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1901-10-03

Senate.

The President took the chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

#### PETITIONS

Senator PLAYFORD

- I beg to present a petition from 222 persons in the State of South Australia.

The PRESIDENT

- Is it certified by the Clerk?

Senator Playford

- It is correct.

The PRESIDENT

- It cannot be received until it is certified as correct by the Clerk.

Senator Playford

- I have never presented a petition certified by the Clerk. That is not the practice of the House of Assembly of South Australia,

The PRESIDENT

- That is the practice of the Legislative Council of South Australia. I do not know if it is the practice of the House of Assembly.

Senator Major Gould

- The practice has been enforced here.

The PRESIDENT

- It has always been the practice of the House over which I presided for many years, and I believed it was the practice of the House of Assembly, whose rules we have adopted, that a petition should be left with the Clerk, and that he should certify that it is in conformity with the standing orders; but I confess that I cannot see any such rule in the standing orders at the moment. If the honorable senator is right, I was wrong on a former occasion.

Senator Playford

- I have presented dozens of petitions in the House of Assembly of South Australia without their being certified to as correct.

The PRESIDENT

- Perhaps it would be best for the honorable senator to conform to the rule we have hitherto observed.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD presented a petition signed by 368 merchants, traders, firms, and corporations of Melbourne and Geelong, representing 554 firms, praying that the Post and Telegraph department should at once enter into such a contract with the Eastern Extension, Australasian, and China Telegraph Company Limited, as would allow them and all other inhabitants of the State of "Victoria the same blessings of reduced cable rates as were enjoyed by the people of the contracting States.

Petition received, and read.

Senator CHARLESTON presented a petition from the Standing Committee of the Synod of the Church of England, in the diocese of Adelaide, praying the Senate to reject the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill.

Petition received, and read.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

"Vice-President of the Executive Council

Senator O'CONNOR

. - I have to ask the consent of the Senate to my giving a notice of motion, which will enable me to ask leave later in the day for the suspension of the standing orders. The motion is one, to enable the standing orders to be suspended in relation to the Excise Bill, which I propose to ask the Senate to recommit for the purpose of inserting a new clause.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- The honorable and learned senator can move the suspension of the standing orders without notice.

Vice-President of the Executive Council

Senator O'CONNOR

- I think it is obvious that it is necessary that this Bill should become law as soon as possible. It has been

fully discussed.

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The PRESIDENT

- I may point out to the "Vice-President of the Executive Council and to the Senate that the honorable and learned senator is perfectly justified in giving notice -without any leave at all, and that the fact that he gives notice will not put him in any better position when he moves his motion later on ; because if the Senate gives him leave to move the motion of which he gives notice, that does not carry him any further forward. He will be in exactly the same position as he was in before.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I would add to your explanation, Mr. President, that, of course, the moving of the motion of which my honorable and learned friend has given notice will involve the suspension of the standing orders. It is quite possible that when the motion came up later on he may find himself in an awkward position. There may not be an absolute majority of the Senate present. There is an absolute majority present now, and therefore, if my honorable and learned friend will move to suspend the standing orders at once, I do not see why he should not do so.

The PRESIDENT

- Senator O'Connor can move the suspension of the standing orders without giving notice.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- He would require an absolute majority of the Senate to carry that motion.

The PRESIDENT

- The proper procedure would be to move the suspension of the standing orders in order that the motion might be valid. That is a different thing to giving notice. The validation of a notice of motion is not required. The validation of the motion when moved is what is required. I suggest that if the Vice-President of the Executive Council gives the notice, and then moves to suspend the standing orders, that will be the best way of attaining what he desires.

Senator O'Connor

-I have no objection to doing that.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

-I suggest that the Vice-President of the Executive Council is proposing to take a course that is somewhat novel - to give notice at one stage of the sitting of a motion to be moved later on. I think that is an absolutely new idea, which is not provided for in the standing orders, nor do I think it is done in the House of Commons. I suggest, however, that the honorable and learned senator should now move his motion, and I do not think there will be any objection to it.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I move-

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Bill relating to excise from passing through all its remaining Stages in the same sitting of the Senate.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- May I suggest that the further consideration of the Bill will be contingent upon the report of the committee being adopted. I therefore suggest that there should be added to the motion the words "contingent upon the report of the committee being adopted."

Senator O'CONNOR

- I will accept that suggestion.

Motion amended accordingly, and agreed to as follows : -

That, contingent on the Excise Bill being reported a second time from the committee of the whole, so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Bill from passing through all its remaining stages in the same sitting of the Senate.

ELECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER, by leave, presented a special report from the Elections and Qualifications Committee.

Report ordered to be printed, and considered by the Senate on Wednesday next.

QUESTIONS

REPORTED ADJOURNMENT OF SENATE

Senator HIGGS

- I wish to ask the Vice-President of the Executive Council, without notice, whether he has seen in a provincial newspaper of considerable influence in the State of Victoria, a paragraph to the effect that the Senate was to adjourn for three weeks ; and whether he has seen in another newspaper, also of considerable influence, a paragraph stating that the Ministry objects to the Senate adjourning for three weeks! Has the Government given any authority for the publication of the paragraphs stating that the Senate wishes to adjourn ?

Senator O'CONNOR

- I have not seen either paragraph, and I know nothing whatever about them. I have not given any consent to the insertion of any paragraph.

CUSTOMS BILL

Royal assent to this Bill reported.

EXCISE BILL

Resolved(on motion by Senator O'Connor) -

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering a new clause to follow clause 154.

In Committee :

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Senator O'CONNOR

- On looking through this Bill it was found that there was an omission, which would have to be rectified by providing a clause regarding rebate of duty. There is a clause in reference to drawback, and it is necessary also to have one relating to rebates. I move -

That the following new clause be inserted, to follow clause 154 : - 154A. If any rebate is allowed in respect of any excise duty, the allowance shall be made and duty paid as prescribed.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- This amendment has only just been circulated, but it occurs to me that the word " repaid," instead of "paid," should be used in the clause.

Senator O'CONNOR

- No. The rebate may be as to the whole or part of the duty and it is convenient to have some power of making regulations as to the way in which the duty is to be paid in cases where rebate is allowed.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- Why not say " refunded " instead of " paid " ?

Senator O'CONNOR

-The word "paid" is better. It is necessary to have the clause in this way.

Senator PULSFORD

- I have not heard the discussion on this clause, but it occurs to me that the word ' refunded " or " repaid " should be used instead of " paid."

Senator O'CONNOR

- No. The word " refunded " would apply where there had been a rebate of the whole of the duty, but as I have just explained there may be a rebate of part of the duty only. For instance, there are the cases which we dealt with yesterday in which dutiable materials are allowed to be used in the manufacture of certain articles, and the Government have power to deal with the materials used in any way they think fit so far as the duty is concerned. There may be a rebate of portion or of the whole duty. There must be power to make regulations dealing with questions of this kind. Where there is a refund of the duty we do not want any regulations, but we must have power to deal with rebate cases, and that is why the words "duty paid as prescribed " are used. There may be a question as to the payment of duty, and we want power to make regulations dealing with the whole matter.

Senator Pulsford

- Should we not use the words "and duty less rebate be paid as prescribed."

Senator O'CONNOR

- That is not necessary.

Senator PLAYFORD

- Would the Vice-President of the Executive Council point out the provision in the Bill which allows rebates, because the words " if any rebate is allowed " are used in this proposed new clause.

Senator O'CONNOR

- This is a machinery Bill which will apply to duties that may be imposed. We have to consider what our Tariff or our Act imposing duties is before any of the machinery comes into operation.

New clause agreed to.

Bill reported with a further amendment.

Report adopted.

Bill read the third time.

#### POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL

In Committee(consideration of House of Representatives' amendments) :

Clause 1 (Short title and commencement).

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - The House of Representatives has omitted the words "first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and one." The clause refers to the date on which the Bill shall come into operation. The Bill was introduced in the first week in June. I was sanguine enough at the time to anticipate that it would become law by the 1st October, and I fixed upon that date. It has been longer in its passage through Parliament than I anticipated, and the question now is what is the most convenient date to insert in the clause. I propose to postpone the consideration of the amendment until we have dealt with others made by the House of Representatives, because they may have a bearing upon it. Before the Bill actually comes into operation, it will be desirable to have regulations provided.

Senator Major Gould

- Why not provide that it shall come into operation within one month after passing ?

Senator DRAKE

- It would be better for us to consider other amendments before we deal with this one, but I intend to suggest that the 1st December should be fixed upon. That will give plenty of time to cover all contingencies and to prepare regulations.

Senator Playford

- Why not provide for " a date to be named by proclamation "?

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Senator DRAKE

- I should prefer fixing the date in the Bill.

Senator CLEMONS

- As the Postmaster-General is aware, the date on which this Bill shall come into operation is a matter of very considerable importance, and I should like to- know whether it is his intention to as the committee to fix the date- before we deal finally with the Bill 1

Senator DRAKE

- We shall, have to do that. If we accept the House of Representatives' amendment, it will be necessary for us to make a consequential amendment, fixing the date.

Amendment postponed.

Clause 2 (Acts repealed).

Senator DRAKE

- I move -

That the committee agree to the .amendment of the House of Representatives, omitting the words " are repealed to the extent in the said schedule indicated," and inserting in lieu thereof the words " shall cease to apply to the Postal and Telegraphic services of the Commonwealth."

This is an amendment by the House of Representatives, expressing the repealing power Of this Bill in a different form, in order to bring it into conformity with section 109 of the Constitution Act, which provides that where an Act of Parliament of the Commonwealth is inconsistent with the State Act, the provisions of the latter shall be invalid. It has been pointed out that under that provision we have no real power to repeal a State Act, and this amendment is considered to be a better way of expressing what is contained in section 109 of the Constitution. Some of these State Acts may contain provisions - I do not think they do - which apply to something belonging entirely to the States. In that case this measure would not override those provisions. By adopting this amendment, we make it clear that these particular State Acts

only cease to apply to the Post and Telegraph service of the Commonwealth. We shall, therefore, be on safe ground, the service having been transferred to the Commonwealth.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- It is hardly wanted.

Senator DRAKE

- It is a question which has been considerably debated whether it is required or not, because as the Constitution defines exactly our powers in the matter it operates even if we say nothing as to it here, while, if we say something which goes beyond the Constitution, it becomes invalid. Still, it is considered that the clause as amended in this way will be preferable, and the plan has been adopted in every Act that we have passed, that contains provisions repugnant to the State Acts, stating that fact in one of the sections. I think the expression used here is an improvement.

Motion agreed to.

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Senator DRAKE

- I move -

That the committee agree to the amendment of the House of Representatives omitting from clause 2 the words " until rates and charges fixed by the Governor-General under this Act come into operation."

This amendment is one of a very important nature, because it involves the whole question of the method of fixing rates. It is just as convenient, I think, to take this discussion now as at any other time. It really involves the question of whether clause 19 should or should not be struck out. The House of Representatives have omitted it. That clause provided that rates should be fixed by means of regulations to be laid on the table of the House for a certain time, and if they were not dissented from they should become law. The view of the House of Representatives is that it is desirable that the power to fix and alter rates should be left in the hands of Parliament, no change being made except by Act of Parliament. The question was discussed at considerable length when the clause was before the Senate. I pointed out then, as fairly as I was able to do, the advantages and disadvantages of either course. I did not pretend that either course had such transcendent merits that nothing could be claimed on behalf of the other. The advantage of having the rates fixed by regulation is that it is easier to make alterations. In view of the probability of post and telegraph rates being varied at an early period, it seemed to me that the changes would be facilitated by adopting the principle of fixing the rates by regulation. On the other hand, I pointed out at the time that when rates can be altered only by Act of Parliament, a Minister for the time being, who may be pressed to make alterations in rates, is able to decline to do so on the ground of the difficulty there would be in getting the necessary Bill through Parliament. If we adopt the principle of fixing rates by Act of Parliament, it will fix them for the time being more rigidly and securely than if the rates can be altered simply by laying regulations upon the table of the House. [ do not feel very strongly about it myself, and it is not desirable that we should incur the possibility of any delay in the passage of the Bill by fighting a question of that kind.

Senator HIGGS

- I see a difficulty in the way of Parliament fixing postal rates. If it were merely a question of newspaper rates throughout the Commonwealth, or of penny postage, we might decide it, but to say that members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives are to discuss and settle the many charges that have to be made by the Post and Telegraph department seems to me an unbusinesslike proceeding.

Senator Drake

- It is so in Queensland, so far as postal rates are concerned. The rates cannot be altered there except by Act of Parliament.

Senator HIGGS

- We might just as well in a State Parliament propose that Parliament should fix the railway rates to be charged. I do not propose to raise any objection to the acceptance of the amendment, because I was very much charmed with the way in which the House of Representatives met this other evening, when we insisted upon amendments in a certain Bill. I am very much in favour of maintaining the greatest harmony between the two Chambers. But I think the Postmaster-General and the Cabinet should be in a better position, generally speaking, than Parliament, to decide upon the rates which will make the Post and Telegraph department a businesslike establishment, and a paying concern.

Senator PULSFORD

- I am rather amused at the honorable senator speaking of the difficulty which Parliament would have in the arrangement of half-a-dozen or twenty postal rates, when we are on the eve of arranging a Customs Tariff, which may possibly contain several hundred items. On further consideration, I am sure the honorable senator will see that if Parliament can deal with the hundreds of customs duties involved in .1 Tariff, we can, with a great deal more ease, deal with a tariff of half-a-dozen postage rates.

Motion agreed to.

Clause 3 (Interpretation of terms).

Senator DRAKE

- The amendment next proposed by the House of Representatives is to insert a definition of the words "indecent or obscene matter." This is a question that was discussed when the Bill was before the Senate, and I confess I do not like to see the thing in the Bill at all. I do not see that it is vital, or that there is any advantage in having it. I should like to hear the opinion of honorable senators with regard to it, as I do not care to throw my own personal views into the scale.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am exceedingly gratified to hear the view indicated by my honorable and learned friend the Postmaster-General. I think this amendment would be a pollution of the Bill, and it ought to be disagreed to without discussion.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- In connexion with this amendment, it is just as well to point out, as I endeavoured to do when the clause was under discussion before, that this provision was put into a special Act passed in Victoria in consequence of a break -down of justice in connexion with this matter, and because, until this interpretation of the words " indecent and obscene matter " became law, it was absolutely impossible to carry out a prosecution successfully.

Motion (by Senator Drake) agreed to -

That the committee disagree to the amendment of the House of Representatives.

Clause 7 (Future telegraph messengers to retire on attaining the age of .eighteen).

Senator DRAKE

- The amendment proposed by the House of Representatives makes one vital alteration in this clause, but think it is an alteration in the right direction. It provides that boys engaged as messengers shall cease to be employed as messengers when they are seventeen years of age. As we sent the Bill from the Senate the age stated was eighteen. The rest of the alteration proposed is merely a matter of drafting to carry out the intention suggested better. I move -

That the committee agree to the amendment of the House of Representatives omitting clause .10, and inserting the following new clause : - 9a. Every person taken into the employment of the department as a telegraph messenger after the commencement of this Act shall immediately on attaining the age of seventeen years cease to be so employed.

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Senator PEARCE

- I think there is also another vital alteration, because, as the clause left the Senate, it provided that every person appointed as a telegraph messenger after the commencement of the Act should retire from the service of the department on attaining the age of eighteen years, " unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted to some other position in such service." I think that expression carries on the face of it the inference that, if possible, these boys should be transferred to some other branch of the service on attaining the age stated, and certainly no harm would follow if the words to which I have referred had been retained. The clause as we agreed to it certainly seemed to provide for a more humane treatment of these boys.

Senator Sir .FREDERICKSARGOOD (Victoria). - I might say that I agree largely with what Senator Pearce has said; " cease to be so employed " may fairly be read " cease to be employed in the service." I think the wording of the clause as we passed it better indicates to the Minister or the head of the department that Parliament is desirous that if possible these boys should be retained in the service. It is just as well that the clause should express that view. I point out, also, that the clause, as proposed to be amended, uses the expression " every person taken into the employment," while in the Public Service Bill

the word used is "appointed," and I think that is the proper term.

Senator DRAKE

- I heard this matter discussed in the House of Representatives, and a great deal of care was taken over it. It has to be clearly shown that this provision will not apply to messenger boys already in the service, and the question was raised whether their transfer to the Commonwealth service was an appointment in the sense used in the Public Service Bill. I think that under the Public Service Bill that is not considered an appointment, and it was therefore decided to adopt the phraseology "taken into the employment." With regard to the omission of the words referred to by Senator Pearce, it seems to me that they are all implied in the expression "so employed." So employed in the clause means employed as a messenger. And if a boy is transferred or promoted to some other position he is not employed as a messenger. That matter was the subject of careful consideration and skilful drafting.

Senator GLASSEY

- This is a matter which I think deserves some consideration. There are a number of boys employed as messengers continuously in the service, which they enter at from twelve to thirteen years of age. I think it is hard and harsh to provide that these boys may be retained for four or five years and then be subject to be sent adrift when they have arrived at the age of seventeen years, which is, perhaps, the most critical period of a person's life. That is how the matter strikes me, though it is possible that those who have to work a large concern like the Postal department may see difficulties in the way. I think it is our duty to arrange matters in such a way that these boys shall not be liable to be thrown out at the critical period of their lives when they might resort to idle habits and drift into channels of a more or less deplorable character, and when they might bring discredit upon themselves and be a source of pain and anxiety to their parents or relations. I should be sorry to agree with the proposal submitted by the House of Representatives unless strong reasons are given to show that it would be impossible to continue these boys in the department or to draft them to some other department.

Senator WALKER

- I believe with the Postmaster-General that it is probably not necessary to have the additional words in, but I agree also with Senator Glassey that it would give some heart to these boys and to their parents if the intention which has been expressed was shown in the Bill.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- I entirely agree- with the remarks which have fallen from Senator Glassey. It seems to me that the alteration of the clause is merely a transference of phrases which can accomplish no good purpose, and the benevolent intention of the clause as it left the Senate can only be shown by the retention of the words which the House of Representatives proposes to omit. As to the question of age, it is simply deplorable that the other House should have made the amendment we are asked to assent to. I shall want a lot of convincing before I shall vote to change the age from eighteen to seventeen. There are good reasons why, in my estimation, the age should be retained at eighteen.

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Senator CHARLESTON

- We had a very long discussion on this clause, and some of us voted to strike it out, and leave it to the Postmaster-General and his officers to determine when the time had arrived for messenger boys to be dismissed. I am afraid that if we agree to this amendment, we may do a very great injustice to some of the messenger boys who may be taken on. Supposing that a boy has entered the service at about fourteen, and that he is approaching his seventeenth year. His officer can see that changes will shortly take place which will enable him to give the youth a promotion, but if the Act is strictly administered, the youth cannot possibly be continued in the service. I see right through the clause a great danger of hardships being wrought. What the supporters of the clause desire most is to prevent young men being continued in the service, and practically rendering themselves unfit for any other work. If a boy is retained until he is eighteen or nineteen, he is then totally unsuited to learn a trade. At that age a boy would be unable to enter any other employment with profit to himself, and that, I think, is the reason why the other House inserted the amendment. I hope that the clause will not be administered too stringently, that if an opportunity arises for a boy to be promoted he will not be given his walking ticket simply because he is within a month or two of seventeen.

Senator PLAYFORD

- I think that the other House has made a mistake in lowering the age. Although the provision in the clause is not mandatory, still it is an expression of the wish of Parliament that a boy should go, unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted to some other position. It is a provision to which a boy can appeal. He can say to his superior officer - "If I have qualified myself for a higher position than that of a mere messenger, and there is a vacancy, it is your duty to employ me." I feel certain that on reconsideration the other House will see that the Senate acted more liberally than it did as regards the age, and express a pious wish that the boys will have a chance afforded to them to go higher in the service.

Senator DRAKE

- I would not recommend the course which has been suggested by Senator Playford. There can be no doubt that the drafting of the clause is better than it was. There is a difficulty in regard to the use of the word "appointment." It is questionable whether a telegraph messenger is a person appointed to the service. He is employed as a messenger, but he is not appointed in the sense in which an officer is appointed. What Senator Glassey desires is, as he knows, what is invariably carried out not only in the interests of the lads, but in the interests of the department. The boys are employed for, say, four years, and it is from the ranks of the messengers that any vacancies in the department are filled. Practically they are in training for better positions, and the only case where a messenger boy would not be promoted would be where he had shown himself quite unfit. But still a certain age limit must be fixed. If a boy has shown that he is not fit for Ins work, it is just as well that his services should be dispensed with at seventeen as at eighteen. But every effort is made by the department to retain the services of those boys who have shown themselves worthy.

