothing!

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- We should have the tallow used up in the making of soap. These are arguments which have been used

by the Attorney-General himself, but I find that of late years he is inclined to think that those industries that have been fostered for the last 35 years ought by this time to be able to stand alone, and so do I. Where are the protectionists, that they allow the Government to continue in office, when instead of giving them protection, they have to come over to the opposition side and have practically adopted a free-trade policy? I find that the Government say that a rigid adherence to fiscal theories would cause the destruction of sources of employment. Does that mean that protection as a policy has broken down in Victoria? The loss of population that has taken place in Victoria and the losses that have occurred in other ways to her manufactories, are arguments that I will not bring forward, because honorable members have had a great deal of them. Do the arguments put forward by some honorable members mean that a free-trade Tariff such as is operating in New South Wales would lead to the unnecessary destruction of sources of employment? This is the argument used by the Ministry in this part of the speech of the Governor-General. The honorable member who preceded me challenged this side to show that there was ever any progress made in free-trade countries. Since 1896, when free-trade was introduced in New South Wales the hands employed in factories have increased by something like 11,000, the number to-day being only 5,000 fewer than the number employed in the factories of Victoria. But I am not desirous of contrasting one State with another, because there has been so much of it already, and probably honorable members have had enough of that part of the subject. A great deal could be said, however, from other points of view in favour of New South Wales as a State, which has been able to carry on, and maintain her manufactures under a freetrade Tariff, and that to a greater extent and in a better way, than smaller industries have been carried on in the State of Victoria. We find that in Victoria they are dismissing men and taking on women and little children. In New South Wales they are dismissing women and taking on men, and the little children find their way to the play-ground.

Mr. Higgins. - Cruel. They should not dismiss women.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- I take it as a compliment that there should be an interjection from the honorable member for Northern Melbourne, and I ask him to devote a little attention to what I am saying. The increase in New South Wales of the land under cultivation since we have had a freer port which allows all the implements to come in free-

Mr Deakin

- It increased faster under the Dibbs Tariff.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It did not, and I will direct the attention of the Attorney-General to the experience of New South Wales under a free-trade Tariff, and the honorable member for Northern Melbourne will, I hope, lend me his ear. From 1853 to 1865 the increase in imports in New South Wales' was 67 per cent.; in exports, 111 per cent.; in revenue, 135 per cent.; and in population, 80 per cent. That continued for a number of years. From 1865 to 1-873, I find that there was a -duty of 5 per cent, advalorem, and certain specific duties, in operation in New SOUth Wales. During that period I find that the State did not improve in any degree whatever. It rather went back.

An Honorable Member. - That was under a revenue Tariff.

Mr HENRY WILLIS

- It was under a similar Tariff to that which is proposed by the present Administration.

Mr Deakin

- There is no Tariff proposed yet.

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Mr HENRY WILLIS

- We have an indication of what the Ministerial intentions are. We are told that there must be a Tariff which will raise from ?8,000,000 to ?8,500,000. The Ministry raises the amount by half-a-million occasionally. I think it will be a Tariff such as I have indicated, and if this debate is continued till every honorable member has spoken, I think one might fairly sit down and make out the Tariff that will be introduced. The Government are going to introduce a Tariff that will be protective, and that will also be revenue-producing, and that is a similar Tariff to the one I have been referring to. The Administration I was speaking of continued in power for eight years in New South Wales and made no progress. From

1873 to 1884, we returned to free-trade, and therefore we had an increase of imports by 120 per cent. Exports increased by 120 per cent., revenue 193 per cent., and population 70 per cent. These are reasons, and very fair reasons, I think, why I am in favour of a free-trade Tariff, and form a complete answer to the honorable member who preceded me, and who wished to know if there was a country in the world that had progressed under a free-trade Tariff? The Tariff I have been speaking of was introduced by Mr. Deas Thomson. It was a Tariff similar to that in operation in Great Britain at the time, with two or three more articles on the list. The Tariff operating in New South Wales at the present moment is one of the freest that has ever been imposed in Australia, and the marvellous increase of prosperity that has attended that State under that Tariff should merit the attention of all thoughtful men. We are told also in the speech of the Governor-General -

Revenue must, of course, be the first consideration; but existing Tariffs have in all the States given rise to industries, many of which are so substantial that my advisers consider that any Policy tending to destroy them is inadmissible. A Tariff which gives fair consideration to these factors, must necessarily operate protectively as well as for the production of revenue.

