

honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) in his speech on Thursday evening. Referring to the 25 per cent. ad valorem duty as a maximum, he politely remarked that this was brought forward as an electioneering cry. Now, I would like to ask what constitutes an electioneering cry. Does it not mean a promise to support some popular measure? Is it not something that the electors wish for and desire to obtain? And if a candidate is elected on that particular platform, I ask what course lies open for him to follow? He must do one of two things—either be true or false to the trust reposed in him. I would say—let us stand fast to our colours and accept the consequence. What will be the consequence? The gratifying sense of having been true to our pledges, and the firm conviction that we have acted in the best interests of our country.

On the motion of Mr. McCOLL, the debate was adjourned.

Progress was then reported.

Mr. G. TURNER said he would ask honorable members to assist the Government to bring the discussion on the first item of the Tariff to a close next week. He had no desire to prevent any honorable member from speaking—he believed there were still a large number of honorable members who wished to speak—but he thought that if they would curtail their remarks as much as possible there should be no difficulty in taking a vote on Wednesday, or at any rate on Thursday.

The House adjourned at six o'clock, until Tuesday June 25.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, June 25, 1895.

New Member—Inspection of Dairies—Width of Tires Bill—Gaols Bill—Public and Bank Holidays Bill—Friendly Societies Actuary's Bill—Sale of Goods Bill—Trusts Bill—Election of Chairman of Committees—Theatres Act Amendment Bill—Juries Act Amendment Bill—Supreme Court Act Further Amendment Bill—Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill—Assimilation of Australian Customs Tariffs—Voluntary Conveyances Bill.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at twenty-two minutes to five o'clock p.m., and read the prayer.

NEW MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a return to the writ issued

for the election of a member of the Legislative Council to serve for the South Eastern Province (in the room of the late Hon. F. S. Dobson, deceased), showing that Mr. J. C. Campbell had been elected.

Mr. Campbell was then introduced and sworn, and presented to the Clerk the declaration of qualification required by Act No. 1075.

INSPECTION OF DAIRIES.

The Hon. J. STERNBERG asked the Solicitor-General what action the Government proposed taking in respect to the proper supervision of dairies and dairy herds?

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT stated that, as regarded the public health aspect of the question, the municipal councils had ample powers to protect the public against any injury that might arise from diseased conditions of dairy cattle and from any unwholesomeness of dairies. With the view of getting further expert advice in the matter, the suggestion of the appointment of an inspector under the Board of Public Health was now engaging the special consideration of the Minister of Health.

WIDTH OF TIRES BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved for leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the weights to be carried on certain vehicles and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

GAOLS BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Gaols Act 1890 and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS BILL.

The Hon. W. McCULLOCH moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to certain public and bank holidays.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACTUARY'S BILL.

The Hon. S. WILLIAMSON (in the absence of the Hon. D. COURTTS) moved

for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the transfer of certain powers and duties from the Government Statist to the Actuary for Friendly Societies.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

SALE OF GOODS BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT, without notice, moved for leave to introduce a Bill for codifying the law relating to the sale of goods. He stated that the Bill was similar to the measure which was passed by the House last session.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

TRUSTS BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law relating to trusts and trustees. He said that this Bill was also passed by the House last session, and that it had received a good deal of attention at the hands of honorable members.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved that the Hon. Frederick Brown be elected Chairman of Committees. He said Mr. Brown had had the honour of occupying a seat in the House for over eight years, and he had had an opportunity during that time of showing that the duties of Chairman of Committees could be efficiently discharged by him. He was sure that Mr. Brown's legal training would be of service to him in performing his duties; that he would fill the position with satisfaction to the House, and with credit to himself; and that his decisions would always be characterized by strict impartiality.

The Hon. J. BALFOUR seconded the motion. He expressed the hope that Mr. Brown would long live to enjoy the high honour the House had conferred upon him.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDENT.—Mr. Brown, I have now the pleasing duty of informing you that you have been unanimously elected by this House as Chairman of Committees, and in making this statement I am sure I do not trespass beyond the ordinary indulgence that is allowed to the occupant

of the chair when I say that I am quite sure that you will do your utmost to carry out efficiently and impartially the duties of the office. It will be particularly gratifying to you to know that two honorable, able, and distinguished gentlemen who have occupied seats in the Chamber for a much longer period than yourself were in competition with you for the office, and to know also that the election was conducted in the most impartial and honorable manner to all concerned. I have now much pleasure in informing you officially that you are appointed Chairman of Committees of the House.

The Hon. F. BROWN said that it was with a great amount of diffidence, and at the same time with a great amount of pleasure, that he submitted himself to the will of the House. There was no honorable member who regretted more than he did the necessity of an election to fill the vacant chair. The late occupant of the chair was a man who, by his deep learning and great research, was well qualified to occupy the position. He was not a man who kept that learning to himself, but who placed it at the disposal of every honorable member. He (Mr. Brown) could not aspire to fill the chair with the same degree of efficiency in that respect. He thanked honorable members for the honour that they had conferred upon him, and he could only say that with their indulgence for a little while, and their kind help, which he knew that he would receive at all times, he would do his utmost to carry out the duties attached to the office with satisfaction to the House and, he trusted, with credit to himself. He thanked the Solicitor-General and Mr. Balfour for the kind references they had made to him in moving the motion, and he also thanked the President for his generous remarks in conveying to him the announcement of his election. He trusted that he would be able to do his duty in such a way that when his term of office terminated no honorable member would have cause to regret that they did him the distinguished honour of electing him to the position.

THEATRES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved the second reading of this Bill. He stated that he thought it would be found to be a very useful measure indeed. It was to amend the Theatres Act of 1890, and

it consisted of only four clauses. Under the principal Act the control of houses for dramatic entertainments was vested in the Chief Secretary, and he had power to issue licences for all such places of amusement. He had only power, however, to license them for entertainments during week days. There was a defect in the principal Act in not giving the Chief Secretary power to control such houses on Sundays, and the Bill was intended to remedy that defect. It provided that where, pursuant to the Theatres Act, a written authority or licence had at any time, either before or after the passing of this Bill, been granted by the Chief Secretary in respect of any theatre, house, room, building, garden, or place, it should be lawful for the Chief Secretary to cancel or suspend for such period as he might think fit such authority or licence if it were proved to his satisfaction that such house had, during the currency of the licence, and without a special permit, been used on Sundays for any entertainment of the stage whatsoever, or for any public concert, reading, lecture, recitation, or musical entertainment. Before the power to cancel was exercised, seven days' notice had to be given to the licensee to enable him to come forward and to show why his licence should not be suspended or cancelled. He thought that the Bill would commend itself to honorable members. It seemed to him to be strange that in the original Act express power was not given to the Chief Secretary to prevent the using of any house that had not been licensed by him—and in which entertainments were given, for admission to which the public paid—for Sunday entertainments without a special permit. He considered it was desirable that there should be some controlling power over these Sunday entertainments, and that the Chief Secretary, who at present was not permitted to prevent the giving of any entertainment to which admission was free, should have a discretionary power in regard to entertainments to which he objected. There was no danger that a discretionary power of that kind would be abused. Any person desiring to give a Sunday entertainment of a religious character could apply to the Chief Secretary, who would be able to grant him permission; but to leave the law as it at present stood, and not give the Chief Secretary a discretionary power, would be a mistake.

Hon. H. Cuthbert.

The Hon. A. WYNNE remarked that it seemed to him that the Bill went rather too far. There were buildings in Melbourne in use for public entertainment which had cost very large sums of money to erect, and there might happen to be a narrow-minded Chief Secretary in power who would look at all entertainments in a most narrow way, and perhaps object to theatres altogether. Such a Chief Secretary under the Bill might, without the slightest excuse, close a building which had cost many thousands of pounds, simply because the proprietors proposed to give a Sunday evening entertainment which consisted of a religious reading or lecture or a religious musical programme. For his own part, he could see no more objection to a lecture being given in a theatre on a Sunday than in a church, and the same remark applied to recitations or sacred music. Personally, he was not in favour of placing this power in the hands of one man. If theatrical entertainments which were objectionable were given it would be proper enough to suspend the proprietor's licence for a limited time, but he would not empower any man to cancel a licence, simply because the proprietor of a place of entertainment might have made one mistake. In committee he would move in the direction of considerably restricting the powers proposed to be given to the Chief Secretary.

The Hon. J. BELL observed that he was inclined to agree to a certain extent with the last speaker, but he thought it would be wise to empower the Chief Secretary to stop the giving of secular entertainments on the first day of the week. All other trading concerns were prohibited from transacting business on Sundays, and when entertainments of a very questionable class were given, he thought they ought to be interdicted, because these entertainments were given altogether for gain. The proprietors of these places of entertainment being traders, the law should be made to apply to them as well as to other places. (An Honorable Member—"They do not charge for admission.") The plate was sent round at these places of entertainment, and that was practically the same thing as making a charge for admission. He would not object to sacred concerts being given on Sunday evenings, but the Chief Secretary ought to have power to prevent anything like theatrical entertainments being presented on those evenings.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE remarked that it was quite true, as Mr. Wynne had said, that there might be a narrow-minded Chief Secretary in power, but on the other hand there might be a Chief Secretary in power who had very little mind. There was nothing in the Bill to prevent a fixed charge from being made by any person who gave a Sunday evening entertainment. If the Chief Secretary gave his consent to a concert, a charge could be made by the promoters. (Mr. Cuthbert—"That is prohibited by the principal Act.") It seemed to him that the effect of the present Bill was to cancel that, because it provided for the cancelling of licences in cases where entertainments were given on Sundays without permission of the Chief Secretary. He thought that the Bill should be passed, but that the point in regard to fixed charges should be made clear. If the Chief Secretary granted a permit for a certain entertainment to be given in a theatre on a Sunday, there was nothing in the Bill to say that it should not be given for money. If the Chief Secretary happened to be a liberal-minded man, he might allow religious concerts to be given on Sundays. In that case seats would be booked just the same as with ordinary theatrical business, and that would be very undesirable.

The Hon. J. BALFOUR stated that he would support the second reading of the Bill. He quite understood the object of it. When Mr. (now Sir Graham) Berry was Chief Secretary he actually gave notice of cancellation of a theatre licence because of entertainments being conducted in it on Sundays. In so doing, the then Chief Secretary went beyond the law, as he had no power to cancel the licence of a theatre for such a reason. An old Act of George IV, which was a very stringent Act, was declared to be in force in this colony. It provided for the imposition of a very heavy penalty on the proprietors of theatres who gave entertainments on Sundays. These penalties extended to the persons who took tickets for the entertainments, and even to the newspapers which advertised them. The difficulty was that of late years a number of entertainments had been conducted on Sundays, and though the promoters made no charge nominally they really made one by a side-wind. He would not object to entertainments that were conducted in a proper way, or to a collection being made, but it was

objectionable for the promoters to say that people should not come into their building without paying something, or without putting so much in the plate if they were in one part of the building, and so much if they were in another part. He understood the object of the Bill to be to provide an easy method for the Chief Secretary to prevent the evasion of the law, by empowering him to tell the promoters of such entertainments that if they did not stop these practices their licences would be cancelled. Mr. Wynne had said that it was possible that a Chief Secretary might threaten to cancel a licence if such and such an entertainment were presented, but he (Mr. Balfour) thought that that was an utterly remote contingency, because no Chief Secretary could remain in office for a day if he cancelled the licence of a place of entertainment for giving an entertainment of a religious character. The object in view was to prevent the giving of secular entertainments for which a charge was made. (Dr. Enbling—"That is grandmotherly legislation.") Grandmotherly legislation was sometimes a good thing; there was a good deal of it on the statute-book of the colony, and he did not object to some of it. He agreed with the view expressed by Mr. Grimwade that it would be as well to insert a clause providing that nothing contained in the Bill should permit a charge to be made for entertainments given on Sundays. A friend of his told him the other day that after reading the Bill he visited three of the Sunday evening entertainments in the city, and that in one of these places he was absolutely prevented from entering, because a charge was made for admission to a certain portion of the building. That gentleman's description of the programme performed was such that no honorable member would say it was a suitable entertainment for a Sunday. The programme was, in point of fact, a lot of comic songs.

The Hon. J. H. ABBOTT said he would like to know if there was really any demand outside of Parliament for a measure of the kind now under consideration? His own impression was that the people of this colony were a very well-conducted community, and he was certain that if the Bill were intended to drive people into the churches it would fail. In London there were many halls open on Sundays in which concerts were given. It was found there to be a good thing to provide the people with wholesome entertainments on

a Sunday, and Parliament would be going a great deal out of its way if it attempted to stop such entertainments in this colony. He did not wish to have entertainments consisting of comic singing on Sunday evenings, nor did he understand that that was the class of Sunday entertainments given in Melbourne. (Mr. Balfour—"It is—every Sunday night.") There were churches in the city into which a man could not enter without paying. (Mr. Balfour—"You are not obliged to pay.") People could pay without going in, but they could not go in without paying. Was it necessary for the Government, at a time like the present, when there were thousands of people starving in consequence of being out of employment, to submit a Bill of this sort? The measure seemed to have been brought in for the purpose of amusing the Council while the Assembly was engaged in important matters. He was amazed that the Government, with their immense responsibilities, and after telling the Council that it was very necessary for it to go on with the business without delay, should have submitted a measure like the present one to amuse honorable members. He believed that the Chief Secretary, at the present time, had as much power to control the theatres as was necessary. If honorable members could do anything to encourage the harmless amusements of the people they were bound to do it. He would be very glad if the Bill were thrown out. Honorable members could occupy their time much better than by troubling about the pleasant Sunday afternoons of the people.

The Hon. W. McCULLOCH observed that he was as much against the Bill as any one when it was first submitted to the Cabinet, but having called for a report upon the subject from the police he had seen reason to change his opinion. If honorable members saw the report that was furnished by the police, he was certain that they would agree with the provisions of the Bill. (Mr. Wynne—"You ought to produce it.") A lot of young people were engaged in these Sunday evening entertainments, and they were not paid for their work, because their week's salary contained no allowance for the Sunday work. It was true that no actual price of admission was charged, but the public could not take their seats unless they agreed to put a certain sum in the plate, according to the part of the building they were in, placards being

posted which stated that the sum of 2s. was required in one place, 1s. in another, and so on.

The Hon. N. LEVI remarked that, after the statement of the Minister of Defence, it would be just as well if the debate were adjourned until the police report to which that honorable gentleman had referred could be presented. He would be no party to allowing charges to be made for admission to Sunday evening entertainments, but he thought there was a strong feeling in the House that the law, as it now stood, was sufficiently powerful to suppress any proceedings which were distasteful to the community. He was not aware that any objectionable entertainments were being given, and if any such were being given he would ask honorable members to name the particular places. If the Government had any information on the subject it was only fair that honorable members should be placed in possession of it. It was well known that the people of this community had frequently expressed a desire to have the National Picture Gallery, Library, and Museum open on Sundays. Large sums of money were also frequently collected for the Melbourne Hospital on Sundays by the means of lectures and similar entertainments. In his younger days he remembered that the Brougham Institute, in Liverpool, was attended on Sundays by crowds in search of intellectual entertainment, and that a pin could be heard to drop in the building when they were assembled there. If the Government were in possession of such a report from the police as would justify honorable members in supporting the Bill he had not the slightest doubt that it would be carried without any opposition, but honorable members ought certainly to be allowed the opportunity of judging for themselves. He begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate lapsed for want of a seconder.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES said he could understand an honorable member opposing the Bill on the ground that he desired to have performances on Sunday, but he could not understand him opposing it on the ground that it would place improper or unusual powers in the hands of a Chief Secretary, who might be so narrow-minded as to object to any kind of secular performance being given on a Sunday. At the present time, if any narrow-minded Chief Secretary chose to

exercise his power he could refuse to issue a licence to any theatre. He could also prevent the performance of any piece if he thought it was not in accordance with good manners and decorum. The Bill referred to performances which were given in return for charges for admission to them. Seeing that the principal Act had been in force since 1865, and there had been no narrow-minded Chief Secretary who had refused to license a theatre, or who had refused to allow the production of any play which ought to be produced, he (Mr. Davies) did not think honorable members need fear that in giving the power now asked for in connexion with Sunday performances it would be improperly exercised by the Chief Secretary. He thought it would be right to pass the Bill. Probably some honorable members had no knowledge of what took place on Sunday evenings. He had no personal knowledge on the subject, but he had been informed that comic concerts and other secular entertainments were given on Sunday evenings. It had even been proposed, he believed, to exhibit the magic swing on Sundays. There was no doubt that a collection was taken up at these Sunday evening entertainments in such a way that if the persons who desired to be present did not contribute they were either not allowed to come in, or they were so marked and pointed out to the rest of the assembly that they were virtually bound to pay. It was just the same as though a fixed charge were made, because an intimation of what was required was posted up in the various parts of the building. (Dr. Enbling—"Does not the same thing occur in some churches?") That might be so, but he had never been in such churches. If any church acted illegally it would be the duty of somebody to proceed against it, but that was no reason why anything improper should be allowed to go on in other directions.

The Hon. J. A. WALLACE stated that he could not see anything wrong with the measure. He was of opinion that prevention was better than cure. If objectionable entertainments were being given in the theatres on Sundays they ought to be checked. If honorable members thought that the Bill gave too much authority to the Chief Secretary that could be remedied in committee, but for his own part he did not see any reason to complain on that score. The givers of Sunday entertainments ought to be kept in check, and the

working classes, above all others, ought to be on the side of those who wished to keep them in check. Authority must be given to some one, and he could see no objection to the Bill.

Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD remarked that the third section of the Theatres Act 1890, of which the present Bill was designed to be an amendment, dealt with the licensing of buildings for performance of—

"Any interlude, tragedy, opera, or comedy, stage play, farce, burletta, melodrama, pantomime, or any stage-dancing, tumbling, or horsemanship."

Performances in the theatres were limited to these things, and these performances could only be presented after the lessee had obtained a licence from the Chief Secretary. Apparently, as far as he could ascertain, the theatres had exceeded that power, and had gone considerably beyond the performances referred to in the section he had just quoted, and without any authority. He understood the Bill not to say that under no circumstances should lectures, musical entertainments, or recitations be given in theatres on Sundays, but that before they were given the consent of the Chief Secretary must be obtained. That, he thought, was a reasonable thing to do, bearing in mind that a licence for definite purposes could be obtained under the principal Act. If theatre lessees desired to extend the objects of their licences, surely there could be no objection to their being obliged to go to the Chief Secretary to ask permission for such extension. The experience of the past 30 years showed that the power which had been delegated to the Chief Secretary had not been unwisely used. He was strongly in favour of giving all the legitimate power it was possible to give to the Chief Secretary. If the power was not given to the Chief Secretary, to whom could it be given? The Chief Secretary was responsible to Parliament, and if he acted against the public wishes he would be speedily brought to book. The experience of the past proved that this power was not likely to be injudiciously exercised in the future. It might be desirable to limit the powers of the Chief Secretary. The absolute cancelling of a licence might be too severe a punishment to inflict. The object in view would be undoubtedly attained if the Chief Secretary were empowered to suspend licences for twelve months, or for such time as he might think

fit. That would enable him to nip an objectionable thing in the bud, or the suspension might be for the remainder of the duration of the licence. He hoped that the Solicitor-General would lay upon the table of the House the report from the police which had been referred to by the Minister of Defence. If honorable members had that information before them they would act wisely in agreeing to the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. W. H. EMBLING observed that no man had a greater respect for the Sunday than he had, and that no man had a greater wish to conserve the sacred character of that day than he had, but he had a distinct objection to legislating in a direction which he thought might prove burdensome to the people. It would be easy to pass a law conferring despotic power on the Chief Secretary for the time being. The Chief Secretary could rule Melbourne in five minutes; but suppose the people of Bendigo wanted to have a lecture or entertainment given in a theatre there on a Sunday, they would have to come down to Melbourne, at a great expense and loss of time, to obtain the permission of the Chief Secretary. (An Honorable Member—"Could they not write?") No, because the red-tape of the department would come in. His objection to the Bill was simply that there was no necessity for all these various sumptuary laws which were passed 300 years ago in England, and were afterwards laid aside by the common sense of the people. He did not want to have those laws introduced into Victoria now. The existing law relating to theatres was sufficient as it stood. The Bill proposed that the Chief Secretary should be empowered of his own will to close any place of entertainment if he happened to dislike the entertainment for any reason. (An Honorable Member—"The Chief Secretary can do that now.") Then why bring in the Bill? A Salvation Army entertainment might be given some Sunday evening, and if the Chief Secretary were a strict Presbyterian he might say it was wrong, and close the theatre. It ought not to be put in the power of any one man to arrive at a decision on such a subject. According to Sir Frederick Sargood's interpretation of the present law, the Chief Secretary had at present as much controlling power as he chose to exercise. He (Dr. Embling) knew nothing of the subject except from hearsay, but if there was anything objectionable going on it could easily be stopped by

the Government or the Chief Secretary. He considered it to be very wrong to attempt to remedy by a new Bill such a small matter, which could be remedied under the existing law. As Mr. Abbott had said, it looked as though honorable members of the Council were called upon to amuse themselves while honorable members in another place were dealing with important matters.