Senator Charleston

- The Minister could not retain them after they were seventeen.

Senator DRAKE

- Not messengers, because it says that from seventeen they shall cease to be so employed. If we decide to adhere to the clause we shall have to strike out the word "so," and then it would mean exactly the same thing -

Cease to be employed unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted to some other position in such service.

Is there any danger to a messenger boy in omitting these words which are admittedly in themselves meaningless? If he has been transferred or promoted then he has ceased to be employed as a messenger boy. The only question is whether the age shall be seventeen or eighteen, and seeing that every effort is made to find employment in other capacities for the lads I cannot see any objection to fixing the age at seventeen.

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Senator FRASER

- If a boy has to go through unfitness the sooner he goes the better. If he has to face the world it is better that he should start at seventeen than at eighteen. The longer a boy retains the position of messenger, the more is he made into a sort of civil servant, and, as we know, civil servants are not very well adapted to battle with the world. If a boy is fit and eligible he will be drafted into other branches of the service. If a boy ceases to be a messenger when he is twenty it is all the more difficult for him to adapt himself to his new surroundings. There is no indication that a boy will be drafted to another position, and if an amendment to that effect were inserted the clause would be perfect.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD (Victoria). - May we not meet the general wish that these intimations should be retained by altering the clause so as to make it read -

Every person taken into the employment of the department as a telegraph messenger after the commencement of the Act, shall immediately on attaining the age of seventeen cease to be so employed unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted.

Senator Drake

- The words "so" will have to be omitted.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I think it is desirable to retain the qualification.

Senator DOBSON



- It appears to me that the clause is more a matter of administration than of legislation. I am rather inclined to approve of the clause as it stands, because. I think seventeen is the better age for the reasons so well put by Senator Fraser. If a boy is going to be anything in life, he had better cease to be a messenger at seventeen than at eighteen. The clause does not forbid boys to be transferred or kept on. I was going to ask the Postmaster-General, who has practically answered the question, whether these boys are so numerous, and have to be discharged so rapidly, that there is no chance of finding them situations in any other branch of the department or service.

Senator Drake

- We do that regularly.

Senator DOBSON

- If the department does that regularly I think that a number of honorable senators, like myself, are showing anxiety about nothing. I was going to observe that suppose the Government cannot find other situations for these messengers at the age of seventeen in the Post and Telegraph department, a duty is thrown upon them - I do not say of finding a situation for the boys in other departments, because, out of fairness to the taxpayers, we have no right to create billets for any one unless they are absolutely wanted in the service ; but I think the boys who give up being messengers at the age of seventeen should be found places, if possible, either in the Postal department or some other department. But here, again, comes in the question of political influence. If Ministers and Members of Parliament are desirous of putting their friends and proteges into Government departments, and these boys are turned into the street to make room for them, that will not be a desirable state of affairs. That, however, is a matter of administration. Every boy taken into the service as a messenger should be given a situation elsewhere in the service if he is capable of filling such position efficiently. I have heard something about the employment of boys at the age of twelve. If the school age in Victoria is thirteen, as it is in Tasmania, I do not think that the Minister should consent to taking a boy away from school at the age of twelve unless the lad can pass an. examination showing that he has been sufficiently educated.

Senator McGREGOR

- I think it will be better for the committee to amend the amendment by replacing seventeen by eighteen. As for the other portion of the clause that was omitted, I think, because, from what has been said by Senator Drake, and from what ought to be known and probably is known to a great many honorable senators, as far as possible boys who have been employed in the post and telegraph service will always be transferred to other positions in the Commonwealth service if they are suitable for them.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- That has been done to a very limited extent.

Senator Drake

- That is only in Victoria.

Senator McGREGOR

- That is only in Victoria, where everything is in a muddle. The reason why I should like to see " eighteen" again inserted in the clause is that to my mind it is quite time enough any boy to be taken on as a messenger if he is engaged between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.

Senator Drake

- We say thirteen.

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Senator McGREGOR

- Then how are the boys appointed 1 Is it not right that the boys should make application for positions, and that if suitable they should .be taken on in the order in which they appear on the applications 1 That is the way it ought to be done, and that is the way in which it is done in the "model State." But what would happen if the boys were only employed up to the age of seventeen ] I have known applications to be made by boys at the age of thirteen, and their cases were dealt with very unfairly. I have one case in my recollection at the present time. Whenever the turn came when he should be appointed, a boy much younger, who had only put his application in about six months before, was taken oil because the other boy was within a few months of being seventeen years of age, although seventeen, was the limit at which he might be taken on. Suppose a boy applied when he was thirteen and a vacancy for a messenger did not occur until he was fifteen or sixteen - suppose he was taken on at sixteen - if he had to retire at

seventeen he would only have twelve months' service, and the officers of the department would have no possible chance of finding out what the boy was really worth. If the limit of age was extended to eighteen the department would have an opportunity of finding out whether the boy was really worth retaining as an officer in any branch of the Postal department. That is the argument to which I should like honorable senators to attach importance. Senator Eraser has said that if a boy is unsuitable for the employment he is in, it is better for his services to be dispensed with at seventeen than at eighteen. Am I to understand from what Senator Eraser says that a boy is to be kept in employment as a messenger until he is seventeen whether he is any good or not? I should hope not. As soon as the department discovers from any cause, no matter how, that a boy is unsuitable, he should at once be discharged, and a more suitable boy taken on in his place. If that were done, the boys engaged would be suitable for the positions they held up to the age of seventeen; and if the age of eighteen were substituted for seventeen in this clause, there would be an additional twelve months to the advantage of the boy, and the convenience of the department, during which time he could be transferred to some other position in which he might both do credit to himself and good service to the country.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- I think that honorable senators should consider the circumstances in which these messengers are taken on. A messenger is what may be called a casual servant. He is only engaged for carrying parcels or messages. No doubt, when he attains a certain age, it is for the advantage of the boy, either that he should cease to be employed as a messenger or should qualify himself educationally for a higher position in the service. I think that is the view that has governed the Postal department in this State at all events, where it has been held that if a messenger boy is continually employed as such year after year, through his obtaining the good-will of the head of his department, he has no incentive to get on, and will remain as a messenger until he reaches the age of 24 or 25. In Victoria, even though it is not a "model State," we have the greatest difficulty in getting a boy as a messenger in a private office. If a man puts an advertisement in the paper for a messenger boy, he experiences the greatest difficulty in obtaining one on any terms. It is for the advantage of any boy who is employed as a messenger that he should be only employed as such up to a certain age, and that, say, at the age of seventeen years, he should cease to be a messenger, and should qualify himself from an educational point of view for a higher position in the service; which there is no doubt he will be able to obtain if he makes himself efficient. Senator McGregor, like myself and other honorable senators, looks to the future of these civil servants, and wishes them to get on. In Victoria, no boy can obtain a higher position in the service unless he passes an educational test. A boy can obtain casual employment as a messenger without any educational qualifications, but it is in the boys' own interest, as well as in the interests of the service, that they should be encouraged to qualify themselves educationally for higher positions. If there is no such incentive the boy is allowed to drift on from year to year, his intelligence is throttled, and we prevent him from becoming a useful citizen hereafter. It seems to me that the proposal of the Government goes quite far enough.

Senator Playford

- The Government proposed eighteen at first.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- The age is seventeen in Victoria, and I think that is the reason why it is now proposed. I can state from my own knowledge that it has worked well in the past in Victoria. The only fault has been that in some cases messengers have been employed as such longer than they should have been.

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Senator Major GOULD

- I think it would be better to keep to eighteen as the age at which boys should cease to be employed as messengers. It is most desirable that the messengers themselves should be given to understand that facilities are afforded to them for securing permanent employment in the service, in some clerical or other position. As to the age at which these boys should enter the service, it is all very well to have a limit of thirteen years of age, but I would point out that as a rule a boy at the age of thirteen is not qualified to pass a public service examination. "We wish these boys to pass an examination for permanent positions at a later date, and if they are taken away from school at the age of thirteen it is only one lad in a score - perhaps only one out of a hundred - who will take the trouble to work and qualify himself to pass an examination. I therefore think the age of thirteen is too young at which to take a boy into the public service

if he is to obtain a position somewhat better than that of a messenger. Judging from the small infants we see about Melbourne wearing uniforms, the boys who are employed by the Post-office in this State are very juvenile indeed.

Senator Drake

- They are very small, but they are good.

Senator Major GOULD

- They may be good, but they are certainly small. It would be very much better in my opinion that these boys should be of a more mature age when taken into the service, and that they should be allowed to remain until the age of eighteen. If they were allowed to stop at school until they were fourteen, they would be more likely to qualify themselves afterwards for better positions. I therefore trust that the age will be increased to eighteen.

Senator HIGGS(Queensland). -I do not like the idea of increasing the age to eighteen, because I think . the additional year is likely to hamper the youth a great deal in making it more difficult for him to get into some trade or profession in case he leaves the service. The tendency will consequently be to drive boys into the ruck of men who have no trade. I should not like to make the service too attractive to a lot of lads. It is quite a mistake for a number of our citizens to desire to get their children into the public service at any cost. We see in Melbourne poor little " nippers " who must surely, in order to pass the educational standard of Victoria, have had a pen in their hands at the age of two. I quite admit that they may be good -in fact, some of them look as sharp as the point of a needle. But some of the children employed by the Postal depart in this State would be far better in bed on occasions when they are sitting around in the neighbourhood of the Legislative chambers. They should not, in my opinion, have been taken from school, and it is a great loss to the country that children like these are sent out to work at such an early age. I agree with the sentiment that - once a lad is employed as a messenger and becomes too old for that position, the department should endeavour to find some other employment for him. If that messenger is to be found work in some department of the Federal Public Service, I venture to think we shall only increase the desire of a number of people to obtain employment for their boys under the Government. I am satisfied that the Minister has more applications from lads desiring to enter the service at the present time than he has vacancies to fill, and if it is understood that once a boy obtains employment in the service he is to be kept there for all time, the number of applications will be greatly increased. I do not feel strongly on the question of fixing the limit at seventeen years of age, but still I think the Government is right in asking the committee to agree to the amendment.

Senator GLASSEY(Queensland). - I much prefer the clause as it left this Chamber.

Senator Drake

- It was faulty in construction.

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Senator GLASSEY

- The fault is imaginary; certainly the fault pointed out by the Postmaster General cannot be considered a serious one. The clause as it left the Senate conveyed to a youth who may be employed in the department some encouragement to equip himself for the service by going through the necessary training. As it comes back, however, it contains no such stimulating influence. It is a bald set of words meaning nothing to a boy in the department save that when he reaches the age of seventeen years he will probably have to look elsewhere for work. I will say to the credit of the former Under-Secretary of the Queensland Postal department, who is now the Secretary of the Commonwealth department, that he paid every possible attention to boys in his department, and gave them every encouragement. On many occasions when I have seen him with regard to persons desiring to enter the service as letter carriers or in other capacities, he has said always, " There are youths in the department who are doing messengers' work, and they have a prior claim." That I freely acknowledged at the time, and acknowledge still. We will do well to continue that line of policy, and give every "encouragement to boys who enter the service to equip themselves thoroughly for the work. I make no claim for any lad who is neglectful of his future, and I do not agree with Senator Zeal or Senator Eraser's contention that a youth will be fitted better to go out into the world at seventeen than at eighteen.

Senator Charleston

- He would learn a trade better at eighteen.

Senator GLASSEY

- Yes; he would take to it more readily. His energy and vitality would be greater.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- I went out when I was fourteen.

Senator GLASSEY

- It is not for me to dilate for one moment in regard to the struggles I have seen put forth by lads of fourteen. I intend to move -

That the amendment be 'disagreed with.

Senator DRAKE

- I think we are giving almost too much time to the consideration of this amendment, because the question of whether a boy should be sent out at seventeen or eighteen is not a very important one. One boy at fifteen may be, in knowledge and manner, as old as another boy of seventeen or eighteen. It is purely empirical, but some age must be fixed upon. It is hardly possible for any one to say dogmatically whether seventeen or eighteen is the right age at which a boy should leave the service. With regard to the proposed insertion of the words " unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted," I do not think they would serve any useful purpose. That is covered by the word "so." But if the committee wishes to test the matter by moving the omission of the word " so," and the addition of these other words, I shall offer no objection.

The CHAIRMAN

- I understand the Postmaster-General is prepared to withdraw his motion for the present in order to allow another amendment to be proposed.

Senator Drake

- Yes.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Senator Sir JOSIAHSYMON (South Australia). - I have a suggestion to make which I hope will have the effect of meeting every one's views. I agree with the Postmaster-General that the clause, as sent up to us by the House of Representatives, is better than it was when we sent it to them, so far as' drafting and clearness are concerned. In the next place, the words -

Unless in the meantime he has been transferred or promoted to some position in such service- in the clause, as sent down by us, were not only absolutely meaningless and unnecessary, but quite inconsistent with the earlier part of the clause, because they made imperative retirement from the service at eighteen years of age, unless in the meantime the youth had been transferred. That, on the face of it, is an absurdity. Then I think the word " so " should not be struck out, because it is merely from the particular employment referred to that the boy is to retire. I would leave the clause as it is, except as to the age, which I think should be eighteen, and at the end I would add certain words. The words " cease to be so employed " get rid of the particular employment, but in order to encourage the lads, and let them feel that under this hard-and-fast rule we do not absolutely shut them out from the service, I would add -  
But shall be eligible for other employment in the service.

Senator Drake

- A boy may not be eligible.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- He is eligible if the service chooses to employ him. He may be chosen if he can pass the educational standard.

Senator McGregor

- Why not say "may be appointed if eligible ? "

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes ; I will alter my proposal in that way.

Senator DRAKE

- I do not think it is advisable to alter the clause in that way, but to meet the views of those senators who have taken up this position with regard to employment in other branches of the service, I would make the clause read, " cease to be employed as a messenger."

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- But the word " so " does that.

Senator Sir FREDERICKSARGOOD (Victoria). - I desire to point out merely that the retention of the word " so " implies that a messenger must be retained after eighteen. That would place us in the same difficulty as the Victorian department has suffered under.

Senator Drake

- Oh, no.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- The words suggested by the Postmaster-General would have the same result, but I think Senator Symon's proposal will get over the difficulty. It is practically the same amendment that we had before but put in a different way.

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The CHAIRMAN

- I suggested to the Postmaster-General that he should withdraw his motion for the present, as several honorable senators have indicated a desire to alter the new clause as brought up from the other place. By leave, the Postmaster-General withdrew the motion, and there was an intimation by Senator McGregor of his intention to move that the word " seventeen " be struck out.

Motion (by Senator McGregor) proposed -

That the amendment of the House of Representatives be amended by omitting the word " seventeen " with a view to insert in lieu thereof the word " eighteen."

Question - That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the amendment - put.

The committee divided -

Ayes ... .. 10

Noes ... .. 18

Majority ... .. 8

Question so resolved in the negative. Motion agreed to.

Motion (by Senator Walker) agreed to-

That the words " but may if eligible be appointed to some other position in the public service" be added to the amendment.

Amendment of the House of Representatives, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 13 (Officers of the department free from tolls).

Senator DRAKE

-I move-

That the committee agree to the amendment of the House of Representatives adding to the clause the following words : - "The Postmaster-General may pay to the person entitled by way of compensation for the use of any pier, wharf, quay, landing place, or ferry in the landing, shipping, or conveying any material or tools for the construction or repair of a telegraph line, such sum as may be agreed upon, and in default of agreement as maybe settled by arbitration."

This clause, I think, was passed rather hastily, but an objection was taken by Senator Playford in respect to the provision contained in paragraph (f), which provided that no duty or toll payable at or in respect of any pier or wharf should be demanded in respect of any material or tools used or employed in the construction or repair of any telegraph line. The honorable senator pointed out that it was not equitable to demand that perhaps tons of telegraphic material should be landed on a wharf without any payment. I think that we passed the clause without giving sufficient consideration to the suggestion made by the honorable senator ; but the amendment that has been adopted by the House of Representatives puts this question of landing of telegraph material on a wharf very much in the same position as we have placed the railways in regard to the conveying of mails. Under the amendment it is recognised that these dues should be paid, and it is provided that the amount to be paid shall be as agreed upon, and where there is no agreement that it shall be settled by arbitration.

Senator PLAYFORD

- I am very much gratified to find that another view of this matter was taken in the House of Representatives to that which was held here. I was sorry at the time that the Senate did not see eye to eye with me on the subject ; and it is pleasing to find that in another place they have done exactly what I wanted the Senate to do, and in a way which is satisfactory to me, and which will prevent the Postmaster-General from being able to use private wharfs or State wharfs for passing over hundreds of

tons of material to be used in the construction of a line of telegraphs without paying a penny to the owner of the wharf. I see that under the amendment, where there is a difficulty in coming to an agreement as to the amount, it is to be met in the fairest possible way by arbitration. '

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Senator CHARLESTON

- I object to the Postmaster-General saying that we passed this clause rather hastily, because I know the matter was very warmly discussed by many of us, and it was only after fighting it for a long time, and finding ourselves in a minority, that we had to give way. It is very pleasing to find that the House of Representatives has introduced into the clause let the C.F.O. that it didn't make any sense to you why something which many of us contended for in the Senate.

Motion agreed to.

Senator DRAKE

- The next amendment proposed by the House of Representatives is the insertion of the following new clause after clause 15 : - 15a. (1) No contract or arrangement for the carriage of mails shall be entered into on behalf of the Commonwealth unless it contains a condition that only white labour shall be employed in such carriage.

This condition shall not apply to the coaling and loading of ships at places beyond the limits of the Commonwealth

This matter, in a somewhat different form, was discussed in the Senate, and there was a considerable division of opinion upon it. My sympathies, as I have said before, are entirely with the amendment that has been made by the House of Representatives. There are difficulties, as I have previously pointed out, in carrying out such a provision, and it is largely a question as to the way in which the provision is to be interpreted. If it were to be interpreted strictly that no coloured labour, either directly or indirectly - and I suppose that is what it means - should even incidentally be employed in connexion with the carriage of the mails, then it would be almost impossible to carry it out. I do not think from the conversations I have had with honorable members of both Houses that it is intended that it should be interpreted in that way. I shall take it that such a provision was not intended to prevent the employment of aborigines in particular work for which they are fitted. I have always been a very strong advocate of white labour in every form. I hold that we have no right to do anything which would prevent the employment of aboriginal natives ; that in their present condition they should be allowed to earn a living. In most of the States, especially in those of large extent, the mail contracts in the country districts are carried out in a certain measure by one large company - sometimes by companies or firms - having contracts for two or three of these routes. It happens, in many cases, at a station that the groom will employ an aboriginal or two to bring up the horses from outside paddocks. I take it that it is not intended by this amendment that a man should be debarred from employing an aboriginal. Of course, if it came to a question of carrying the mails I should say that there would be ample justification for insisting to the greatest possible extent that they should be carried by white persons. It would be almost justifiable in any civilized country to insist on a certain class of persons being engaged in that most important work. It is provided that the clause shall not apply to the working and coaling of ships. As the words used are " contract or arrangement " it clearly cannot apply to the case of our employing, under another clause, a ship to carry a mail at a prescribed rate. Whenever a vessel is leaving for any port we have the right to put on board a mail, which on paying the prescribed rate, they are compelled to carry. If this provision were to apply to those cases there would be some countries to which we could not send a mail - for instance to Japan, New Caledonia, and a number of other places, simply because we should not be able to find any vessel that was not carrying some coloured person. As I construe the provision, that is not a contract or an arrangement.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- Supposing that when the boats get outside the limits of the Commonwealth they throw the mails overboard, how is the Minister going to enforce it ?

Senator DRAKE

- It might be said that a carrying company could do the same thing. We are simply employing a boat as we employ a carrying company.

Senator Dobson

- How will the Minister apply the clause to the P. and O. contract when the present one runs out ?

Senator DRAKE

- I do not know that it applies to that at all. That is dealt with under clause 14 - The Governor-General may make arrangements with the Postmaster-General of the United Kingdom. I do not know whether that would apply to the P. and O. Company's steamers.

Senator PLAYFORD

- Undoubtedly.

Senator DRAKE

- If it does apply, clearly it will not apply for the next four years.

Senator Dobson

- Is it not plain that it is meant to apply at the end of four years ? It is a most unjust and unstatesmanlike provision.