The Prime Minister, at Maitland, stated that the Customs would have to contribute about ?8,000,000 sterling. This sum would provide ?2,000,000 for Commonwealth purposes, which is ?500,000 in excess of the estimated expenditure agreed upon at the Federal Convention. Here is half-a-million sterling in excess of the estimate of those experts who sat in that Convention when this Constitution was framed. That there would be this excess was admitted by the Prime Minister in his speech the other day, when he said that at the expiration of five years the Government might be able to bring ih an old-age pensions scheme, though it would not be a very liberal one. Indeed, it could not be a very liberal one, because the scheme that is likely to be in operation in all the States, following the example of those which have adopted it, will cost ?1,000,000 a year to effectively carry out. As the Prime Minister will have only ?500,000 available, he will be able to provide only half the sum necessary for this purpose. It is admitted, therefore, that the Commonwealth expenditure mil not amount to ?2,000,000, that its necessities will not be more than the sum outlined in the Estimates, namely, ?1,500,000, which will give the Government a very large margin to play with. Is it desirable that the Government should have such a large surplus? It is not. Therefore, I go back to the contention that it is not necessary to introduce a Tariff that will raise so much as ?8,500,000. But I would point out that a Tariff which would raise ?8,000,000 sterling may meet with the approval of the Treasurers of the several States, because it would make it so much easier for them to manage their finances. There is one State in the group in which such n proposal would not meet with acceptance, and that is the State of New South Wales, because she would obtain from that Tariff something like ?800,000 more than she requires for carrying on the affairs of government. The Premier of New South Wales recently stated that he expects to get from the Tariff of the Commonwealth Government something like ?800,000. I ask, then, will this House penalize the masses of the people of New South Wales and take from them this money that is unnecessary for the government of that State. That is a matter that the right honorable the Minister for Customs might give some attention to. The wage-earners of New South Wales, like those of every other country, have to work very hard for the wages they obtain. Mr Deakin

- It is free-trade which requires the wage-earners of New South Wales to work so hard. Mr HENRY WILLIS
- Now the proposed Tariff will take out of the pockets of the people of New South Wales ?800,000 more than is required for the services of the Commonwealth. That sum will be returned to them in excess of the sum required to meet the obligations of their own State. But a Tariff of ?6,000,000 would be sufficient for the purposes of the Commonwealth, and if only that amount of revenue is raised, a very small sum per head of population will have to be paid by the people of the several States, and the wage-earners of the Commonwealth will benefit to the extent of something like ?2,000,000. Can there, then, be any doubt about it being the correct thing to make the taxation per head of population as low as possible? If honorable members have followed the arguments used by the protectionist press for the last 20 years, they will find that newspapers like the Adelaide Advertiser and the Melbourne Age have stated that you should not take out of the pockets of the wage-earners more than is required for the purposes of government. They say that you should, as far as possible, protect local industries, but that you should of it in such a way that the people will not have to pay anything for that protection. Of course it is a fallacy to

expect that that can be done. We know that the wage-earner has always to pay for protection, and according to the great authorities on the subject, he has to pay 33 per cent, more for articles which he purchases under protection than he has to pay under free-trade. I have no intention, however, of following this argument any further to-night. As I have succeeded in making the Treasurer uncomfortable, and have drawn from the Attorney-General a large number of interjections', I may assume that I have caused honorable gentlemen to think that the proposals of the Government are not the best, in the interests, of Australia as a whole, that could be brought forward. I would again repeat . that it is not necessary to raise so much, money as it is proposed to raise from the State of New South - Wales. If it becomes., a question of subsidizing Tasmania, I believe the people of New South Wales will readily subscribe whatever sum is necessary..

#### Mr O'MALLEY

- Tasmania does not want. . a subsidy ; she wants justice.