The Hon. D. E. MCBRYDE said the confidence he had in the present Government justified him in voting for this measure, for the simple reason that he felt quite sure that they would not submit the Bill were they not of opinion that it was required. Consequently, although he did not know anything about the entertainments alluded to beyond what he saw in the public press, he was satisfied with the statement of the Minister of Defence that certain information which the Government had received from the police justified them in the action they were now taking. If the Government, in their judgment, considered it was desirable that certain powers ought to be conferred on the Chief Secretary, he (Mr. McBryde) thought it was the duty of the Council to give effect to that view. He was not so strict perhaps as some honorable members, but at the same time he was a great believer in the Sabbath being kept, and he thought there was far too much amusement going on on the Sabbath in this country; that there was not the same respect shown for the Sabbath as there ought to be. He believed it was their bounden duty to endeavour, as far as lay in their power, to lead the young in the proper way, and he did not think the entertainments referred to tended in that direction. He intended to vote for the Bill.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE stated that he was afraid that the Solicitor-General had caused this discussion by not stating clearly what he meant to achieve by the measure. If the ideas of the honorable gentleman as to Sunday were that it should be more limited than it was now—if he wished to draw the line a little tighter—he (Mr. Melville) was not sure that the public would go with him. At the present time the railways, except certain trains to the suburbs, were stopped on Sundays. All business was suspended, and the universal cry was—"Give us the seventh day free of all work." So far did this go that the Public Library and the museums were closed on Sunday, and the people were

handed over to the parsons. If the Solicitor-General thought that we were not sufficiently sanctimonious after all this, what did he wish to arrive at? The streets were crowded on Sundays with people who did not know where to go. Many of them would not go to the parsons, many of them were tired of the parsons, but there was not a single other avenue open for those persons on Sundays. He thought the mistake which had been made in the past was in saying—"This only shalt thou do on Sunday, and nothing else." What were the people to do on Sundays who did not go to the churches? Did the Minister mean to say that the habits of the people in Victoria had been so bad that it was necessary for the Government to come down with this Bill to rectify them? He (Mr. Melville) did not know anything about the alleged attendance of people at theatres on Sundays in Melbourne. He had not, like Mr. Balfour, investigated the matter. He had never been there on Sunday. (Mr. Balfour—"I have not been there on Sunday either.") He did not mean to convey that the honorable member had been to such places on Sunday himself; but that he had sent people to inquire into the proceedings which were carried on. What did the Minister mean to do by this Bill? Did he mean to say that in future the Chief Secretary should exercise a proper supervision over what was done at these theatres? (Mr. Cuthbert—"Hear, hear.") Why was the question of payment raised at all? He supposed that the Solicitor-General would admit that, if there was anything going on which was improper it ought to be stopped, apart altogether from the question of whether people paid or not. The mere question of payment was the smallest element in the matter. If what was done was wrong, they should say straight out that it would not be tolerated. (Sir Frederick Sargood—"This Bill will do that.") He did not clearly understand what the Minister meant by the Bill. If he meant that such espionage was to be exercised over these places that a man should not be able to preach a lay sermon in a theatre, or to read certain passages from the Bible there, as the late Mr. Kean did in order to illustrate the proper way in which clergymen should read, it was doubtful whether the public would support such a proposition. A great change had come over the opinions of the public

as to what was sacred and what was not sacred since the days when he (Mr. Melville) first came to the colony. Formerly such a thing as the Salvation Army band playing along the streets on Sunday would have been regarded as most irreverent, but now people did not think anything of it. What he (Mr. Melville) desired to urge was that while the seventh day should be kept free from all labour, too strict a line should not be drawn as to what the people might or might not do upon that day. He had no knowledge of people going to hear comic songs at theatres on Sunday in this colony. (Mr. Reid—"But they do.") Was it proposed to give permission to sing comic songs on Sunday? (An Honorable Member—"No.") What the Bill provided apparently was that comic songs might be sung, but that a charge must not be made for singing them. If the religious people were to interfere at all, let them pass a law straight out declaring what was right and what was wrong. He did not think the people of Melbourne or the suburbs had any tendencies in the direction of injuring the Sabbath such as required a Bill of this character to deal with them. At the present moment it was very difficult to ascertain what the exact grievance was which this Bill was to deal with, but he hoped that when the House got into committee the Government would be more explicit on the subject.

The Hon. C. J. HAM said that he intended to support the second reading of the Bill. In many previous Acts of Parliament certain powers had been given to Ministers so that the law might not be of too cast-iron a character; and, as those powers had not been abused, it was safe to assume that the Chief Secretary would exercise equal common sense in administering this measure as his predecessors during the last 30 years had shown in regard to other Acts of Parliament. If anything foolish or unreasonable was done by the Chief Secretary, public opinion would soon be brought to bear upon him, but he (Mr. Ham) believed that the powers given by this measure would be exercised wisely and with discretion. It was not so many years ago that a certain theatrical gentleman professed to give Bible readings on the Sunday; but his object was not to illustrate the beauties of the Bible or to show how it should be read, but his deliberate and avowed purpose was to bring the Bible into disrepute and ridicule.

This was done in the city of Melbourne, to the great annoyance of thousands of the inhabitants. In a case of that kind the Chief Secretary could say under this Bill that such a performance would not be permitted. On the other hand, if a great orator or elocutionist desired to illustrate the excellence and beauties of the Bible he would not be interfered with. He (Mr. Ham) had heard it said that the great actor Garrick having in some performance to read the Lord's Prayer found it necessary to occupy two days in rehearsal before he felt himself competent to repeat that prayer in the manner in which he thought it should be repeated. Where a lecture or entertainment was injurious to the morals of the people, or was intended to bring ridicule on those things which were held sacred by the bulk of the population, the Chief Secretary would be able under this Bill to interfere, and it was quite right that he should have power to do so.

The Hon. W. I. WINTER-IRVING remarked that he was in favour of the Bill, and if it had for one of its purposes the throwing open of the Public Library and Museums and National Gallery on Sundays he would be still more favorable to it. He thought it was monstrous that educated men, who were among our best citizens, should be shut out from attending the Public Library and National Gallery on Sunday when, as in many cases, they had not an opportunity of visiting those institutions during the week. He quite agreed that there were certain kinds of entertainments which a person should be precluded from carrying on on Sundays. He did not think that free-thought discussions or political entertainments were very desirable things on Sunday evenings, but anything of an elevating character, which was calculated to take the people off the streets, ought to be encouraged. It was much better for people to be attending rational and elevating lectures or amusements on Sunday afternoons than to be lying in bed.

The Hon. E. MILLER said that the way he read the Bill was that theatres or music halls which wished to open on Sundays must apply to the Chief Secretary for permission to do so. It therefore followed that if the measure was passed, the first thing a music hall or theatre would do would be to obtain permission from the Chief Secretary to conduct some stated service on Sunday, and he (Mr. Miller) presumed that the Chief Secretary would

give permission to the proprietors of respectable theatres or places of amusement, while seeing that such entertainments as had been conducted at low music halls on Sundays in Melbourne for some time past were not continued on the Sabbath. Mr. Abbott had been very pronounced in his opposition to the Bill, but it must be recollected that the honorable member had just returned from a continental trip, and perhaps he had been imbued during his tour with some of the continental manners, so that his remarks should not be taken too seriously. The Government had apparently full reason for bringing in this measure. As the Minister of Defence had pointed out, the police had reported that entertainments were going on which should not be allowed, and surely the police and the Government could be trusted to see that no entertainments were interfered with which were of a proper character. He (Mr. Miller) would support the Bill, which he thought ought to be passed by the House.

The Hon. J. M. PRATT observed that honorable members were slightly handicapped in discussing this Bill, through not having the facts before them on which the measure was based. Personally he was inclined to agree with those honorable members who considered that the Bill was not necessary. At the present time the Chief Secretary had the power of licensing theatres and buildings for public entertainment, and if the police reported that on Sunday evenings proceedings were carried on which were not attended with due decorum, the Chief Secretary had simply to hint to the proprietor of that building that his licence was being imperilled to secure that such proceedings would be discontinued. In his opinion the more the people were surrounded and limited by legislation of this character the less good would be done. He had not been in any of the places referred to, but if they conducted their proceedings soberly and properly there was no use in bringing in Acts of Parliament to attempt to prevent the people from attending them. The good sense of the people would dictate to them what was best for them to do without such legislation. He thought the measure, even if it was passed by the Council, would have no chance of passing another place.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then read a second time, and committed.

On clause 1,

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved that progress be reported.

The Hon. N. LEVI asked the Solicitor-General when the report of the police, which had been referred to during the debate on the second reading, would be laid on the table?

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT said that he had sent for the report, which was addressed to the Chief Secretary, during the debate; but he found that, unfortunately, the Chief Secretary was at present laid up with illness. He (Mr. Cuthbert) hoped, however, that the report would be presented before the measure again came on for discussion.

The motion was agreed to.

Progress was then reported.

JURIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved the second reading of this Bill. He observed that this was a retrenchment measure, by which the Government hoped to save some £3,000 a year without injuring any class of the community. In civil cases he thought that it was reasonable that the expenses should fall upon the litigant, but under the system of trial by jury a large portion of the expenses at present fell upon the Government. In the Supreme Court either a plaintiff or defendant could have a case set down for trial by jury on payment of the jury fee. In the case of a jury of twelve the fee was £6, which was at the rate of 10s. per day for each of the jurymen engaged in the case. Generally, however, from 36 to 40 jurymen were summoned, so that the country on the first day of a trial was involved in an expenditure of £20. The second day's hearing cost the country £6 for the twelve jurymen, and if the case continued a third day the country was put to an additional expense of £6, making in all £32. To this expense all that was contributed by the litigant was the fee of £6 paid on the first day. It was proposed by this Bill that the fees of jurymen should be reduced from 10s. to 7s. per day for the first three days, so that the fee for setting down a case to be tried by a jury of twelve would be £4 4s. instead of £6. The expenses of a jury of six would be in the same ratio. At present the fee was £3, and by the Bill it would be reduced to £2 2s. In the County Court the plaintiff or defendant had a right to have a case tried by a jury of four on payment of a fee of £1, while if he desired to have six jurymen

there was an additional fee of £1. The cost to the country, however, of a jury of four for one day was £2, so that the State lost £1 per day by the present system. If the Bill was passed the fee of £1 now charged in the County Court for having a case tried by a jury of four would be reduced to 14s. Where the Judge considered a case a proper one to be tried by a jury, and ordered it to be so tried without application from either plaintiff or defendant, the expense would be borne by the State. In all civil cases the party who set down a case to be tried by a jury had to pay the first day's jury fees, but the Crown paid the second and third days' fees. Each jurymen was entitled to receive 10s. per day for three days. If the case extended beyond that time each jurymen was entitled to £1 a day for the next three days, and if the case went on still further each jurymen was entitled to £2 a day. These fees were a very heavy burden on both litigants and the Crown, and so it was proposed to reduce them to the fees set forth in the schedule to this Bill (which was to be substituted for the 10th schedule of the Juries Act), and which were as follow :—

“Special and common jurors residing within five miles of the court, for each day attending at the court, 7s.; travelling expenses to special and common jurors, for every mile of distance beyond 5 miles between the juror's residence and the court, one way only, 1s.; in the event of any criminal or civil case occupying the court beyond three days, to each juror impannelled on the trial of such case, for each day beyond the first three days, and not exceeding six days, 10s.; and for every day over six days, £1.”

The Bill also proposed to saddle the litigants with the expenses of the jurors engaged in the trial of cases, except in any instance in which the Court or the Judge ordered the case to be tried before a jury. The enactment of this measure would effect a saving to the State of £3,000 a year. (Sir Frederick Sargood—“Who pays the jury fees on the first day of each trial?”) The party to the suit who desired that the case should be tried before a jury. (Mr. Bell—“The Government pay all the jurymen who are not impannelled?”) Yes. He thought the fees in the schedule were fair and equitable, and he hoped that the Council would pass the Bill.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES expressed the opinion that this was a Bill in the right direction. The Crown would get the benefit of the reductions of jury fees in criminal cases, which were paid entirely

by the State, but in the cases of civil actions the Bill would make very little difference as far as the Crown was concerned. At present the plaintiff in setting down the case for trial by jury had to pay the jury fees for the first day. This Bill would compel him to pay also for the second and third days, which were at present paid by the Crown. Under the present system if a case extended beyond the third day the plaintiff or defendant requiring the jury had to pay the jury fees; but there appeared to be some difficulty, in case the party in question neglected to pay the jury fees, as to what the duty of the Judge was—whether his Honour should direct the case to proceed with a jury or not. He took it that this Bill was to clear up that point, and give the Judge power to direct the case to proceed without a jury. One provision of the law was in favour of litigants, because it threw on the Crown an expense which the Crown had not to bear at the present time. If a jury was required in consequence of an order of the court or the Judge, the jury fees were, under this Bill, to be paid by the Crown. The present law provided that if a jury was required in consequence of an order of the court or Judge, the jury fees should be paid by such party or parties to the suit as the court or Judge directed. He did not know why, in these days of retrenchment, Parliament should be asked to take a burden from off the shoulders of litigants and put it on the Crown. (Mr. Cuthbert—"That would very seldom happen.") It might very seldom happen, but the avowed object of this Bill was to relieve the Crown of expense, whereas in that particular direction the Bill would throw expense on the Crown which the Crown had not to bear at the present time. Objection had been raised to the Bill on the ground that it would enable a litigant to have a case taken from the jury and tried by the Judge alone, but he did not agree with that, and if the party who demanded the jury was not able to continue to pay for the jury, he should be deprived of it. There was power in this Bill for the other party to the suit to pay the jury, if he desired; but if neither party was able or willing to pay the jury, they ought to do without it.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then read a second time, and committed.

On clause 1, giving the short title of the measure,

Hon. J. M. Davies.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE stated that Mr. Brunton, who was not then present, desired to propose certain amendments which he (Mr. Melville) had handed to the Solicitor-General in writing, and he would ask the honorable gentleman to have those amendments printed and circulated during the refreshment-hour. (Mr. Bell—"The Treasurer wants the Bill passed to enable him to estimate the expenditure.") That was "too thin."

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT remarked that no notice had been given of the amendments, and he had no idea that they were to be proposed, but he would have them printed and circulated after the refreshment hour. (Mr. Sachse—"Postpone the Bill till next Tuesday.") The general principle of the Bill had been adopted by the House, and it would be a great pity to postpone the measure which, as he intimated last week, he wished the Council to pass this week, in addition to the Supreme Court Act Further Amendment Bill, as those two measures would effect a saving of £6,500 a year, and the Treasurer desired that they should be passed in order that he might be able to make out his estimates of expenditure.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE said he desired to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee. That would give him the opportunity of pointing to the necessity of discussing the question of the cost of litigation to the community. Only two speeches had been delivered on this measure, and they were by lawyers. Why the laymen should not be enabled to address themselves to the subject he could not understand.

The CHAIRMAN.—I think the question which the honorable member desires to bring forward is one which would be more properly brought forward when the Supreme Court Act Further Amendment Bill is submitted to the Council.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE expressed the opinion that the question of retrenchment in the cost of litigation was one which might be brought forward in connexion with either of those Bills, but he agreed with the remark of the Chairman of Committees. (Mr. Bell—"You cannot raise a general discussion on this clause.") He believed he was perfectly in order in doing so.

The Hon. J. BELL asked the Chairman to rule that the honorable member was not in order in discussing the question of the excessive cost of litigation on clause 1 of this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN. — The honorable member would be in order in moving that this clause be postponed.

Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD observed that the proper course for Mr. Melville to take, in order to gain time for the consideration of Mr. Brunton's amendments, would be to move that progress be reported. The honorable member's motion that the Bill be referred to a select committee was out of order. The proper time for the honorable member to move that the measure be referred to a select committee would have been before the House decided that it should be committed, which it had already done.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE remarked that he would withdraw the motion for referring the Bill to a select committee, because he did not wish to embarrass honorable members, and he would take another opportunity later on of bringing forward the question he desired to discuss. But did Mr. Bell think that his mouth was to be closed in that fashion? (Mr. Bell—"Impossible.") There were various ways of raising the question, but in loyalty to the Chair he would abstain from raising it at the present juncture.

Mr. Melville's motion was accordingly withdrawn.

On clause 2, which was as follows:—

"In sections 40 and 44 of the Juries Act, 1890, for the words 'Three pounds,' and 'Six pounds,' and 'One pound,' wherever they occur, there shall be substituted the words 'Two pounds and two shillings,' and 'Four pounds and four shillings,' and 'One pound and eight shillings,' respectively."

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE asked why in this clause the sum of £1 8s. was mentioned, when in the schedule the fee stood at £1?

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT stated that in a County Court case a litigant could have a jury of four, and each jurymen had to be paid 7s. for the first day. That would amount to £1 8s. At present the litigant only paid £1, and the Crown paid another £1, making 10s. for each jurymen.

On clause 3, substituting the schedule to the Bill for the 10th schedule to the Juries Act,

The Hon. D. MELVILLE observed that jury fees were all increased under recent Acts of Parliament, but he believed they were too high, and he would even go so far as to say that the jury fees proposed in this Bill were too high. It was beyond the power of ordinary citizens to pay such heavy fees, and he questioned whether, for

the purpose of shortening and cheapening litigation, jury fees should not be paid by the State. He would like to know whether it was in the power of the Council to further reduce jury fees below the amounts specified in this Bill?

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT replied in the negative.

On clause 4, relating to the payment of jurors' fees, and providing, *inter alia*, that—

"(2) In all other civil cases the sums payable to jurors shall for the second and every subsequent day of any trial be paid to the Sheriff by the party requiring such jury, at or before the opening of the court on each day of the trial,"

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES said he did not know whether the wording of sub-section (2) of this clause was sufficiently explicit. It was provided in the schedule that special and common jurors residing within five miles of the court were, for each day's attendance at the court, to be paid 7s. per juror. That sum was payable to every juror who was summoned, and not merely to every juror who acted as a jurymen in the case. That fee remained in force three days. It was further provided in the schedule that, in the event of any criminal or civil case occupying the court beyond three days, each juror impanelled on the trial of such case was, for each day beyond the first three days, and not exceeding six days, to be paid 10s. per day. Therefore, while the sums payable to jurors, up to and including the third day, were to be paid to all the jurors summoned to the court, after the third day they were only to be paid to the jurors in the particular case. In order to make the meaning of this part of the clause perfectly clear that the litigant was to pay only the fees of those jurors who were engaged in trying the case on the first three days, and not the fees of all the jurors summoned, he begged to move that it be amended to read as follows:—

"(2) In all other civil cases the sums payable to the jurors impanelled on any trial shall, for the second and every subsequent day of the trial, be paid to the Sheriff, &c."

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT expressed the opinion that the amendment was unnecessary, as the clause clearly expressed the meaning intended by its framers, namely that the jurors in any trial, and not all the jurors summoned, were to be paid by the litigant or litigants. (Mr. J. M. Davies—"But the clause does not say that.") It could not be taken to mean anything else, and he was satisfied that

the court would so interpret it. He wanted, if possible, to get the Bill through without any amendment, the adoption of which would cause an undesirable delay.

The Hon. J. BELL remarked that while he believed the amendment of Mr. J. M. Davies would make the meaning of the clause quite clear, he thought it would be inadvisable to press it after the Solicitor-General's explanation and appeal.

The Hon. S. FRASER said he thought the wording of the clause clearly expressed the intention of its framers, and he did not think that any Judge would construe this provision otherwise than as explained by the Solicitor-General.

The amendment was negatived.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE (in the absence of the Hon. T. BRUNTON) proposed the following new clause:—

"That in all civil actions either in the Supreme Court or County Court the mode of trial shall be by a Judge without a jury in all cases.

"Provided that any party to the action may before the hearing apply in chambers to a Judge of the Supreme Court or County Court (as the case may be tried in the Supreme Court or County Court respectively) on a summons calling on the other party to the action to show cause why the action should not be tried with a jury.