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Senator DRAKE

- It seems to me that it does apply to that, because the word "arrangement" is used. We have one clause which provides for the Governor-General making an arrangement, and another clause which provides for the Postmaster-General making contracts. It does not apply in the case of putting a mail on a steamer, and I apprehend that we could put mails on the P. and O. boats in the same way as we do on other boats. The German or French boats carry our mails without any contract or arrangement. They carry them simply by force of law. The amendment of the other House would clearly prevent us from entering into any contract or making any arrangement with those companies for the conveyance of mails. Under all the circumstances, I think the wiser course which can be adopted by the Senate is to accept the amendment. I move -

That the committee agree to the amendment of the House of Representatives.

Senator PULSFORD

-I congratulate the Postmaster-General upon finding it necessary to offer these wide apologies for this provision, and to do his best to explain away its operation. He has told us that it will not apply here and that it will not apply there, and he even has had doubts as to whether it would apply to the contracts with the great foreign going mail steamers. There can be no doubt that the clause has been drafted to apply not only to the contracts with the ocean going steamers, but to stop the conveyance of a letter on any vessel on which a coloured person is employed. At this time, especially when we are about to pass very drastic measures to conserve what we call a white Australia, we should be very careful indeed that we do not take any course calculated to bring ridicule and disgrace upon Australia.

Senator Higgs

- Surely the honorable senator is not speaking on behalf of a white Australia.

Senator PULSFORD

- I am, and' have been, an advocate of the retention of Australia for the white race under proper conditions.

Senator Walker

- Hear, hear ! " Under proper conditions."

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Senator PULSFORD

- I do not agree with the opinions which Senator Walker is known to hold. I do not believe in the division of Australia between the white and coloured races, and I hope the majority of the committee are at one with me in holding that the maintenance of the conditions we require for the inhabitants of Australia are very different from the conditions it is necessary that we should require in those with whom we are pleased to trade or have any business connexions. If we take it upon ourselves to say - " We shallot allow any letter to be carried on a vessel in which coloured labour is employed," surely it will gradually come about that we shall say - " We shall neither eat nor drink any food which has been prepared by coloured labour in any part of the world. We shall not allow any tea to come in from China, India, or any other country where coloured labour exists. We shall have no sugar, no product at all admitted which has been denied by the touch of coloured 'labour.'" That is the natural result of such a clause as we have here. I desire honorable senators to see clearly the position to which it commits Australia. Australia is part of the Empire, which is committed to a certain course. There are hundreds of millions of the coloured races under the Crown of

Great Britain, and it ill becomes us to throw a slur upon them. What possible good can result to Australia from this provision ? The insult to 200,000,000 coloured people would be ill compensated by any paltry employment such as might arise. Why should we have it, when the object to be gained is so paltry ? The advantages to be gained from it are most trifling, and the disadvantages, which are great, from the point of view of the Government of Great Britain, do not warrant us in taking upon ourselves the adoption of so drastic a provision. Surely it is driving it home in a most absurd way to say that not only contracts but any arrangements are to be avoided. In all sorts of ways our mail contracts would be affected. The forwarding of letters to the South Sea Islands, to all parts of Oceania, and many foreign countries, would be affected by the adoption of the word "arrangement." I object not only to the word " arrangement," but to the whole clause. I object to the whole policy indicated in the clause which we are asked to accept. I do honestly ask the members of the Senate to look at the question in all its lights. They should look at it, not only from the point of view of Australia, but from the point of view of the Empire of which we are a part, and certainly hy no means an insignificant part. If we claim to share in the glories and prestige of the Empire, let us also be willing to share, to some extent, in its responsibilities, and, therefore, do not let us take the course indicated in this amendment, which will do us no good whatever, but will cast a slur upon hundreds of millions of our fellow subjects.

Senator MACFARLANE(Tasmania).I would direct the attention of the committee to the fact that this question was debated at great length on the 10th July, and on that occasion the Government declared for and voted in favour of the clause as it stood, before the amendment was made by the House of Representatives. By a majority of 17 to 8 the committee then negatived the amendment proposed by Senator' Glassey. A reference to Hansard, page 2223, will show that the amendment proposed by Senator Glassey was to add to the clause the following words -

In all such contracts for the carriage of mails by sea there shall be inserted a term stipulating that the crew of any vessel employed in such carriage shall be white" men.

The Postmaster-General has endeavoured to show that the amendment of the House of Representatives, though it says, " No contract or arrangement shall be entered into," will not debar a black man who is a native of this country from being employed in connexion with horses used for the carriage of mails. I must ask the honorable and learned senator, in view of his previous expression of opinion, to be a little consistent in this matter. Nothing really new has turned up to warrant a change of opinion on his part. I shall not repeat what I said before upon this question, but I would point out to the committee that if no contract is to be entered into for the carriage of mails unless such a condition is included in it, the consequence is likely to be that there will be no regularity in the delivery of mails. The very fact of our being able to put mails on a vessel regularly is of great advantage to the commercial community. No such arrangement will be able to be made with a ship employing even a black cook. Nearly all sea-going vessels have mora or less coloured labour on board. I do not think that the stoke-hole of .a steamer in the Red Sea is a proper place for a white man, and if we debar black labour from being employed we shall debar some of the best and fastest vessels from coming here\* It has been shown by Sir Thomas Sutherland, the chairman of the P. and O. Company, that the employment of white men only will not benefit the English-speaking race, because in the majority of cases the companies .will employ foreign seamen. Sir Thomas Sutherland also says that the giving up of black labour by the companies will" not really injure the companies. He spoke from knowledge as an expert.

Senator O'CONNOR

- Does the honorable senator say that it will not injure the steam-boat companies 1

Senator MACFARLANE

- Yes : Sir Thomas Sutherland says so, because they can get white labour almost as cheaply, if they can get it all. But the quality is so bad, so far as concerns the labour the companies get for the stoke-hole, that it will be very troublesome to enforce the employment of white labour only. We shall really be preventing ourselves from entering into contracts for our own benefit if this amendment is agreed to.

Senator WALKER

- I intend to be consistent and to vote against this amendment. I draw the attention of the Postmaster-General to the fact that, if the amendment is agreed to, it will prevent the employment of Maories. Is not a man to be at liberty to employ a Maori on a steamer 1

Senator Drake



- If the honorable senator starts by making distinctions like that he will not be finished by the time the sun goes down.

Senator WALKER

- The Postmaster-General says that Australian aboriginals would be able to be employed in some cases. But what about the sons and daughters of people who may happen to have what is called a dash of black in their blood 1 Are they not to be allowed to be employed, although those sons and daughters may have been born in Australia 1 The whole proposal is so monstrous that I can hardly find language sufficiently strong to express my contempt for it. I sincerely hope that the Postmaster-General will not make the question a party one at all, but that the committee will vote upon it on its merits, and that we shall have a repetition of the division which was previously taken.

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Senator DOBSON

- The committee are placed in a very unfortunate position in regard to this question. I would call the attention of the representatives of the Government to the situation in which they have helped to place us if we are now going to pass the clause with this amendment in it. I think the Prime Minister has given way very weakly upon a question which he must know vitally affects the Empire. I read with very great annoyance and disappointment that my right honorable friend the Prime Minister had decided- to support the amendment moved in another place upon the clause as it originally stood, though that amendment, or a similar one to it, was opposed conscientiously and from conviction by the representatives of the Government in the Senate. I am happy to say that on the last occasion the members of the Government in this Chamber assisted in defeating Senator Glassey's amendment ; and I think that constitutionally and in honor they are not bound to follow their leader, who has changed the policy of the Government in another Chamber. After the Prime Minister had made, as I believe he did, a most admirable speech about the relations of Australia to the Empire, he changed his policy in the direction of preventing the employment of British subjects upon vessels where they have been employed for 50 years. The policy of a white Australia every one of us admits to be a true policy, and we are all in favour of it. But the whole point lies in the application of that doctrine. Do not my honorable friends know that all through their lives there are doctrines which have to be applied with discretion? Do they not recognise that it will be a cruelty and an injustice to vote simply for a craze regardless of its consequences ? Honorable senators recognise that we are a part of the British Empire. We are proud of being members of the British Empire. That being so, are we going to follow a cruel course that will take the livelihood from men who are our own fellow subjects ? Honorable senators know that our King is Emperor of India. Is it not a fact that only recently it cost a million of money to keep people in India from starving from famine, and that, notwithstanding that, 800\*000 of them died ? Is it not a fact that some years ago a million and a half of people in India died from famine, and that on a previous occasion some two or -three millions died from the same cause ? Yet, in view of those facts, because only 36,000 of these people are employed by British steam-ship companies throughout the world, it is desired to take away their livelihood, and to force our Ministers not to enter into any contract with any steam-ship company on whose vessels black labour is employed. This policy will -make Australia the laughing-stock of the thinking people of the world. Another question arises in connexion with the defence of the Empire. There may come a time when the Empire will have to fight for its life, and when the people of this country will have to fight for their commercial and industrial freedom. At such a time the black crews employed on British merchant vessels may be the saving of the British navy. It is proved beyond a doubt that there are not sufficient English seamen in the British mercantile marine and the British navy to man the ships. Is that denied ?

Senator McGregor

- We all deny it.

Senator DOBSON

- Then all I can say is that I shall be happy when the debate is over to obtain some of the superior knowledge that my honorable friends appear to have. But, from the papers I have before me, let me inform them that the British navy and the British mercantile marine are increasing by leaps and bounds ; their vessels are becoming more numerous, and there can be no doubt that in the future there will not be enough British sailors to man the ships.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- There are not enough now.

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Senator DOBSON

- Let me put this point to my honorable friends. I suppose - although I hope it will never happen in my time - that a great naval war is bound to take place some time. In that event, the 36,000 lascars employed in our ships may be the very saving of the British Empire ; because 10,000 or 15,000 of our own seamen may be drowned or killed, and then the men of the mercantile marine will have to come forward. We may then be glad of the services of these sober, worthy, and industrious lascars. The paper I hold in my hand shows that the Royal navy will, in the near future, inevitably have to get additional men, and that the men they are now able to obtain are not sufficient for the requirements of the service. In this paper, which deals with lascar crews, I find the following passage : -

I have also pointed out that the bulk of our foreign seamen are drawn from the Scandinavian countries, and it is not within the bounds of possibility that we shall ever be at war with those countries. Again, large numbers of lascars are employed. They are our Indian subjects, and therefore our fellow subjects, but as we are not likely to be at war with them, their employment in the merchant lines tends again to release a number of British seamen for service in the navy.

Lord Dudley, speaking in the House of Lords upon the- subject, said -

It was obviously impossible to rely upon the merchant marine as a reserve for the navy in anything like the same proportion as in days gone by, but 30 years ago the figures were 197,000 and 48,000 respectively. If all the merchant seamen were British, they would not constitute a source of supply to meet the wastage of a great naval war in anything like the proportion of past times. He could not agree that the employment of foreign seamen in the merchant marine necessarily constituted a source of danger in time of war, because the seamen were drawn from so many nationalities. Even during the pressure of the great French war in 1803, the navigation laws were partially suspended to allow three fourths of the crews of British ships to be foreigners.

I do not hesitate to say that when this miserable attempt at legislation - this poking of our noses into matters that do not concern us - comes to be applied four or five years hence, when the present contracts expire, the Postmaster-General of the day will enter into contracts with British ship - owners for the carriage of mails, whether they employ lascars or not. I should like to see the set of men who would move a vote of confidence in a Government that adopted that course. Day after day the question of Empire becomes more important. My\* honorable friends know that, and if some of them are not proud of the Empire now, they will, perhaps, be proud of it in four years' time. I heard one honorable senator laugh at the idea that the Empire should be put first and Australia nowhere. I put the Empire first always, and Australia second. Any one who talks to me of putting Australia first, of putting the interests of our little Commonwealth before the interests of the mighty Empire, loses my respect for his politics. What did one of our admirable morning journals tell us the other day ? It showed that the whole Commonwealth is girdled round with the fighting ships of our Empire, that the very confidence with which this clause has been inserted, is due to the fact that we are British subjects, and have a British navy to protect us, and that we have lascars doing their duty on British ships as well as any others. It is because of our connexion with the Empire, which some honorable senators desire to slap in the face, that we have the confidence and the strength to propose the insertion of this clause. If the Empire were to raise its hand and allow us to act for ourselves, we should no more dare to pass a clause like this than we should dare to jump into a fiery furnace.

Senator McGregor

- Nonsense.

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Senator DOBSON

- I read in the Times a most interesting speech made by Lord George Hamilton in delivering the Indian Budget, and I was perfectly astounded to learn of the prosperity of that portion of the Empire in view of the severe famine, through which it has passed. In the report of the debate I caught sight of the name of Sir M. Bhownaggee, a native of India, who has been educated in Britain, and for the last eight or ten years has been a member of the House of Commons. We might say that he is an educated English gentleman, except that by birth he is an Indian.. He said -

With regard to the unfair treatment of lascars seamen he submitted that it was in the power of statesmen here to adopt measures to give justice and deserved rights to those poor people. If lascars were to be employed at all on board British ships, it would be because it was profitable to the owners to employ them. He did not see why men whose frugal habits and hardy pursuits adapted, them for such service should not be employed on terms which they themselves were willing to accept. To deprive lascars of this opportunity of employment robbed the industrial classes of India of one of the few means of livelihood left to them. He believed that those placed in office were not wanting in sympathy -

I hope that applies to my honorable friends in the labour corner - and were doing their best to safeguard the interests of the people of India, but that all the people knew what were the results.

In conclusion he said - and I would call the attention of Ministers to this last paragraph -

If Imperial statesmen were to throw up their hands and say that, because they had given self government to the colonies here and there, those colonies could not be touched when they trampled in the dust the great traditions of the British rule, then the right to govern India from here would be to a large extent modified in the eyes of the natives of India and other foreign countries.

No words of mine could put the matter stronger than that. When I spoke on this subject before, I called the attention of the Senate to a statement made by Sir Thomas Sutherland, who pointed out that upon the opening of the Suez Canal the P. and O. Company tried to do away with lascars, because there was a prejudice against them, many people thinking they were not good seamen in a storm. The company tried most persistently to do away with them ; but owing to the desertion of white crews, and the fact that the great strain attendant upon working in a stoke-hole engendered habits of drunkenness in white men, it was found impossible to make the change. The company had to take back the lascars. Within one week of the debate in which I drew attention to this fact last July, the Orient Company, whose passengers and clients had always boasted that no black fellows were employed on the line, announced that they had decided to employ lascars in the stoke-holes of their vessels, because the work was not fit for white men to discharge.

Senator DAWSON

- That is absurd.

Senator DOBSON

- Will my honorable friends in the labour corner, who profess to represent the true opinions of labour, listen to me? Men who have had years and years of experience say that in hot weather and in tropical parts a stoke-hole is not a fit place for a white man. All the evidence goes to show that when white men are sent into stoke-holes in such places over one-half of them become more like beasts than human beings.

Senator McGregor

- That is a libel.

Senator DOBSON

- It is out of consideration for the white man, and because of the appalling strain attaching to this work, that lascars are employed in the stoke-holes of these vessels. I asked the manager of the Orient Company the meaning of their change of front. He said it was absolutely forced upon them. "If you would go down to the wharf," he remarked, "and see the Orient steamers waiting there to get off, and see the white stokers dragged down to the ships by the police, looking more dead than alive - if you could see the looks of the wretched beings - you would recognise that we are driven to employ lascars." I ask Ministers in the Senate, whether they are going to vote against their conscience in this matter ; whether they are going to commit an act which, I think, would be most unwise and unstatesmanlike, simply because one of their colleagues in another place has changed his mind. I know that this is a delicate subject ; that it gives rise to a constitutional question ; but it has been said, that the Senate is going to stand up for its rights, and I think we have a right to insist upon our first proposal. Ministers here should stand up for the opinions and convictions honestly expressed by the Senate. This is not a party question, and I do not think that

Ministers in this Chamber are going to vote against their deliberate judgment on an Imperial matter of this kind, simply because in another place a certain proposal has been carried. I cannot state more strongly than I have, that this is a most cruel and unjust application of a very right principle. We are turning that very right principle into a wrong one. It is a sin to say, that after 60 years' training on the P. and O. mail

steamers the lascars are to be sent adrift. Some honorable senators seem to think that lascars are employed solely because they are cheaper than white men. In the papers which I quoted on a previous occasion, but which I have not got with me now, it was shown that one of the officers of the Orient Company, which did not employ lascars at the time, denied that it was cheaper to employ them, but asserted that the shipping companies were compelled to utilize their services. He pointed out that far more lascars than white men had to be employed to do the same amount of work, and the companies had to keep the families of these coloured men going. He said it was not a question of expense - but rather one of getting the work done ; of carrying the mails according to contract, and of keeping their ships clean - that was involved. It is a matter of looking after their own business in their own way, without any interference on the part of this young Commonwealth. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to, and that the whole matter will be thrashed out. I trust that honorable senators in the labour corner will do me the honor of answering my arguments, but that they will not do me the dishonour of sneering at my remarks when I say I feel that they are making a blow at the Empire, and certainly proposing to do something which will be a disgrace to our legislation.

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Vice-President of the Executive Council

Senator O'CONNOR

.I am sure that every honorable senator who has listened to Senator Dobson will admit that he is actuated by the utmost sincerity, and that, if he will allow me to say so, the somewhat extravagant expressions he has used are dictated by his enthusiasm for the Empire. We may all be enthusiastic about the Empire, and I would yield to no man here in my admiration for it, and my feeling of pride that Australia is part of it. At the same time, I never forget, as I hope none of us do, that we are also citizens of the Australian Commonwealth, and that we have to recognise that, however proud we may be of our connexion with the Empire, we must take care that the policy of the Australian Commonwealth is developed on those lines which are necessary for its safety. No confusion of thought on this matter, it seems to me, is more common than that into which Senator Dobson has fallen, namely, that we cannot carry out the policy of a white Australia without doing injustice to other portions of the Empire.

Senator Dobson

- Has the safety of the Commonwealth nothing to do with this matter ?

Senator O'CONNOR

- There is no doubt that the latest opinions of the best British statesmen is that we must work out our own destiny with regard to the Empire wherever possible, but first of all we must work out our own destiny, and there is no intention, and never has been any intention, expressed on behalf of the Colonial-office, ruled as it is now by men who have the experience of Colonial government of a hundred years behind them, of forcing the will of the Empire upon any colony - especially upon the Commonwealth of Australia - where the forcing of that will is inimical to the interests of the colonies themselves. In every matter concerning the colonies, their intention is, and wisely, to let the colonies govern themselves, according to their own views.

Senator PULSFORD

- But the Attorney-General says he does not know whether this Bill will be accepted.

Senator O'CONNOR

- There is no question that one of the most important matters of policy for the safeguarding of the Commonwealth is the preservation of a white Australia.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

-Col. Neild. - This has nothing whatever to do with it.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I do not expect my honorable friends opposite to agree with me, but I am making a statement which, I think, cannot be gainsaid, except, perhaps, by those whose enthusiasm for the Empire has somewhat carried them off their feet.

Senator Dobson

- The honorable and learned senator is taking up a position different to that which he took up on a previous occasion.

Senator O'CONNOR

- I cannot say everything at once. I do not possess that faculty which the honorable and learned senator enjoys ; but I intend to explain fully my position in this matter. I was observing that one of the cardinal points of our policy in dealing with the Commonwealth is that Australia shall be maintained as a place for the white races. Although it is not a necessary part of that policy that we should see that the principle is observed in all contracts dealing with the carrying of mails from and to Australia, the same principle is involved. That principle is, that if we find it necessary for the maintenance of a white Australia to do an act which may seem inhospitable to other parts of the Empire, we are under that first and greatest law of nature, self-preservation, and we have to look after ourselves first of all. Therefore all these arguments we have heard as to the injustice to the other inhabitants of the Empire, in India and other places, seem to me to be answered in one word. If to do this is to do an injustice to them, then the answer is that it is necessary for our preservation that this injustice should be done. Has this question of a white Australia any bearing upon this matter at all ? I say it has - in this sense, that the Commonwealth wishes to carry out the policy of a white Australia and will spend, and does spend now, a very large amount in the carriage of mails.

Senator Dobson

- I rise to a point of order. I ask whether the doctrine of a white Australia, and the saving of the Commonwealth and our own safety in this matter, has anything to do with the amendment before the committee?

The CHAIRMAN

- I think the remarks of the "Vice-President of the Executive Council are quite relevant to the question before the committee.