Mr. HENRYWILLIS. The people of 'New South Wales would readily allow the payment of such a subsidy to the State of Tasmania, even out of the surplus due to New South Wales after the distribution of the 75 per cent, of the total revenue raised, which is provided for by the Braddon, provision. <page>533</page>

# Mr R EDWARDS

- It is not. my intention to speak at any great length, to-night, but there are one dr two paragraphs in the Governor-General's speech) upon which I should like to make a few. remarks. The first paragraph to which. I shall refer is that which states that -

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

The latter part of the paragraph refers more particularly to the abolition of kanaka, labour in Queensland, and I am glad that'.the "gradual abolition of importation" is\*referred to, because any hasty legislation that would give a check to the sugar industry would bring ruin and disaster to a great, many of our people. I have listened with pleasure to the speeches which have been delivered by honorable members on both sides of the House, many of which I considered very able and moderate in tone. I was especially interested in those parts of honorable members' speeches which dealt with the fiscal question and the abolition of coloured labour; but I have been forced to the conclusion that the majority of honor: able members on both sides of the chamber have displayed a considerable want of knowledge of the conditions under which coloured labour is employed in the north . of Queensland. I do not blame honorable members for their want of information on this subject: it is their misfortune to be ignorant upon it. Possibly, they have not visited the tropical portions of this- continent, and, owing to their want 'of information, are hardly competent to legislate upon such an important matter as- the abolition of coloured labour there. With a view to securing 'information which would enable honorable members to deal more justly with the question, I think that a Royal commission or a select committee should be appointed to visit the various plantations- where coloured labour is employed, to take evidence on the subject, and it is possible that when a measure dealing with this question is put before the House, a motion will be moved for the appointment of such a commission. I received to-day from the general council of the Queensland' Chamber of Commerce a resolution which had just been passed by that body, and which, as the members of the council- are a body of merchants, whose opinions should be respected, should carry some weight with honorable members. The council are of opinion that a Royal commission should be appointed to make an inquiry into the conditions of the employment of coloured labour before legislation is passed for its abolition, and I would suggest that such a commission should be composed of members of this House, and that they should be expected to work for a week at least in the sugar plantations of North Queensland in the month of November or December. If that were insisted upon, whatever else happened, honorable members would come back here with some practical information on the subject. I do not want to appear to be an advocate for the employment of coloured labour, because I am anything but that: I am as much in favour of the creation of a white Australia as any honorable member can be. But ?7,000,000 of private capital have been invested in the sugar industry of Northern Queensland, and in the course of years the industry has grown until it has become one of the most important industriesthere. Any hasty legislation for tie abolition of coloured labour would, by its effect upon the sugar industry,- bring disaster to many thousands- of our people. If anything is to be done, let it be done

gradually, and without injury to those who are earning their living by the employment given by this industry. It will not be the planters alone who will suffer by the destruction of tins industry. In a. leading article which appeared- in the Melbourne Argus of May 23rd it is- stated -

Big interests are involved. There are 22,500 white persons- and five millions of money employed in the cultivation and manufacture of sugar in Queensland. And, of course there are many thousands of women and children dependent on the white workers; Senator O'Connor mentioned one mill and its associated plantations in the Bundaberg district on 'which, in the slack season, 173 kanakas receive ?3,450, and 330 Europeans receive ?17,402: and in tie busy season 197 kanakas- receive ?2,028; and 620 Europeans receive ?10,502. So the European interest in the industry is incomparably more important than the kanaka interest.

The interests of Europeans in the industry are far greater than the interests of the kanakas. It gives employment to thousands of? white men on the plantations themselves, and it gives employment to thousands more in connexion with the handling of the sugar on the wharfs, and. its shipment to other places, while it also gives employment to clerks in mercantile houses. Then many thousands more are working in coal mines and in foundries which are maintained by the sugar industry. It is well known that for every ton of sugar which is manufactured, between two or three tons of coal are consumed. About two months ago, tie leader of the Government was in; Queensland, and went as far north as Bundaberg; but I think it is- unfortunate that he did not go further north;, and obtain a more practical acquaintance with the condition of affairs that exists there. Honorable members may know by repute Walker's foundry at Maryborough, in Queensland. I was present when tie Prime Minister spoke of having gone through that beehive of industry, where 700 men are employed from one year's- end to tie other,, and I heard him say that the foundry supplied no less than ?30;000 worth of machinery a year for use in connexion with the manufacture of sugar. Honorable members will therefore understand how important the sugar industry is. It. will be understood how much it assists in the welfare and prosperity of this important State. The farmers are interested in the sugar industry. Possibly honorable members may think that farmers can have very little to do with the growth and manufacture of sugar. They are, however, greatly interested, because the sugar planters do not grow their own produce - neither the produce for human consumption nor the horse feed. They have to get it elsewhere. The farmers of South Queensland supply a great deal of this produce. One planter alone consumes no less than 30,000 bags of maize every year., and no less than ?300,000 worth of produce is sent up to the district annually. It cannot be imagined for a moment that this is all supplied by the farmers of Southern Queensland. Some of it comes from New South Wales and Victoria. So that I maintain that the continued welfare and prosperity of this industry must tend to the benefit of Victoria and New South Wales, as well as of Queensland. I venture to say that there are no less than 50,000 white men, women, and children deriving their living from the sugar industry. I ask honorable members: are we prepared to sacrifice an industry which is of so much importance to the welfare and prosperity of the sister States? This is not merely a local matter. It is a national industry, and the Commonwealth as well as the State will suffer if its progress is in any way checked. I have heard it said by several honorable members that the planters employ the kanakas because of their cheapness. That is not the case. I have it on the best authority that planters would gladly change that labour for white labour if it were possible to obtain white labour. The planters do not employ kanaka labour because of its cheapness, but because of its reliableness. There are times during the crushing season when the stoppage of the work for a week would mean disaster for the planters. White men at that particular time, according to the experience of Queenslanders, will be likely to strike, thinking that they will then be able to get what they demand from the planters in the way of an increase of wages. The kanaka never does that. He is there at all times. But he is not cheaper than the white man for this reason - the white working man in Queensland works better than the kanaka. I have heard it said that it takes three kanakas to do the work of one white man.