"And the Judge may, if he thinks there are special features that make it more desirable that the action should be tried by a jury, order in his discretion that such action shall be so tried by a jury.

"Provided also that the Judge presiding at the trial may, if he think fit, order any case to be sent for trial before a jury if there are such special features as above mentioned.

"Provided also nothing is to affect the power now possessed by a Judge to order the appointment of assessors or to send the matter in dispute to a referee."

He said he regretted that his honorable colleague was not present to take charge of the clause himself, as he had given very considerable attention to the matter. The honorable member was impressed with the great cost of litigation, and he thought that by doing away with juries so far as civil actions were concerned altogether under certain conditions, they would modify the cost very greatly. The terror of to-day among the mercantile and manufacturing classes was simply the law. He (Mr. Melville) did not desire, in Mr. Brunton's absence, to say anything further regarding the matter, excepting that he recognised that there might be one objection to the clause, and that was that it would put the power entirely into the hands of the Judge. He was rather

afraid that the clause went too far in that direction. Perhaps the best thing to do under present circumstances was to do without juries so far as civil actions were concerned, and he believed that that feeling was gaining ground. The clause had, however, the weakness (if it was a weakness) to which he had referred. It would be, perhaps, too drastic, and he would merely submit it to the committee in a formal way.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES stated that it would be as well to inform the committee of the present position, and they would then see that the amendment was altogether unnecessary. Under the Judicature Act the Judges made certain rules of practice, and those rules prescribed the mode of trial. They provided:—

"In actions of slander, libel, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, seduction, or breach of promise of marriage, the plaintiff may, in the memorandum of the close of the pleadings, and the defendant may, within four days of the time of receiving notice of trial as hereinafter provided, or within such extended time as the court or a Judge may allow, signify his desire to have the issues of fact tried by a Judge with a jury, and upon payment of the proper jury fees the same shall be so tried.

"Causes or matters heretofore within the cognizance of the court in its equitable jurisdiction shall be tried by a Judge without a jury, unless the court or a Judge shall otherwise order.

"The court or a Judge may, if it shall appear desirable, direct a trial without a jury of any question or issue of fact, or partly of fact, and partly of law, arising in any cause or matter which previously to the passing of the Act could, without any consent of parties, have been tried without a jury.

"The court or a Judge may direct the trial without a jury of any cause, matter, or issue requiring any prolonged examination of documents or accounts, or any scientific or local investigation, which cannot in their or his opinion conveniently be made with a jury.

"In any other cause or matter, upon the application of any party thereto for a trial with a jury of the cause or matter or any issue of fact, an order shall be made for a trial with a jury."

All these things were provided for. There were certain cases where the Judges thought it would be better to leave it to the option of the parties to have a jury where they so wished. There were certain other cases where the parties had no option, and they could not have a jury unless they got the consent of the court, so that those rules covered all the ground that would be covered by the amendment. In the County Court either party might

have a jury, but not one case in 100 in the County Court was set down for trial by a jury.

The clause was negatived.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and the report was adopted.

On the motion of the Hon. H. CUTHBERT, the Bill was read a third time.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved the addition to the title of the Bill of the words "and for other purposes." He stated that the Bill dealt not only with the Juries Act but also with the County Court Act, and it would therefore be advisable to make this alteration.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Bill was then ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

SUPREME COURT ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved the second reading of this Bill. He said that the measure might be divided under three headings. Clauses 1 to 5 dealt with the power of the Governor in Council to make new regulations increasing or reducing the rates of the fees, expenses, and sums fixed by the 11th and 12th schedules in the principal Act, &c. The second part would be found in clauses 6 to 8, which gave power in criminal cases for offenders to be tried in any bailiwick in the colony, no matter where the offences were committed. The third division included clauses 9 to 13, which related to the style of the Sheriff of the colony and to the performance of his duties. The first part of the Bill related chiefly to the fees payable to bailiffs. With regard to extending the execution of writs, it had been deemed advisable to place the power in the hands of the Governor in Council instead of leaving it in the Act as at present. It might be asked—"Is it not better to leave it as it is, with the Supreme Court Judges?" The Chief Justice, to whom the matter was submitted, no doubt consulted with the other Judges, and the decision arrived at was that they approved of these schedules being left in the hands of the Governor in Council, because a large portion of the fees payable had at the present time to be subsidized by the State to the extent of £3,500 a year. It was intended that the practice which was followed in the County Court should also prevail in the Supreme Court. For instance, when a bailiff, having to execute a writ, had

to travel 30 miles, he was allowed, under the schedule of the Supreme Court Act, the cost of a journey to the place at which he had to execute it, but nothing was allowed to him for the expense of returning. In a case in the County Court practice, the bailiff was allowed expenses for going and returning also. (Mr. J. M. Davies—"How much?") He believed that the amount was 2s. a mile, and it was quite sufficient. Charges like that made up the amount of £3,500 a year which had to be paid by the State. In some cases the amount under the schedule was too much, and in others it was too little. Therefore, it was necessary that the Governor in Council should have the power of revising and altering. The bailiff, at one time, might have to go a journey in a buggy in consequence of there being no railway, but in a year or two's time the circumstances might be completely altered. It was, therefore, necessary to have power to make these changes from time to time as the cases arose. Considering that the Judges themselves approved of the alteration which it was proposed to make, he did not see how honorable members could oppose it. With regard to the second portion of the Bill, when a man was accused of an indictable offence he was brought before a bench of magistrates, and, if a *prima facie* case was made out against him, he was committed to the next court having jurisdiction in the bailiwick in which the offence was committed. A fortnight might elapse before a court which was to finally deal with his case was held, and it would be a convenience to the man charged, especially if he were innocent, to have his case quickly disposed of. Under the present law there was no power to commit the offender to a court outside of the bailiwick in which the offence was committed without good and sufficient cause, and then it involved the making of an application to a Judge. For instance, if there was a reasonable apprehension that a fair trial could not be obtained in the particular venue, the venue might be changed for another. (Sir Frederick Sargood—"All that costs money.") Certainly it involved a considerable expense. The amendment proposed by the Bill, providing that offences might be tried in any bailiwick, would effect a saving in expense and it would be a convenience to the Crown as well as frequently a convenience to the man who had to take his trial, if the court which

had to deal finally with his case dealt with it promptly. The remaining clauses of the Bill related to the appointment of one man as Sheriff. At the present time the colony was divided into no less than six bailiwicks, and these were not done away with. In 1874 there were six sheriffs, one for each bailiwick. If a judgment creditor found that the defendant had property in a particular bailiwick, and he discovered on inquiry that that property was disposed of, and then he ascertained that there was property belonging to the man in another bailiwick, a second writ had to be issued to take effect in number two bailiwick. A judgment creditor was thus put to great inconvenience and expense under a system which had been in existence from 1874 until the present time. The policy of various Governments had been to reduce this great expense which resulted from having such a number of sheriffs. Sometimes, as these offices fell in, a sheriff was appointed to two bailiwicks, and he was glad to say now that the whole business of the colony was to be concentrated in one man. Under the Bill, for the future, all writs for execution would proceed from one man as the Sheriff of the colony. That would be a great improvement on the administration of the law. The last clause of the Bill provided—

“Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in the Police Regulation Act 1890 or in any other Act, any member of the police force may lawfully be appointed to act as a bailiff.”

In the absence of such a provision a police constable could not act as bailiff without losing his office. The Government thought that, in the interests of the public, this disqualification should no longer exist. In distant parts of the colony the execution creditor would be saved the expense of sending a bailiff if the resident constable's services were availed of to execute warrants. On the whole, he thought that the Bill was a good one.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE remarked that, there being so many lawyers in the House, he hardly liked to allow a Bill of this importance to pass without some comment. He had assisted at this kind of thing—the making of small amendments in important Acts of Parliament—for twelve years; and every time that amendments of this sort were submitted the people were told that the object was to make the law cheaper to them. The Solicitor-General had made most eloquent

speeches in regard to the Legal Professions Amalgamation Bill cheapening the law; but, with all these amendments, he (Mr. Melville) did not know of any greater muddle than the whole law system of this colony. The public were not interested in these little things about bailiffs; what they felt interested in was the terrible quagmire they had been drawn into owing to the constant amending of laws, which tended to demoralize one side and ruin the other. Nobody could read of what was going on in the courts at the present day without agreeing with Charles Dickens that it was a pity that the whole thing was not blown into the air. When a man committed what his neighbour thought to be a fault, the neighbour went to a lawyer, and instituted against him proceedings the duration of which no one could foretell. If the man complained against was only reputed to be rich it was a certainty that the case would be protracted enormously. The House had been under a great disadvantage for a long time in dealing with the railway affairs of the colony simply because a newspaper commented upon railway matters, and was undergoing a succession of libel actions. The consequence was that the Legislature was restrained from dealing with proper reforms, because it might be said that if they touched those matters they were interfering with justice. Any honorable member who read the newspapers could see the dreary way in which these cases were being spun out day after day. Even the Judges were beginning to be ashamed of the manner in which cases were protracted. The most inhuman and cruel things were being perpetrated in the Supreme Court, and in all the courts; because if a man committed, it might be a very trifling offence, he did not know from month to month and from year to year where the thing was going to end, so far as the law was concerned. Did not the Solicitor-General know that the kind of thing which was now going on in the Supreme Court was calculated to drive the country into communism or socialism? If anything would make him (Mr. Melville) a socialist it was the contemplation of what was going on between Speight and Syme and Smith and Syme. These cases were being carried on from year to year, and when one man was done with the defendant another was allowed to proceed against him. Could any one say that this kind of thing was justice? He

(Mr. Melville) would characterize it by a totally different name. Neither of these men were looking for justice. (Mr. Cuthbert—"What men?") The honorable gentleman did not want him to go into the cases which were now pending; he only mentioned the matter as a sample of what the country was called upon to stand. The Solicitor-General might rely upon it that the people could not be kept quiet much longer if such dreadful calamities could overtake Her Majesty's subjects. He (Mr. Melville) had to go to the Mines department the other day in connexion with a complicated dispute, but the Minister settled the matter in three minutes. If the case had gone into the Supreme Court it might have lasted eighteen months. The proceedings in the law courts which people read in the newspapers every morning were simply a farcical exhibition. An ordinary citizen could not expect to get justice; the law as administered had become so complicated that it was only a luxury of the rich. If a dispute about a will was brought into the courts, proceedings were protracted until all the money had been swallowed up. (Mr. Cuthbert—"How would you stop all that?") He hoped the Minister was in earnest in asking the question. Perhaps the best way would be to refer this Bill to a select committee, and let the committee examine the Judges, barristers, and the public. Unless there was some way discovered of stopping the kind of thing that was going on the people would soon be all anarchists. The tendency was to laugh at the administration of justice, because it was regarded as a matter only for the moneyed men. Why should not there be a court which was accessible to the humblest, and at which the humblest could obtain justice? This was the only opportunity the House had had for a long time of asking the Government if they intended to do anything to reform the administration of the law, and he thought honorable members should avail themselves of it. He heard socialists and communists speak of the present state of affairs, and he could assure the House that to-day the courts were looked on with supreme contempt, simply from the cost of the proceedings and the absurdities that were practised there. The colony had splendid men as Judges, although they might be overpaid; but what was to be said about the barristers and all the forms of legal procedure which they practised?

The Solicitor-General had been holding up the bailiffs and the sheriffs, but he did not say anything of the lawyers. While the honorable gentleman could see the mote in the eyes of the other men, he could not see the beam in the eyes of those of his own profession. The costs of barristers and solicitors were continually increasing, and the whole system was rapidly nearing the point where it would only be availed of by the upper twenty. But if the law was to exist only for the upper twenty, the bulk of the people would object to be taxed for it, and they would demand courts to which they could apply without being ruined. How long were the public to submit to the present system of administering the law? How they must laugh at us in England. Why was not something done to introduce a simpler and easier method of settling matters, which under the present system of litigation were protracted over months and weeks if not years. Surely it would be desirable to refer this Bill to a select committee, in order that honorable members might ascertain whether something could not be done to obviate the present state of things. Apart from the expense to individuals, even the cost to the State alone was enormous. If there was no mercy for the men who were subjected to protracted litigation, surely there should become consideration for the people of the colony, who had to pay the expense of the Judges and all those who were connected with the administration of the law. The simple matter of a newspaper having made some remarks in connexion with certain men was apparently going to cost the colony years of labour and an immeasurable amount of money before it could be settled. While a Bill of this kind was brought forward to save a few thousands a year, the worst features in connexion with the administration of the law were left untouched. The great complaint of the people was that notwithstanding all the amendments in the Judicature Act and other Acts relating to legal procedure, the only result was to render the law still more complex and ruinous. If lawyers were spoken to privately on the subject they wondered that the people had put up with the state of affairs so long, but of course they did not express that view in public. The Solicitor-General should know that in bringing forward these small amending Bills he was not doing what the public required. They wanted real reform, so that the law should

be available for every man in the community to obtain justice, however poor he might be.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE observed that the honorable member (Mr. Melville) had been very amusing in his remarks, but also very unpractical. The House had already passed one Bill that evening which would have the effect of saving some thousands of pounds per annum by lessening the fees to jurors; and the Solicitor-General had brought forward the present measure, which would not only be an advantage in allowing a more reasonable scale of charges to be fixed for sheriffs' and bailiffs' fees, but would also save the Government £3,000 or £4,000 a year. At the present time, if a man wanted to send a bailiff out of Melbourne, he had to pay him 5s. for the first 10 miles, and then 2s. per mile for the rest of the distance, while the bailiff might also charge something for returning, although the cost of the bailiff's railway ticket might only be 1s. 6d. If the present Bill was passed, it would not only be a clear advantage in saving the Government several thousands a year, but would also save suitors a considerable amount. All honorable members knew that the expense of law had become proverbial, but Mr. Melville had referred to one case now going on before the Supreme Court in connexion with which the lawyers could not be blamed, for in that case the suitor was his own lawyer, and this fact did not seem in any way to expedite the case. Mr. Melville had also stated that they would laugh at us in England; but certainly, although there were many things about which the English people might have the right to laugh at us, the cost of legal proceedings was not one of them, because in England immense sums were spent in connexion with lawsuits. He himself remembered, when he was a boy, one will case, the proceedings in connexion with which cost £120,000, and were protracted for a great length of time. He failed to see how an exordium with regard to the expense of the law was appropriate to the introduction of a Bill which manifestly would entail a great saving both to the country and to suitors. If Mr. Melville really wanted to bring forward some proposals for a thorough reform of the law, let him propose the appointment of a select committee, not in connexion with this Bill, but for the express purpose of going into the question of law reform.

The Hon. T. DOWLING stated that he did not rise to oppose the Bill, but to remind the House that there was dire necessity for it. In 1885, when he was appointed a magistrate in this colony, all the magistrates were territorial magistrates, and had jurisdiction all over the colony. Parliament, however, subsequently divided the colony into bailiwicks—a most disastrous proceeding, which had caused no end of inconvenience, because a magistrate of one bailiwick could not adjudicate in another bailiwick, even although it might be only 100 yards away. Most of the amendments now proposed were really rendered necessary by the action which was taken in dividing the colony into bailiwicks, and it would be well if the Government would bring in a short Bill doing away with bailiwicks altogether. He knew that the reason the division into bailiwicks was instituted was because a cry was raised in Collingwood about magistrates from other districts packing the bench, but surely one or two cases of that kind did not form sufficient ground to put the country to such expense as had been entailed by the division into bailiwicks. He quite agreed with the proposals in the Bill, but for the most part they would have been unnecessary if the division of the colony into bailiwicks had not been carried out.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES said he was afraid that this Bill was not intended in any way to lessen the cost of litigation. It seemed that at present certain fees were paid to bailiffs, and that, in addition to those fees, the Government also paid salaries. The Bill proposed that the Governor in Council should have power to alter the present fees either by increasing or reducing them, and he supposed it was intended so to regulate the fees that the fees payable to the bailiffs would be sufficient to enable the Government to do without giving them any salary in addition. If the Government thought that the present fees were sufficient, they could have stopped the payment of any salaries to the bailiffs without this Bill at all. They could have said to the bailiffs—"You must be content with such fees as you are entitled to under the Supreme Court Act, and you will get no salaries in future;" but taking power to alter the fees because the Government intended to do away with salaries to bailiffs seemed to indicate that it was intended to somewhat increase the fees. Now, he (Mr. Davies) thought that

the fees payable to bailiffs under the present Act were quite sufficient without any salary. Surely, if a bailiff was paid 2s. a mile for every mile beyond the first 5 miles for executing a warrant, that was quite enough. (Mr. Grimwade—"Suppose he has only one warrant in the year to execute?") Then the bailiff would be doing something else for a living besides executing warrants. He would not devote his time exclusively to that work. There was no necessity for a bailiff to refrain from all other work. The bailiffs of the County Court, he (Mr. Davies) believed, made a very good thing out of their employment; certainly the bailiff of the County Court of Melbourne did. These bailiffs were also employed, when they did not charge too much, by solicitors for serving writs. The indication in the Bill evidently was that, on the whole, the fees payable by suitors would be increased and not reduced, seeing that the Government could have done away with the salaries of bailiffs if they thought the fees sufficient without proposing to take the power to alter the fees. At the same time, he (Mr. Davies) was not against the Bill, because he thought litigants should pay the cost of litigation as far as executing processes was concerned, and that the country should not be put to expense because one man wished to recover a debt from another. The man who owed the money should pay if he was able to do so, and, if he was not able, the man who sued for the money should pay, but not the Government. As to the remarks of Mr. Melville, he certainly thought that the trial of actions took longer now than it used to do some twenty years ago. What the cause was he did not know, but the fact existed. Again, since the passing of the Judicature Act, although the cost of proceedings that formerly would have been equity proceedings had not, he thought, increased, the cost of proceedings in what were common law actions had, he believed, increased considerably. Formerly interrogatories and the discovery of documents were very seldom resorted to in common law cases, but now, in nearly every case, there was the discovery of documents of every description that the other side had—documents which had to be set out by affidavit; and there was the inspection of those documents. One side required it from the other, and *vice versa*. Then there were interrogatories, asking all kinds of questions about the matters in litigation.

To some extent these things might shorten trials, but the expense incurred was much greater. (An Honorable Member—"In most instances they prolonged the trials.") They might in this way, that both parties discovered documents of which they were previously unaware. He thought the interrogatories shortened trials, but that shortening of the trials was obtained at much greater cost than the amounts saved by shortening the trials. Then, the proceedings in reference to new trials were much more expensive. Formerly a case was tried by a jury before a Judge. The following term there was an application made for a new trial, a non-suit, or to enter up the verdict one way or the other. A short rule was obtained, consisting generally of about three or four lines on foolscap, and that was argued a few days afterwards, the Judge who tried the case using his notes for the benefit of the other Judges. Now, in a motion for a new trial, the applicant had to go to the Full Court, and set out all kinds of reasons in a much more lengthy way than they used to be set out. He had also to furnish each Judge with a copy of the evidence, which, in some of the long cases, was a very expensive thing. He thought that had added a good deal to the cost of litigation in cases where it was necessary to apply for a new trial. Further, judgment was not obtained in the speedy way it used to be got. It used to be entered up as a matter of course, but now there had to be a motion for judgment in a great many cases. The costs of legal proceedings had increased beyond doubt, and he thought greatly increased. On the whole, the scale of costs was not higher here than it was in England—that was to say, that a legal practitioner for the same work did not get any more here than a legal practitioner would get in England. There might be some items on which there was a difference; but, as a rule, the scales of costs were about the same. The costs of conveyancing here were considerably lower than the costs of conveyancing in England. (Mr. Grimwade—"Under the Real Property Act.") Under the old system, for the work done. He occasionally got a bill from England, and he noticed that every letter, every attendance, &c., was charged for. That was sometimes done here; but it was a very unusual thing in ordinary cases for every possible item to be charged in the same way as he saw the items charged in English bills. Mr. Melville could not

suggest any remedy for any of these things. He seemed to complain in one breath that the law courts were only for the rich, and in another breath that long cases were brought against people by persons who were not in a position to pay the costs. What would the honorable member do? Would he shut up the courts against those who had no money? No, he would complain against that as being an injustice. On the other hand, the honorable member complained that those persons ought not to be able to bring cases that occupied a long time against somebody else, so that he was rather inconsistent in his argument, as he sometimes was. With reference to the bailiwicks, the only danger that could arise under this Bill was that a person committed for trial might be taken from the place where the offence was committed to a distance, and put to a much greater expense in regard to the cost of witnesses, counsel, and other matters. However, he thought that was a risk that they must run, and he most decidedly thought that the Judge should have power to send a person to be tried in another bailiwick in any case where the jury had disagreed. There had been cases where the juries had not agreed, and the court would not meet in that particular place again for three months. In those cases it was a hardship for the accused to have their trials held over for such a length of time. This Bill would empower the Judges to send such cases for trial in a neighbouring bailiwick. He intended to support the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. C. J. HAM said he had much pleasure in supporting the Bill, which was a step in the right direction, in which Mr. Melville wanted to go still further. The enactment of this measure would cheapen the cost of litigation; and although they were told that it would only save £3,000 a year to the Crown, that sum was well worth saving. The Government were to be commended for the fact that not only was it in large, but also in small, things that they were retrenching, because it was the aggregate of small amounts that swelled up into the large sums. If the finances of the colony were to be put straight, it would be by the Government of the day and every officer in the public service recognising that the money of the State had to be conserved and made to go as far as possible. It was owing to the fact that the officers throughout the

various departments had been required to recognise this necessity that these economies were being effected, and that the finances of the colony would be put straight. He remembered the passing of that precious Judicature Act, which they were informed at the time was a thing of such beauty and perfection that they ought not to dot an "i" or cross a "t" in it. That measure was going to cheapen law, and combine equity and common law in one. Parliament passed it with delight, but what did honorable members find? They found what had been referred to by Mr. Melville and Mr. J. M. Davies—interrogatories and discoveries—and instead of an action occupying two or three days it occupied two or three weeks. It would have been a good thing if the colony had never seen the Judicature Act. He had a good deal of sympathy with Mr. Melville—although the honorable member talked rather wide of the Bill—in his views as to the ruinous cost of litigation. Men would now stand aside and suffer gross wrong rather than incur the heavy expense of going to law to get justice, and that was not a right state of affairs. Cases that used to take hours took days, and those that used to take days took weeks. Thus law would necessarily become the luxury of the rich, for the man with the longest purse would be able to carry on legal proceedings until his opponent with a limited purse had to give up the struggle. This Bill encouraged him to believe that when the Government had time they would devote themselves to a much larger measure of relief in the matter of law costs.