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I was pointing out that the Commonwealth will be asked to expend a very large amount of money belonging to the people in the carriage of mails to places outside the Commonwealth itself. The question has arisen under this Bill whether or not this principle of maintaining a white Australia should be extended to the service which is employed for the carrying of the mails to and from Australia. That is the question which has been raised. Honorable senators will perhaps remember that when I spoke on this matter before, I pointed out that so far as the extension of the principle was concerned the policy of the Government was entirely in favour of carrying out that principle in all matters of contract which the Commonwealth had under its control

I stated that that was the policy of the Government, and that it would be carried out in administration under the watchful eyes of Parliament, of the press, and of the public opinion of Australia. At the time when I was speaking on Senator Glassey's amendment I stated that it appeared to me that it would be very much better that the carrying out of that policy should be left as a matter of administration to the Government, subject to the checks and safeguards which are afforded by Parliament, the press and public opinion. That was my individual opinion. I expressed it strongly here. It is my opinion still, and I have not altered it in any way whatever. But the honorable and learned senator who has spoken and has made references to the position of Ministers, seems to forget that we are dealing here with parliamentary responsible government, under which every man cannot have his own way ; under which people must subordinate their opinions sometimes, and under which there would never be any agreement, either between individuals in a Government or between legislative Houses, unless there was some sinking of individual opinion and some compromise in regard to a matter of this kind. I find that although in the Senate the Government carried their way and defeated Senator Glassey's amendment by a large majority, in the House of Representatives, the majority was so strong the other way that the Government took the course, and the very wise course, of recognising that position, and did not even put the matter to a division. Every one who has had anything to do with parliamentary work will recognise that it very often happens that we feel that the opinion of a House is so strongly in favour of a particular view that it is useless to waste time in taking up a position otherwise than in accordance with the view of the great majority of those who are dealing with the question. That is the position the Government took up, and having taken up that position and having supported this amendment, my honorable and learned friend and myself are faced with this question : Is the matter one in which we think that for the sake of preserving our own individual opinions we ought to refuse any longer to carry out this policy in the Bill, as

it has come to us from the other House? So far as I am concerned, I have no hesitation whatever in coming to the conclusion, and my honorable and learned friend takes the same view, that this is one of those matters in connexion with which we feel bound to accept the view which has been taken by the Government in the other Chamber. And when the measure comes here as a Government measure - the Government having taken that view of the proper policy - we intend to support it. That is the position I take up here, and it is a position which every man who deals with practical politics at times, finds himself obliged to face. I have said already that I have not changed in any way whatever my own individual opinion. I expressed it strongly and still believe in it, but at the same time I recognise that we have got on in this matter to a position at which there is a choice between one of two courses. The course we advocated here was that as a matter of administration this very thing should be done, and that in every contract with which the Government had anything to do or could control in any way, they should make a stipulation that only white labour should be employed. We were willing to do that as a matter of administration, and we now, as a Government, say that this is a matter which should be embodied in legislation, that the same thing which we were willing to do as a matter of administration should be embodied in an Act which enables the Commonwealth to spend its money in connexion with the conduct of these postal services.

Senator DAWSON

- This makes it imperative.

Senator O'CONNOR

- As the honorable senator says, this will make it imperative, instead of making it a mere matter of administration to be carried out subject to the will of Parliament.

Senator Clemons

- And the honorable and learned senator will risk the Bill ?

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Senator O'CONNOR

- I will come to that in a moment. That being the position, I ask the committee to remember that we have got to a point at which the House of Representatives has taken one view, and this committee has taken another view. Unless there is some agreement about it, this Bill cannot become law. The Senate has got now to consider, having the Bill with a number of amendments, whether it will refuse to agree to this amendment, or whether it will agree to it, and enable to be put in the forefront of the Bill itself a declaration of the policy to which I, and most honorable senators here have already given our assent. I say that, under these circumstances, there can be no doubt that the right course will be to assent to this amendment. No alteration in the existing condition of things can be made for the next four years, because it is practically to the contract of the P. and O. Company that this clause is likely to apply. But at the end of that time this policy will be carried out. I have no doubt from what has been said by Senator Macfarlane, as to the opinion of the chairman of the P. and O. Company, that when the time comes for the making of these contracts, and the time comes when Australia will be spending at least some £70,000 a year in subsidizing these companies, other companies will be found to take up the same position as the Orient Company has already taken up, and probably there will be very little difficulty found in carrying out the services with the same efficiency as at present, and under the conditions which it will be imperative to insert in these contracts under the amendment at present under discussion.

Senator Dobson

- Then we shall give the contract to a German or a French company.

Senator O'CONNOR

- That is a matter which can be settled later on. We have nothing to do with it now. I hope that, under the circumstances, Senator Dobson, who has spoken so enthusiastically and, I may say, angrily on this question, and who has referred to the position of the Government, will understand that, as a matter of actual practical politics, I say the committee ought to assent to this amendment, and I make that statement without changing my own personal opinion in any way whatever, but feeling impelled by the circumstances which have arisen to take the course which my honorable and learned colleague and myself have taken.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- This, of course, is a matter of very great importance from whatever point of view it may be viewed. I

desire for myself to take the earliest opportunity of declaring my entire and consistent adhesion to the view I have already held, and expressed in the Senate by my voice and by my vote. I shall vote against this amendment being accepted by the Senate, and it appears to me that the Senate will be gravely stultifying itself if now, after a vote of nearly two to one on the previous occasion, it changes its policy and its determination, and accepts the amendment offered to us by the House of Representatives. In the first place I yield to no one in my desire to magnify Australia. I have incurred in the past in some respects criticism, perhaps odium, because I have sought to insist upon making Australia as completely self governing as she is entitled to be made. On the other hand, I desire in every respect to do nothing which shall qualify our loyalty or our admiration for the great Empire to which we belong. I say at once that I do not go the length Senator Dobson has gone, in placing the Empire in away before Australia. I consider that they are in one sense peers, that it is not exactly an imperium in imperio, but that the Commonwealth of Australia ought in the eyes of Australians to occupy the first place, and that by keeping the first place we shall best magnify the Empire. We have no desire to unfix the ties which unite us to the Empire in any way whatever, and my belief is that the more we increase our powers of self-government, the higher the plane we seek to occupy in working out our great destiny, the greater the strength we shall bring to the Empire, which we wish to see continue strong, and the greater the credit we shall add to ourselves as a part of it. Having said that I come to the consideration of the matter with which we are more immediately concerned. It is an extraordinary position that we occupy on this occasion. On the former occasion we were led by the representatives of the Government in the Senate to victory. The defeat of those who advocated this particular provision was brought about under the banner of the Government and under the most capable leadership which could be given to this great question. I felt myself that largely the views which were expressed, and which guided me on that occasion to give my vote against the clause as it was then proposed, were expressed with the very greatest power by my honorable and learned friend the "Vice-President of the Executive Council.

Senator DAWSON

- Did the Vice-President of the Executive Council convince the honorable and learned senator ?

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The honorable and learned senator did not convince me, but he confirmed my own conviction. My honorable and learned friend is entitled, as the comic opera says, " to our heart-felt sympathy." He comes here and seeks to lead us in an entirely opposite direction to that in which he led us here before.

Senator Fraser

- The two roads cannot be alike.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I could not help thinking, when he was speaking with that great earnestness which distinguishes his utterances, that he is like the Chinese theologians who believe that they can hold two opinions at the same time, so long as they state them with sufficient violence, or, as my honorable friend would say, with sufficient earnestness. I do not believe that is possible myself. I prefer the earlier opinions of my honorable friend to these later opinions thrust upon him, as he has said, by the majority in the other House. The opinions which I read in Hansard are diametrically opposite to those which he entertains and expresses now. We are all entitled to change our mind. My honorable friend says that he has not changed his mind, but that it is the people in the other place who have dictated to him and that he has not strength of mind enough to resist their dictation. He says now we must have this embodied in legislation. On a former occasion, with the utmost strenuousness, and with an eloquence which he has never excelled here - and that is saying a great deal - he declared that we ought not, under any circumstances, to put a cast-iron direction into an Act of Parliament on this subject ; that no legislation was to be attempted on the matter; that such an Act of Parliament would prevent the Postmaster-General from making any contract that does not contain this stipulation.

If the amendment is carried, it will be mandatory that in all such contracts there shall be inserted a stipulation that the crew shall be white men.

A cast-iron direction in an Act of Parliament is what my honorable friend denounced in the most emphatic form a few short weeks ago, but it is what he appeals to the Senate to swallow now. On that occasion he gave us an excellent illustration. He said -

Is it right that the Postmaster-General, who will have to deal not only with Inter-State contracts, but with contracts in which he shares with the British Government in subsidizing companies for possibly the delivery of mails to some islands in the Pacific - with which our trade will grow in time - should have his hands tied, so that he cannot make a contract with the companies which employ black labour?

He saw that the effect of this provision would be to defeat the possibility of our sending mails at all to the islands of the Pacific, and he implored the committee not to assent to a cast-iron direction in an Act of Parliament, which might, possibly, in years to come, have that most mischievous result. I ventured to interject -

One coloured man in a crew would vitiate the whole contract.

And my honorable and learned friend - we were in absolute harmony then - said -

Exactly ; any coloured person might vitiate the contract.

Senator O'Connor

- Hear, hear.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable and learned friend cheers that because it is impossible for him, as a gentleman greatly learned in the law, to differ from it. We are not leaving it to administration, but we are putting it as a cast-iron condition in an Act of Parliament, from which there can be no deviation, and under which we shall have to abstain from entering into any contracts of that description or run the risk of their being vitiated in that way. He said to-day it was to be left as a matter of administration. I quite agree that he said so before; but to what extent? -

What danger is there in leaving it to the Government to carry out this policy wherever it is possible ?

If you are to have a policy of this description, undoubtedly let it be subject to that qualification "as far as it is possible," and the moment you introduce that qualification you cast from the administration the direction of the affair wherever it is possible. You have to do it, possible or not possible. It is a provision of boycott against a certain set of small steam-ship companies. You are seeking to legislate not as to your own InterState vessels, not as to your own country, but as to the steam vessels of other nations, over whom you have no power of legislation in this matter. You are seeking not to deal with the subject of white Australia at all, but to compel other nations to adopt the policy of white Australia for themselves. If this affected the question of a white Australia a totally different set of conditions would arise. It is not a white Australia but a white universe that you want. I am talking not merely the language of my profession, but the language of Parliament when I say that each vessel is a part of the country to which it belongs, and if you attempt indirectly to compel the owner to employ white men only, if he prefers to employ black men, you are seeking to legislate for the country to which she belongs. If that is so, what possible gain is it to us to put in this provision?

Senator Pearce. - We shall not enter into a contract.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Does the honorable senator mean to say that he will tell the P. and O. Company we shall not enter into a mail contract or put mails on board their boats, if they have black men amongst the crew or the stokers - that they will be so delighted to receive our small subsidy of £70,000 or £80,000 a year for the whole of these mails, that they would allow us to dictate to them the policy under which they would manage their enormous fleet? Nothing of the sort. We have been told that when the P. and O. Company's contract expires in four years time, we shall be able to make arrangements with the Orient Company. I read in the newspapers the other day that the Orient Company have been driven to employ lascars.

Senator Pearce

- One boat.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- One boat is only the beginning, but whether it is one boat or the fleet, there is the fact that the two lines of steamers which have been carrying the mails to this country under contracts utilize coloured labour ; and we are to cut off our noses, if you please, to spite our faces, to say - " We shall not allow you to carry our mails. We would rather have no mails carried than put them on a vessel on which black labour is employed." The thing is ludicrous. It astonishes me that we should have a proposition of that kind put forward.



Senator Keating

- Fortunately, that is not the proposition before the committee.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend cannot have been listening, because that is exactly, in substance if not in words, the proposition. How are we to have our mails carried ? Does he wish to tie the Government to the German line or the French line ? What other line is there that comes through the Suez Canal to these ports ? These other vessels come here once a month.

Senator McGregor

- With white crews.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am not discussing the ability of white men to do the work. There is a great deal of force in what Senator Dobson has said on that point. If you can get other men whom you perhaps call inferior races to do the menial work, it is lamentable to me that you should not permit them to do it.

Senator McGregor

- That is what the American slave-owners said.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Not at all, but when they used to smash up machinery in England many years ago, it was said - " You are taking work from the hands of workmen." You might just as well say - " Because we can get a machine to do this kind of thing, we shall not allow it to be employed, for it will throw men out of work." Take the position in which this matter stands. We are told that this is a white Australian problem. If it is, there are great considerations which have to be dealt with. But we are not legislating for Australia at all in this respect. We are seeking to compel the vessels upon which we wish our mails to be carried to employ all white labour. We are going beyond the bounds of our legislation if we attempt anything of the kind, and, as Senator O'Connor said on a former occasion -

If any arrangements are to be made with regard to Inter-State affairs or other affairs, then let arrangements be made wherever it is possible.

And that can only be in regard to InterState vessels which may be manned, if necessary, from Australia. Supposing that coloured men are driven out of the P. and O. steamers, do honorable senators think that Australians will take their place ? Nothing of the kind. Why are we to legislate, when we have enough to do with our own affairs, for the affairs of England, or for the benefit of seamen who are supposed to be waiting for employment upon these mail steamers in England? I take the view that not one single British seaman is deprived of employment by the employment of lascars on board these mail steamers. We know quite well that the merchant service is manned very largely by foreign sailors.

Senator McGregor

- Does the honorable and learned senator know why ?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I know why well; because there are not enough British seamen.

Senator McGregor

- They cannot be got to live like dogs.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend knows that the condition of the mercantile marine has been enormously improved.

Senator McGregor

- There is a lot more room for improvement.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I should think that the British seaman would not care about living in the saloon of a P. and O. steamer; he prefers his own mode of living, and it would be utterly absurd to suggest anything of the sort. But we have the fact that at .this moment the mercantile marine is manned to the extent of half the number of its sailors by foreign seamen. I would very much rather see these foreign seamen out of the mercantile marine of England. I think they are a positive menace in case of a foreign war, or danger of any kind. What lines of steamers are we seeking to affect 1 The P. and O. and Orient lines. What possible gain would it be tons? None ; not a single Australian would be employed. What possible gain would it be to us in regard to the policy of a white Australia 1 None ; because these lascars are not coming into Australia,

and it is not suggested that they will come. It is simply this idea - this mania - against coloured races run absolutely to riot that has caused the amendment to be made. Having before us the most vital question of a white Australia, we are not content to settle that, but are seeking to drive home the same principle in regard to other people, over whom we have no control, doing an injustice at the same time to the owners of ships, who are perfectly entitled to manage their own business as they choose. These are the reasons upon which I intend to act in resisting this amendment as it has come up from the House of Representatives. There are many other reasons that might be urged, but we have debated the matter at great length before. I have put those reasons which stick out really on the very surface - if I may use that expression - of the question. If it could be even plausibly argued that this matter was involved in the policy of a white Australia, I should be quite prepared to view it from a totally different aspect. But under cover of the phrase "a white Australia," I feel that the Senate would be exceedingly unwise if it attempted to legislate for the coloured population belonging to a different country.

Senator FRASER

- I am greatly disappointed that the Government have changed front on this question. I believe that had they acted fairly in the other Chamber, possibly the difficulty that now faces us would not have appeared. I am confident that, had the Government been firm in the House of Representatives, the division at any rate would have been very close, even if the Government had not won by a small majority.

Senator Glassey

- The Government would have been beaten.

Senator FRASER

- A Government are not worthy of being named a good or patriotic Government unless they stand to their opinions, whether they be in a majority or a minority. At times it is greatly to the credit of a Government, here or elsewhere, to be in a minority, and it is much to the discredit of a Government to be always endeavouring to be in a majority.

Senator Glassey

- This is part of their policy.

Senator FRASER

- I do not think it is part of their policy. I am now, however, speaking upon the action that has taken place on the part of the Government and not upon the main question. I say it is greatly to the credit of a Government sometimes to be in a minority and to hold to their opinions ; by so doing they may instruct the country, and also point the way to weak-minded and ill-informed people who do not know what course to take.

Senator MCGREGOR

- Who are the ill informed people the honorable senator refers to ?

Senator FRASER

- The world is full of them. There is more ignorance than wisdom in the world. We all think we are very wise, perhaps, when we are not. I know that the more I read the more I realize my own ignorance ; and the more I travel through the world - and I have travelled round it three or four times keeping my eyes and ears open - the more I realize how much there is to learn. I am entirely in favour of the policy of a white Australia. Let there be no mistake about that. Had this amendment been confined to Australian shipping, I might have voted for it ; I think I should have done.

Senator Pearce

- That is admitting a good deal.

Senator FRASER

- But the amendment has nothing to do with Australian shipping. It applies to British shipping.

Senator Glassey

- It is Australian cash that has to pay for it.

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Senator FRASER

- The paltry few thousands of pounds we pay in this respect is only a tithe - a drop in the bucket - compared with what we pay for black labour in other directions. We pay for black labour in connexion with almost everything we eat and drink and wear. Is it because British shipping is carrying a few letters for us that we are to demand the right to interfere ? We only contribute a very small part of the subsidy received

by these boats. The amendment is aimed at certain shipping companies only.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- No.

Senator FRASER

- My common sense tells me that it is aimed at merely a few companies, which are only employing a small amount of black labour. I am not going to argue whether the work done in the stoke-hole of the steamers can be done by white labour, though my own opinion is that it is not white men's work. I am for elevating the white race, not degrading it. I am for keeping the white race to employment that will elevate the mind and help the body as well, and am not in favour of putting the white race to labour that will degrade them and make them as bad as brute beasts. I know that my honorable friends opposite are of the same opinion as myself in that regard.

Senator De Largie

- Is the honorable senator in favour of keeping white men out of the deep mines ?

Senator FRASER

- I am in favour of employing black labour where the conditions of work are such as would be degrading to white labour.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- There is no disgrace in honest labour.

Senator FRASER

- No one says there is.

Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator said that labour in the stoke-hole of steamers degraded white men.

Senator FRASER

- I say that honest labour is a credit to any human being. Let me point out that British shipping does half the trade of the whole civilized world. British shipping is a marvel and a wonder, and the money invested in it is perfectly amazing and enormous.

Senator Higgs

- Beloved money !

Senator FRASER

- It is not the money I care two straws about, but it is the prestige of the British Empire. If we man British boats only with white men, what do we do but drive in foreigners and compel British companies to employ them ? As a British subject, holding the view that every part of the British Empire must stand to each other part in trouble as well as in success, I hold that it is much better for British shipping companies to employ lascars than Germans, or Frenchmen, or Austrians, or Russians, or Scandinavians, or Danes, or citizens of the United States. It is far safer that they should do so, because in time of trouble - which may come much sooner than we think - foreigners would be likely to turn against us. Every wise statesman is supposed to look ahead, and in forecasting the future we should speak our minds freely and unreservedly. It is far safer for the British navy and for British shipping - because British merchant ships are part of the British navy, and can be called into requisition on any occasion - that they shall be manned by honest British subjects, even lascars, than that we should have foreigners who may turn upon us at any time, or who at any rate would be likely to desert our ships and fight for their own country against us. There is no justification for inserting a provision of the kind proposed in any post-office contract. I indorse every word that fell from Senator O'Connor when he first spoke, and I am sure his heart was not in the speech he delivered to-night. When it is considered that the British Empire is composed of hundreds of millions of human beings, and that the whites are only a small proportion of the whole number-

Senator Pearce

- They keep it together, though.

Senator FRASER

- There are only forty millions of whites in Great Britain, four or five millions in Australia, five millions in Canada, and so on.

Senator Pearce

- But they "boss the show."

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Senator FRASER

- But for her other subjects, where would Great Britain be ? I do not say that we should allow coloured races to come here and take possession of this country. I will go "the whole hog" in regard to maintaining Australia as a white Australia, I would support the Government proposal in that regard, but it is ridiculous to say that we should dictate to the British Empire. If I were a member of the Government I should rather haul down the flag than do such a thing. We are only a small section of the Empire, and why should we be so arrogant as to say that we are going to do this, that, and the other, without regard to the Empire as a whole ? Has not the mother country treated us well ? Has she not been as considerate to us as any mother country could be ? Has she not given us these millions and millions of acres without asking us to pay a penny for them ? Has she not treated us magnanimously ? I do not say that we should not do what is right and fair to ourselves, but I do say that we should have some consideration for the Empire.

Senator Higgs

- Look at the interest we pay on our public debts ?

Senator FRASER.- If the British money lender closed his pockets to us for three months we should be practically insolvent. The Senate ought to hold firm to the vote which it gave on a previous occasion. I trust that there will be no backsliding, and that we shall say we are not going to insert a miserable amendment such as this in a Postal Bill. It deals with matters that have no part in such a measure. When we are considering the question of a white Australia let us deal with it thoroughly ; but it is absurd to talk of inserting such a provision as this by a mere side wind. I hope that the amendment will be rejected. For Ministers to say that matters will go on as they are for four years is a paltry way of dealing with the question. If the principle is a wicked one let us fight it now.