Mr Ronald

- It is slave labour.

Mr R EDWARDS

- No, it is not slave labour. None are better treated in Northern Queensland than are the kanakas. Mr Kingston
- What is the average wage paid?

#### Mr R EDWARDS

- They receive ?6 a year, food, clothing, and medical attendance. Their passages are paid to Queensland. All this represents a considerable sum. Further, the money for their return passage is lodged with the Government on their arrival in Queensland. So that I maintain that the actual money paid for each kanaka in wages and in other ways is not less than would be paid to a white man; but the point is that it is reliable labour, and if reliable white labour were obtainable, I am quite sure none would rejoice more than would the sugar planters themselves.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- The kanakas die out well, do they not?

Mr R EDWARDS

- They are diminishing in Queensland, at any rate. Whether they die out or not I cannot say. It is said that the kanakas compete with the white men; but they do not. In Queensland the kanakas are used entirely for field work. They are not even allowed to drive a horse and cart. They are doing work that hitherto white men have not taken to. White men have attempted the work, but they say that it is only fit for slaves. If white men can do this kind of work it is strange that they, instead of the kanakas, are not doing it. The kanakas do not remain in Queensland. They do not intermarry. They never become tradesmen. I venture to say that no honorable member in this House has ever known a kanaka to become a storekeeper or a tradesman. Surety, then, a few thousand kanakas will not prevent this country from remaining a white Australia. In a few years time the kanaka question will settle itself, for they are gradually going away from Queensland. Ten years ago there was a larger number there than there are to-day. There are about 8,000 at the present time.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Will the industry survive when they have gone ?

Mr R EDWARDS

- We hope so. The quantity of sugar produced with some thousands fewer kanakas is much larger than it was a few years ago. We look forward to having no kanakas at all . But we do not want to do anything to injure the prosperity of the industry; and I ask honorable members not to allow the immediate abolition of or stoppage of the introduction of this labour into Queensland. This is all we are asking for.

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Mr JOSEPH COOK

- Less kanakas and more sugar.

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Mr R EDWARDS

- With more central mills, with the cutting up of large estates into moderate sized farms, and with improved machinery, the kanaka will become a thing of the past as far as Queensland is concerned. But there is a far more dangerous element than the kanakas, and that is the Asiatics. The introduction of Chinese and other Asiatics is a graver danger than the introduction of a few thousand kanakas, who are never seen anywhere but in Queensland. The abolition of Asiatic immigration will be very difficult indeed. I observed in this morning's Argus that in the last session of the Queensland Parliament a Bill was passed authorizing the expenditure of money upon central mills. On the initiative of the labour party a section was inserted prohibiting the employment of coloured labour. The Royal assent has been withheld from that Bill according to to-day's cablegram. Possibly the same difficulty will have to be faced if anything is done with regard to the prohibition of the immigration of alien races to Australia. I hold that more information is required before this question is finally dealt with. The kanakas do not remain with us. Few stay in Australia. Some of them enter into an engagement for another three years, at the expiration of the first term, but not very many. They never take any money away; they spend all they earn. They give us all their labour, and pay back to us what they receive. Owing to climatic conditions, Northern Queensland, and possibly the Northern Territory of South Australia, with other parts of this continent, will grow, in addition to 'Sugar, tea, coffee, - rice, and other products. It is a question whether, in the tropical climate of Australia, it would be possible to cultivate these things with white labour. I doubt it very much, though I am as anxious as is any honorable member that we should have none but white labour in this Commonwealth. A very important question which is likely to come before the House during this session, relates to the Federal Tariff. The Governor-General's speech says : -