The Hon. W. H. EMBLING remarked that Mr. Melville had simply voiced the general feeling of the country with regard to the cost of litigation. The Government were beginning well in attempting some reform of the minor expenses of legal proceedings. Any one who had been forced to go to law of late years knew that the cost of litigation had greatly increased, and that cases were drawn out. It reminded him of a story in relation to his own profession. In a certain place, many years ago, an epidemic broke out. Many children were taken ill and died, and the local authorities sent a circular to the medical men of the place asking their opinions as to the cause. A great many reasons were given, but one rather cynical medical man wrote to say that he thought the cause of the whole thing was that several

new medical men had started in the city of late. In the same way it might be that there were nowadays so many more legal practitioners wanting work to do. If the Government could see its way to propose, as new legislation, the good old rules of Alfred the Great, and thereby cheapen law to the common people, they would do a far greater amount of good. Of course that was a more difficult task than the one the Government had essayed in this Bill. It was easy enough to cut down the fees of bailiffs and other minor officers, but a more difficult thing to go to the root of the evil and cheapen law to the whole colony. Any man of ordinary intelligence would do anything almost to escape an action at law, and if one was dragged into the court with ever so simple a case, instead of its taking a single day, it occupied week after week, and the end of it was a lawyer's bill of three or four figures. He hoped that the Government would accept Mr. Melville's suggestion, and refer to a select committee the question of shortening and cheapening the cost of legal proceedings. By that means they would do a very good work for the colony at large.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then read a second time, and committed.

On clause 10, which provided, *inter alia*—

“(1) Where in any Act (other than the Juries Act 1890) any express or implied reference is made to the sheriff or to any sheriff or to the sheriff of any bailiwick such reference shall be construed to mean and refer to the Sheriff,”

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT moved the omission of the words “(other than the Juries Act 1890).” He thought those words were unnecessary.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Bill was then reported with an amendment, and the amendment was adopted.

On the motion of the Hon. H. CUTHBERT, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Married Women's Property Act 1890.

The Hon. C. J. HAM seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

ASSIMILATION OF AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS TARIFFS.

The Hon. C. SARGEANT moved—

“That, in the opinion of this House, proposals should be made by the Victorian Government to the Premiers of the other Australian colonies inviting them to appoint delegates to a convention, with full powers to arrange and assimilate the various Customs Tariffs of the colonies.”

He said his object in submitting this motion was, if possible, to bring federation a step further forward. There was a general consensus of opinion amongst thinking people that a federal union of the Australian colonies was most desirable and essential, and it was believed that such a union would be highly advantageous to all concerned. It was also felt that such a union would—in addition to general advantages—add greatly to the importance and power of this southern land, in enabling it to speak and act with one voice whenever occasion demanded it. And, owing to the great unrest that now prevailed in Europe and Asia, they did not know how soon the Australian colonies might have to unite for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the people. While all this was acknowledged and felt, such a desirable consummation as a federal union did not seem to be within measurable distance of accomplishment. Honorable members were cognizant of all that had taken place in the past in the direction of bringing about a federal union. They were also aware that so far nothing of a tangible character had occurred to advance the cause, but rather the reverse. The Premiers who recently met in Tasmania certainly came to an understanding with reference to future action, and the Premier of New South Wales was intrusted with the task of initiating the new movement in the Parliament of that colony. But owing to political turmoil, and a radical alteration in its fiscal policy, that colony was inclined to strike out for itself a new orbit of an unusual and eccentric character—an orbit entirely distinct from and out of harmony with that of its neighbours. It must be quite clear that erratic movements of that kind could only end in isolation and disaster. That course of action in the past had dealt a violent blow at the federal cause, from which it would take some time to recover. Unless New South Wales retraced her steps, she failed to see how she could enter into a fiscal federation with the other colonies,

The policy she adopted was entirely at variance with the interests and conditions of a new country. No country could afford to live on its capital. If it was to prosper and survive it must live on its resources and the interest of what capital it might possess. He felt free to admit that free-trade was a lofty and a magnificent theory; but, like many other theories, when it was applied to the fortunes and circumstances of a new country it could only end in a magnificent failure. What was required to advance the interests of Australia was a moderate protective Tariff as against the world, and free-trade amongst the various colonies. That was what was required, and that was what they should all seek to obtain. (Mr. Wallace — "England has prospered under free-trade.") There was no analogy between England and Australia. If the Australian colonies would consent to join in a fiscal federation until they were ready for, and there was a prospect of, political federation, that would do more to settle trade and encourage the investment of capital in industrial pursuits than anything else that could be thought of. Owing to the continual tinkering and alterations that were taking place in the Tariffs of the colonies no one cared to embark his capital in any industrial enterprise or undertaking. He would say, therefore, let the colonies, or such of them as were willing, lose no time in dealing with this matter with a view of affording a feeling of security to trade and commerce and of settling the minds of the people. This was what might be termed a business federation, and it should be taken up and carried out by business men with the assistance of politicians. He was afraid that the prospect of a political federation was in the distant future. The pull-baker-pull-devil tactics that were now rampant in New South Wales seemed to be endless, and federation appeared only to be a thing to be played with. It was a football to be kicked about from one end of the paddock to the other. In this colony there was a section of the community who were blocking the way by insisting that their own particular views should be accepted as a preliminary to any federal compact, and honorable members would agree with him that these views were opposed to those of the great bulk of the people of the colony. He was not now going to argue as to whether those views were right or wrong, but the fact remained that this had acted as a wet blanket on

the federal cause in Victoria. It was well known that a large number of leading and influential men had withdrawn their support from the organization that came into existence a short time ago for the purpose of stimulating the federal movement with the view of bringing it to a successful issue. Seeing that the path was blocked by such barriers he would ask the House to join with him in the opinion that, while complete federation at the present time was not yet obtainable, it was possible to bring about a fiscal union of such of the colonies as might be willing to federate to that extent. It was much to be regretted that New South Wales had adopted a policy that had shut her out owing to the isolated position she had taken up on the fiscal question, for it was certain that none of the other colonies were prepared to enter upon such a mad course—a course that meant the impoverishment of the country and the pauperization of the rank and file of her people. He felt sure that it was not likely to become the law of New South Wales. It might have a temporary existence, but it would not last long. With regard to the object of the motion he had tabled—that was the appointment of a convention to undertake and arrange the assimilation of the Tariffs of the consenting colonies, and he said the consenting colonies because he thought that if any of the colonies were willing, and he believed that some were, that the start should be at once made for union—he thought that this was highly desirable. He believed that many of the colonies would be willing to federate on fiscal lines, although they were not yet ready to federate on political lines. As he had already stated, political federation did not appear to be within measurable distance of accomplishment. It was therefore desirable to bring about a fiscal federation as a step towards the larger federation which they all desired. As to the constitution of the convention, that was a matter that might be left for further consideration, but, in his opinion, it should be composed of gentlemen representing the commercial, manufacturing and agricultural interests, with a proportion of politicians, and the Ministers of Customs for the time being. The work of assimilating the Tariffs would not be such a great undertaking after all. It would involve a little levelling up here, and a little levelling down there. Any one who studied the Tariff of Victoria would find

that in nearly every case, or rather in the bulk of cases, it would have to level up to the extent of nearly £500,000 to bring it in line with the revenue of the other colonies. (An Honorable Member—"Level down.") No; New South Wales collected £500,000 more revenue than Victoria. The importance of a customs union could not be over-valued. As he had before remarked, it would have a wonderful effect in steadying and stimulating the business and trade of the country, while ultimately it would lead up to a complete scheme of federation. The proposal contained in the motion would test the feeling of the other colonies on the subject of intercolonial free-trade, which they all seemed so desirous of seeing accomplished. South Australia was most anxious to enter into a fiscal union, and New South Wales and Tasmania professed to be influenced by the same desire. He would like to know, therefore, what stood in the way? If the colonies acted up to their professions, there was nothing standing in the way to prevent the accomplishment of such a federation as he proposed. Honorable members might argue that this was a question that could be left to a Federal Parliament, but they had not yet a Federal Parliament, and there was no prospect of one being established. If they agreed for the time being to constitute a temporary Parliament of business men for the purpose of assimilating the Tariffs of the colonies, that would be the grandest thing that could happen to Australia at the present time. He had tried to locate the position of the federal ship, but he could not locate it, and he did not know whether any honorable member could do so. It appeared to him that the federal ship was a sort of phantom ship—a sort of Flying Dutchman—that no one could locate, that was here to-day and gone to-morrow. As he said in the House a few days ago, the accomplishment of federation did not seem to be very near, and therefore they should proceed step by step. He would ask the House to assent to the motion, so that a cordial invitation might be extended to the other colonies to join in the appointment of a convention invested with full powers to arrange for a common Tariff between the colonies. If they were not willing to comply with the request, no harm would be done. By doing so Victoria would have shown its willingness to agree to a common Tariff and to intercolonial free-trade.

The Hon. D. MELVILLE seconded the motion, and also moved the adjournment of the debate.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and the debate was then adjourned.

VOLUNTARY CONVEYANCES BILL.

The Hon. J. M. DAVIES moved for leave to introduce a Bill relating to the law of voluntary conveyances.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

The House adjourned at sixteen minutes to ten o'clock, until Tuesday, July 2.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, June 25, 1895.

Metropolitan Board of Works—Reclassification of Shires—Railway Department: Increases in Salary: "Daily-pay" Men: Reduction of Wages at Maryborough Junction—Inspection of Slaughter-yards—Diamond Drills—Mildura Irrigation Trusts Bill—Revision of the Tariff: Sixth Day's Debate.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past four o'clock p.m.

METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

Mr. DEAKIN asked the Premier if it was the intention of the Government to introduce a measure this session dealing with the mode of appointment of representatives to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works? He observed that he put this question at the instance of one of the municipal bodies of the constituency which he represented, and with the full concurrence, he believed, of the other municipal bodies in that constituency. It also represented the opinion of a number of municipal bodies in and around Melbourne, which were at present the elective bodies charged with the duty of appointing the representatives to this board. Of course, as the Premier would see, the object of this question was to inquire if the Government would introduce a Bill which would either propose, or give some one else the opportunity of proposing, that the present method of appointing the members of the Metropolitan Board of Works by the municipal councils should be changed, and that instead the ratepayers should be empowered to elect their own representatives on the board.

Mr. G. TURNER stated that the Metropolitan Board of Works had intimated to him that they would ask the Government to introduce a Bill to amend their Act in several respects during the present session. The honorable member would have an opportunity in connexion with that Bill of proposing the introduction of the principle which he desired to see in operation.

RECLASSIFICATION OF SHIRES.

Mr. LONGMORE asked the Minister of Public Works when it was intended to bring in a Bill to reclassify the shires of the colony, so as to distribute the subsidy on a fairer basis than was done at present? He said it was well known that some of the shires had been receiving a subsidy for about 40 years, and hardly knew how to spend the money, while others were in great want.

Mr. TAVERNER observed that, as soon as business would permit, the question would be considered in conjunction with an amendment of the Local Government Act.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. SALMON asked the Minister of Railways if it was a fact that a number of increases in salary were recently granted in his department; and, if so, had he any objection to state (a) on what grounds were they granted; and (b) in what branches of the department were they granted? He remarked that there was an impression throughout the Railway department that increments had been stopped, but there was also a very strong impression that some increments had been granted quite recently, and that one branch of the department had been favoured in this respect.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS said the Railways Commissioners had furnished the following replies to the questions:—

“Small increases, varying in amount from £2 10s. to £12 10s. per annum, were recently granted to junior clerks in all branches who had been receiving less than £150 per year, on the grounds that they were specially deserving cases and had received no increase during the preceding three years. In no case was the increased salary raised above £150 per annum.”

Mr. SALMON remarked that he was not satisfied with the reply which had been given. He had a perfect knowledge that one branch of the department had been favoured more than another in this matter.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS.—That is not so.

Mr. GROSE asked the Minister of Railways whether he would take an early opportunity of considering the position of the “daily-pay” men of the Railway department in connexion with the recent increases of salary granted to other officers of the department?

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS stated that, in the present condition of the railway finances, he could not promise to consider the question of an increase in pay to any of the employés.

Mr. PRENDERGAST asked the Minister of Railways, without notice, if it was true that the wages of the men employed on the Maryborough Junction, who had been receiving 6s. per day, had been reduced to 5s. per day?

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS replied in the negative.

INSPECTION OF SLAUGHTER-YARDS.

Mr. PRENDERGAST asked the Premier if the Government purposed taking any steps to compel the effective inspection of all slaughter-yards, so as to prevent the possibility of diseased meat entering into human consumption? He said a large number of people were deeply interested in this matter. Up to the present time the most effective inspection—that which took place at the city abattoirs—was practically powerless to prevent bad meat from going into consumption, because unprincipled butchers went to private slaughter-yards, where the supervision was not so strict, to get their meat killed, and the vast majority of the meat was killed outside the city abattoirs. (Mr. Taverner—“Are you satisfied with the supervision of the city abattoirs?”) It was good enough as far as it went, but there was not power to compel the killing of cattle and sheep at the abattoirs. Last year in the city abattoirs 1,200 sheep and 282 cattle were condemned. This amounted to about 4 per cent. of the quantity of meat killed in those abattoirs, but outside in the private slaughter-yards not more than 1 per cent. of the meat was condemned as unfit for food. The majority of the cattle and sheep were purchased to be sent to the private slaughter-yards, because the supervision there was not so stringent as in the city abattoirs, and he hoped that, for the protection of the public, the Government would introduce a measure to deal with this matter.

Mr. G. TURNER remarked that this matter was under the supervision of the Board of Health, and the chairman informed him that he had been for some time past urging upon the municipal councils to have proper supervision carried out. If the councils would not do this the Board of Health itself would have to move in the matter. But the great difficulty was that there was such a large number of places for slaughtering in the different parts of the colony that it was almost impossible to keep strict control over them all, and the only means, apparently, of getting over this difficulty was to prevent slaughtering in different districts, and to have two or three large centres where the whole of the slaughtering, at all events for Melbourne and the suburbs, could be carried out.

Mr. PRENDERGAST observed that at present the Board of Health had not power to compel the councils to employ skilled men to examine whether meat was fit for human food or not.

DIAMOND DRILLS.

Mr. CARTER asked the Minister of Mines the following questions:—

"1. Has his department any diamond drills for sale?

"2. Has the department recently disposed of any such drills, privately or by public auction?

"3. If so, to whom were they sold, and through whom?

"4. What was the price obtained?"

Mr. FOSTER said that the answers to the questions were as follow:—

"1. There are some of the diamond drills not now in use which may be advantageously sold.

"2. One drill has been sold privately.

"3. To Central Mount Lyal Mining Company, Tasmania. Not through anybody, but directly by the department.

"4. The price was £850 cash. The drill has been in use for nearly fourteen years."

Dr. MALONEY asked what was the cost of the drill originally?

Mr. FOSTER remarked that it was about £1,200, he believed.

MILDURA IRRIGATION TRUSTS BILL.

Mr. I. A. ISAACS, without notice, moved for leave to introduce a Bill to constitute irrigation trusts within the irrigation colony of Mildura, and to invest such trusts with certain powers, and for other purposes. He observed that honorable members were aware of the troubles which had beset the settlers at Mildura, and the Act which was now in force would expire

on the 30th of the present month. It was the desire of the Government to have this Bill introduced and circulated at once, so that as soon as a favorable opportunity arrived it might be dealt with by the House.

Mr. TAVERNER seconded the motion which was agreed to.

The Bill was then brought in, and read a first time.

REVISION OF THE TARIFF.

SIXTH DAY'S DEBATE.

The House resolved itself into committee of the whole for the purpose of resuming the debate (adjourned from Thursday, June 20) on the Tariff proposals of the Government, and on Mr. Murray Smith's amendment that no ad valorem duties should exceed 25 per cent.

Mr. TRENWITH.—Sir, before the debate is resumed, I desire to make an explanation. Some annoyance appears to have been given to Mr. McLean, because it seems that I mentioned his name inadvertently, in speaking on this question last week, as having given evidence before the Tariff Board. I should have said Mr. Honey, of McLean Bros. and Rigg, not Mr. McLean.