Senator Drake

- The present contracts have four years to run.

Senator FRASER

- I am aware of that ; but if the principle is a bad one it is no justification to say that it will not be applied for another four years.

Senator O'Connor

- I have never used that argument.

Senator FRASER

- No ; but Senator Drake used it. He said that it was not intended to unduly interfere with these shipping companies. The amendment is as plain as it can be. It is a far reaching one.

Senator Higgs

- It is intended to be far reaching.

Senator McGregor

- It might cause war.

Senator FRASER

- My honorable friend Senator McGregor is always very wise. He has the faculty of the Scotchman for thinking, and he is correct in saying that such a proposal as this might cause war. The amendment provides that no contract or arrangement for the carrying of mails shall be entered into, unless white labour is employed in such carriage. I hold that we should not be able to put a letter on board a boat going to Hong Kong or Honolulu, or any foreign port, without making an "arrangement."

Senator Pearce

- Yes, we could do so under clause 67.

Senator FRASER

- I am ashamed of such an amendment, and I hope it will be rejected by the committee.

Senator PEARCE

- I am sure we all realize with Senator Fraser that this is a very serious question, and that we can realize also the position in which the Government has been placed. The position of the Government has not been fairly put by Senator Symon. We know very well that when this question was before the Senate on a prior occasion, Senator O'Connor agreed with all the sentiments then expressed by those who favoured the proposal.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- But he opposed an amendment to this effect.

Senator PEARCE. - The honorable and learned senator was just as emphatic as any honorable senator in his support of the principle involved. He said, however, that no difficulties would arise if we allowed the Government to deal with it.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Wherever possible.

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Senator PEARCE

- Yes. I believe the representatives of the Government in this Chamber were sincere on that occasion, and we should give them credit for being sincere. There were other honorable senators besides the representatives of the Government, who thought it better that this matter should be dealt with as one of administration and that it would be unwise to insert a proposal of this character in a Postal Bill. Seeing that the Government found that the other House was almost unanimous in the opinion that this matter should be dealt with in the Bill itself; and seeing that the Government had not objected to the principle, the only difference being as to the method in which our object should be attained, I do not think there has been any climbing down on their part. They have adopted the decision of the other House, and they ask the Senate to agree to it. Senator Fraser said we should look ahead. I am surprised at the want of logic in the arguments used by some honorable senators who urge that we should do so. Senator Symon and Senator Dobson pointed out that a few weeks ago, before we last considered this question, there was only one line of steam-ships running between the old country and Australia manned by coloured crews. Since that time, the unfair competition of black crews on board those vessels has compelled another company to employ them.

Senator Keating

- To come down to the bad level of the P. and O. Company !

Senator PEARCE

- Yes; the logical outcome of their argument is that in a short time the whole of our ocean-going vessels will be manned not by white, but by coloured crews. That is the position which we have to face if we look ahead. I am surprised that some honorable senators, who profess to have so much love for the Empire, and to be such thorough-going Imperialists, are prepared to damage the chief partner in the Imperial concern. We have to remember that it is the white portion of the British Empire which has made it what it is to-day ; it is the white portion that keeps the Empire in its present position, and we must see that no action of ours is going to damage or lower these white races. It has been said that this question has no bearing on the principle of a white Australia. In my opinion it has, because the commercial life of Australia exists not only on the land, but on the sea. If we are to be a nation, or a worthy part of the Empire to which we belong, we must extend the principle of a white Australia to our seas. We must see that our white workers on land are protected from unfair competition and wherever it is possible we should insure that our white workers on the sea receive the same protection. I am surprised that those honorable senators who have opposed this amendment are prepared to concede every argument in favour of a white Australia. If we once concede that it is unfair to allow the white worker on land to be brought into competition with the coloured labour of India, how can we say that we are prepared to allow the white worker on sea to come into competition with the coloured man ? We have traders along the coast who have to compete with those very lines of steamers that Senator Fraser is prepared to assist. The honorable senator says he is ready to support legislation which will have the effect of compelling our own coastal boats to employ white crews, and yet he is prepared to allow them to come into competition with boats which employ coloured crews in the very same trade. There is absolutely no logic in the position of the opponents of this amendment. We cannot deal with this question from the point of view of empire without interlocking with it the great question of defence. I think we should remember the words of one who has taken a great interest in the naval defence of the Empire - Lord Brassey - a statesman who has told us that the 200,000 British seamen in the mercantile marine of 25 years ago have dwindled down to 100,000 to-day. That is a very serious matter. Can we rely on the lascars for the efficient defence of the Empire ?

Senator Walker

- Certainly we can !

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Senator PEARCE

- I say that their behaviour in times of peril is a sufficient answer to the question. It has been shown that they are not equal to white seamen in the face of danger. I am astonished to find such an Imperialist as Senator Symon taking up a position of antagonism to a proposal which will have the effect of insuring the employment certainly of a larger proportion of white seamen in the future than we have had in the past, and of stopping the rot which has set in in the employment of white seamen. We must remember that, while we are proud to belong to the Empire, our first duty is to Australia. Senator Dobson places his duty to the Empire first and his duty to Australia nowhere. In all these questions pertaining to trade and commerce, we cannot allow matters of Imperial concern, in which we have not vote or voice, to sway us in the direction of setting aside the interests of Australia. That very Empire which Senator Symon is so fond of quoting does not extend to its Indian subjects that consideration which it gives to its white people. Hindoos are not allowed the rights of citizenship in their own country, which belongs to them by very right. If we are to follow the example of Britain, we shall see that it is in the direction of this very amendment which has been sent up by the House of Representatives. The far-seeing statesmen of Great Britain say that it would be dangerous, not only to the Empire, but to the Indian people themselves, to give them the power of self-government. They say that if it were placed in their hands they would misuse it to their own detriment. Therefore they have denied to them the right which they have given to the white people of the United Kingdom. In denying them the right to share in the shipping trade of Australia, we are acting to their disadvantage, but certainly in the best interests of Australian seamen, and we have to consider our own seamen before, in charity or philanthropy, we extend our sympathy to the Indian and other coloured races. "We are not making any new departure. We are not taking a step which no nation has ever taken before. We have the example before, us of the great Republic of the West.

Senator Walker

- Any number of Chinamen are employed on their boats.

Senator PEARCE

- The United States of America are even more stringent in their provisions relating to mail contracts than those proposed in this amendment. In the contracts entered into by the United States Government, not only is it provided that all crews shall consist of white men, but that a certain proportion shall be citizens of the United States. If, for the purpose of fostering their navy, and encouraging the employment of their own citizens in the mercantile marine, they have found it necessary to take such precautions, I consider we are justified in doing the same thing. We are not inflicting any injustice upon steam-ship companies in this respect. There are only two companies which will be affected by this amendment - the French and the P. and O. lines. We find that the White Star Line, the Orient Company, the Blue Anchor Line, and the Gulf Line, all employ white crews. Many of the vessels of these companies trade through the tropics, and they have white stokers, though they have had the opportunity at any time to employ lascars. Notwithstanding the evidence of Senator Dobson, and notwithstanding his libel upon the white workers in these steamers, they have not found it necessary in the interests of economy to employ black labour. I say that the fact that so many of these companies have found it advantageous to employ white crews, is a direct contradiction of the statement that white men as crews are unreliable and unsafe. The fact of the matter is that this is all a question of pay and conditions. To say that it is a question of the sobriety of the crews is altogether beside the question. Every one who has seen a vessel worked by these lascar crews knows that they are servile labourers, that they accept a low rate of pay, and that in 1612 respect of the way in which they are treated they are practically slaves. I have seen them myself on a coasting boat cuffed and kicked.

Senator Dobson

- That is a gross libel as regards the P. and O. Company.

Senator PEARCE

- It is not a libel as regards the crew I am speaking of, for I saw them cuffed and kicked by their head serang, and treated in a way in which I am sure no white man would allow any superior to treat him. I should be very sorry to see the white man who would allow it. I contend that the whole question of the competition of these crews is bound up in the question of cost. One of the quotations upon which Senator Dobson based his argument showed that these companies admitted that they were impelled to this course because of the question of economy.

Senator Dobson

- Nothing of the kind.

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Senator PEARCE

- If Senator Dobson will look over his quotations again he will find there is one upon which that construction may be placed, although the honorable and learned senator did not use it in that way, but as an argument for the employment of these coloured crews. Seeing that it is all a question of pay and conditions, surely we who, as a Commonwealth, wish our white workers to have fair conditions and fair rates of pay, should be prepared to extend the same consideration to workers on the sea? Surely we are not content to be merely a Commonwealth of producers and manufacturers and to allow other nations to do our oversea carrying for us? Surely we have in us some love of the sea, and there is some of that blood in our veins which impelled our forefathers to become the masters of the sea? If that is so, our destiny is not only to become the greatest nation in the southern hemisphere, but to take a great part in the carrying trade of the world in the same way as the mother country has taken the lion's share of that trade. If that is so, we cannot too soon begin to lay the foundations of a mercantile marine manned by white men and by white Australians, and we should not allow these considerations for the coloured populations of the British Empire to brush aside the greater consideration which we should have for the white populations of that Empire to which we belong, because those are the people who have the first claim upon us.

Senator FERGUSON

- I intend to oppose this amendment. I recorded my vote, when this Bill was before us some time ago, against an amendment proposed by Senator Glassey, which was almost the same as this. I have had no reason since then to change my view upon the question. If there is any difference in my feeling at the present time it is that I am more convinced than ever that an amendment of this kind should not be passed. I notice that all the supporters of this amendment have laid a great deal of stress on a white Australia. I cannot understand what in the world the employment of coloured stokers in mail steamers has to do with a white Australia. Each of the P. and O. steamers comes to us about three times a year, and the crews scarcely land in Australia. They make the steamers their home, attend to their business quietly and obediently, and go away without interfering with us in the least. I cannot, therefore, see what the employment of these coloured stokers in the mail steamers has to do with the whiteness of Australia. I suppose that the object of the supporters of this amendment is to substitute white stokers for lascar stokers upon these steamers. If that is so, all I can say is that I pity the white stokers. I have been a passenger upon one of the Orient steamers going through the Red Sea in the month of July, and I then saw quite enough to convince me that no white man should be asked to work in the stoke-hole of a steamer in the Red Sea if it was possible to get a coloured man to do the work. It is work for which the coloured men are specially adapted.

Senator McGregor

- Are the coloured men better than the white men?

Senator FERGUSON

- For that work they are. I have seen stoker after stoker on one of the Orient boats hauled up on deck, and stretched out in a fainting state more dead than alive. There was a regular commotion on the steamer for some days, and the doctor and his assistants had work enough to bring them round with ice and cold water. That went on for some days, because the steamer was going through the Red Sea at half-speed, since they could not possibly keep up steam to enable her to go through in the ordinary time. I have been a passenger through the Red Sea also upon one of the P. and O. steamers at the same time of the year, and everything went on as smoothly and as quietly as during any other part of the voyage. That to my mind proves beyond a doubt that the lascar stoker is superior to the white stoker for work in the tropics, at all events during a certain part of the year.

Senator DAWSON

- Does the honorable senator consider that he is inferior to a lascar?

Senator FERGUSON

- For that work. I do not suppose there is an honorable senator in this Chamber who would like to see any white man who was one of his friends, or one to whom he wished well, working in the stoke-hole of a

steamer in the Red Sea in the month of July.

Senator DAWSON

- Does the honorable senator think a lascar is as good a man as himself?

Senator FERGUSON

- As good as some white men I know.

Senator DAWSON

- What about the honorable senator's own opinion ?

Senator FERGUSON

- What are we going to gain if this amendment is accepted ? Do honorable senators think for a moment that the P. and O. Company will discharge all their lascars and disorganize their business to comply with this provision? They have nine of their best steamers trading to Australia, and is it likely they will discharge the crews of these steamers to satisfy a few persons of a certain class in Australia ? There is not the least fear that they will do that for the sake of the subsidy they receive from Australia. I understand that the P. and O. and Orient companies receive something like £70,000 a year between them in mail subsidies or about £35,000 for each company. The Messageries Company have four steamers trading to Australia, and each of their boats is subsidized to the extent of £10,000 for each voyage it makes. That is the subsidy which the French Government gives to this company for the purpose of securing as much of the trade of Australia as they can secure. I believe that the German line of steamers is subsidized as highly by the German Government. The whole object of these subsidies is to secure the Australian trade, and we are trying to pass laws now which will only hamper our own British companies, and throw the trade of Australia into the hands of foreign companies.

Senator DAWSON

- No.

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Senator FERGUSON

- That is what this will do. I do not believe for a moment that it will be so, but suppose for arguments sake that the P. and O. Company discharge their lascar stokers. What will be the result and what kind of crew are they' going to substitute for the lascar crew ? They are going to have a crew of mixed foreigners of all nationalities, Greeks, Italians, Poles, and other nationalities, and we know how loyal those people are to the British Empire. Had it not been for these classes of people there would have been no Boer war. The Boers would never have gone to war with England had they not believed that they would be supported by these classes of foreigners. And what about the danger in time of war with crews of this kind ? Senator Dawson. - Is this in order 1 The CHAIRMAN. - By way of illustration, yes.

Senator FERGUSON

- I would ten times sooner travel in a steamer manned by lascars, who are our own loyal subjects, than with a steamer manned by a crew of mixed foreigners of this kind.

Senator MCGREGOR

- Is that the way the honorable senator talks about the Germans and the French ?

Senator FERGUSON

- At all events, I am a strong supporter of the British Empire, and any one who would act in the way proposed in this amendment is disloyal. I am a loyal subject and I shall therefore vote against the amendment.

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Senator Lt Col CAMERON

- I do not wish to delay the committee very much, but I must make a few remarks upon this extremely important subject. I should like first of all to say that I listened with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to the lofty tone of the speech delivered by Senator Pearce. I feel sure that the whole of the members of the Senate will agree with me when I characterize the honorable senator's speech in that way. I am not given to flattery, but the honorable senator undoubtedly raised the tone of the discussion far above the ordinary level of wage earning and its accessories I would like, however, to say that although I thoroughly appreciate the high spirit necessary for the development of the national Australian Marine, Senator Pearce has referred to, and upon which he dwelt so ably, we must not lose sight of the practical conditions of life existing at the present time. What is the amendment we have to consider?



It strikes at the root of the Empire we serve. We must approach the question as an' integral portion of the Empire. We must not approach it from a pettifogging spirit of parochial Australianism. I shall yield "to no man in being an Australian first, but that does not tie me down to forget my duties to the Empire. The question of practical importance before us is - Whom and what does this principle affect ? At the present moment it affects primarily one company. The P. and O. Company has done an immense service in the development of these States. Primarily it is a company trading with the tropics, and this is only a branch of its trade. I would ask whether the amount and the conditions which are involved are worthy of this rising nation we are founding, and of this lofty tone we desire to adopt ? Is it worthy of the Commonwealth to adopt such an ignoble system, which has been called boycotting, and which I think might be called a system of exclusive dealing. The Government desire to deal exclusively with the companies that carry out certain conditions, to the exclusion of the one company, which has done so much towards the development of the Commonwealth. I do not desire to delay the committee by discussing whether it a matter of national concern that these few black men should be excluded from being used in time of national emergency. The matter to me is so paltry and small that it is not worth a moment's consideration. It has been associated to a great extent with a very distinguished party, for which I have the greatest respect, individually and collectively. The policy which the labour party, not only here but elsewhere, have endeavoured to adopt, has been one of a white Australia pure and simple. But this amendment has nothing to do with a white Australia. It has to do with another portion of the British Empire, and we must not lose sight of that fact. I cannot help solemnly and sincerely appealing to the committee to take this view, and not to permit the Parliament to persist in a policy which they will be ashamed of - a policy which is of ignoble origin, and which will have ignoble results. I would also ask the labour party, and all those who are associated with the white Australia cry, not to drive this white Australia coach to the verge of absurdity. Because, instead of their carrying out a reasonable policy, the cry" of white Australia will become the laughing stock of the country, and will stink in the nostrils -of any decent man.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- cannot see any necessity for our altering the opinion 'which, being most excellently led, we adopted on a previous occasion. The white Australia question has nothing to do with this clause. What has to do with it is our relation to the Imperial Government in the carrying of our mails, and the extent to which we are prepared to pay for the benefit we are to receive, because, after all, it comes to be a business question. There is no white Australia question in the employment of a few lascars who never come ashore and whom we never see. We subscribe to the subsidy to these ships, but the Imperial Government pay a much larger sum than we do. Whether they will endure our dictating to them in the insane egotism which we have lately adopted on the motion of a certain party, the insane self appreciation which we are rapidly developing, and which can only end in dissolution and decay ; whether we are to expect the Imperial Government to assist us in running the mails, they paying the greater part of the money, while we in our confounded impudence dictate to them the colour- of the men they shall employ, what they shall receive, and everything else, is another question. I have a great admiration for strength ; even if it is badly used I have a certain respect' for power, but when it comes to a question of ordinary common sense I think at times we must rise up and say - " We are going a little too far : let us hurry a little more slowly." We are all agreed on the white Australia view. Have those honorable senators who speak authoritatively about the experiences on the P. and O. and Orient boats ever been in the Red Sea ? Have they ever seen these poor blackfellows come up naked as nature made them, streaming with perspiration, and have the hose providentially turned on to them to put them into a more comfortable condition ? Do they want to see their countrymen in so ignoble and miserable a position ? Do they want to go back to the conditions of Oriental countries, where you will see a woman and an ox pulling a vehicle ? Or do they think that there ought to be something more noble for ourselves ?

Senator Dobson

- The honorable senator has turned dog on the Government?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Not at all. I am with the honorable senator heart and soul in the substance, but not in the abuse to which he puts the substance. I always thought that white Australia was a bit of a cry. I accepted it as I accept everything where the feeling is so strong that either you have to accept it or to wipe yourself out. Rut the white Australia being accepted, I object to this abuse of it. What does it all come to? We are going to

dictate to the world. We do not know exactly how the finances will come out. AH the States are exceedingly anxious as to how -the balance-sheet will come out, and we are superadding to that at the earliest opportunity, when all ought to be peace, and we ought to interfere as little as possible with existing conditions, every precious fad which any one can think of. It may be all right ultimately ; but do not hurry the thing too much. Find out exactly how you are, and incidentally find out your relations with other people, and do not presume to dictate that you will not consent to something unless others agree to it, when they have to pay the greater part of the money. That is common sense, not sentiment. This is only a cry got up to catch popularity. There is no substance in this talk about these men being employed. Nearly all the speakers have never seen the degraded conditions which necessarily come from working in the steamers in a climate so terrible as that in the Red Sea.

Senator MCGREGOR

- The honorable senator is not the only one who was ever in the Bed Sea.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I have been there four times, and I would not like to see my honorable .friend come up from the stoke-hole and be hosed, as I am afraid he would have to be if he worked under the same conditions as I saw those men working under in the Red Sea. We have to take things as we find them. Although we are the greatest people in the world - greater than the country we came from- and are entitled- to have the whole world to ourselves, still we must incidentally agree that in the common cause- of Christianity, which we talk about sometimes, and do .not practise much, there might be a little consideration given to these poor people, whose lands we claim the right to take, whose liberties we claim the right to control, and whom we refuse to assist in any shape. As far as my experience goes - I admit that it is not as great as that which some honorable senators have had - I do not wish to see my friends opposite, or their friends, who will also be mine, engaged in a line of labour which I think would be horrible and demoralizing to them. It may be a painful tiling that we have to employ any one to do this work, but. after all the men who do it are born in a tropical climate, and can endure what we cannot endure. I entirely dispute the proposition that Europeans can endure the climate of the Red Sea as these lascars can. It is said that the Orient Company have never employed black labour. But they want to do it. Why? Because they cannot make their business pay otherwise.

Senator McGregor

- Because of unfair competition.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We want to bring about the establishment of the Commonwealth with as little dislocation of our local economies as possible. We have all sorts of trials and troubles before us ; and yet at the very initiation of our Constitution we are asked to introduce this disturbing element, notwithstanding that there is nothing except a cry in it - nothing except sentiment.

Senator Dobson

- And we have four years to think about it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We have, as my honorable and learned friend says, four years to think about it. Yet we are asked now to pass a clause which will have no effect for three or four years.