Revenue must, of course, be the first consideration; but existing Tariffs have, in all the States, given rise to industries many of which are so substantial that my Advisers consider that any policy tending to destroy them is-inadmissible. A Tariff which gives fair consideration to these factors must necessarily operate protectively as well as for the production of revenue.

Now, sir, this question is causing a considerable amount of anxiety amongst the mercantile community, owing to the uncertainty of what the Tariff is likely to he. Therefore, it should be settled with as little delay as possible. Last week the leader of the Opposition took upon himself to criticise the federal elections and the principles upon which honorable members have been returned. Referring to Queensland, he satisfied himself that that State had returned members who would support him, but he left out one member whom he described as doubtful. 'That one was .myself. - Had the right honorable gentleman attended any of the many meetings I held in the division of Oxley he would have had no doubt as to the principles on which I was returned to the Federal Parliament. In tie first place, I distinctly stated that if elected I would support the Government of the present Prime Minister. I felt that as he had been called upon by the people of Australia to form the first Federal Government he was entitled to every consideration and fair play, and to a full opportunity of showing what he meant to do for the Commonwealth, and for tie establishment of federation on a healthy foundation. The important matters to be dealt with cannot be settled in a month or two, and I told my constituents that any attempt to overthrow the Government without giving the Prime Minister an opportunity of showing what his policy was, would be disastrous so far as federation was concerned. The leader of the Opposition has been good enough to acknowledge to me in conversation that he made a mistake in classifying me as doubtful. He ought to have said that he did not know. But we are all liable to make mistakes. At the elections I stated I was a protectionist because, as I understand, protection will tend to foster industries and establish new ones, as well as to provide' employment, and, I trust, better wages for the workers generally. I confess I do not believe in the extreme Tariff existing in Victoria. The days of 40 and 50 per cents, are numbered. Whether we call ourselves moderate or reasonable protectionists, it matters not, but I take it the Tariff' Bill will be in the direction of fostering and encouraging native industries. I have no desire to prolong the debate, but I would just mention that when the old-age pensions, women suffrage, and the conciliation and arbitration measures are brought before the House, I shall give them my very earnest consideration. The short time I have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of the honorable members of the House has given me a great deal of pleasure, for I have received every courtesy at their hands, and I am satisfied that the object, aim and desire of every honorable member is very much the same, namely, to carry out a determination to use their best endeavours in building up in Australia a great, a powerful, and a prosperous nation.

#### Mr WILKINSON

- It was only this afternoon I made up my mind to address the Chamber on the Address in Reply. That was after the speech delivered by the honorable member for Brisbane; and had I had any hesitation in following out my determination to speak, it would have been sent to the winds by the speech I have just heard delivered by the honorable member for Oxley. I came into the House pledged by one of the constituencies of Queensland to use my best endeavour to secure the abolition of alien labour of every shade and every colour at the earliest .possible moment. I am quite satisfied that the majority of the votes polled in Queensland, not only for this Chamber, but for the Senate, were given in the same direction. It is idle to be told the time is coming when the kanaka question will settle itself, and, in the same breath, that sugar cannot be grown in northern Queensland without the aid of black labour. How is the question to settle itself if sugar cannot be grown in northern Queensland without the aid of coloured labour 1 We are told repeatedly that white men cannot do the work, but that argument is met by proof that white men can do the work, seeing that while the production of sugar has doubled, the number of kanakas engaged in the industry has been reduced by nearly 1,000. That in itself is proof that sugar can be grown, and is being grown, by white labour. Then the opponents of the abolition of this alien labour fall back on the statement that white labour is unreliable. But why is that ? Simply because the industry has not offered the wage that would make white labour reliable. What this House has to do is to devise some means to enable the sugar industry to pay a wage that will make white labour reliable, and I am satisfied that white workers can and will do the work if they are paid to do it. The verdict of Queensland has been given on this question, not only during the recent election, but also on the occasion of the referendum on the question of federation itself, and, perhaps, the highest vote polled on that occasion was in the sugar