Mr. McCOLL.—Mr. Mason, I think honorable members will sympathize with the Premier in his desire to bring this debate to a close at an early date. There is no doubt that almost everything that can be said with regard to the general principles has been said—well and ably said; and I, for my part, do not intend to take up the time of the committee at any great length. I think the debate, so far as it has gone, reflects great credit upon the Chamber. I have rarely in my parliamentary career heard a subject so well debated, the speeches so well sustained, and the discussion so free from personal feeling and acrimony as this debate has been all through, and I trust that that spirit may continue. An attempt has been made to minimize the importance of this debate. Well, I think that is scarcely fair, because it is probably one of the most important debates that has ever taken place in this colony, or that will take place for many years to come. It is unfair to the boards, which have spent such a length of time in considering this question, that the importance of the debate should be minimized. There have been two boards, and they have sat for a period of eighteen months, travelling

all over the colony and collecting a great deal of very valuable information. It is unfair to the House, because members were especially returned at the last general election to deal with this particular question, and it is especially unfair to the people of the country, who are looking very eagerly indeed to the turn which this debate will take. I find in going about the country, whether in city or town, that the Tariff is the one engrossing topic. Almost every one you meet has something to say about it or some speculation as to what the result of the debate will be. The country is desirous of having clear and full information on all the subjects now under discussion, and the people have a right to such information. Therefore, while the speeches have been somewhat long, and while time has been somewhat taken up over this question, I do not think any one can fairly complain on this point. At the present time we are in a much better position to deal with the Tariff question than we have been at any previous time for a great many years past when increases of the Tariff were proposed. In 1889 a moderate Tariff was brought down by the Gillies-Deakin Government, but that was taken in hand by what I may term the ultra-protectionists of the House, who completely ran away with it, and increases of duty far beyond anything that was then contemplated were inserted in the Tariff. In 1892 the Tariff was brought in immediately after a general election, though at that general election nothing whatever had been said as to dealing with the Tariff at all. It will be remembered that the alterations in the Tariff were then brought about by a secret committee who met—I might almost say illegally, and certainly unconstitutionally—in this building. They laid their views before the Government of the day, and that Government adopted them, and the increases proposed by that committee were mostly carried through the House. From the time when the first large increases were adopted in 1889, I believe we may begin to date the disfavour that protection, and certainly prohibition, has fallen into in this country. At the present time we have the advantage of having a fair fight, and no favour. We have a clear ground to stand on, and we have also the benefit of the very extended information obtained by the Tariff Boards during the eighteen months of their existence, so that I think we never were in a better

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position to deal with this important question than we are at the present time. We have had two Tariff Boards. The first board, so far as I can understand, was composed of five free-traders and seven protectionists. The second, which only numbered eleven members, was composed of four free-traders and seven protectionists. The first board had a free-trade chairman, while the second one had a protectionist chairman—the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker)—a gentleman who, I believe, is as sincere and as honest a protectionist as there is in this country. I think honorable members will also admit that the chairman of the first board (Mr. Bosisto), although a free-trader, is a fair, honest, and painstaking man, thoroughly sincere in all his convictions, and one who, whatever he was dealing with, would always be prepared to bring in a verdict in accordance with the facts. There have been twenty members in all engaged on these boards, and therefore it is not fair to minimize the recommendations made by those gentlemen. On the contrary, their recommendations are, I think, entitled to the very greatest consideration by the members of this Chamber. It is rather notable that the two boards, while somewhat differently constituted, and while presided over by gentlemen holding different political opinions, have yet come to almost absolutely the same conclusions. In fact, as regards the general principles, their conclusions are absolutely identical; while, as to matters of detail, there are only one or two small items, I think, in which the recommendations of the first board have been varied by the second board in the light of fuller knowledge and experience. We have now had 25 years of protection. It has been said that we have had 30 years, but the first duties put on were low duties of 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. We have had 25 years of 20 per cent. duties, and therefore we are in a very fair position to gauge what the effect of a protective Tariff has been. The one fact which stands out most prominently in the reports of both Tariff Boards, and in the recommendations which they have submitted, is that in regard to a great many of the duties we have gone too far. We have hitherto always been going up, up, in piling on the duties; but on this occasion both protectionists and free-traders have felt it incumbent on them to report that in many cases the duties are too high, and that

we must hark back and retrace our steps. In order to show this, I may point out that the increases which the Tariff Board recommend are only 21 in number, while the reductions recommended are 81, and the board also propose to add to the exemption list 26 new items. The Government have altered, I think, some thirteen of the increases recommended by the board and some five of the reductions. The board say that the feeling of the people has been thoroughly gauged, and that the general feeling of the country is that we have gone too far; but, on the other hand, that the general feeling of the people is not unfavorable to moderate protection. It seems to me as if we had almost reached the period which the present Speaker predicted when he brought in his Tariff in 1871. At that time he was reminded that the United States so far from increasing its duties was relaxing them, and in reply to that he said—

“I may state generally—subject to any contradiction which may be offered, and reserving to another opportunity the task of proving it—that whatever may have been the condition of the United States when they relaxed their Tariff, without exception they became under that Tariff wealthy and prosperous—able to support in comfort and plenty a very large and increasing population. Suppose the time has arrived, or may arrive hereafter, when the United States may think fit to relax the policy which they have adopted for nearly half-a-century, and diminish their customs duties, the advocates of that course will be prepared to admit, not that the policy is wrong, but that simply through it the United States have arrived at that stage of development when the policy may be relaxed, if not abandoned. Like other progressive people, they find that they want foreign markets. The advanced commercial men there are following in the wake of England, and are preparing the popular mind for the advocacy of free-trade, in order that, having secured their own markets beyond all fear, they may now secure other markets of the world.”

That seems to me to describe the position which we are rapidly coming to to-day, and I am glad to know that the gentleman who made that statement 24 years ago is still amongst us. He remarked that America had had 50 years of protection, while we have only had 25; but I think that industrial matters have been entirely revolutionized during the last twenty years, and in all branches of industry we have moved far quicker during the last 25 years than was done during the previous 50. Our duty now is not to keep on in the old grooves but to meet the changed conditions in which we find

ourselves to-day. I believe myself, and have always believed, in the policy of moderate protection. I have maintained that steadfastly ever since I have had anything to do with politics. I believe the policy of moderate protection is the policy which is best suited for this colony to-day. Therefore I differ from my friends in both corners—from those who say that we ought to return to free-trade; and also from those who assert that our duties are not high enough and that protection is not protection unless it becomes prohibition—that the protection which does not exclude is not the protection they require. I am not prepared to say that this colony should go back to free-trade, neither am I prepared to kill protection by going as far as prohibition. What we have to study now is what is best for the colony in the conditions we have at the present time. I look upon protection myself as paternalism. There are certain animals that are able to look after and provide for themselves from their birth. Children, however, are not able to do that. They required to be cared for, nursed and trained, until they attain the age when they can look out for themselves; and so I say in a young country manufactures should be cared for, protected, and nursed until they are able to do for themselves.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—When do they come of age?

Mr. MCCOLL.—We ought to apply just the same test to an industry as we do to a young man when he reaches the age at which he should be able to go out into the world and fight for himself. When we have given an industry reasonable protection and training for such a length of time as should enable the industry to fight for itself, that industry ought to be able to fight its own battle. If it cannot do so, the protecting care should be withdrawn. I do not think it can be said that protection has been a failure in this colony. I think Victoria would not have attained the position which it has occupied for so many years past if the policy of protection had not been adopted. Reference has been made to the time when protection was adopted, and to the causes which brought about its adoption. We all know that the gold yield had fallen off very largely, and that the land was locked up so that people could not get on it; therefore, it was necessary, if we were to retain the population which we had in

the colony—men who were the flower of the old world, and who had reared families here—that protection should be given to native industry, and it was on that account that the policy of protection was adopted. That policy was successful until it was checked; and by what was it checked? It was checked first of all by prohibitive duties, and then it received a still greater check by reason of the other colonies imposing protective duties; not because they were specially in favour of that policy, but largely in retaliation for the years of protection during which we had imposed duties on their goods. Until 1889 the people were fairly satisfied with the duties that existed. But since then discontent has arisen, and the country has been going from bad to worse. Certainly we were somewhat blinded to the real state of things. We did not see the way we were drifting year after year—that production was falling off. We did not see that, because the enormous loans which were coming in year after year stimulated industry and employment, and the glamour of the gold that came to us blinded our eyes, so that we did not see the way we were going. But now we find that the colony is depressed, that the productive power of the country is declining, that our land is not being settled, and that much of the land which has been settled is being deserted and going out of cultivation; that our cities are overcrowded, and that those industries which have been unduly protected and stimulated have no outlet for their products. Our exports are falling off, the city of Melbourne is glutted with goods, employment is scarce both in town and country, and one great result of the present condition of affairs is that wages are going down below almost sweating rates. We also find that our shipping has almost vanished from our ports, and the only remedy I can see for this state of things is that we must increase our production and extend our markets. It is only to the soil—to the natural industries of this country as against the artificial industries—that we can look for recovering our lost position. Our producers must send their products to other countries, and get in return money from those countries, not as loans, but as hard-won cash, with which we can pay our way. We are getting more and more dependent on outside markets. We have overdone our own market entirely, and we must secure markets beyond our borders if we are to

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hold our own and make any progress at all. And yet many honorable members would say we must build a higher wall than ever round about us, and shut out imported goods almost entirely—that we must, as was once said in this House before, put ourselves in a state of commercial quarantine, in which things would neither go out of the colony nor come in. Now, we have to look the facts fairly in the face, and not be led away by prejudices, fancies, or fads. We have to see whether we cannot fairly meet the situation. First of all, let us ask ourselves is the Tariff Board's report an honest and true report? I believe it is honest, sincere, and conscientious in every line. Then, the next question we have to consider is, do the recommendations submitted by the board tally with their report? I scarcely think they do. In some cases they do, but in others I think they do not, and in my opinion we may very properly reduce the duties in many cases still lower than the board recommend. Summarized, the board's report says that, after having exceptional opportunities for gauging public opinion, they find that the feeling exists throughout the country generally for moderate protection; that the 1892 increases of duties are the most objected to; that many of the duties are bringing no benefit to any one at all; that generally prices, where an industry has been stimulated by protection, are not higher, but that where the protective duties have not been taken advantage of the prices, in those cases, are much higher than they ought to be. The board find that there are not only importers' rings but also manufacturers' rings; and that the high duties have lowered wages in many trades; that we are losing our inter-colonial trade; and that one consequence of these high duties is that both the goods manufactured inside the colony and the goods imported from outside are of a much inferior quality to the goods we had some years ago. These are the main conclusions which the Tariff Board have come to, and we ask can these allegations be proved? I think they can. There is no doubt that the 1892 increases in the protective duties formed the turning point in the history of protection in this colony, when people began to look on high duties with disfavour. The Tariff Board tell us that many duties are of no benefit at all to the Victorian manufacturers. That also is correct. Many of

the duties on the small articles used in the coach-builders' trade—articles, which are to them the raw material of trade—range from 60 to 100 per cent. The consequence of imposing such duties is that trade has fallen off very much, and the prices of vehicles are dearer instead of cheaper. The men who are engaged in the coach-builders' trade clamour very much against these high duties on what they call their raw material, and urge that they should be largely reduced, if not entirely removed. We find that in carpeting no advantage has been taken of the 35 per cent. duty. No one has attempted to establish the carpet manufacturing industry here, and the Tariff Board have very properly recommended that the duty on carpets should be reduced to 15 per cent. The board have not recommended that the duty on rugs and other such things should be reduced, but I am of opinion that they should be put in the same category as carpets. It has been stated that carpeting is a luxury of the well-to-do, but that is not the case. The standard of comfort has been raised, and carpeting is now a requisite in every poor man's house. On portable engines there is a duty of 25 per cent., but so far as I can gather there have not been more than one or two portable engines ever made in the colony. Portable engines are really a requisite of the farmer—every farmer should have one on his land, for there is nothing so useful in agriculture—but the enormous duty prohibits the farmers from getting portable engines, and yet no effort is made by our manufacturers to produce them here. I believe they could produce them, for at Ballarat they manufacture locomotives. So far, however, they do not seem to have attempted to make portable engines, and therefore the duty on portable engines should be reduced very largely, if not knocked off altogether. The question of hosiery is one of great importance. The Government have attempted to meet that difficulty by reducing the duty on men's rough socks from 35 to 25 per cent., but Ministers have forgotten that men have their wives, sons, and daughters to clothe, and that there is no merino hose made in this colony at all. Therefore, I think the Government might recast their proposals and reduce that duty to 15 per cent., in accordance with the recommendation of the Tariff Board. Several persons have pressed on me the desirability of Parliament reducing the duty on patent

medicines. They are largely used by poor people, and it makes no difference to the retailers whether a duty is on or not. Therefore, I think that the duty on patent medicines might very fairly be reduced. At present it is 25 per cent., and it is stated that the imposition of the duty increases the cost to between 30 and 40 per cent. Infants' foods, which are now charged 20 per cent. as oilmen's stores, ought certainly to be admitted free. The Tariff Board state that prices generally are no higher than they were before. Where fair competition is engendered, I believe that protected articles are cheaper now than they were before; but why stop short, and simply compare ourselves with ourselves? It is not altogether sufficient to compare prices here now with what they were in this colony before—we ought to see whether they are reduced to a fair level, and to a corresponding rate to what they are in other colonies and in other countries. The question of manufacturers' rings has been touched upon by a number of honorable members. The existence of such rings has been denied in this chamber, but no attempt has been made to meet the very serious allegations that have been made in a morning newspaper as to the existence of these rings, proofs of the existence of which have been furnished. In face of those proofs, a bald denial only has been given, and I think we may therefore infer that such rings do exist. I know of one case that occurred in 1889. In that year Parliament increased the duty on agricultural implements, and the increase was not on more than six or eight weeks before there was a combination of implement manufacturers, and circulars were sent round the whole country notifying that the prices of agricultural implements and machinery had been increased 10 per cent. It is also stated that there is a ring among the candle manufacturers. There is no doubt that we are losing the intercolonial trade; in fact, we have lost the great bulk of it already. That arises not so much from our having adopted protection as from the other colonies having adopted it, thus causing our exports to those places to fall off. That is the main reason for our loss of intercolonial trade. As the leader of the Opposition has said, we are out of line with the other colonies, and we must get into line with them as soon as possible. The honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) twitted the leader of the Opposition in regard to the South Australian

Tariff, which he said was only 15 to 20 per cent.; but I find, on looking the matter up, that they have in South Australia a maximum of 25 per cent. ad valorem, and that is the duty recommended to this country at the present time. I think it is beyond question that the imposition of high duties is causing us to get inferior goods. There is no doubt the quality of the articles made in the colony now is not equal to the quality of the articles made here years ago, and the high duties on a large number of things of very general consumption have increased prices so much that importers cannot afford to import the higher-priced goods for general sale. Therefore we have low-priced inferior goods imported into the colony, and low-priced inferior goods made here. A good deal has been said about the Castlemaine flannel, but I have made inquiries, and I find that the Castlemaine flannel is somewhat better than has been represented, whereas the Geelong flannel is somewhat worse. An expert has informed me that the intermixture of cotton with the material used in the manufacture of Geelong flannel is somewhat over 50 per cent., which shows that the quality of our goods has fallen off very largely. Now, what we have to do at the present time is to try and assimilate our duties as far as we can to the duties prevailing in the other colonies. It is necessary that we should get into line with the other colonies as soon as we can, because the main thing we require to do is to stimulate our productive capabilities as much as possible, and open out fresh markets. If we cannot do that there is nothing else for us but to go down and down, until we do not know how low this colony will sink. The other colonies, with lighter duties on machinery and manufactured goods, are far more prosperous and thriving than we are here with heavy duties of customs, and it remains to be seen whether our manufacturers have not thrown away ingenuity enough to have enabled them to compete with the other colonies without such a large measure of protection. If they have not, they cannot expect to be bolstered up in the future as they have been bolstered up in the past. We have in this colony over half-a-million of breadwinners. There are 387,658 males, and 114,266 females who are winning their bread. Out of that number only a very small proportion are engaged in the protected manufacturing industries, and the persons who are

interested in those industries cannot expect that this large number of breadwinners will be content to go on for ever heavily taxed for the benefit of a few, unless those people who are concerned in our protected manufactories take advantage of the privileges given them, and unless their industries are more successful in the future than they have been in the past.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Do you count the farmers among those who are engaged in protected industries?

Mr. McCOLL.—Yes, certainly I do, although the protection given to them was very tardy. It was not until 1892 that the farmers got any real protection.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—And many of their protective duties are quite inoperative now.

Mr. McCOLL.—Not all; the stock tax is not inoperative—it does the farmers good and should be retained. At the same time I may point out that it is only a 25-per cent. duty. Although it is a fixed duty I don't think it averages more than 25-per cent. on the whole, and therefore no one in this Chamber will object to the stock tax being retained. With regard to the action of the Government on the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, I think the Ministry were not wise in treating it as a vote of want of confidence, taking into consideration the fact that they did not regard the honorable member for South Yarra's amendment as a motion of want of confidence, and considering also that they suffered a reverse on a Bill which they laid down as a part of their policy of retrenchment. The Premier said, in effect, "This Bill embodies the policy of the present Government. We differ from the late Government on the question dealt with in this Bill. We say that these people should get pensions; that it is more humane to dispense with their services in that fashion. That is our policy." And, although the House refused to adopt that policy, the Premier took no notice of that reverse or of the amendment of the honorable member for South Yarra, and it is therefore scarcely fair for the honorable gentleman to treat the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a motion of want of confidence. In addition to that, I may point out that while nominally declaring that the amendment is a motion of want of confidence, the Premier and the Government are really not treating it as a motion of want of confidence. Whenever

a motion of want of confidence in the Government of the day is submitted to the Assembly no questions are allowed to be asked, all other business is suspended, and the other Chamber does not sit. But, despite this amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, we have questions asked in this Chamber every day, and notices given by Ministers of their intention to ask for leave to introduce new Bills from day to day, and other business going on, so that it is somewhat of a pretence for the Premier to profess to be treating the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a motion of want of confidence. I was rather disappointed with the speech of the Minister of Customs in introducing the Tariff proposals of the Government. The honorable gentleman dealt largely in details, but he seemed to forget the great principles that underlay them. He dealt with the special facts concerning particular industries, but he scarcely touched upon the effect of the high protective duties on work, wages, and the general prosperity of the country; in fact, he almost entirely ignored the large issues involved in this debate. He said that protection came out with flying colours, but from the attitude he assumed one would almost think that those colours were flying away instead of flying from the top of the mast. I say that at the present time prohibition is at the bar of public opinion. The advocates of high duties have endeavoured to make out that this is a free-trade movement—an attempt to get the colony to return to free-trade—but I do not think that even the most ardent free-trader expects any such result to be achieved. For myself I certainly would not countenance a return to free-trade. All that is wanted is a fair and moderate protection, fixed for a term of years, so that we should not have these frequent changes of the Tariff. We may very well leave to the future the task of dealing with anomalies as they arise. For the present time the policy we should adopt is a policy of moderate protection, while knocking off those protective duties which manufacturers and others have not taken advantage of, and encouraging industries in which manufacturers have attempted to avail themselves of the privileges afforded by protection. I will not occupy any further time, and I trust that the example of brevity which I am setting will be followed by other honorable members, so that we may be able to

close the debate, at any rate, by the end of this week.

Mr. GURR.—Mr. Mason, I quite agree with the honorable member for Gunbower that Tariff reform is about the most important matter that can be brought before the Assembly. I was privileged to be a member of the Tariff Board. I say I was privileged, because, from an educational point of view, it is one of the finest boards for an honorable member to be on. I was privileged to hear the variety of evidence which was given to the board from day to day, and that will enable me, as matters come before us, to give my vote in accordance with the evidence. In introducing the Tariff proposals of the Government the Minister of Customs gave a very clear exposition of affairs as they stood, coming direct from the Tariff Board, and he also asked honorable members to go into the matter in a calm and businesslike way, and to consider with unprejudiced minds the proposals submitted by the Government based on the Tariff Board's report. I am sure that if that is done by honorable members the result will be beneficial to those who have invested large sums of money in our various protected industries, as well as beneficial to the workers employed in those industries, and to the consumers of the goods they produce. As a protectionist, I desire to do justice to every industry in the course of this Tariff revision, not in all cases giving them what they want, but in all cases giving them what they actually need. What they actually need is to be ascertained by a careful consideration of the facts contained in the Tariff Board's report, and of other information from reliable sources. As far as the "I believes" and the "I thinks" are concerned they should be put out of the question altogether, and we should consider the matter in the light of the facts contained in the evidence that has been adduced, putting everything else aside. We have had placed before us during this debate very ably the opinions of John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and other great thinkers, but I venture to say that their environment was far different from that in which our lot is cast, and I do not think that their opinions touch our present case at all. We have to consider things as we find them, and not from the point of view of what clever men and thinkers may say. The Tariff Board have endeavoured to do that, and the report they have presented embodies the result of their labours, while

the proposals of the Government embody most of the recommendations of the board. The Chairman of the Tariff Board has forcibly placed before honorable members the work of the board. He has told the committee of the large amount of time and labour expended by the members of the Tariff Board, and I will only add to his statement that it is wonderful how some of those persons who would not give evidence at the commencement of the board's inquiries were only too eager to come before the board and give evidence towards the close of its investigations. That is to be accounted for principally by the fact that in the first instance the Tariff Board was set down as being composed of men who were all of one frame of mind with regard to the fiscal policy of the country, but as things went on that was seen to be a great mistake. Hence the change which I have mentioned, and the fact that towards the close of our inquiries we were rushed by persons who were very anxious to give evidence before the board. Our chairman devoted a large amount of time to the work of the Tariff Board, not only before but also after each meeting. He was present at all the meetings; and with all witnesses he was most courteous, and put the questions impartially and fairly, probing for the truth in regard to every matter placed before the board, and not framing his inquiries so as to please any particular section of the community. When difficulties arose, as they will arise, and sometimes loss of temper occurred, our chairman, by tact and judgment, brought things round again very nicely, so that we got on as a very happy family. When the board sat in private to consider their report, the chairman was enabled by his great tact and judgment to guide our thoughts in the right direction, as far as the evidence was concerned, which assisted honorable members to come to their decisions; and, in all cases when his casting vote was necessary, he gave it on the side of the industry concerned. I am sure that he deserves the greatest credit for his share of the work, and for the report that has been presented to Parliament. When the Chairman of the Tariff Board was speaking the other night, and some honorable members on the opposition side of the chamber thought that he was with them, and counted on his vote, as they said, I think if they had only seen the very significant shake of the head

Mr. Gurr.