Senator Dobson

- And then it will be ignored.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- It must have a disturbing influence in connexion with the line of policy we are going to adopt ; and all for a sentimental cry about a white Australia. There is no fear of Australia not being white - not the slightest fear. When the British came here the population was black Through the ennobling influences of the civilized whites, the blacks are nearly all dead. Through the equally ennobling influence of the whites, other blacks will be dead; and that will be the inevitable conclusion of this comedy - or comedy and tragedy - which is going on amongst us.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- It is a tragedy for the blacks.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- My view has been very well put by Senator Cameron, just now. It seems to me that the question of a white Australia is not involved. These lascars come to our ports on board their ships, they stay on board, and to my mind they are just the sort of people to do the business they have to do.

Senator McGregor

- It is a pity the companies do not get a few monkeys to do it.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- If monkeys could do the work I should prefer it; my honorable friend cannot beat me in generosity in that respect. I consider that the work is so horribly demoralizing to human beings that there is no class of human creation whom I would consider too low to do it if they were able to do it.

Senator McGregor

- What about the dignity of labour, then?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I think the dignity of labour is best preserved by keeping white workmen out of this sort of employment. I do not want to go through the same experience as I have had with regard to the ordinary course of business on P. and O. boats; and I think it is a little to be regretted that in this general running amok - because that is what it is - with a name of "white Australia," we should endeavour hurriedly to interfere with an industry which can be best carried on in the way it is conducted at present.

Senator DAWSON

- What industry?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I speak of the work done by these lascars in the Red Sea.

Senator Higgs

- We have nothing to do with the Red Sea.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Yes, we have, because we are now proposing to refuse to enter into any contract made by the Imperial Government with the shipping companies that employ any but white people. I say honestly that I do not want to see white people employed in that work.

Senator Higgs

- The honorable senator does not?

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- No, I do not. I say that quite straightforwardly. I do not want to have any mistake made about it. I think it is just as well that in certain tropical parts of the world people who are acclimatized to tropical conditions should do the work. I believe they are the only people who can do it, and that if white people try to do it, it will lead, not to the improvement of the race which we long for, not to that rising to higher things to which we want the white race to attain, but to demoralization, and to dragging the white race down to a lower standard.

Senator DAWSON

- What about the unemployed market?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

.- I do not think the unemployed market has anything to do with the question. The whole cry is a trumpety one, without substance, and practically without form. All it comes to is, that whilst we are all agreed that there is to be a white Australia, we shall also go to the extent of saying that other countries are to be dictated to - that a handful of people in this country are to dictate to the millions of the world, and to say that we will have no traffic with them if they employ a certain class of labour. That simply means that we shall have to pay a much higher rate than we pay at present in order to carry on communication between Australia and other countries; and that notwithstanding that no question is involved of a single man coming here whose landing would be inconsistent with the policy of a white Australia. I sincerely hope that the original view of the Government will be maintained. We have heard no arguments on the other side. During the discussion I have listened to nothing more terse and nothing clearer than what has been said by Senator Cameron, who has raised the important point that the policy of a white Australia has nothing to do with this proposal, which is simply a mercantile question. If we attempt to dictate to the Imperial Government in respect to this transaction, the result will be, I hope, that the Imperial Government will

simply laugh at us. I sincerely hope that will be the result, because, although I have a high opinion of everything connected with Australia, I think we want our self-esteem taken down at times. If we insist upon this amendment, the consequence will simply be that it will cost more money than we pay at present to carry our mails, and will tend to reduce those represented by my honorable friends opposite, whom we desire to see leading nobler lives, to a condition of degeneration. From every point of view I wish my position to be thoroughly understood. I entirely supported the Government in the position which they originally took up, and I oppose them as entirely in the attitude they take up. now.

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Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- After the flood of eloquence we have heard on this question, after the florid language which has been used, and after the statement made by my honorable and learned friend Senator Symon, that we were endeavouring to legislate for a "white universe," we should come down from the clouds of sentiment and rhetoric, and consider this matter from a common-sense point of view. We are not endeavouring to legislate for a "white universe." We are not even endeavouring by law to insist upon having white crews for all mail steamers. We are simply saying in this clause that we have a right to spend our own money, which is paid by our own taxpayers, in any way they think fit. All the talk about our being disloyal if we do this is beside the question. If we have to get the consent of the British Empire, if we have to go to the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain and ask him, before we spend our own money raised from taxation, and before we can pass such laws as this, I say that we are degrading ourselves and degrading the Empire. We are not using any compulsion by means of this clause. We simply say that we will not pay subsidies for the purpose of turning our white brethren out of ships like those of the Orient Company to make room for low-caste Hindoos. The companies need not confine the employment of coloured people to India. They can put in their ships Chinese, Malays, or negroes if they like ; and probably they will do so if they can get them at a cheaper rate than they can get Hindoos. This question of making a stipulation with regard to white people is not a novel one. I know there are many honorable senators who have a great objection to anything novel. They are not in favour of anything unless it has been sanctioned by antiquity, and received the hall-mark of approval from their grandfathers. But this clause is not novel at all. I believe that the terms upon which the Orient Company hire some of their steam-ships include a stipulation that they shall not use any but white crews on board. We, in our own government contracts in the various States of Australia, have a condition that no coloured labour shall be employed upon the work in question. If that can be clone, surely we can say with regard to our own money that we will not be parties to subsidizing mail steamers that use, coloured labour, and turn out British sailors to starve.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- The companies are not entirely subsidized by our money. What about the British Government 1

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- I believe Australia pays £76,000 to their £86,000. If we are not able to make a stipulation in contracts like that, we had better not say we have representative government at all. The thing is a mere farce if we have to run to the Imperial Government and ask them how we shall spend our money. My own opinion is that this clause simply contemplates that we shall not make a contract or shall not pay a subsidy to mail steamers or any steamers that employ coloured labour. As long as we do not subsidize them or make contracts with them, they can carry our mails, and we do not paralyze our mail service in the , manner hinted at by some honorable senators. I am not so sure that it is absolutely necessary for us to pay these mail subsidies. Why do we pay mail subsidies to the Orient and the P. and O. Company ? It is said to expedite the service, but do not the Messageries Maritime Company and the Norddeutscher Lloyds run their boats just as quickly 1

Senator Playford

- But they are subsidized.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- Yes ; but from a national point of view. If the British Government desire us to assist in subsidizing British mail steam- ships, just as the French and the German Governments subsidize their mail steamers, let them ask us to do so.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Does the honorable senator think we should agree 1

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- Possibly we should agree if it were necessary for the Empire. I am just as strong an Imperialist as Senator Symon ; but if no subsidy was granted to the P. and O. and the Orient companies I believe they would still run their steamers just as fast as they do at the present time. They would be compelled to do so, or lose their enormous passenger traffic, which is one of their principal sources of revenue. I notice that my honorable friend, Senator Downer, laid particular stress upon the pitiable condition of stokers on vessels passing through the Red Sea. In fact, the whole of his argument had its beginning and end on the position of stokers and seamen in the Red Sea. The only argument which opponents of this amendment have brought forward, is that of the injustice and inhumanity of employing white stokers on vessels that have to pass through the Red Sea. Recently I read a very interesting account by Mr. Donald Macdonald on the employment of stokers there. I know that my honorable friends who are not in favour of a white Australia will quote that writer very largely in a subsequent debate, because he has written in favour of the retention of the kanakas in Queensland. Mr. Donald Macdonald states that the white people can stand the heat of the stoke-holes of vessels in the Red Sea better than coloured crews ; that it is less cruel to employ white than coloured stokers there. Those honorable senators who, like Senator Dobson, put the Hindoo on a higher plane than white seamen ; those honorable senators who speak of Christian principles, and say that we are going to inflict on the Hindoos, who are our fellow-subjects, greater cruelties than on the white races, put forward a very poor and cruel argument.

Senator McGregor

- It is a mean argument.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- It is a mean argument. My honorable friend Senator Dobson inferred that he put the Hindoo on a higher plane than the British sailor.

Senator Dobson

- I said nothing of the sort, nor did I imply anything of the sort.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- What is the position in regard to all the tramp steamers that go through the Red Sea. Have they no white seamen ? Any one may go down to the wharfs, and see their white crews ; they have not thought it necessary to employ coloured stokers.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- But they do not keep up the same speed as the mail steam-ships.

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Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- My honorable friend must remember that the stoke-holes of these tramp steamers are not nearly as well ventilated or as comfortable as those of the mail steam-ships. The whole movement to employ coloured crews on our mail steamers is not actuated by patriotism alone, but by greed. Senator Fraser tells us he is in favour of white crews on Australian boats. We are going to put Australian ships at a distinct disadvantage to foreign oceangoing ships ; -we are going to compel them to employ white crews at a higher wage, and give a distinct advantage to foreign or oceangoing ships which compete with them on the coastal trade.

Senator Fraser

- Because we have no right to dictate to the shipping companies of Great Britain'.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- My honorable friend is in favour of putting white crews on our coastal ships, and surely we should endeavour to follow the example of the mother country by building up our mercantile marine. Yet my honorable friend would start off by putting our ships in a worse position than that occupied by foreign vessels which trade to Australia. The French and German mail-ships employ white crews. Do honorable senators think that the French and German Governments would allow them to employ coloured men on their respective vessels ?

Senator Fraser

- They employ a lot of coloured people.

Senator STANIFORTH SMITH

- may tell my honorable friend that the Germans do not employ coloured labour on their vessels, although

the French give employment to coloured stokers on some of their steamers. We have been told that if we insist upon only white sailors being employed on these vessels half of them will be foreigners. Even if that be true, it would be far better to have our steamers manned by crews, half of whom were foreigners, than to have them manned by the lowest class of- Hindoos who are now employed on these boats. Senator Dobson has had much to say from the point of view of the Empire. I give him credit for being absolutely sincere in what he said, and for being actuated by the very highest motives. I was astonished, however, to see the great lengths to which his patriotism carried him. It caused him to sneer at our own flesh and blood, and to say that our own British sailors were a drunken lot of fellows.

Senator Dobson

- I rise to a point of order. My honorable friend has, quite unintentionally, misrepresented me, and I think he will find that his language is exceedingly strong. All I did was to quote what has been told me again and again, namely, that British sailors in these stokeholes have a facility for getting tipsy and for deserting, and that some of the steam-ship companies have been driven to employ lascar crews.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable and learned senator indorsed that statement.

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- If Senator Dobson did not make the statement I attributed to him, then he quoted something which misled us, although I did not think he intended to do so. He quoted something that he believed to be true, and thus indorsed it.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- That statement was true.

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Senator Dobson

- I believe it to be absolutely true.

Senator STANFORTH SMITH. Senator Dobson spoke of the necessity of employing these coloured men, who are of the lowest caste of Hindoos, in the stokeholes of steam-ships. They are not Ghoorkahs and Sikhs, who have fought so bravely for us ; but they are a different class altogether, who have been accustomed to be in a state of bondage and engaged in menial occupations. I think there is nothing so subversive to a strong, healthy, robust Imperial spirit as the pitiable practice of saying that we cannot use our own discretion ; that we are really not a self-governing country, and that in all these little matters we must run to the British Government and ask them whether our proposals are acceptable to them before we carry them out. That is not in accordance with British traditions. By their strength and self-reliance Britishers have been able to conquer a great part of the world, and if we are not degenerate sons of Britain, we shall have some self-reliance also. If we want to keep alive the love of the Empire, if we want to make Australia remain proud of the Empire to which we belong, we shall only do so by love and affection, and not by deferring in everything to the British Government before we put an Act on our statute-books. The steamers that some honorable senators talk about encouraging, to employ coloured races, form part of our naval reserve. They can be fitted with guns and used as transports when Great Britain is at war. Are we going to assist, by subsidizing those steamers, in having lascar and other coloured crews to man them, so that they cannot be used as a naval reserve in the time of Great Britain's extremity ? What is the present position of our mercantile marine, which all great writers on seafaring matters have referred to as the sheet-anchor of the continuity of our race ? Twenty-five years ago we had 200,000 white men in our vessels ; to-day we have but 100,000. Are we to encourage the dwindling down of that 100,000 to perhaps 20,000 or 10,000 a few years hence ? When we were discussing this matter a few weeks ago, the P. and O. Company was the only mail line of steamers employing coloured labour. Since then the Orient Company has started to do the same thing. These represent two of our best oceangoing lines of steam-ships, and if we continue to subsidize them there is no saying but that all the mercantile marine will not be employing cheap coloured labour before long.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- If they do it is their own and not the honorable senator's business.

Senator STANFORTH SMITH

- I think that as a citizen of the British Empire it is my business. It is the business of every person who takes a pride in the British Empire. If we look at the question from a common-sense point of view it really

amounts to this : Have we or have we not the right to spend our own money as we wish ? Have we the right to say that we can make a distinction between certain companies ; that we will subsidize one company and not another, or are our great powers of self-government insufficient to enable us to do so 1 That is the whole question. It is not a question, as one honorable senator has said, of legislating for a white universe ; it is not a question of dictating to the world or to the steam-ship companies. We simply say we can pay our subsidies to any company we like. If we can do it from that point of view, or from the patriotic stand-point, we shall see that we can pass this clause, and I hope we shall follow the example of another place and agree to it.

Senator GLASSEY

- I desire to offer a few remarks upon what is to my mind a very important question. I do not view it in the same light as Senator Downer, who regards the question merely as a " cry." I think it is something more than a cry. There is a considerable amount of vitality and force behind it so far as the people of Australia are concerned. It is not merely an empty sound ; it is something real and substantial. The question is whether and when we are to commence to build up this white Australia. Senator Downer believes in a white Australia. Other honorable senators have said the same thing. But I have noticed that whenever any question comes before the Senate which would enable us to carry out this principle of importance and value to the people of Australia, those honorable senators use the same cry, and say- - " believe in a white Australia, but I am opposed to this proposition." That is the position. When are these honorable senators going to commence to build up this white Australia 1 They have never taken that decided step in that direction which has been taken by other honorable senators, who believe that it should not be merely a cry, but a reality that the Australian people should be a white and not a mixed or a coloured race.

Senator Pearce

- They are great believers in masterly retreats.

Senator GLASSEY

-I regret that this matter has to be discussed in the Senate again. When it was previously discussed I regretted that we were not successful in embodying this proposal in the Post and Telegraph Bill. Other honorable senators and myself did the best we could, but we were beaten by a considerable majority. The other House, I am pleased to say, viewed the matter in a different light, and came to the conclusion that we in the Senate were not justified in the course we pursued. Now, instead of standing in the proud position in which the Senate was entitled to stand with regard to this great question, we have the matter before us again from the other Chamber, and we are whipped into line by the House of Representatives and asked to pass this proposal.

Senator Playford

- And we have lost the credit of it for the Senate.

Senator GLASSEY

- And, as Senator Playford suggests, we are in the position of having to accept the amendment from the House of Representatives, instead of being in the position of having initiated the proposal, and being able to ask the other Chamber to accept our view. I express my regret that we have to discuss this matter in a secondary way rather than as the Chamber first discussing it and having the full credit of its initiation.

Senator Pulsford

- We are not bound to accept it.

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Senator GLASSEY

- Senator Pulsford has said again and again that he believes in a white Australia; but, so far as my memory serves me, when this question has come before the Senate, the honorable senator has never given his thorough adhesion to the principle. I am sure I am echoing the sentiments of other honorable senators when I ask - "When is that honorable senator and other honorable senators in this Chamber going to commence to give some proof of their sympathy, so far as their voice and vote are concerned, in support of this great question? I do not wish to be offensive, but surely those who take the view I am expressing upon this question may reasonably say that the "cry" rests, with those who say they believe in a "white Australia," but adopt a course which is opposed to it. The cry does not rest with us, for we not only give expression to the sentiment, but support it by our votes when the opportunity offers. Senator Dobson says that if we pass this amendment it will be a serious injury to the British Empire. "Where does

this injury come in? Does the whole care and anxiety for the British Empire rest with my honorable and learned friend and some other honorable senators who agree with him? Do they think for a moment that there are not other senators here who have any regard for the prestige, the honour, and the glory, may I say, of the British Empire, but themselves? I say there are senators in this Chamber, and I claim to be one, who have as much regard for the honour, integrity, prestige, and glory of the British Empire as any member of the Senate. If proof were necessary to support that statement, so far as other senators and myself are concerned, that proof could be forthcoming. No proof of the statement is necessary, and I repudiate the statement of some honorable senators that they, and they alone, care for the British Empire. Senator Dobson and some other honorable senators imagine that this is a new proposal, that it is something novel, but as the last honorable senator who has addressed the Chamber has said, there is nothing new, and nothing extreme about it, nor is there anything proposed that has not already been accepted by the British Government. So far as the entering into a contract for the carrying of mails under the conditions proposed by this amendment is concerned, this principle has been in operation in the State of Queensland since the year 1889. When the British Government at that time accepted the same proposal, is it not reasonable to expect that at any rate there will be no holes knocked in the British Empire, provided that the British Government continue to acquiesce, so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, in that line of policy which was adopted by Queensland. There is no foundation for the suggestion that this proposal is likely to effect any change in the British Empire, and I have shown that the policy proposed is not novel because it is the policy which was adopted by Queensland in 1889 in connexion with the mail contracts with the British India Company. The question was raised in Queensland at that time by myself, and I am pleased to say that though the Government of the day was a Government largely in sympathy with the coloured labour question, and holding largely the views expressed by Senator Dobson and those who agree with him, the country had pronounced judgment so strongly in favour of this particular policy, that the Government accepted the proposal and made it a condition in the terms of contract with the British India Company, that in future their ships subsidized by the Queensland Government, must be manned by white crews, and they have been so manned from that time forward. There is, therefore, nothing novel about this proposal; and so far as we have knowledge - and we have distinct knowledge in this instance - the British Empire has not suffered in any way through its operation. Then Senator Dobson talks about the unreliability of the white man and the exceeding reliability of the lascar. But Senator Dobson has given us no proof of his assertion. He has certainly read some letters from shipping companies to say that it is sometimes difficult to get white men to act as stokers. Why is there that difficulty? Is it because white men are unreliable? It is because white men are not sufficiently paid to perform that kind of labour. That is the reason for the difficulty in obtaining them. But let the shipping companies of Australia or of the British Isles pay reasonable wages to white men; have reasonable conditions under which they shall labour, reasonable places in which they shall sleep, reasonable food and attention for them, and I venture to say that they will get white labour to work in these ships and in their stoke-holes in abundance and to spare. So far as the reliability is concerned it will be a sorry day indeed when the British Empire, the shipping companies, or the people of Australia have to depend upon a few lascars to carry on the shipping trade, and when we cannot get men of our own colour to do this work. Dealing again with this question of reliability, it is a well-known fact, which few here will dispute, and which certainly many of the shipping companies will not dispute, that in the times of stress, storm, difficulty, and peril these lascars are not reliable.

Senator Macfarlane

- They are.

Senator GLASSEY

- I have the statement from shipping companies of the port of Melbourne. I asked them if I might use the statement I am now about to mention. I asked the question, "Are these lascars absolutely reliable in times of storm, difficult weather, and peril?" and I have been asked by some of the ship-owners to say that eight-tenths of the ship-owners in the port of Melbourne would declare that during times of peril and storm the lascars are not reliable. Do honorable senators remember the loss of the Quetta beyond northern Queensland in February 1890, and the strictures that appeared in the public journals at that time with regard to the lascar crew. The criticism was that but for the unreliability, fear, and terror of the lascars who manned the Quetta many of those on board of her could have been saved.



Senator Macfarlane

- That is- not correct.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- She was cut open by a rock, the crew had nothing to do with it.

Senator GLASSEY

- I know something about it ; I was on the northern coast at that particular time. How did the lascar crew behave with regard to the saving of passengers ?

Senator Keating

- How did they behave with regard to the women and children ?

Senator GLASSEY

- I say that so far as the lascar crews are concerned during periods of storm, stress of weather, and peril, these men are not reliable. Senator Dobson said, and some honorable senators agree with him, that in case of a naval war we could not rely upon our own white men.

Senator Dobson

- Whoever said that 1 Not in that connexion. I said we would not have them. Do not say that I said we could not rely upon them.

Senator GLASSEY

- The honorable and learned senator said we would not have them, and we would not be able to get them. Does the honorable and learned senator mean to make us believe that the 40,000,000 of the inhabitants of the British Islands could not get 200,000 men to man our vessels. Does the honorable and learned senator wish us to believe that the British people have come to that pass that they cannot get enough men to man their ships, in ordinary times, and in times of war, must depend upon lascars from India to do their work 1 So far as my knowledge of the British Empire and the British Isles is concerned, I say that such a statement is absolutely groundless, and could not be borne out by facts. Pay these men fairly, as I have already said, and we will get abundance of men. There are large numbers walking the streets to-day who will be glad to be employed under fair conditions.

Senator Dobson

- British sailors are the best treated sailors in the world.