districts. I cannot say that I represent a sugar district, but I do represent a constituency which is just on the fringe and which contains tens of thousands of acres of Sugar cane, and I have travelled and 'made myself acquainted, as well as any man could in casual visits, with the conditions under which sugar is grown. I am sorry, indeed, to hear an authority like the member for South Australia, Mr. V. L. Solomon, speak in the way he did this evening, when he said there was a part of this continent, in the northern territory of South Australia, which was unlit in certain occupations for the labour of white men. As an Australian native I refuse to believe that, because the white man can accommodate himself to any circumstances.

#### Mr V L SOLOMON

- - I said distinctly the white man was unfit for tropical agriculture, but not for mining. <page>537</page>

## Mr WILKINSON

- I understand that. I am old enough to remember when, much further down the coast than Townsville, malaria carried white people off much as it is carrying them off now further north. I remember when fever and ague were very prevalent about Brisbane itself, and fever and ague I take to be a form of malaria. I remember when the railway was being constructed towards Roma, and when the navvies who were engaged in turning up the scrub died, as was said at the time, "like rotten sheep." This malaria, as it appears to me, is a result of opening up soil in virgin country, and is not so much a matter of climate. But, while we say the white man cannot stand this work in these latitudes, let us ask ourselves whether the kanaka stands it - if we look at this matter from a humanitarian point of view, let us ask ourselves that question. These kanakas are recruited from the islands, and are supposed to be brought to Queensland hale, strong men, with a certificate of health; but the fact is that their death rate is something like 47 per thousand, as against twelve per thousand of the' white population, including nien, women, and children, who are occupying northern parts of the State, and doing well. On the authority of an honorable member who preceded me, and who represents a constituency in Queensland, we know that large holdings on sugar plantations have been cut up, and that white families are carrying on tropical agriculture in some of these places and if white families can do that, why cannot sugar be grown under similar conditions and circumstances in the same locality? Does the fact that white families are profitably working agriculture make the white man or his family immune from the complaints or diseases which arise through working in tropical countries? If a white family can do this work, cannot other white men do it if it be made worth their while?

An Honorable Member. - Pay him.

#### Mr WILKINSON

- Pay him; that is the thing. When seeking election I went a little further than the Government do in the speech of His Excellency the Governor General, and urged that the recruiting of kanakas should be stopped immediately. I would allow those islanders who are here to remain if they wish, and compel planters who have entered into agreements with them to send them back to the islands if they desire to go. By that means there would be a gradual, though not too slow diminution of kanakas; and if kanakas were required to clear tropical scrub on the northern rivers and make the land fit for the planting of sugar, there would be sufficient of them in the State to engage in the work, while the white man took up the other part of the work of the sugar-growing. It was said that the kanakas are confined to certain classes of work in the plantations, and the member for Melbourne Ports interjected that he had seen five drays driven by kanakas. But I have seen two drays driven by one kanaka, and I have seen kanakas engaged in all kinds of work; they are not confined to trashing and cutting cane, but when the inspector's back is turned they engage in all kinds of occupations.

An Honorable Member. - There is legislation against that.

## Mr WILKINSON

- There may be an Act, but it is impossible to keep a policeman watching every kanaka. I know kanakas, not only engaged in agriculture, but others who have been here for 30 years, having been brought over to grow cotton, and who are still here engaged in driving coaches and carriages, and doing gardening and all kinds of work. But there is an aspect of the question that has been lost sight of, namely, the influence of the presence of these aliens on the morals and health of the community. I would ask honorable members who have not been in the northern parts- of Queensland, to make themselves acquainted with

the conditions of life there. Let them make inquiries of those who have been there as to the contamination of the race of this young nation. To me it is a far more serious thing to have the blood of this young nation contaminated, as we know it is being contaminated by this alien race, than it would be to lose the sugar industry. I have no desire to see the sugar industry perish, but I would rather see that come about than see the race we hope will live and build up a nation, perish and become unworthy of its ancestors. Yet that is what is going on. In some of the northern towns may be seen a polyglot population, a mixture of almost all the races of the earth. And what is the fact with regard to the health of the community? A few years ago none of us knew what a leper was, except by reading of him in the old Book, in which it is said the people cried "Unclean, unclean," and got out of his way. Now we have lazaredes established in every State.