which the honorable member gave they would have been sure that he is a protectionist still. Now, we could not possibly decide on any one fixed amount of duty that would satisfy the needs of all our industries. A duty of 10 per cent. may suit one industry, whereas a duty of 35 per cent. may be required by another; and I think that the Tariff Board have come to very moderate conclusions in regard to all the necessities of our various industries. It cannot be said that any prohibitive duty has been recommended in a single instance. The duties recommended by the board have been so fixed that it will be quite possible under them to import goods from outside the colony, if importers so desire; but to attempt to determine our fiscal policy by the opinions of John Stuart Mill, or any other man of any other time and country, would inevitably result in failure. If we attempted it we should miss the mark, and stand in the way of doing justice to our various industries, which I feel sure is far from the wish of any honorable member. I have no desire to place a duty on anything that we cannot produce in this colony, except in so far as revenue is required. We should never lose sight of the fact that protective duties are not revenue duties; we do not expect to get revenue from protective duties. They could not be called protective duties in any sense of the term if we did get revenue from them, because while goods may be imported under a protective Tariff, they cannot come in to any large extent so as to provide a revenue if the Tariff is really protective; and therefore we must get a revenue from duties on those things which we do not produce. In regard to those commodities, the wisest course to pursue is to impose the lowest possible duty that will bring in the highest revenue. Now, we could do far better in our efforts to meet outside competition if those who lived here would discontinue depreciating our own productions. We find on all hands that the tendency is to run down our own manufactures. The same thing is done in this chamber. Some honorable members call our Victorian-made goods by the very worst possible names. They talk about shoddy goods, and in so doing they show that, although they may know a great deal about some things, there are other things that they have not a sufficient knowledge of to enable them to call those things by their right names. One honorable member

said that he went to New Zealand and bought a rug there for 20s., and that when he came back to Victoria he found that the price of a similar rug was 35s. here. Well, if any business man came from New Zealand, and visited our Ballarat woollen mills, he could buy a splendid rug for 20s. equal to any rug he would get at that price in New Zealand, and when he went back to New Zealand, and compared that rug with the Ballarat rugs in the shops there, he would find that he would have had to pay 35s. for it in New Zealand. This is the way in which our products are made light of in the eyes of the people, and it is one very good reason why they do not succeed as well as they might. We should desire rather to show that as far as we can produce any article it is the best article produced, and so try to make the very best market we can, instead of endeavouring in every possible way to depreciate our own manufactures. Victorians go to New South Wales, and on visiting their friends they are invited to go and see some of the New South Wales industries. The honorable member for Castlemaine (Sir James Patterson) went to Sydney, and was taken to a furniture manufactory, where he saw some wonderful products; but I would like to know if he has ever been to our furniture manufactories and seen what can be produced here? Of course, any one going away from home on a holiday trip naturally tries to see all the sights, but while at home he has no time to visit similar places in his own colony, and consequently sees and knows very little of what is being done at home. Again, it has been stated that we cannot buy colonial-made articles in the shops here. Why? Do people try to get colonial-made articles when they are shopping? Do they ask for the colonial-made goods? Do they say, if a shopkeeper tells them, "I have no colonial tweed," for example—"Well, I will not have anything else"? That is the only way to get colonial-made goods—to make the shopkeepers keep the colonial articles, and insist on having them. Colonial-made goods are in the shops right enough, but the shopkeepers sell them as imported goods, because of the prejudice there is against colonial-made goods, and because he can make a far larger profit—and too much profit—out of them. Therefore, I say that if these who purchased goods would insist on having the colonial-made article (when there is a

colonial-made article) they would materially help our industries. To deprive our industries of the protection they need would be a great injustice to those who have invested millions of capital in them. It would also take away from nearly one-tenth of our population the whole, or at least a part, of their means of livelihood. It has been said that there are only 43,000 persons employed in connexion with our local industries, but that statement is not correct. In 1893 the number of persons employed was 87,336.

Mr. MOULE.—What do you call industries?

Mr. GURR.—This refers to all our industries. If we were to take 10 per cent. off some of the duties and more than 10 per cent. off others, that would deprive a great number of these persons of their living, or a portion of it. At the same time it would not help the consumer in the slightest degree, as he would not get his goods any cheaper. It is a well-known fact that before our industries were started every article was far more expensive to the consumer than it has been since. If our duties are reduced in a very large degree (and I would call 10 per cent. a tremendous reduction) it would, I believe, bring about a crisis as far-reaching in its effects as any crisis that we have had, including the banking crisis. Many industries are now flourishing. They are beginning to pay dividends, although that is regarded as a fault by some persons. It seems to be considered a crime for any of our local industries to pay a dividend of 10 per cent., or it may be 15 per cent.; but I think that it is a splendid thing when such a result is achieved, and especially when the consumer is getting the benefit of lower prices. But honorable members say—"Oh, they are making too much money," and that is not the way in which to assist our industries and to set this colony going. As far as monopolies and rings are concerned, I think that there are very few of them to be found in connexion with our local industries. It has been said that they exist, but no satisfactory proof of the statement has been given. It is said, for example, that there is a ring in the candle industry. There may be. The price of candles, however, is lower now than ever it was before, and if there is a ring the public are not losing by it. All our producers ask for protection. The farmer believes in protection for himself, and rightly so

too. He is entitled to all the protection that he needs, and I would do all that I could to assist him in that direction. Some of the selectors have very great hardships to contend with. I travelled through the Beech Forest at Easter time, and there I saw a number of selectors. I wondered that they had hearts large enough to go into that back country and select. It is difficult to see what prospects they have before them. They have no means of getting their produce to the railways; there is merely a bush track in many parts for miles and miles, and if we can do anything for those selectors by giving them a narrow-gauge railway, or a tramway, to enable them to get their produce to market I shall be very glad to afford them that measure of protection. Then the farmers have the advantage of a duty on potatoes, and a good thing too. If there was not a duty on potatoes of £1 a ton there would be large quantities of potatoes coming in here from other parts. I know that potatoes are now selling for only 7s. 6d. a ton; but when the price was 15s. a ton an honorable member of this House was getting £4 a ton for all that he grew.

MR. MADDEN.—He knew how to grow potatoes.

MR. GURR.—Yes, he does know how to grow potatoes. It would be very unsafe to remove that duty. Then there is fruit. I meet with a number of fruit-growers once a week, and I know that they are very much concerned about the duty on fruit. They would not like to have it removed. In their interests I think that it should be allowed to remain. There are also duties on bacon, cheese, and eggs, all of which are necessary in the interests of the farmer, and should not be touched. As to butter, the dairymen have had the advantage of the butter bonuses. The payment of the butter bonuses has been discontinued, but they did a great deal of good to the farmers. If it had not been for the bonuses the farmer could not have experimented on the home market. He has that market now, and as long as he continues to make good butter he will have it. The bonuses, therefore, afforded wonderful protection to the dairy industry. They have also been the means of teaching the dairyman that it is to his advantage to keep good cows and to produce good milk. The milk is paid for by results. Numbers of persons have given up making butter, but they send their milk to the

creamery, and they get a better return for it than they would do if they made their own butter. They are paid, as I have said, according to results, so that the man who keeps the best cows and has the best milk gets the best price. With regard to the selectors there is a duty on timber, and if that duty were withdrawn timber would come in from other parts which would enter into competition with the local product, and perhaps drive it out of the market. The grazier has the stock tax, and he states that he needs it. If he does, then I say let him have it. I do not know much about stock, although I can tell a fat sheep when I feel it. But if the grazier states that the stock tax is necessary to him then I would not deprive him of it. The farmer does not object to protection for himself, and he does not object to protection for others. He knows very well that he gets his clothing, his boots, and everything that he wears cheaper than ever he got them in the history of the colony before, and that if the duties which protect our local industries were removed he would have to pay through the nose for his goods again. Of course, the farmer objects to some duties. Complaints have, for example, been made about the duties on agricultural implements, but, as a matter of fact, the farmer gets agricultural implements at a lower price now than ever he did before, and he also gets, in many cases, a better article. It is not the farmer who grumbles at the duties, but those who represent the farmer, and who do not believe in protection. It is a strange thing that about the only implement the farmer uses on which there is no duty—the reaper and binder—is the dearest. The reason for that is that there is a monopoly on behalf of those who sell the reaper and binder in the colony. “Yes,” said one smart farmer—and there are a good many smart farmers about—“I am going home, and I will buy a reaper and binder for myself.” His neighbour said to him—“Buy me one also.” Seventeen other farmers made the same request, and that made eighteen reapers and binders that he had commissions to buy. He took the gold with him, and when in America he went to the factory at which they are manufactured. He inquired at the office what was the price of the reapers and binders, and he was told that it was £28. “Well, I will take eighteen of them,” he said; “make out an account, and I will give you the cash.” Then he

was asked—"Do you want to use them in America?" "No," he answered, "I want them shipped to Melbourne, in Victoria." "We cannot supply you," the firm said; "you must get them through our agents there." Therefore, I say that the only article that is not protected is made dear to the farmer because of the existence of this monopoly. In the case of those implements that are protected the farmer gets the advantage of a cheaper and a better article than he ever had before. The benefits of protection are not understood by some people simply because they do not think for themselves and keep their eyes open to the saving they are making on what they purchase day by day. When they do think for themselves and deal with the matter in a practical light they see that the more workers there are employed in our industries, and the better wages they receive, the higher will be the price that the producer gets for his produce. When wages are good, and work is plentiful, the farmer gets a better price for his produce; and therefore both classes are successful together. It has been proposed by the honorable member for Hawthorn that no *ad valorem* duty shall exceed 25 per cent. In the honorable member's opinion we should have free-trade, or only revenue duties. We could not, of course, expect any other proposal from the honorable member for Hawthorn. He is a consistent member of this House; a gentleman to whom it is always a great pleasure to listen on every occasion when he sees fit to address the House. To my mind he is an ideal politician—courteous to opponents; and one who is always found expressing his opinions in faultless language. As I said before, it is always a pleasure to listen to him, and he is an example to every young member, at any rate, of this House. Whilst I say this from the inner chamber of my heart, I must say that some of us cannot swallow the potion that he has so beautifully prepared for us. But the honorable member is consistent. He believes in himself—that is, in the principles he holds—and, doing so, he sees now an opportunity for bringing those principles forcibly before honorable members, and he does so, and stands—I was going to say almost alone. Although he might have expected support from those who have written on the subject which he has brought before the committee, he has been told that the time for the introduction of his proposal was

inopportune. What other opportunity would the honorable member have for bringing forward such a motion? No other opportunity will probably present itself during this Parliament, and therefore, although some of us do not agree with the amendment, we cannot help saying, at the same time, that the honorable member is thoroughly consistent in bringing it forward at this juncture. The honorable member, of course, is a disciple of John Stuart Mill and Adam Smith, and he quoted very largely from them. It was a pleasure to listen to him as he did so, but I could not quite understand his position regarding one statement, which I think he attributed to Adam Smith, and that was when eggs became dear roosters began to lay.

MR. MURRAY SMITH.—I did not attribute that to Adam Smith.

MR. GURR.—Whoever made the statement it is perfectly correct, for when hens go to roost at sundown they are roosters, and therefore roosters do lay eggs. The honorable member's argument was, therefore, quite wrong. It must be apparent to the committee—as the honorable member for Castlemaine (Sir James Patterson) said—that duties of 25 per cent. all round would not suit the whole of our industries unless we had intercolonial free-trade. There are a number of our industries that could do with 25 per cent. if we had intercolonial free-trade, which would give us a much larger market for our products and would help us very considerably. The larger our market the better it is for us, and that is really what we want. Our duties are not prohibitive—or, at any rate, there are only two or three of them that are—and I would consider a reduction of 10 per cent. affecting any particular industry to be a very drastic reduction indeed. In fact, such a reduction would kill some of our industries, and would very materially injure others. As a member of the Tariff Board I had full opportunities of learning from the evidence the needs of our industries, and the necessity for continuing the present fiscal system. The board state in their report—

"Although we have not examined minutely into the position of each industry, we have had exceptional opportunities for gauging the feeling of the people of Victoria in regard to the general policy of the Tariff. The principles of protection have scarcely been assailed, and we are convinced that a majority of the taxpayers of Victoria are in favour of a continuance of the system."

That statement is based on the evidence that was given by the witnesses who appeared before the Tariff Board. The Tariff Board have recommended reductions in a majority of cases. Some are fair reductions and some are too drastic; and, in regard to some matters, the duties have been left untouched. Whatever reductions are made, they should, I think, be small, and we should be careful that we do not give our market away. If we make too large a reduction at one time we may do a great injury to an industry. It is far better to reduce the duties by, say, 5 per cent. at a time, and to wait to see the effects of that alteration. If it is thought to be advisable we can, later on, make further reductions. To reduce the duties largely at one jump would be a very great mistake; and I trust that the committee, when considering the various items, will take care that they do nothing that will injure our industries. The Government have adopted most of the proposals of the Tariff Board and they have modified some of them. All classes of the community really go for protection. Even the lawyers go for protection. They are the best protected people in the world. If a lawyer comes here from any of the other colonies, with the object of settling down, he has a lot of rigmorole to go through before he can be admitted. The lawyers have also a fixed set of fees, which must be paid by all alike, and their position is, in many respects, an exceptionally advantageous one. The doctors also go in for protection. If they write out a prescription there is 5 per cent. of medicine in it and 95 per cent. of water. They thus protect themselves from giving the patient something that might injure him. If he took all medicine the probabilities are that he would be killed; the doctors are afraid to trust the patients, and they therefore mix this large percentage of water with the drugs which they prescribe, to protect themselves against the possibilities of criminal actions. As the doctors, the lawyers, and the farmers go in for protection, we may fairly conclude that it is the policy that the country desires. I only intend now to touch upon one item in the Tariff, and that is the woollen industry. No industry has been more attacked by honorable members than the woollen industry.

Mr. SALMON.—None more deservedly so.

Mr. GURR.—If the doctors would attend to their patients, and let the woollen people

attend to woollens, we should get a proper Tariff. Every shoemaker should stick to his last.

Mr. MADDEN.—Why do you put so much cotton into your woollens?

Mr. GURR.—If the honorable member will wait he will see how much cotton we put into our woollens. No industry has been attacked more than the woollen industry, and the puzzle to me is to find out why. It has been unjustly attacked, because the statements that have been made have been unsupported by facts. It has been unfairly attacked. It has been struck below the belt, as the saying is, by most of the honorable members who have addressed themselves to this subject. The honorable member for Castlemaine (Sir James Patterson) spoke about the woollen mills in a way that showed that he was out of touch with the productions of the woollen mills. If the honorable member had looked at the exhibit from the Albion Woollen Mill, which was placed at the disposal of honorable members, I do not think he would have made such a speech. I believe that he does not wish to do an injustice to the woollen industry. He is too large-hearted for that. And I am sure that he will vote for a duty of 35 per cent. on woollens. If the honorable member had seen the beautiful exhibit of tweeds from the Albion Woollen Mills at Geelong before he made his speech, I do not think that he would have said what he did with regard to the necessity for a reduction. I cannot understand why the honorable member for Emerald Hill should have given us such an unqualified denunciation of the Victorian tweeds. He should have known better. I do not excuse him in the slightest degree, as he is a protectionist, and is identified with a great and important industry—the hat industry. When he went to buy a suit of clothes he should have asked for colonial tweeds, and taken nothing else. The colonial tweeds would have been found for him. The great trouble is that people do not insist upon having the colonial article. They are too easily put off; and I will venture the opinion that if the honorable member were clad in the best colonial tweed or suiting he would look as well as he does now and be as well dressed as he is in the imported material which he is wearing. What the honorable member said about woollens has been said about hats. It has been stated that good hats, or hats that will keep their colour, cannot

be made in Victoria, and that the newest fashion in hats is not obtainable. The answer to that is that any gentleman who wishes to be well dressed can get as good a hat and as new a shaped hat made in this colony as he can imported. What the honorable member claims for hats I claim for woollens. I say that it is possible to get tweeds, suitings, or coatings fit for any honorable member to wear. There are honorable members present who are dressed in colonial tweeds, and if the best expert in the House were to go round he would find that one honorable member looks just as well as another, and that it would be impossible to distinguish the colonial from the imported article. The colonial article is therefore equal, at any rate, to the imported. Had the honorable member for Emerald Hill accepted the invitation of the manager of the Albion Woollen Mill —

MR. T. SMITH.—I did.

MR. GURR.—Did the honorable member accept the invitation before he delivered his speech? I feel sure that if he had he could not have said what he did in regard to the woollen industry. The honorable member would like to see a new mill started that would produce something that we are not producing at present. There is a mill at Geelong that has been closed for some time, and I believe that if the Tariff is fixed as proposed by the Government it will within six months be in full working order again. The gentlemen interested will then have some inducement for spending their money in setting the mill going, and it would give an impetus to the industry if honorable members would take up some shares in that mill. It would also be a means of distributing the products of the mill, and that seems to be the difficulty just now. One of the witnesses before the Tariff Board—a Mr. Lane, I think—who is manager of the woollen department in the Mutual Store, said that we were the most shoddily-dressed people in the world. I think that when that witness was giving his evidence he must have seen his figure reflected in the shiny bald head of some member of the Tariff Board—it may have been the member for Kyneton, or perhaps myself. He was not very well dressed on that occasion. The statement he made shows that he is out of touch with the way in which the people of Victoria do dress. He may be a salesman in a large warehouse; but it is not true

that the Victorians are the most shoddily-dressed people in the world. They are as well dressed as the people in any other colony, and, it is said, better dressed than the people of New South Wales. To make such a statement was hardly fair, and I do not think that it was right that it should have been taken up and made so much of, because Mr. Lane's evidence was, after all, not worth much. Speaking about the distribution of hats, he said—"Why do not the Denton mills sell direct to the retailers; we could buy them so much cheaper?" He was asked—"How much do you think it would cost to distribute the goods to the retailers?" and his reply was "about 2 per cent." Any business man knows that that is absurd. No one could take up the sale of hats, open shops here and there and everywhere, and employ people to sell the goods at a cost of 2 per cent. It could not be done under $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or 15 per cent., and this statement shows the value of Mr. Lane's evidence, if any value at all can be attached to it. I would ask the committee to carefully consider some facts in regard to the woollen industry. Though this industry has been so seriously attacked, honorable members would not have attacked it had they known the facts. I shall now ask the committee to consider some facts connected with our woollen industry, in order that no injustice may be done to it. I am sure that honorable members are just as anxious as I am to do justice to it. We have 772 hands employed in our woollen industry, though the number was stated the other night to be 639. In addition there are 220 men engaged in wood splitting and wood cutting for these woollen industries, making a total of 992 persons.

SIR JAMES PATTERSON.—The number in 1894 was 516.

MR. GURR.—The statistics which give that number are not correct. I have been round to the factories, and have examined the figures on the pay-sheets, so that I know that my statements are exactly correct. The amount paid in wages to these 772 men is £43,000 per annum, and to the 220 men £6,500 per annum.

MR. MOULE.—Are those figures from the Government Statist's account?

MR. GURR.—The Government Statist is wrong; he only gives figures up to the year 1893, whereas my figures are up to the 25th of June, 1895. The honorable member for Brighton said the other evening that he was quite sure that honorable

members desired to know the facts connected with every industry. In addition to the figures I have given, I wish to say that tweeds are now being sold 33 per cent. cheaper than was the case in 1884, and that wool has fallen 15 per cent.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—You mean 50, not 15 per cent.

MR. GURR.—That would have to be proved before I should believe it. As tweeds are being sold 33 per cent. cheaper than in 1884, it must be a great benefit to the consumer, and this proves that though the duty on woollens was raised to 40 per cent., the effect has been to lower the price to the consumer. In fact, it shows that the public have appreciated the colonial-made articles, whether they are tweeds, flannels, or blankets, more than ever they did before in the history of this colony. The proof of that is seen in the very large output of the mills, which has increased tremendously during the last few years. The mills now do not hold any stock whatever. They make up goods to order, and sell every yard, the whole of it being put into consumption. The mills are also working full time, which is a thing that has not happened for many years past, and they cannot deliver the goods they turn out fast enough to satisfy the warehousemen who distribute them to the public. If the price and the quality did not commend themselves to the people, the demand would soon fall off. The advance of the duty in 1892 to 40 per cent. gave a further impetus to this industry. The mills now study the needs of their customers, and manufacture up to the requirements of the people. It is an important point in connexion with our woollen industries that they make what the people need. Is it not far better for the mills to make what the people require than that they should make some things which the people require and leave it to the merchants to import others? I say that the mills are on the right road to make a success of our woollen industries. No doubt a number of honorable members have visited the exhibition of Geelong tweeds. It was a splendid opportunity of seeing that one mill, at any rate, was turning out some of the highest qualities of goods that are made in this colony. I hope that the honorable member for Melbourne East (Mr. Zox) saw those goods.