Senator GLASSEY

- I am glad to know that, but I always find that Senator Dobson, and others who think with him, would rather have the reliable lascar. Is it from a humanitarian point of view, or a patriotic point of view? From which, or from both ? Speaking from the point of view of their ability, reliability, stamina, vitality, or courage at any time, I would scorn to come the belief that our British sailors are not men who would at any time face any danger, and be as reliable, as truthful, as brave, and courageous as any people in the world. It has been contended again and again that we cannot get white men. I deny that statement absolutely and emphatically. Cannot they get white men to man the ships trading on the Australian coast or the men-of-war ? Is there a ship lying in an Australian port which cannot be worked from the want of men ? Can a senator point to one instance along the coast of Australia, particularly in the tropics of Queensland, where a vessel has been stuck up from a day for the want of men to go into the stoke-holes or to man her?

Senator Dobson

- There is the Orient proof.

Senator GLASSEY

- The Orient Company does not trade in the tropics of North Queensland.

Senator Pearce

- Senator Dobson told us that he gave that on hearsay evidence just now.

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Senator Dobson

- I gave it on the evidence of the Orient Company.

Senator GLASSEY

- I have lived in Queensland for seventeen years. Again and again I have sailed in these vessels in the tropics, and have never known a vessel to be hung up for a day from an insufficiency of white men. Why is there an abundance of white men in the tropics ? Because they are reasonably paid and live under

reasonable conditions, although in some cases I admit that there is room for improvement. For the reasons I mentioned, these ships are manned to the full, and a number of men cannot get employment. I have been in the Bed Sea, in vessels manned by lascars and in steamers manned by white men. I have seen the trials of the black men. I have seen them carried up and laid on the deck through excessive heat. I have seen the same thing happen in North Queensland, but only once have I seen a white man so prostrated that he had to be treated in that way. To say that white men have not the vital force to endure any hardship or any heat which the lascars can endure is to make a statement which cannot be borne out by the facts. The objection to the employment of men of our own colour in place of these lascars arises from the fact that white men demand to be treated, not as mere serfs, but as men to be reasonably paid and to live under fairly humane conditions. Do that, and I venture to say there will be no difficulty in getting any number of them. During one speech Senator Dawson interjected - What about the deep mines, which are excessively hot, and which are more difficult for men to work in, because the labour is longer and more continuous? A stoker has to work from two to four hours at a stretch, but a miner has to go down into the mine and work a whole shift of eight hours. Again and again I have seen men working in the mines practically in a nude condition. Without lifting a pick, or a shovel, or a hammer, or a drill it is impossible for men to work there with any degree of comfort. The perspiration simply streams out of them from the moment the men enter the face till they come away. Take some of the coal mines of Queensland, which, as a member of the Royal commission, I have examined quite recently, and in which some of my friends, both old and new, have worked for many years. What is their condition? I have seen the miners carrying in a handkerchief or in a large billy-can the clothes which they wore in the mines. They could not go home in their working clothes. Can you get anything worse than that in the vessels in the tropics? This is not an isolated case. In numbers of mines you will find men working under these conditions - in Queensland and elsewhere, particularly in the deep mines in Charters Towers, Gympie, and other places. The same thing happens, I suppose, in some of the mines in Victoria, for instance in Bendigo. Why is there no difficulty in securing miners to perform this very arduous, dangerous, and oppressive work? It is because they are fairly reasonably paid. They get the wages which are ruling. In Charters Towers men get their £3 a week, in Gympie £2 10s. a week, and so it is elsewhere. Right in the tropics of Queensland, 1,500 miles away from the capital, you will find men working in little shallow mines, cutting the jungle, toiling in railway cuttings, maintaining railways, and operating locomotive engines. In every instance, no matter how difficult the work may be, or how hot it may be, you can get abundance of men. It is all moonshine for honorable senators to state that white men cannot be got. They have given no proof in support of their statement. It is a mere cry. Senator Downer said that the question of a white Australia was a cry. So far as the principle of a white Australia is concerned - a principle which some men proclaim they believe in, but which their whole action disproves - the cry is on the other side. Then it is said that it will be very inhuman to turn the lascars out of the vessels. Senator Dobson used that argument on a previous occasion, and it is not necessary for me to refer to it now. The inhumanity is all the other way. It consists in depriving our own men of the means of earning a livelihood. In my judgment, our own men have a prior claim to our consideration. I would not treat lascars inhumanely.

Senator Dobson

- No, but the honorable senator would turn them out to starve.

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Senator GLASSEY

- Certainly, I would turn them out when the ships are subsidized by our own money. I would rather see our own men employed than lascars. Senator Symon used a most peculiar argument. He described this proposition as a policy of boycotting. Where does the boycott come in? I cannot see it. He says it simply means, if carried, the exclusion of ships belonging to one or two companies. It excludes the ships of no company. It simply provides that when the mail contracts expire, the companies shall tender for the service under certain conditions. If Senator Symon or any other senator was going to let a contract for the building of a house or any other contract, would he stipulate the conditions under which it should be carried out, and because of the existence of those conditions would it be said that any one was boycotted? Not at all. It is unworthy of the ability, and certainly unworthy of the master mind of senator Symon to argue that it is a policy of boycotting. If the P. and O. Company do not like the conditions, they do not need to tender, but there is no intention to boycott them. They do not carry the mails out of philanthropy

or charity. They enter into the arrangements with their eyes open, and with a view to making a profit. If the P. and O. Company or any other company do not wish to secure the contract under our conditions, the fault does not rest with the Commonwealth, and there is no boycotting or the slightest intention to enforce a boycott. Senator Smith referred to a statement which has been made, and which has not been contradicted, namely, that the Orient Company have chartered four ships to do a portion of their work, but there is a stipulation that each ship shall be manned by a white crew. If that be the case where then comes the argument that we should reject this amendment because of the inability of that company to obtain white men to go into the stokeholes ? I think that was very well answered by Senator Pearce. The Orient Company have to compete with the P. and O. Company and other companies who carry cheap crews, and it is in consequence of that competition, and not from the want of men willing to work under fair conditions, that they have come to that conclusion. Then the question arises whether the lascar or the white man has the first claim to our consideration as a Senate not appointed by the Prime Minister and indorsed by a Governor-General, but elected by the free choice of the people. As regards finding employment and securing reasonable pay in the ships subsidized to do the work of the Commonwealth, those who have my first consideration are men of our own race and colour, men who have done something to build up and maintain the British Empire, who have ploughed the fields, cleared the jungle, sunk and worked mines, laid down railways, and manned locomotives, who have manned the ships and carried the British flag into all parts of the world, who have done credit to themselves, and upheld the honour and prestige of the British Empire.

Senator CHARLESTON(South Australia). - On a previous occasion I stood on the side of the Government, because in my opinion it was not the time or the place to introduce such an amendment. I was strongly in sympathy with Senator Glassey who moved the amendment, and I said - I cannot support the amendment now because I believe this is not the time or the place to affirm the principle.

I could not support the amendment because the stand taken by the Government was one which, if they were correct, would have greatly imperilled the Bill. Senator O'Connor clearly showed the Senate that if he attempted to insert an amendment similar to the one we are now discussing it would lead to the Bill being reserved for His Majesty's assent, and probably might lead to the assent being refused. By so doing, we should have a very important Bill, providing machinery which is highly necessary for the conduct of our business,, set aside, and thereby land ourselves in great trouble. On that ground I supported the Government. I did not think then, nor do I think now, that the question before us is connected with that of a white Australia. I considered, with the Government, that if we carried such an amendment, it might lead to the reservation of the Bill by the Governor-General. But I have thought over the matter a great deal since, and I do not now think that if we carry an amendment of this sort it would be necessary for the Governor-General to reserve the Bill for His Majesty's assent. The amendment does not imply that we must break contracts already entered into. It simply deals with future arrangements, which will have to be conducted just as we think best. At the present time we are co-partners with the Imperial Government in the carriage of our mails. When the British Government was approached some years ago by the Postmasters-General of Australia, who were desirous of putting in a clause similar to that we are now discussing, it was represented to Mr. Joseph Cook, the Postmaster-General of New South Wales, by Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that under no circumstances could Her Majesty's Government consent to the making of a contract which would confer a preference as between Her Majesty's individual subjects. I can quite see now that if we carry this amendment we shall, in all probability, be unable to enter into partnership with the British Government for the carriage of our mails. "We must face that difficulty, It is as well we should understand clearly what we are doing. The Government are prepared to take the responsibility, because, I presume, they see their way clear to give effect to the amendment, whereas previously they thought that this was not the place in which to introduce it. Having given greater thought to the matter, the Government have come to the conclusion that they are in the position to give effect to the amendment, and I will support them in it, because, if they have changed their attitude, I am justified in changing mine. After all, as has been stated to-night, it is purely a question of commerce and of business. We wish our mails to be carried, and we have previously thought we could get better terms by entering into a partnership with the Imperial Government, who contracted with various shipping companies for the carriage of the mails at certain speeds. I can see very

clearly that, according to the statement of Mr. Chamberlain, it will - be almost impossible, unless the British Government change their attitude also, for us to be co-partners with them in future contracts. Therefore we should undoubtedly be in the position of being compelled to enter into contracts for ourselves alone. What effect that will have upon the commercial community I do not know ; how much more it will cost us I do not know. But the Government, when they were before the country, and the people of the country themselves, declared in favour of a white Australia and of white labour. I have already said, and now repeat, that this question, in my opinion, has nothing directly to do with a white Australia, but it certainly has a great deal to do with the principle of the employment of white labour. Whatever the cost may be to the people, I take it, from the attitude of the Government, that they are prepared to employ none but white labour under all their contracts. Having so decided, and as the Government are prepared to take that responsibility, I am prepared to follow them. We have heard a great deal about dictating to the Imperial Government. There is no dictation whatever in this amendment. We have a certain work to do. The Imperial Government has for a long while encouraged us to conduct our own business in our own way. But if we wish to enter into partnership with them in connexion with any work we are executing, we must accede to their terms. In this case all we can say in the future is that we are going to have our mails carried in a certain way. The Imperial Government can say " Very good, then we cannot join with you." There is an end to it. There is no dictation to the Imperial authorities. But I am afraid that the Government will find themselves in a difficult position in giving effect to the amendment, because it will clearly state, not by regulation but in an Act of Parliament, "no contract or arrangement." What that means I do not apprehend, unless it expresses that we cannot enter into any bargain at all with any company.

Senator Drake

- If the honorable senator refers to clause 13 he will see that it relates to arrangements with the Postmaster-General of Great Britain.

Senator CHARLESTON

- How the Government will manage in regard to the carriage of their mails from Australia to Hong Kong or to China or to other parts I do not know.

Senator Drake

- We can do that by clause 67.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I know that clause 67 says that we can put our mails upon any ship that comes into our ports ; but if we do so, we are simply employing coloured crews for the carriage of our mails.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- We are not subsidizing them.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I do not see what there is in that point. Subsidizing is making a payment for services rendered. It is not paying a bonus. When we put our mails on board a boat trading with our ports and carrying a Chinese, Japanese, or other coloured crew, we must pay them for the services they render to us, and we do no more to the P. and O. Company than pay it for services rendered.

Senator Staniforth Smith

- We do not pay the P. and O. Company at freight rates ; payment is different to a subsidy.

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Senator CHARLESTON

- Subsidy is payment for services rendered ; only it is rather better payment than is ordinarily made. Instead of paying the P. and O. Company for the carriage of our mails at so much per ton, and letting them deliver the mails when they are able, we are desirous of having them brought within a certain time, if possible, and therefore we say to these companies - " We are prepared to pay you an extra amount for this service."

Senator Drake

- That is a subsidy.

Senator CHARLESTON

- It is no more than a payment for services rendered. We agree to pay them a higher price than we should be called upon to pay if we did not stipulate that the mails must be landed within a certain time. We pay

more because we are desirous of having our mails landed quickly. I can assure honorable senators as a marine engineer, that it costs the companies every penny of the extra amount we pay them to bring the mails here within the stipulated time. Honorable senators may not know that when boats are run at a high speed the cost is as the cube of the speed ; and therefore the cost to these companies in carrying the mails at the speed at which they carry them runs into an enormous amount. I therefore think that the companies are under no obligation to us. If we pay them more than is necessary, supposing they were allowed to deliver the mails as it suited their convenience - if instead of letting them drive their boats at twelve knots an hour we compel them to drive at sixteen - we have to pay them extra for doing so ; but I dare say it would be more profitable to the companies not to drive their boats at sixteen knots, and not to receive the little extra amount we pay them, but to run them at a slower speed and be paid less. Therefore whether we call the payment a subsidy or not, it is, I repeat, simply payment for services rendered; and we take good care we get full value for the money we pay them. If we employ a Japanese or any other boat, no matter what flag she may fly, and put our mails on board, and that boat has a coloured crew, we shall be paying that ship for services rendered just as we now pay to the P. and O. Company when we enter into a five years' contract with it. We say to a ship : " Take our mails to Yokohama and we will pay you so much." Similarly we say to the P. and O. Company - " We will pay you so much for carrying our mails for five years." Therefore I am puzzled to know how the Government are going to give full effect to the amendment they have accepted in another place.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- The honorable senator is going to support it all the same.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I supported the Government before, because they said they could not see their way clear to give effect to the amendment of Senator Glassey. I said then that I was in sympathy with what Senator Glassey said, and with his object, but that I could not see my way to give effect to it in a Bill of this sort.

Senator Clemons

- Can the honorable senator see it now ?

Senator CHARLESTON

- The Government could not see their way to do it then.

Senator Barrett

- But they say they can now.

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Senator CHARLESTON

- Yes, and that makes all the difference. They are the executive of Parliament. They are a committee, we might say, to carry out certain administrative work. Since the matter was last before us, they have gone into it closely and thoroughly. They say, they are prepared to give effect to it, and that this is the time and place to do so. If they are prepared to take that responsibility upon themselves - if they can see their way clear to do so - then I have no longer any objection to that action being taken. Although I say this, I do not say it blindly. I can see a great deal of difficulty in attempting to carry white crews on all our boats that go through the Red Sea. Of all the steam-ship trades, that which goes through the Red Sea is the worst. When white firemen are required, it is found that they are ready to go in almost any other than the Red Sea trade, because there are fewer inconveniences to be suffered on any other route. We find that the very refuse of sea-going stokers are left in this particular trade. Firemen, like all the rest of us, seek positions which give them the most comfort and the best pay. Therefore, do honorable senators mean to tell me that they will get a man to go through the Suez Canal in the stoke-hole of one of these vessels when he can obtain employment on vessels going round by the Cape ? It is a comparatively easy matter for the White Star Company to obtain white crews to go round the Cape. I have never been through the Red Sea, but I have gone across the equator; I have traded to Panama and Hong Kong, and I can very well understand what it must be to work in the stoke-hole of a steam ship company passing through the Red Sea. It must be extremely difficult to obtain any good men for such work. I have as much respect for my own race, and for all white races, as any other man, but I speak as an engineer, and I am certain that it would be extremely difficult to get reliable men for stoke-hole work on vessels going through the Red Sea. That is why the Orient Company have given up the employment of white" stokers. They have found it impossible to employ them. Notwithstanding these facts, however, the people of Australia are saying

now, through their Executive, that white crews shall be employed on mail steamers carrying their mails ; and the Executive have made it their policy, and are ready to enter into contracts for the carriage of the mails by boats which employ only white crews. I shall, therefore, be prepared to support them, as I supported them before. The Government have changed their views upon a wider and more practical knowledge of the question. They have considered it more thoroughly since the matter was last before us, and as the Executive of the Commonwealth they are prepared to take the responsibility upon themselves. I see no reason, therefore, why I should not support them ?

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I approach this question from a somewhat different stand-point to many honorable senators who have preceded me. I have heard very eloquent orations on the humanitarian side of the question, the national side, the side of the unemployed, and the side of the steam-ship companies, from almost every side except that which appeals to my sense of responsibility in the matter, the practical side, of how this proposal will affect the Commonwealth as a whole. That is the point upon which I propose to address myself, and before sitting down I shall ask leave to move an amendment, inserting certain words in the clause as passed in another place. I have heard also a number of statements that I venture to think were made in good faith, but which, in some instances, nevertheless, were rather random in their character. For instance, I have heard it said by one honorable senator that the total number of British seamen has fallen by something like 100,000 during the last 25 years. From the Parliamentary Library I have obtained the Statesman's Year Book. I suppose it is a very heterodox, volume to some people, but I believe its figures may be accepted. Without going over a period of more than ten years, instead of a reduction in the number of seamen employed in vessels doing the carrying trade of Great Britain, and registered in Great Britain, excluding river boats, I find that there has been an increase. The figures run from 1889 to 1898 inclusive, a period of ten years. The number of men employed in 1889 was 230,000.

Senator Drake

- Senator Pearce spoke of British seamen.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Will the honorable senator allow me to finish my quotation! It is hardly worth troubling, about the hundreds, the tens, and units. I will take the thousands, saying merely that if I took the hundreds, tens, and units, they would be in favour of my proposition, that there has been an increase rather than, a decrease in the number of British sailors.. 230,000 was the number of men employed, in 1889, 242,000 was the number employed in 1898. That is an increase of 12,000.. It may seem a very small one.

Senator Pearce

- But of that number

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Will the honorable senator allow me to proceed ? I did not interrupt him. It may seem to be a small number. It is only an increase of a little over 1,000 per annum, but any one who goes into the matter will recognise that two things have had a great influence in respect of the number of men employed in the mercantile marine not only of Great Britain, but of other countries. The sailing ship is a thing very largely of the past. The sailing ship, with its great crew, is a thing so much of the past that when we compare it with the steam-ship of to-day with its small number of men for its great tonnage, the contrast is remarkable. Not only does the steam-ship take fewer hands than the sailing vessel, but there is also this question to be considered : that every year which we have seen for years past, and shall see for years to come, we shall find that the smaller steamers have been giving way to the larger, and that the number of men engaged, compared with the tonnage, has been a diminishing, rather than an increasing, quantity. The giant mailer of to-day carries a smaller crew than was carried in the past by what- we should now regard as insignificant sailing ships. I have no doubt that Senator Pearce was going just now to ask me a question as to how many coloured men are included in the figures I have quoted.

Senator Pearce

- That is the question I intended to put.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- It is true that of the 242,000 in 1898, 35,000 are put down as foreigners.

Senator Dobson

- There are 36,000 foreigners and 36,000 lascars in the service at the present time.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- Unfortunately these figures as to coloured sailors are of little value to me or to the committee, because we have not the corresponding figures for the first year I have quoted. Therefore I am not in a position to state whether there has been an increase or a decrease. Certainly, in the total number of men employed on British ships, there has not been an actual decrease, such as we have been led to believe, in the number of British sailors. There has been a great deal said, and very strongly and well said, with reference to the maintenance of the true type of the British seaman. Let me say, with the greatest respect, that I think honorable senators who use that argument wholly overlook the fact that the amendment before us now will in no shape or form, seek to preserve the purity of British seamen. The British marine is to be open to the scum of European prisons. I am not going to relate instances about hosing blackfellows in the Bed Sea, but I am aware, of my own knowledge, that in connexion with one of the largest vessels that visits Australia, owing to the fact that she was compelled, by reason of another boat going ashore, to be driven at a higher rate of speed than usual the slums of Naples were ransacked one Sunday evening for more firemen the moment a telegram from the agent reached the vessel there. About the hardest-faced lot of savages of any colour that one could find in all the globe were taken on board that steamer to bring her on to Australia at a higher rate of speed than the number of firemen she had on board would have permitted. I venture to think that under this clause we shall open our ports, without let or hindrance, to the scum of Europe. We need not set up the argument that the clause is for the protection of the noble British seaman. That is twaddle. A clean living blackfellow is as good as a dirty living white man.

Senator Pearce

- Does the honorable senator object to the people of the slums obtaining a living?

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I object to Australia being made a depository for the scum of Europe. The expression I used, with reference to dirtiness, applies to the morals, the disposition, and the criminal character, and not to the personal cleanliness, of people. The hose that Senator Downer spoke of would perhaps cure the latter trouble.

Senator O'Keefe

- We cannot wash a black man white.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.-I have respect for the Hindoo, who, under the old flag of England, saved not only English, but other European life in the . legations of Pekin. I have more respect and admiration for those men than for the class that under this amendment can come into the Commonwealth ; the class which produced the assassins of the crowned and elective heads of the people of Europe and America. That is why, in my humble opinion - which I am entitled to hold, and I hope I do not offend any one's susceptibilities because I express it - we should not accept the amendment as it stands. We have other questions to regard in this matter. We have contracts running that will last for the next four years, and this clause, if passed as proposed by the other House, will be whole inoperative for four years as regards the great mail carrying of the Commonwealth. We have but a one third interest in these con tracts. The British Government is after all the contracting party ; we have a potential voice if we have not a controlling voice in these contracts, but we shall have to go to the British Government to arrange for the carriage of our mails under this clause. I venture humbly, but very confidently, to prognosticate that before the end of four years, when the time comes for negotiation, my honorable and learned friend the Postmaster-General or his successor will come to this Chamber and his colleagues to the other Chamber, and ask for the repeal of a provision which will be found inoperative because of its impossible character.