An Honorable Member. - For Europeans? <page>538</page> Mr WILKINSON

- For Europeans, too, unfortunately. We have two lazarettes in Queensland, one on Stradbrooke Island for whites, and one on Friday Island for kanakas. I want to know how lepers came to this country. Did Englishmen, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Danes, or Germans bring the disease here? No; it came from the islands of Polynesia, and from China and other parts of Asia, and this is one of the prices we are paying for the sugar industry. Honorable members may talk about the large amount of money invested in that industry, but Queensland has a bigger stake than the ?7,000,000said to be thus invested. I have been at the homes of some of the lepers, and would ask honorable members to think of the misery that is entailed. I have seen homes from which the leper has been taken, and we know that at public schools in Queensland, children of lepers thus removed have been refused admission. It would have been ten thousand times better for the children had their father been carried out of his home dead. There would have then been no refusal to admit the orphans- to the school, and no social ostracism; but because the man had been taken to the lazarette, other parents declined to allow their children to mix with the children of the leper lest there should be contagion. And those parents cannot be blamed, although the doctors tell us the disease is not contagious. If the disease is not contagious, how is it we find Eather Damien, after fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen years at Molokai, dying of leprosy; and how is it we find nearly all of those who come in contact with lepers, contracting and dying, of the disease. No doctor can persuade me the disease is not contagious. I have seen the lepers in tie lazarette,, and if honorable members saw some of the scenes there, they would come to the conclusion that there is a bigger consideration in settling the question of alien labour, than the ?7,000,000 said to be invested in the sugar industry. I am speaking, warmly because I believe this is tie biggest question before the Federal Parliament. Bigger than the Tariff question, bigger than, defence questions, bigger than the administration of any of the departments we have taken over, is this one question of keeping our race a pure and a white race, worthy of the people from whom we sprung. Australia has held her own in the universities of the world; she has held her own on the sports ground; she has held her own on the battle field; and are we going to suffer these inferior races from Asia and Polynesia to come in and cause a degeneration in the race? I hope we shall not, no matter how much capital may be said to be invested in the sugar industry. Let us preserve that capital; I believe it can be preserved. It was said by one of tie speakers in this- debate, and by the Honorable Angus Gibson,, in the State Parliament of Queensland, that, if a duty of ?5 per ton were levied on all sugar introduced from other countries, we would be giving enough protection to the sugar-growers in Queensland, and the planters- could then afford to grow sugar and pay wages to white men. Mr JOSEPH COOK

- -What is the duty now?

Mr WILKINSON

- There is a duty of ?5 per ton in Queensland, of ?3 per ton in New South Wales, of ?6 per ton in Victoria, of ?3 per ton in South Australia, and I believe that in Western Australia the article comes in free. Under the system under which we have been working, these duties operated against the Queensland sugar-growers just as they operated against Java and the Mauritius, but, under intercolonial freetrade, Queensland will have the run of the intercolonial markets, whilst we hope for a duty on sugar coming, from other lands where cheap labour is employed. By that means the desire of Mr. Gibson will be realized as well as the desire of those who wish to see a white Australia. I have no wish to speak at any length in

this debate. I would not have spoken at all, but that I thought it was in the interest of the State I come from that I should make these few remarks in rebuttal of -the statements made by two other Queensland, representatives. So far the debate on the Address in Reply seems to have been almost a duel between New South Wales and Victoria. At the same time, I am free to admit that the debate has been of a very high order. It has been quite a pleasure to listen to the very able speeches delivered from both sides- of the House, and as an Australian, I am proud that Australia can assemble such a galaxy of talent as we find here in the first Federal Parliament. I do not think any country in the world need be ashamed of the speeches that have been delivered, or of the knowledge of tie subjects- under discussion which has been exhibited during the course of this, debate. At the same time, when we are discussing the- question of free-trade or protection, it does seems to me that the whole of the arguments of tie protectionist have been directed to the protection of manufacturing industries-. But there are certain producing industries that also require protection. I believe that most of the supporters of the Government recognise that fact, although it appears to have been lost sight of- in tie debate:

Mr Deakin

- Because the attack has been on manufacturers, the reply has been to the attack. <page>539</page>