MR. ZOX.—I did.

MR. GURR.—And the honorable member cannot say that they were not splendid

goods if he speaks the truth, as he always does.

MR. ZOX.—Can't I?

MR. GURR.—I am sure that that exhibition was an eye-opener to a number of members of this House. They saw there the very best goods that can be manufactured; and those goods can be purchased in all the best shops if the people will ask for them. The trouble is that some of our best manufactures are not sold by the shopkeepers and warehousemen as colonial-made articles. A shopkeeper does not say—"Here is a nice line of colonial tweed;" he mixes up the colonial goods with his other goods, and the people buy them as imported goods. The result is that the public do not know when they are getting colonial goods, and those who sell them obtain a far larger profit by passing them off as English goods. This is not as it should be. The public should set their faces against the practice, and see that they get a colonial article when they ask for it, and go somewhere else for it if a shopkeeper tells them that he has not got it. Our woollen mills now produce tweeds suitable for all classes of people; they make the best, medium, and the commonest goods. The testimony of those who use these articles is that each in its class is good value for the price charged, and suitable for the requirements of the people. One large manufacturer stated in his evidence before the Tariff Board that for every 100 yards of imported stuff he used 1,000 yards of colonial stuff. That is a grand testimony to the importance and value of our woollen industry. This manufacturer also stated that the product of the colonial mills was of good value, and that the mills were improving their output. Surely this should encourage honorable members to protect our woollen industries. It has been asked—"Why cannot we, with a duty of 40 per cent., compete against the New Zealand mills which have only a duty of 20 per cent.," but are all the mills in New Zealand prosperous? This question has not been answered yet. I venture to say that they are not all in a prosperous condition. It is true that the principal mill there is doing splendidly. It has lately bought up two other mills, which were not succeeding, and the other mills which were not bought up are not prospering at the present time. The reason why the principal mill in New Zealand does so well with a 20 per cent. duty is to be found in the fact that the

warehouses there hold a very large number of shares in this mill, and they take care that the goods which it produces are properly put before the public. They sell them in their warehouses, and the mill-owners have shops of their own in which they sell their own tweed. They also make up clothing at the mills, and sell it. They take the greatest possible interest in every article they manufacture, and are careful to provide that every article shall be properly distributed to the public at a price which is fair to the mill-owner, to the consumer, and to the wage-earner. The New Zealand people all put their shoulders to the wheel, and the woollen industry prospers. We need to do the same thing in Victoria. But at this juncture, to cut down the duty from 40 to 25 per cent. would be to kill the mills. It would knock them clean out, and enable the importer to bring in stuff from Europe, and obtain the control of the market. A reduction to 35 per cent. is the lowest which we could accept at the present time. I have spoken of our best tweeds; I will now deal with the shoddy articles, and the so-called shoddy question. It is dreadful in the eyes of some people to talk of shoddy. There is no such thing made up in Victoria as shoddy tweed or shoddy flannel, and those who say to the contrary know nothing whatever about it. There are mixed tweeds or union tweeds, but we have no old rags and blankets devilled up. There is no shoddy used in this colony either in tweeds or flannels, and I defy any member of this House to prove that there is.

Mr. GRAVES.—What do you call shoddy?

Mr. GURR.—As I have said, old rags and blankets devilled up, as is done in the old country, but not here. We make union tweeds, containing cotton and waste products of our woollen mills, but no shoddy. It has been complained that our mill-owners make cheap tweeds. Well, that meets a demand. There is a demand for cheap tweeds from the people who cannot afford to buy the best. Some people want a tweed at 1s. 6d. a yard, and say they cannot afford to pay 3s. The mill-owners accordingly say—"We will provide a cheap article, as the people want it," which is better than allowing the cheap article to be imported. Therefore they make these cheap tweeds, and they make them very successfully, too. A better article for the price cannot be produced than the one which is produced

in this colony. Why should our mills be blamed for turning out these cheap goods? The fact that they do turn them out shows that they know how to meet the requirements of the people. The warehousemen have refused the same goods in past times as being not saleable, and the woollen mills did not then pay; but now the eyes of the mill-owners are opened to the requirements of the people, and they are keeping their mills going day and night. A fact like that should weigh very much with honorable members when they come to give their votes. One thing which hindered our mills very much years ago was the circumstance that samples of our best tweeds were sent to England with orders to the manufacturers there to copy the patterns and weights and produce them at a certain price. Accordingly, our patterns were reproduced, being mixed with shoddy to give them the necessary weight and cheapness. That is one of the things which injured our mills seriously in the past, when they were fostered under the revenue duty of 10 per cent. Twenty-five per cent. is not a protective duty, and 30 per cent. is hardly a protective duty. The mills were prospering under the low duty until their tweeds were copied in the home market. That almost ruined our mills—in fact, it shut up the Victoria Mill altogether. And the copying was carried on not only in regard to tweed but flannel also. I remember the time when our woollen mills took up the manufacture of flannel. Melbourne importers then sent samples to England to have the goods imitated and sent out here at a low price, to undersell the Victorian flannel, this imitation being actually branded "Victorian."

Mr. ZOX.—Can you prove that?

Mr. GURR.—Yes, up to the hilt. When the importers adopted that course they, in a measure, crushed out our flannel manufactures, and put back the industry a great number of years. I am placing these facts before honorable members so that when they come to vote they will be in a position to arrive at a proper decision. An honorable member stated the other evening that now there is nothing obtainable but shoddy. I interjected at the time—"That is not true." I did not mean to say that the honorable member was telling an untruth, but that what he put before the committee was not a fact. There are low-priced goods made here, but

not shoddy. Our mills used to make up goods for sale, and they had large stocks of woollen goods, resulting in great loss to the mill-owners; but now they make up to order, and there is an enormous range of patterns for merchants to select from. The Albion Mill, Geelong, submits 2,000 different patterns for its customers to select their next season's orders from. It will be seen that they are up to date with their patterns, and that they are doing everything they can to make a success of this industry.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Why do they want a duty of 35 per cent?

Mr. GURR.—I will tell the honorable member why. If his proposal to reduce the duties to 25 per cent. is carried out, the manufacturers in Europe, who have lost this market for many years, will immediately send their products to this colony even if they lose thousands of pounds by it, and, having crushed out this industry at great loss to themselves, the market will be their own. The proposed reduction of the duties is calculated to crush out many of our industries which are now prospering, whereas if the duties are allowed to remain they cannot do any harm. A great noise has been made about the shoddy-flannel question. To those who do not read the signs of the times it has proved a very vexed question. Flannels have been confused with flannelettes. The leader of the Opposition was one of those who fell into that error, not intentionally, I suppose, but he certainly confused flannelettes with flannels. He said, as reported in *Hansard*—

“Everybody admits that the quality of the material made in our mills now is not so good as it ought to be. What is the condition of affairs in this country? We live in a country that produces the best wool in the world, and we are actually compelled by our own legislation to wear that miserable material called flannelette, which from a sanitary point of view is most unhealthy.”

People are not compelled to wear flannelette, but they like to wear flannelette. We have had flannelette in use for the last 25 years. It has been called lambskin and that sort of thing, that being all cotton. The only difference which has been made in this material during the last 25 years is that the styles have been altered to catch the eye. There were no patterns at all at first in this material, but now there are very pretty patterns, which look very nice—they take the eye and taste of the people who like to wear them.

Sir JAMES PATTERSON.—They like the price.

Mr. GURR.—The people who wear these goods know that they are flannelettes. Those who buy flannelette know that they are buying a material that is made wholly of cotton. There is no doubt, however, that a wrong name has been given to this article; it should not be called flannelette, because the name may deceive some people; and an effort is now being made in England to make the manufacturers alter the name. Similarly a short time ago there was an article placed on the market called butterine, which the people naturally thought was butter, but which was not butter; and the British Board of Trade insisted that that name should be altered to margarine, so that people should not think they were buying butter when they were only buying mutton fat, or something of that kind. I think the name flannelette should be altered to cottonette, or some name like that. Flannelette, however, is not used merely in the place of flannel, but it is also used instead of calico. Those who sell calico will tell you that its sale has diminished in proportion as the sale of flannelette has increased. Flannelette is a softer and more comfortable article to wear than hard calico, and working men prefer the softer material for shirts. Now our mills turn out flannel good enough for any one to wear. They make flannel of the purest and most beautiful wool that is grown in this colony, and they make it in such quantities as they can sell. The price, however, is too high, and the quality is too fine for the majority of people. Something stronger was required for heavy wear, and our mill-owners, with a keen eye to their own interests and to the interests of the public, knowing that a heavier article was required—something with more body and which would wear longer—determined, if possible, to get the market for that class of goods, which was then being imported from the old country. Therefore they set to work to make this special flannel, to meet the requirements of a large number of our population. The result was that they hit the public taste, and now they have secured the market completely, and have shut out entirely any similar make of flannel, because they make a far better article for the same price than anything that can be imported. I am not speaking without knowledge in this matter, and I have in my hands samples which

I obtained from a Geelong mill—a mill which has been called a shoddy mill by one honorable member, or a mill that turned out shoddy flannel. Here is flannel at 10½d. a yard, the like of which was never sold in Victoria for the money before flannels were made here, or when there was a revenue duty of 10 per cent. A sample of this flannel was submitted to the Tariff Board, taken direct from the mill. I admit that a gentleman named Andrews came before the board one day and brought a sample of flannel, which he said he had had tested. He said—"There is flannel for you from a Geelong mill—40 per cent. of cotton." He had no evidence to bring to prove that the flannel was manufactured in a Geelong mill or in any other mill in this colony. He was a woollen warehouseman, who did not deal in flannels at all—tweeds were his staple. He went to a shop and asked for a yard of Geelong flannel, and the shopman gave him a yard of what he called Geelong flannel. Mr. Andrews then rushed away, and had this flannel analyzed by somebody, who told him that there was 44 per cent. of cotton in it. He said he objected, as a consumer, to wear that sort of flannel, but a man in his position never wore flannel at a shilling a yard in his life. He was simply putting himself out of the way to try and injure an industry which was catering successfully for the people of this country. I thought fit to go to the mill and get a sample of 10½d. flannel for myself. I gave it to the chairman of the board, who had it analyzed by Mr. Blackett, and we had a certificate that there was not 1 per cent. of cotton in it. There was '96 per cent. of some foreign matter, the nature of which the analyst could not tell, but there was no cotton discovered in it. Therefore I deny the statements which have been made, that Geelong makes shoddy flannel and calls it all wool. Not only are white flannels made at these low prices to suit the working men, but also Shetland flannels, fit for any person to wear—equal to anything; in fact, nothing has ever been imported equal to it, and nothing could be imported to-day equal to it. Even if the duty were taken off, no flannel could be imported of equal quality at the same prices.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Then what do you want the duty for?

Mr. GURR.—I will tell you that presently. I think a fact like this should tell immensely in favour of an industry

which if the duty on flannels were reduced to 25 per cent. would be destroyed. Further, I have samples of finer flannels—fine enough for any one—made of the purest and best of wool. I obtained these myself from the mill, so that I am not speaking from any secondhand information. Again, we have heard a great deal said about the Castlemaine mills, and the shoddy flannels which they make, but here are samples of beautiful flannels from those mills, all pure wool guaranteed. Here is a flannel with a peculiar stripe, which is made for Pentridge and the lunatic asylums under Government contract. The stripe is put there, so that no one outside those institutions can use the flannel, and the article must be of pure wool according to the terms of the contract. The woollen mills of the colony are turning out flannels suitable for every one. They have studied the requirements of the people, and is it a crime for our mills to make what the people require? I say more power to them for doing so, and that if we can assist them by a duty of 35 per cent. we should do it. These flannels are made as low as 10½d. per yard without any cotton whatever. The mills also make flannels as low as 7½d. per yard, but these contain cotton. We admit that, and we have never denied it. Women who buy 7½d. and 9½d. flannels know that there is cotton in them, so that there is no deception in the matter at all; in fact, they prefer that there should be cotton in these flannels, because it assists them to wear, and the flannels are stronger and better for the class of people who buy them. It has been stated in one of the newspapers that there are not more than three kinds of flannel made in the colony. A hostile witness before the Tariff Board stated that he knew thirteen different kinds, but, as a matter of fact, at the Geelong mill they turn out 36 kinds of flannel, while a private individual who is engaged in making flannels in his own house makes four other kinds, so that there are no less than 40 different kinds of flannel made at Geelong alone. As I have said, there is no deception in using cotton in the manufacture of the low price flannels, because those who buy these flannels know that they contain cotton. The cotton used at Geelong is Fiji cotton, which is of a very superior quality, and costs 7d. per lb. The mill-owners do not use it because it is cheaper than wool. They could buy wool for less than 7d. per lb.; but it is better

to use this cotton than it is to use common wool, because it makes the flannel stronger and more suitable. A few years ago samples of these flannels were sent home and imitated and branded as colonial, and this knocked out our flannels for a time, but when the duties were raised we competed with the importers and have secured the market. To reduce the duty now—to cut down that fence which has been erected—would cause foreign manufacturers to again obtain the market by swamping it with flannels. Even though they lost thousands of pounds for twelve months they would be willing to do so if they could obtain the market again by blocking out the colonial article; and therefore, I submit, we ought to be cautious before taking any step to reduce the duty on flannels. To show that cotton is not injurious to the flannel industry, I will quote the following extract from a paper in a London journal entitled "Textile Manufacture," which was published in November last—

"I should like to show many instances, where used judiciously, a little cotton is of great advantage to a cloth composed mainly of wool. The non-shrinking properties of cotton can here be utilized. There are many fabrics which, unlike the ordinary run of dress fabrics and suitings, require frequent washing. Most of this class are composed entirely of cotton or linen, but in the case, for instance, of under-clothing, the majority of persons prefer, both for health and comfort, to wear woollen next to the skin. Where this is persisted in, and pure woollen used, the fad is rather expensive, unless the wearer has a graded family of descendants who in turn receive and wear the article of clothing, as it with each successive washing day decreases in size. . . . So, in this case, a mixture of cotton and wool is preferable to the pure article. Of course, the treatment can be overdone, especially when the percentage of wool dwindles down to nil, as in the case of the number of so-called flannels at present on the market, which are made entirely of cotton and afterwards converted into 'all wool' on the raising machine. This is the other extreme; but, on the other hand, a 70-30 mixture—that is, a yarn containing 70 per cent. of wool and 30 of cotton—comes in cheaper and far more useful in a flannel cloth than pure wool. This is rather a large percentage of cotton for a good cloth, but the quantity is often larger, although in some of the more expensive ones it dwindles down to 5 per cent. only, that is just enough to check shrinking. . . . I have now lightly touched upon the various methods of applying cotton to wool in fabrics which have come under my observation. Each method offers a very wide scope to the designer and manufacturer, and many of the cloths thus produced should, if the cotton is not used to excess, produce articles very slightly, if at all, inferior to pure wool. I consider that this mode of obtaining and

cheapening variety and effect is far preferable to that of using wool—certainly wool, but of the 'third and fourth generation'—as is done by our Batley, Yeadon, and other contemporaries."

Now, I think that proves very conclusively that our woollen mills have taken up the right attitude and are making a flannel which is more durable than all-wool flannel would be; and while they are not deceiving the public in any way, they are giving them exactly what they require. Now, if flannels and tweeds of mixed material are called shoddy, the same term can be applied to cross-bred sheep. Why not grow all pure-bred sheep? Why grow cross-bred sheep? Simply because the cross-bred mutton is preferred. The New Zealand people have gained the frozen meat trade in mutton because they grow a quality of mutton which suits the home taste. They have been wise in their generation, and have produced that class of mutton for which they have the best market. While they have done that with regard to cross-bred mutton, we have done the same thing with regard to our flannels by putting in a mixture of cotton, and thus have gained the market here. Cross-bred wool is better for some tweeds than pure wool, and that is one reason why the Mossiel tweeds have been preferred to some of ours. They are crisper, more wiry, they wear better, and are stronger. For that reason, our Albion Woollen Mill at Geelong has imported from New Zealand 95 bales of this wool during the last six or seven months, and is making up precisely the same tweeds as the Mossiel Mill does. The honorable members who visited the exhibits of the Albion Mill the other day saw some tweeds from this cross-bred wool. Now, if cross-bred wool is required here for our woollens, why not grow cross-bred sheep here? If we did so, we could send the mutton home as the New Zealanders do, while the wool could be used by our manufacturers. It has been said that wages are lowered through the so-called high Tariff, and a great deal has been made of that statement. I can prove, however, that this is not so with regard to the woollen industry. I did not rest satisfied with asking the managers of our mills in Geelong about the wages they paid, but, as I wished to know the facts for myself, I asked permission to go through their pay-sheets, and I was allowed to do so. In connexion with the mills at Geelong, I find from an

examination of those pay-sheets that most of the weavers—who are nearly all women—earn over 30s. per week, while none receive less than 20s. per week. The same wages are now paid for eight hours' work as were paid in 1884 for ten hours' work, so that protection has not reduced wages in our woollen industries but rather improved them. Comparing the wages at the Geelong mills with those paid at a Yorkshire mill—I will not give the name—what do we find? The average all round at the Yorkshire mill was 13s. 8d. per week for 56 hours, while the average in our three mills was 21s. per week for 44 hours, which would be equal to 24s. 6d. per week for the same number of hours as were worked in the Yorkshire mill. I ask whether this does not show that the Tariff on woollens has rather increased wages than lowered them, while, as compared with the wages paid at home, the wages paid at Geelong are much greater. Now, it is evident that the public must be satisfied with the woollens made in this colony, or they would not purchase them; and to show that they are purchasing them, I may mention that our woollen mills have not a yard of stock in hand. These mills are working full time, some of them day and night, yet they cannot turn out goods fast enough for the demand. This proves that their manufactures are acceptable to the public—whether they are sold as colonial or imported is another matter. If the mills have catered successfully for the public and have secured this market, surely they are deserving of the consideration which they need with regard to protective duties. I think I have said sufficient about woollens to prove my case as against the theories put forward by some honorable members. Then we have the proposition of the honorable member for Numurkah that the duties on woollens shall be reduced to 25 per cent. I wish the honorable member had started with moving that the stock tax be reduced to 25 per cent.; he might have known something more about that subject. I would ask the honorable member to consider well the facts which I have laid before the committee, and then to say, in the light of those facts, whether he is justified in going on with the amendment of which he has given notice?

MR. GRAHAM.—Your facts go to prove that you do not want any duty at all.

MR. GURR.—I wish now to deal with one or two statements made by honorable members. The honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) dealt with the question of protection in a very masterly way. He showed the advantage of protection to the colony and to all concerned, and he placed before the committee solid facts which prove that the system of protection is the only fiscal system that will suit Victoria, bring her out of her difficulties, and keep her out of difficulties.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—Why has it not done that then?

MR. GURR.—We cannot help the bank and the boom disasters. It cannot be said that protection was in any way responsible for them. I am speaking now of our industries. We are here, as the honorable member for Lowan said, to go into the facts—not with minds biased to support certain theories. We have not come here with our minds made up that 25 per cent. or any other per cent. is the proper policy for this colony, but to deal with the facts and to give our industries that assistance which it can be proved they require and deserve. Every point of the honorable member for Richmond had a telling effect, and he put many points before us. I am sure that he thrust the protectionists sword up to the hilt, and there it has remained up to the present. But an effort was immediately made to withdraw that sword. We had the startling fact that three lawyers followed the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith). First, there was the honorable member for Lowan, who put his case cleverly in a speech which it was a pleasure to listen to. The honorable member put his case for three hours in a very masterly way; but he did not propose that the duty on wheat should be reduced to 25 per cent. Then the honorable member said that if the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) did not approve of the Tariff Board's report, why did he not say so? I may say that the honorable member for Richmond disapproved of the board's report. It was some time before he could be persuaded to sign it; but it was submitted to him that the report was the report of the majority of the board, and that he should sign it in that way, and then he could dissent from anything he disapproved of. Therefore the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) was right in saying that he dissented from the report of the Tariff Board almost as a whole.