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Senator Pearce

- The matter will be dealt with in the English Parliament before then. It is being considered there now.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I have no doubt there are some who entertain that belief, like my honorable friend Senator Pearce. They are perfectly justified in doing so. This is a free country, but I have yet to cultivate the belief that the British Empire is going to be burst up in order to accommodate the carriage of mails or anything of that kind. The

British Empire is too big to be disrupted by such a question as this. We must believe that there would have to be nothing short of a disruption of the Empire before the coloured men, who constitute numerically so overwhelming a force within the Empire, are to be trodden under heel in more ways than this. Who constitutes the armed force of the Empire. I suppose the coloured troops of England are nearly as numerous as the white troops if we go the world over. Is England going to exclude them ? If they are not good enough to be allowed to stoke a ship that carries a few mail bags, they cannot be good enough to fight for the honour of the Empire.

Senator Keating

- They would not use them in South Africa.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Every one knows the reason why. Because that would be feeding fire with fuel of the same type ; because of the enormous effect of placing before the coloured races of Africa such an example of the power of the coloured races of India. If they had been brought there for such a purpose, it would have been setting a match to powder, and no one could tell what would have been the result.

Senator McGregor

- What diplomacy !

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- Those who laugh are simply those who do not know, because I am stating what I thought was publicly known to every intelligent human being. But they were taken to Africa to a certain extent. They were taken there in the character of servants and drivers and tenders in connexion with the army medical service.

Senator Dobson

- And their presence allowed 10,000 of our own men to go, and that saved the whole thing.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- And their presence allowed 10,000 British soldiers to go, as the honorable and learned senator suggests. However, I do not wish to travel too far on this African example.

Senator PEARCE

- It is rather a dangerous one.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- No, it is not dangerous, and the more it is argued the stronger is the position. But when two people meet and start to discuss a question on which their views are diametrically opposed, it is hardly worth while spending time beating the air to convince those who cannot be convinced. Let me say that if we did not take coloured soldiers to Africa at least we accepted their money to no small value, and we accepted trained war steeds from the hands of the native rulers of India. We know also that in that great time of stress - in 1885, was it not ? - Indian coloured troops were taken over to fight, if need be, even the battles of Europe itself.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable senator forgets 1857 and 1858 !

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- We are told that we should object to the employment of coloured men in the mercantile marine of England, but I want honorable senators to let their thoughts rove back again, and when they Speak, as some have done, in glowing terms of the efforts of the seamen of England in days gone past, I would like to know if there was a ship's crew amongst them that had not two or three African blacks in their number? It was notorious that African blacks were to be found in almost every ship that sailed under the glorious pennant of Nelson. If we are to be told that the British Parliament will scotch a few unfortunate blacks from the stoke-holes of the maritime force of England, how is it that the head of the Empire thinks them good enough to go thousands of miles - a longer journey than any King of England ever took before - to go to India to be crowned amongst his coloured subjects. Is that any sign that these natives are to be cleared out of the stoke-holes of a few steamers ? The British Empire is something too large to devote its energies to such miserable marble playing.

Senator De Largie

- Is he likely to extend the franchise to these people ?

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- There are some other questions- connected with this upon which I should like to say a word, though I do not intend to speak at length. There is a great deal in the present agitation that reminds me of an event that took place a little while before I came into the world, and which was still very strong in the memory of people living in England when I was a child there. I refer to what were known as the machinery riots. It was all a question of cost as this is all a question of cost. Pay these niggers as high a price as white men, and we are told there will be no objection to them. In the case of the machinery riots in England, the great object was to get rid of machinery that was supposed to be interfering with the living of those concerned in occupations into which machinery was introduced. It was only a few years ago that steam tramways were introduced into Sydney. There was, at the time, a perfect howl about it, and petitions were actually presented to Parliament in opposition to the steam tramways in the interests of people engaged in the breeding of horses. They thought all the buses would be run off, and, burlesque as it seems, petitions were actually presented by occupants of the soil in opposition to the steam trams, because of the evil effects it was thought they would have upon the industry of horse breeding.

Senator Pearce

- What has this got to do with the question ?

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- It has to do with the question : That just as people were afraid they would lose their occupation through the introduction of machinery in one case, and their profits by horse breeding, we find people afraid they will lose their occupations now through the introduction of a few coloured seamen.

Senator McGregor

- The horse did not say much about it.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I do not think I have any recollection of reading any historical incident of a horse speaking, but I do recollect keenly reading of a somewhat similar beast making observations to his master. We have heard the American navy cited as an admirable instance of the ability of the Anglo-Saxon sailor. When there was an American man-of-war here I spent a very happy half-day on board of her. But I saw quite as many Chinamen on board that ship as American sailors, and when I asked how it was that they managed, in view of the laws existing in America, to employ Chinese on board an American warship, the answer was that they employed them on all ships on foreign stations. When I asked what they did with them, the answer was that they sacked them at the last port before going home. I may not mention names, because that would be indecent as I was a guest, but there was no secrecy about it ; it was an absolute regulation, and one of the most competent persons in the American Navy is my authority for the statement I have made. We need not make any fuss that the British Navy is going to the dogs and that the American navy is going to climb to the sky because they do not employ coloured labour. They employ whiskies, and that answers as well to the darky from Hindustan. I have been dealing with the national aspect of the question and I desire also to deal with the business aspect of it. I find that this proposal says nothing about a subsidy or payment, but absolutely prohibits the making of a contract or arrangement for the carriage of mails if there is any " coloured brother " about. Everybody knows that the word " contract " covers any agreement that can be entered into, and not necessarily only a written one or a time bargain. Written contracts are required under the Statute of 'Frauds in connexion with real property, but there is no obligation that a contract about any other matter should be in writing, and the term "contract" will cover any agreement that may be made either for a term of years or for the carriage of a single bag. I find also that the word "arrangement" is used. There is no interpretation clause to say what is meant by the word "arrangement, " but it must necessarily involve any form of agreement for the carriage of mail matter, either for a term or for a single- voyage. It must be so. I do not want to see the Commonwealth put in such a position that it cannot have letters delivered to any part of the world to which it is desirable to deliver them. There runs to Australia to-day a very well-equipped and, so far as I know, a handsomely-appointed line of steamers belonging to the Japanese Imperial Government.

Senator McGregor

- Is the honorable senator going to get an invitation to dine with them, too 1

The CHAIRMAN

- Order !

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I do not know what the honorable senator refers to ?

The CHAIRMAN

- The interjection was disorderly.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- If the interjection was disorderly, perhaps you, sir, will call upon the honorable senator to withdraw it ?

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The CHAIRMAN

- I have ruled that the interjection was disorderly, and I ask the honorable senator to proceed with his 1 arguments.

Senator McGregor

- I have very much pleasure in withdrawing anything that was offensive to the honorable senator.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I am not in the position in which some honorable senators are who have addressed the Chamber on this subject, and who have had communications from steam-ship companies and information of the kind supplied to them. I am in the position that so far as any one connected with shipping affairs is concerned I know nothing of any such persons, nor have I communicated directly or indirectly with any shipping company. I was referring to a Japanese line of vessels, and I wish to point out that under this amendment as it stands the Postmaster-General would not send a bag of mails by those boats to Japan.

Senator Drake

- I claim that we could under the 67th clause.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- I claim that we could not; however, if the honorable and learned senator wishes to go into that discussion-

Senator Drake

- No I don't. I withdraw.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Very well, that will save us trouble. I have had some little experience in these matters, and holding that view I am going to propose an amendment which I believe will get over the difficulty. I propose to move the insertion of the words " to agreements limited to single voyages nor" after the word "apply" in the second sub-clause of the amendment, so that that sub-clause would then read -

This condition shall not apply to agreements limited to single voyages nor to the coaling and loading of ships at places beyond the limit of the Commonwealth.

I want to make it quite clear that the clause shall not be read to prevent the carriage, for the convenience of the Commonwealth, of a bag or a dozen bags of mails by a ship which happens to have some coloured people on board. Of course there are all kinds of difficulties surrounding this provision. "We might start with a white crew and finish up with a coloured one. Such a thing might be a necessity. Supposing that a vessel arrives at Ceylon with half the crew sick, how are you going to replace them with white men? You must take coloured men to finish your voyage. That is not provided for. If we are to have a hard-and-fast rule, which admits of no variation, then the Government are inviting the Chamber to adopt something which in working will be found unsatisfactory. There may be a difficulty in respect to my moving an amendment unless Senator Drake will be courteous enough to allow me an opportunity, as is the rule in committee.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I have very little more to say. As regards Imperial mail contracts this clause will not be found operative. It will be found simply a difficulty, and will have to be revoked before we can enter into any contracts, and it is for that reason that I do not take so strong a view on the subject as many honorable senators do. If my amendment is inserted there will be no harm done if we pass the clause, because it will be simply inoperative. If my amendment is adopted, I take it that we shall be free to have our letters- carried where necessary on a single voyage by simply saying to a captain - " We want you to carry these letters, and we shall pay you a small sum for the service," and there the whole transaction will end. I am certainly not in favour of encouraging any form of arrangement that will needlessly bring about the employment of

coloured men to the exclusion of our own people.

Senator McGregor

- What about a wooden leg ?

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- I have little or no knowledge regarding wooden legs, but I possess some regarding wooden heads. At any rate I come across the latter pretty often. ' I am absolutely in favour of a white Australia, and I entirely agree with those who hold that this clause has nothing to do with a white Australia. It will have no more effect on a white Australia than will a few gulls on the coast, affect the breeding of our barn-yard fowls. The Government seem to be in very close communion with the Secretary of State for the Colonies in certain ways, for we are given to understand that their policy has some source of inspiration from the other side of the world, and if they are prepared to take the risk they take it with their eyes open. I do not know whether I shall vote with or against them if the amendment be inserted, but not for the reason which Senator Charleston gave - that he followed the Government once and is prepared to follow them again. I do not take that attitude at all. I think this is a kind of tomfoolery which means nothing, and which comes to nothing. If the Government like to enact a little jocularly, I do not see that we need trouble ourselves very much. But if the clause passes in its present form it will cripple and interfere with details of Australian development in a very cruel, uncertain, and irregular manner. For that reason I wish to see the clause amended. I move -

That the amendment be amended by the insertion after the word "apply," in sub-clause (2) of the words - "to agreements limited to single voyages nor."

Senator DRAKE

- The honorable and gallant senator who has just resumed his seat is candid in stating that even if his amendment is accepted he will not undertake to support the amendment of the other House. I shall oppose his amendment, because if it has any effect it will be to limit the application of this principle. If it is a good thing to apply it to contracts and arrangements, it is a good thing to apply it in the case of a contract made with the master of a vessel for a single voyage. But I think it is not at all necessary, in order to insure that our mails can be carried on any steamer, and that is why I endeavoured, by an interjection, to draw the attention of Senator Neild to clause 67, which provides that the master of a ship leaving a port is bound to take any mails which are put on board, if he is paid a certain rate, to be prescribed under the next clause.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- What does clause 67 say ? It says " an arrangement in writing."

Senator DRAKE

- No ; there is only a receipt for the mail.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- That is a contract, and the Minister knows it is.

Senator DRAKE

- I submit that it is not a contract. The master simply has to give a receipt for the delivery of the mails, and he is bound by law - it is not a matter of contract or arrangement - to take them at a certain rate of pay. It is no arrangement even as to the amount to be paid which is prescribed by regulation.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Is that your opinion as a lawyer ?

Senator DRAKE

- It is.

Senator Clemons

- The Postmaster-General reserves to himself the right to send mails by any steamers, even though they may be filled by blackfellows.

Senator DRAKE

- That is so. He puts them on board, but there is no contract.

Senator Dobson

- Is not clause 67 controlled by the amendment before the committee ?

Senator DRAKE

- Decidedly not. The Postmaster-General can put a mail on board any mail steamer which is leaving a port if he pays the prescribed rate, and it is no more a contract than when a man\* sends a parcel by parcel delivery. That is not what it is intended to effect at all. It refers to contracts and arrangements. If honorable senators will turn to clause 14 they will find that for the transmission of mails - The Governor-General may make arrangements with the Postmaster-General in the United Kingdom, or with the proper authorities of any British possession.

In that case the Governor-General, as representing the Commonwealth, does not enter into a contract. For instance, the contract with the P. and O. Company is made by the British Postmaster-General, and we, by arrangement, are allowed to participate in the advantages of it on payment of a certain amount. Clause 14 refers to making arrangements, and then clause 15 gives the Postmaster-General power to enter into contracts, and these are the contracts by which it is stipulated that on the condition of paying a certain sum the steamers at certain times shall receive the mails and deliver them.

Senator Dobson

- Under clause 67, could not the Minister four years hence send all the mails with the P. and O. Company?

Senator DRAKE

- I am of opinion that under that clause if we put our mail bags on their steamers and pay the prescribed rate, they will be bound to carry them, as I said at an early period of the evening. Again, if we are satisfied to send out our mails to Japan or New Caledonia just as ordinary freight matter is sent, we can do so by putting them on board and paying the prescribed rate.

Senator Dobson

- Then clause 67 allows the Ministry to escape from the very amendment we are debating.

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Senator DRAKE

- It does not let us out of it, as I mentioned early in the afternoon. It leaves us the power of putting our bags on a steamer which is leaving the port. But what we cannot do if this amendment is accepted, is to enter into a contract with any steam-ship company to carry our mails at certain stated periods for an agreed upon sum.

Senator Clemons

- There is another word - "arrangement."

Senator DRAKE

- That refers to clause 14, which gives the Governor-General power to make arrangements with the British Postmaster-General or the constituted authorities in foreign countries to have our mail matter carried over their routes. In those cases the British Postmaster-General or the proper authorities in foreign countries make the contract, and we make an arrangement by which we participate in the benefits and burdens of the contract.

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Senator HIGGS

- It is on occasions like this that the electors get a proper idea of the strength of the professions of some gentlemen who used the cry of white Australia at the federal elections. I am not surprised at the attitude of our friends in the conservative corner. I dare say if I live to be as old as some honorable senators here, I shall become a conservative too, and shall be found quite out of touch with the aspirations of the people of Australia. I hope that time will never come, but I can well believe that in the ordinary course of events, judging by what has happened to the radicals of early days, I may become a conservative. Senators Dobson, Nield, and others have expressed the opinion that as we share in the glories of the Empire we should undertake some of its responsibilities. By their remarks they would lead the general public to believe that in the Senate there is a very disloyal section, who would not come forward to defend the Empire if ever it was in trouble. These ultra loyal gentlemen have had a great deal to say about the virtues of the lascars and the Hindoos in contrast with those of our fellow subjects ; and although Senator Dobson quoted the authority of a company director - who is interested in building up its dividends to as high a summit as he can - that our British sailors are in the habit of getting beastly drunk, he, I venture to say, fathered those opinions when he quoted them here without any qualification. "We know enough of the history of the British race to be aware that some of these unfortunate Britishers, who on occasions get

very drunk indeed, are the bravest and most self sacrificing in the cause of that Empire which has been spoken of so highly to-night. We know that many of the Australians who went to South Africa, and who have distinguished themselves there, have been in the habit of taking more drink than is good, for them. But that does not prove that if our sailors, or soldiers, or tradesmen, or labourers were offered sufficient money to go into the stove-holes of these boats they would not accept the wage and the position.. I refuse to believe that the lascars are as reliable in any way as British or Australian sailors. I refuse to consider them as my fellow subjects. I hope that I am as loyal a citizen of the British Empire as any other resident in the Commonwealth. But I will qualify that statement to this extent : That if ever a Cabinet, who are merely the accident of the time, advise the King to thwart the legislation of the people of Australia, as expressed through the Commonwealth Parliament, I shall do my level best - constitutionally, of course - to endeavour to assert the rights of Australians. Those "fellow subjects" whom Senator Dobson takes unto his bosom are people who, if ever they get the opportunity, will cut the throats of the Britishers in India. Those millions of "fellow subjects" who have been spoken of so highly to-night, if ever they see an opportunity to take advantage of the old country, will, as the best authorities on the subject see, avail themselves of it. They would not deal with the Britishers as we propose to deal with them, but would deal with them in the most relentless and murderous fashion. I would not trust any of them, not even the cultured classes in India, further than I could see them. I do not suppose for a moment that the cultured classes of India are to be blamed if ever they try to get their own independence in their own country. It is my opinion that the nations of the earth,, the old country included, will shortly have to consider the question of making themselves happy in their own country, and not going outside of it and meddling with other people's affairs. Senator Dobson spoke of the millions of Indians who were dying each year, but who were still faithful to the Empire. They die of famine each year because they are oppressed by heavy taxation. It will be the famines which take place through that taxation, and the enormous number of deaths occurring every year, which will drive the rising youth of India to endeavour to get independence for the Indian people. The question is not, as Senator Pulsford said, one of the mere employment of a few sailors. It is a question of principle. We have in the past subsidized these vessels to the extent of thousands of pounds every year, and, as has been pointed out to-night, those subsidies are paid out of the hard-earned cash of Australian citizens - Australian workingmen and Australian sailors included, who are brought into competition with this black labour. I hope that the Senate will reverse its decision. I am very glad that Senator O'Connor and Senator Drake have taken up the position they have assumed, and I expect that the majority of the members of the committee will agree with them. Senator Neild has told us, in a very eloquent way, that he prefers a clean blackfellow to a dirty white. That is one way of putting it, certainly ; but I would ask him - would he prefer a dirty black man to a dirty white? When Senator Neild talks about clean blackfellows, let me draw his attention to certain opinions which he expressed years ago about the blacks. What has occasioned this alteration in the honorable senator's view? I have here a volume of poems, entitled, Songs 'neath the Southern Cross by John Cash Neild. The honorable senator who now holds such a proud place says, in a poem called " Joe " -

They wore always skulkin' round my hut,  
Just to see what they could get ;  
But when I faced 'em, the beggars cut -  
They hadn't much pluck, you bet.  
One night I was smokin' just outside,  
When my dog began to bark,  
And about a dozen spears were shied,  
As I stood there in the dark.  
One split my cheek open to my gum,  
And I'd only time to shut  
The door, when a mob of blacks they come  
With a rush right at the hut ?  
I whipp'd down my gun, and through a crack  
In the wall, I just let drive  
Into the blacks, and they bolted back -  
Well, that's them as were alive.

For one or two of the beggars fell  
Along of that dose of shot :  
Twas enough to make you sweat, the yell  
They gave as they went to pot.  
I hadn't so long to tie up my face,  
When the blacks came back once more  
In a howling crowd, all round the place,  
And tried to smash in the door.  
I let 'em have it - this time with slugs -  
And the way them blacks did yell  
When they got 'em in their painted mugs  
Must have scared up Nick in Hell.

What has taken place to make the honorable and gallant poet alter his views with regard to the blacks?  
Why is it that he prefers the block fellow to the white man now ? Why is it that he should prefer to see  
black sailors -lascars - in our ships ? I cannot understand it. Is it because the honorable senator is  
carrying his free-trade principles to that extent ? Is this another example of his faith in free-trade?

Senator Clemons

- No, certainly not.

The CHAIRMAN

- Order. The honorable senator should confine his remarks to the question.

Senator HIGGS

- I thought I was entitled to ask whether the honorable senator who is opposing this amendment in such a  
violent way, is merely carrying out the wishes of the free-trade party ?

The CHAIRMAN

- Let us try to keep to the amendment before the Choir.

Senator HIGGS

- I must say, sir, that you have allowed other honorable senators considerable latitude. I could quote from  
other poems, but I will not do so.

Progress reported.

BEER EXCISE BILL

The PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a message from the House of Representatives, stating that they  
had agreed to the amendments made by the Senate in this Bill, with the exception of amendment No. 15.

DISTILLATION BILL

The PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a message from the House of Representatives, stating that they  
had agreed to the amendments made by the Senate in this Bill with the exception of amendments Nos. 8,  
19, and 20.

SERVICE AND EXECUTION OF PROCESS BILL

The PRESIDENT reported the receipt of a message from the House of Representatives, stating that they  
did not insist upon their amendments in this Bill, with which the Senate had disagreed.

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22:10:00

Senate adjourned at 10.10 p.m.