Mr WILKINSON

- I refer to this matter because I come from a part of Australia which comprises what they call " the great maize belt." In times of the scarcity of maize we have had ship-loads of the grain coining to-Sydney, from whence it was shipped to Queensland in spite of the duty of Sd. per bushel, thus underselling the Queensland maize-grower. This maize comes from California and the convict settlement of New Caledonia. Queenslanders thought at first that it was grown in New South Wales, because it came from Sydney. Just as the Queensland farmer began to think he was going to get a decent price for his produce, in would come a few ship-loads of this maize and thus ruin his chances. It seems to me a man cannot be in favour of a white Australia - it may appear a bit presumptious to say se - and of free-trade at one and the same time. If we are going to admit the product of cheap labour from other lands, leaving the moral aspect of the question out of consideration, we might just as well admit the cheap labourer himself, because he will spend something here, however little, whereas if we admit the product of his labour, we have to compete with the labourer just the same as if he were actually in our midst. I think the honorable member for Wentworth quoted the thousands of miles of ocean carriage from Great Britain, Germany, and European countries, as sufficient protection for goods manufactured in Australia. But we have to recognise that there are nations much nearer to our doors than are Great Britain a,nd Germany. We have "in the East a nation recently awakened, Japan, whose people can live upon one-fourth to one-tenth of the cost at which we desire our white workers to live.

Sir William McMillan

- And who will want our beef and mutton very soon, and our wool.

# Mr WILKINSON

- They may want our beef and mutton, but if we encourage our own industries we shall have people here to eat our beef and mutton. It seems to me that the only way in which white workers can compete with the workers of Japan and China, is by coming down to their level and by living under the same conditions that they live under, or by taxing the products of their labour. You need not have a prohibitive tax. Protection does -not appear to me to be prohibition. If a Chinaman can make, for 2s. 6d., an article that we can manufacture for 5s., let us put a tax of 2s. 6d. on the Chinaman's article, so that he cannot undersell tie white worker here. If we take the item of coal alone, and this applies to New South Wales, I find, on very good authority, that coal in Japan can be mined for 2s. a ton. The miners of Newcastle clamour for 3s. 2d. a ton for the hewing rate alone.

Mr JOSEPH COOK

- And they are getting it, with plenty of work.

Mr WILKINSON

- I hope they will always get it. But when tie coal-fields of Japan are developed, how is the Newcastle coal-owner going to sell coal, when he has to pay 3s. 2d. per ton for hewing, in competition with Japan, where it is hewn for 2s. a ton. Sir William McMillan

- How is protection going to help that 1

#### Mr WILKINSON

- It will help us to keep our own local markets at any rate, and we will increase those markets by protection. I am in entire accord with the speakers on both sides of the House in regard to the matter of defence, I believe that we should begin with cadets, and train up a citizen soldiery. Our boys in South Africa have proved that very little training is really necessary to turn out efficient soldiers. With regard to the federal capita], I hope that the selection of the site will not be delayed long, and that every honorable member will have an opportunity of inspecting the various sites that have been suggested. I trust that this matter will not be relegated to a select committee, but that an opportunity of visiting the sites will be afforded to every member who wishes to do so. However much honorable members might like to remain in Melbourne, those who come from the northern, and may I say the greatest of the States, would like to get a little nearer to the equator.

## Mr F E McLEAN

- I should think it probable that the Attorney-General would agree to an adjournment of the debate at this late hour of the evening.

Attorney-General

Mr DEAKIN

. - If I do so, I must confess it is with some regret, for I have had a list of really formidable proportions handed to me, containing the names of honorable members who desire to address the House. I take it that it is impossible to apply to honorable members in this our first debate the usual pressure, but, at the same time, as we have made progress more rapidly this evening, may I appeal to honorable members to assist us to-morrow in expediting the number of speeches, so that we may be able to dispose of the Address in Reply at the first day of meeting next week.

An HONORABLE Member. - At what time do the Government propose we should meet to-morrow? <page>540</page>

# Mr DEAKIN

- We propose to meet at two o'clock, and adjourn in time to enable honorable members from the adjoining States to catch the afternoon trains.

Debate (on motion by Mr. F. E. McLean) adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT** 

Resolved(on motion by Mr. Deakin) -

That the House, at its rising, adjourn' until tomorrow nt two o'clock p.m.

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22:20:00

House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.