The speech of the honorable member for Lowan might be summed up as a mighty demonstration of axioms. It was really a wonderful exposition, and it extended over a very long time. Then we had a speech from the honorable member for Jolimont, who did not occupy quite the same length of time as the honorable member for Lowan, but nearly so. He gave us a number of very comprehensive statistics. I could not catch the drift of all of them, but they were very numerous, especially those in regard to the woollen mills. He seemed to speak with great authority, but he had not the facts before him with which to prove his case, and therefore he failed. One thing he succeeded in, and that was the joke he made about the honorable member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams) and the two honorable members for Geelong forming a sort of Hallelujah Chorus whenever the woollen mills were mentioned. The honorable member had a good laugh at his own joke, and no doubt enjoyed it immensely, as the committee did also. He gave us a sum in arithmetic to figure out, with regard to so many more yards of tweed being made in the colony and so much less wool used, inferring that the output of our woollen mills is shoddy, but the honorable member forgot to mention that so many more yards of flannel are now being made. The honorable member gave us two hours and three-quarters of statist's statistics. Then we had the honorable member for Brighton, who spoke really in earnest, and at times with great vehemence, but it seemed to me that his mind had been fully made up without inquiring into the facts before him. He also attacked the woollen industry, although he had visited the Albion Mills, and the manufactures there had made an impression on him, but had not altered his mind. The honorable member found fault with my colleague, because he believes that the manufacturing industries of the colony should have the protection they need. My colleague may be a disciple of John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, or any other great one; but if, on studying our local industries, he has formed the idea that, while free-trade would be the right policy to adopt in starting a new colony, industries established under a policy of protection should be fostered, and not ruthlessly destroyed by a reversal to free-trade, he shows his common sense by taking things as he finds them, and acknowledging, from the facts put before

him, that our industries need a certain amount of protection, and, setting aside his free-trade notions, giving our industries the help they need. That is what we are all here for—to study the needs of our various industries, and make our Tariff as perfect as it possibly can be made. I regret that I have taken up such a long time, but I felt that it was necessary, in justice to our woollen industry, that the true facts of the matter should be placed before the committee. So much has been said that is not fact, that I felt it imperative on me to state the facts fully to honorable members, even though it has taken me such a long time to do so.

Mr. CHIRNSIDE.—Sir, bowing to the desire of the Premier that this debate should be closed this week, I do not intend to take up much time, and if my sentences are rather short I make them short because I desire to make a very brief speech indeed. When I was before my constituents I stated that I was neither a rabid free-trader nor an ardent protectionist, but was in favour of the modification of some of the high duties; and, although surrounded on three sides by protectionists, I do not intend to study my seat in this House at all, although I value my seat in this House second to only one thing in the world. I am going to study the interests of the people at large, and not take myself into consideration at all, because I look at it in this light: Fortunately, I am in a good position, and I can bear the brunt of the high duties; but that is a very narrow-minded way of looking at things, and I am going to take a broader view and think of the welfare of the colony at large. I consider the proposals of the Government totally inadequate, because they will not give sufficient relief to the people of the country, who are at present groaning under the burden of heavy taxation. I am not an advocate for unduly interfering with vested interests in the colony, nor for upsetting industries, nor for causing injury to industries built up under the principle of protection or by means of State subsidies; but surely we can afford to lower some of the duties without inflicting injury to any of these industries, and thereby give a fresh impetus to our commerce and our shipping trade, and, above all, afford greater freedom to our international and intercolonial intercourse and exchange. That, I feel confident, is the desire of every honorable member. Moreover, the majority of the people of this

colony desire Tariff reform, and there is no denying the fact that a majority of honorable members in this Chamber are pledged to Tariff reform. Now, I think it is the duty of the Premier to bow to the majority, and not to seek favour with the minority. I intend to stick to my election pledges, because no man with any sense of honour could say one thing before his constituents, and then come into this chamber and say exactly the reverse. In my opinion the country bears the brunt of taxation in this colony. From all parts of the colony they are pouring money into the Treasury at one end, but it is allowed to flow out at the other end through a tap, which we may call the subsidy tap. I fail to see the good of increasing taxation, so as to pour more money into the Treasury at a great disadvantage to most of the people, but to the great advantage of a few monopolists in and around Melbourne, who fatten on protection at the expense of labour. It is a disgrace to any country, especially a young country like this, to tolerate such a state of things; and the time is not far distant when the people of the country will rise to the occasion, and insist on having their rights. According to *Hayter* of last year, the agricultural produce raised in this colony amounted to £7,000,000, the pastoral to £10,000,000, and the mining produce to £2,000,000, amounting in all to about £20,000,000 sterling. Considering that large proportion of the colony's output, I think the people in the country should have a little consideration extended to them. I feel rather sore on this subject. As a taxpayer I do not object to pay increased taxation, whenever the necessities of the country require it; but I object, and the people of the country object, to pay increased taxation to fatten a few manufacturers in and around Melbourne, and thereby not only deprive labour but also ourselves and the country of what is due. For the last quarter of a century we have tried protection. We started with low duties, now we have worked up to duties of 50 per cent., and in some cases as high as 300 per cent.—600 per cent. I was told this morning—until the country is groaning under the yoke of taxation. For all that, I thoroughly agree that protection has done good in some cases; but, on the whole, I think that high protection is a gigantic failure. If we look back twenty, fifteen, or even ten years, we find that Victoria was then far and away

ahead of the other colonies. But what do we find to-day? We find that Victoria has gone behind New South Wales, and instead of going ahead is still drifting to leeward, whilst New South Wales is steadily progressing. In 1892-3 the imports of New South Wales were £17 11s. 10d. per head of the population, and the exports £18 12s. 1d. per head; while in Victoria in 1892-3 the imports were £14 15s. 5d. per head, and the exports £12 4s. 6d. per head, showing that New South Wales had an excess of exports over imports at the rate of £1 0s. 3d. per head, whilst Victoria had an excess of imports over exports of £2 10s. 11d. per head. Now, I maintain that this is not a manufacturing country—it is purely a producing country, and we depend on our exports, and not on our manufacturing industries. In 1892 the population of Victoria was 1,167,373, showing an increase of 9,695 as compared with the population in 1891, whereas the population of New South Wales was 1,197,050, showing the large increase of 31,750 in one year. In 1880 the population of Victoria was 120,000 ahead of New South Wales; in 1890 it was only 12,000 ahead, and last year we find that New South Wales was 72,000 ahead of us in population. And it is the same in regard to the trade of the two colonies. In 1867 the trade of Victoria amounted to £24,000,000, and the trade of New South Wales to £14,000,000, showing a comparison to the advantage of Victoria to the extent of £10,000,000 sterling. In 1892 we find that the trade of New South Wales amounted to £45,000,000, and the trade of Victoria to £26,000,000, showing an advantage of £19,000,000 in favour of New South Wales. Therefore, as compared with Victoria, New South Wales gained £29,000,000 in the course of 25 years. Now, I do not wish to be personal to any section of the Assembly, but I must say that honorable members in the Ministerial corner support a policy which does not increase wages, but actually decreases wages, and increases sweating and poverty. A great deal has been said about the unemployed, but I think we are all agreed that the number of unemployed is increased by protection. In fact, protection fosters the unemployed difficulty. I have come across a great number of unemployed, and I must say that many of them don't want work. We have frequently put men on in the evening at 25s. a week and found, and they

have had tea and breakfast; but in the morning, when the roll was called, they were off to another station to get another feed. The policy of the late Government was to send people into the country to keep the unemployed out of Melbourne. And, although I do not disagree with the minimum wage in the slightest, I am afraid that since the principle of the minimum wage in Government contracts was adopted by this House a lot of men have thrown up work in the country and come back to swell the ranks of the unemployed in Melbourne. There is no getting away from this fact. If honorable members will look about them when coming up Collins-street and across Spring-street they will see that for every man who is working on the sewerage works there are 100 looking on. I attribute the fall in the prices of our commodities to the decreased purchasing power of the people. Years ago when we had lots of money we did not care whether we paid 1d. per lb. or 2d. per lb. more for tea, but now that money is so scarce we do consider what we are paying when purchasing our requirements. The high protective duties have not benefited labour at all. If an increased duty of £2 per ton was put on any article the manufacturer immediately raised his price £2 per ton, and through the increased competition between local manufacturers, induced by these high duties, they had to cut down their prices. They would not cut down their profits on the articles they produced, and so they had to fall back on those who made the articles and cut down the price of labour. After the high duties were imposed in 1892 our imports fell to the extent of £400,000, and the labour employed was increased to the extent of only 300 hands. Now, there are 93 per cent. of the people of this colony who are not protected at all, because they have to send their produce out of the colony, and accept for it the prices ruling in the markets of the world. I was surprised to hear honorable members quoting the farmers' protective duties, because it is utterly absurd to talk about those duties being protective, seeing that we are exporting millions of bushels of wheat in excess of the requirements of the colony, and that we exported butter last year to the value of £1,000,000 sterling. Therefore, the duty on butter and the duty on wheat are inoperative. Our fiscal policy is fast driving away the trade of this colony. We have already lost our

Mr. Chirnside.

Riverina trade. A few years ago the Riverina people sent all their produce to Melbourne, and got their stores from Melbourne; now they send the whole of their exports to Sydney, and get their stores in New South Wales. Moreover, a great many of our best colonists are leaving Victoria and going over the border into New South Wales, where the laws are more liberal and taxation is not so burdensome. I was astonished the other evening to hear a Minister of the Crown deny this statement, because I think that a gentleman holding such a high and honorable position ought to be better acquainted with the affairs of the country. I myself know seven really good farmers who left Victoria a short time ago, crossed over into New South Wales, and took up land with a land-owner there on the half system. I am acquainted with the gentleman they have joined. Talking about protection, a few years ago the mallee farmers had good protection, because the Government then in power were not so pressing as the present Government are in their dealings with them, but I ask the Minister of Lands what protection is being afforded to the mallee farmers at the present time? To show how we are losing ground, I may mention that the Victorian exports to the other colonies in 1882 amounted to £5,000,000 odd, and in 1892 to only £3,000,000 odd. The Victorian imports from the other colonies in 1882 were £5,000,000 odd, and in 1892 £7,000,000, showing a decrease of inter-colonial trade in ten years of, say, £4,000,000 sterling. I would like to ask honorable members to consider what would be the result if the old country closed her ports to us? It seems a strange thing to me, as a native of the colony, that we should tax our own kith and kin. We can export any article from here to England, and the mother country lets it in free, but not one article can England export to this colony but is taxed up to the hilt. I may also quote France. It is a well-known fact that we export hides, skins, &c., to the value of nearly £1,000,000 per annum. France is a great importer of our hides and skins. Now, we tax French wines imported into this colony, and if France was to retaliate by raising the duties on hides and skins, who would suffer? I don't suppose France would suffer, but Victoria would suffer. I will not rest content until we have a substantial reduction in the duties

on all agricultural implements. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr), was right in saying that there is a great monopoly in reapers and binders, and the same may be said with regard to cream separators also. I brought out a cream separator a few years ago, and landed it here £20 cheaper than I could have bought it in the colony. Protection presses most heavily on our agricultural industry, and everything that is used in constructing and working our butter factories is taxed—hardwood, vats, churns, nails, zinc, pumps, tanks, &c.

Mr. WEBB.—And they are all cheaper here than in any other part of the world.

Mr. CHIRNSIDE.—I do not contradict the honorable member, but the honorable member contradicts himself. Passing on to the effect of a protective policy on wages, I can say, without fear of contradiction, for it is a positive fact, that wages in Victoria have decreased during the last few years. The returns of the wages paid to station hands and farm labourers in New South Wales show that those classes of employés are getting better wages throughout the colony than our station and farm hands in Victoria. If honorable members will look through *Hayter* they will find that in nearly every trade there has been a decrease in the wages paid in this colony. I must congratulate the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) on his advocacy of protection to the woollen mills, and if the Geelong football team play their game as well as he stated his case they are bound to be the premier team. I have always done my best to foster local industries—I have always purchased as much as I could in the local market, and I would like to test the members of this Assembly on that point. Will honorable members who are wearing colonial cloth put on their hats?

Mr. SANGSTER.—A lot of them do not know they are wearing colonial cloth.

Mr. ZOX.—Not one puts on his hat, at all events.

Mr. CHIRNSIDE.—I do not believe there are half-a-dozen members of this Assembly who wear colonial cloth. The colonial industries which are able to support themselves have a staunch friend in me; but those local industries which live by means of subsidies have an enemy in me, because I do not believe in subsidized factories. I have had considerable experience of colonial cloth, and the colonial cloth I have used has been absolutely

rotten. In 1880, prior to the imposition of the high duties, our woollen mills used nearly 2,000,000 lbs. of wool, and in 1894 just over 1,000,000 lbs., although in that year they made 100,000 more yards of cloth than in 1880—I cannot say woollen cloth. In contradiction to the statement of the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr), I may say that I have met people lately returned from England, who used to live here ten years ago, and they have all noticed how badly our people are dressing. I agree with the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Lazarus) that our mining industry seems to be neglected. Protection is killing the mining industry. Fields are left undeveloped through the want of capital. The miners are in favour of lower duties. What with bad fuses, bad explosives, bad fumes down below, and bad ventilation, the life of the Victorian miner is not altogether a pleasant one. I know that miners work underground in cotton shirts because flannel, which they ought to be wearing, is so extremely dear that it is impossible for them to buy it, and they come out of the hot mines into the cold air, and have to go home in their wet cotton shirts, which causes them to catch cold. I wish to say one thing which will bring a lot of honorable members down on me, and that is that candles are dearer now than they were four years ago. In April, 1891, candles were sold by the storekeepers at 15s. 1d. per box, whereas in December, 1893, the price had increased to 16s. 8d., and I have gone round a number of country stores during the last few days, and the storekeepers tell me that candles are dearer in the country at the present time than they were four years ago. I have also looked into another matter. I have studied the union prices of shearers' stores in New South Wales and the prices of shearers' stores in Victoria, and I find that on nearly every item the Victorian shearer has to pay more than the New South Wales shearer pays for his stores. There is one other thing I would like to mention. Some honorable members are in favour of putting a duty on coal. If that is done it will practically kill the export of produce in the western district. Coal steamers now come down from New South Wales to Geelong loaded with coal, and go away with the produce of the western district. Now, there was a time, not very long ago, when Victoria was at the head of all the Australian colonies, and Melbourne was

called, and rightly called in my opinion, the Queen City of the South. This is all changed, and for the worse. We all know that we have made a great retrograde movement, and that we are still steadily drifting to leeward, whilst the other colonies are steadily advancing. Surely the facts that have been adduced in the course of the present debate are such as should convince any unprejudiced person that protection has had a good deal to do with this change in our condition—protection run mad. I don't say that protection has had everything to do with it. There are certain things I would protect up to the hilt. It is the desire of every well-wisher of this colony to see her once more on the march of progress. With this laudable object in view, let free-traders and protectionists, and, above all, let the members of the Legislative Assembly, unite in an endeavour to lift Victoria up from the terrible depression she is in at present, and to place her once more, happy and prosperous, at the head of the Australian colonies, for she is, without doubt, one of the most favoured dependencies of the glorious British Empire.

Mr. GRAVES.—Mr. Mason, in response to the invitation of the honorable member who has just resumed his seat I will take the liberty of putting on my hat, and I now declare that every article I have on, including my hat, is of colonial manufacture. When I was twenty years of age, and wore clothes made by Buckmaster, of London, I looked twice as well as I do now, and my clothes lasted me four times as long as the clothes I am wearing, whilst, at the same time, they cost less money. This hat I bought from Mauger, a few yards down Bourke street. My boots were purchased from Sir William Olive, whose shop is also in Bourke street, a few yards away. My coat was got for me from the Sunnyside Mills at Ballarat, and I may say that I have been wearing colonial tweed for twenty years. My shirt was made in the Acme factory, and my stockings were manufactured by a constituent of the honorable member for Prahran. I came into the House as a protectionist, and I shall always strive to maintain the position I took up on protection. But there is no honorable member who is more deeply pledged to reduce the high duties or to oppose what I may call protection run mad than I am. I challenge contradiction of any statement that I intend making this evening. I may say that

I, my children, and my grandchildren belong to this country. There is no country that is dearer to me, and it is with great regret that I have read certain articles that have been published in England. Mr. Hogan, who was at one time a State school teacher here, but who has gone to England, has written an article about the colonies which has been published in the *Contemporary Review*, and copied by one-half of the English newspapers. In that article, Mr. Hogan says—

"Sydney seemed to me but little changed after seven years' absence. There was certainly nothing in the general aspect of the parent city of the antipodes to corroborate the lugubrious stories of universal collapse that were current in London. The main thoroughfares were as crowded and as busy as ever: the wharfs and wool stores were roaring hives of industry; extensive building operations were in progress in the very heart of the city; and, in short, there were hardly any superficial indications of exceptional depression."

Then further on he says—

"Up to quite a recent period there was a constant and vigorous rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, each claiming to be the 'Queen City' of the Southern Hemisphere. But, for the present, at least, that contest for supremacy is at an end. The ascendancy of Sydney in respect to population, commercial pre-eminence, and shipping activity is clear and unmistakable to the most casual eye. Melbourne's retrogression, stagnation, collapse—call it what you will—is no less striking and manifest."

Is that statement true? The question is not who wrote it, but whether it is true. Every day we see around us village settlers. Let any honorable member ask these men what they are. I have done so. They put down a little plot of vegetables to compete with the farmers, and do the work that Chinamen are doing in other countries. I have asked them whether they have ever grown cabbages before, and their reply was "No." They are mostly tradesmen from Collingwood, hatters, shoemakers, carpenters, and so on, and that is the state to which they have been brought. I have had to contest my seat in this House very frequently. I had to do so at the last general election, and I say unhesitatingly, no matter what the decision of the committee may be, that the feeling of the country is that if we are to live at all we must have lower duties. I think I can prove conclusively that the very men who are most interested in the reduction of the duties are those who are called protectionists. Before I enter on the discussion of the general question, I would like to call the attention

of the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) to one or two facts relating to the woollen duties. The honorable member said that the woollen mills were prosperous under a revenue duty of 10 per cent., but that 25 per cent. is not a protective duty, and 30 per cent. is hardly a protective duty. He also said that the woollen mills did well under the lower duty until the European manufacturers copied their tweeds and sent out inferior stuff. If the mills were prosperous under a 10 per cent. duty is that a reason why my constituents—why the miners and the farmers—should have to put money into the pockets of any ring or monopoly? The thing is perfectly absurd and does not admit of argument. It is well that one or two matters should be explained that may be a subject of difference. Take, for example, the phrase “shoddy” which has been used very frequently in this debate. By the way, the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) forgot when he referred to the lawyers that his honorable colleague is a lawyer, and that he said that if he had to begin anew in this colony he would be a free-trader. The honorable member dwelt on the word “shoddy.” It is true that that word means devilled cloth, or old cloth mixed up with cotton; but it has a wider significance. In the *Imperial Dictionary* the word is defined as meaning also anything of a trashy or inferior character, such, for example, as shoddy literature. It might be any inferior stuff, the real nature of which is sought to be concealed.

Mr. LEVIEN.—It might be a shoddy member.

Mr. GRAVES.—Yes; a shoddy politician who wants a duty of 200 per cent. on Mildura currants and no duty at all on other articles. I shall use the word “shoddy” in the sense I have indicated as being an inferior mixture of some sort, the real nature of which is sought to be concealed. I intend now to reply to the honorable member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams), as he challenged me; but when we come to deal with the item of woollens, I will undertake to show to the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) what is the real nature of the different wools about which he spoke. The honorable member has not that full technical knowledge that he ought to possess. We all know what cloth wool and dead wool are, and the latter is certainly very largely used by some of

our woollen mills. This debate is not a waste of time. It is as important a debate as has ever taken place in the House. We are now at the turning point. We cannot manufacture successfully unless we have a market for our products; we have to look for outside markets, and we know that many houses have transferred their distributing centre from Melbourne to Sydney. What are the merchants of New South Wales doing now? If I order goods, say, at Deniliquin, the merchant will deliver them free at Spencer-street, and it will require all our ingenuity to prevent Victoria, which was at one time the premier colony, from further retrograding and becoming a second-rate colony. The reason of our failure has been the adoption of a false policy. We have duties of 45 per cent. which, as the honorable member for Melbourne East (Mr. Zox) explained really means 80 per cent. to the consumer, and there are hundreds of dutiable articles that cannot be produced in the colony. I will show indisputably from the evidence that was given before the Tariff Board that we are becoming a shoddy manufacturing colony. On the 11th of October, 1894, the Premier, in the manifesto which he then published, said—

“As there are many anomalies in the present Tariff, and some duties have failed in their object and have become oppressive, our experience having shown that others are unnecessary and oppressive, a full revision of the Tariff must be made as soon as possible.”

Do the proposals of the Government represent a full revision of the Tariff? I think not. Such a revision is a perfect sham. The honorable member for Hawthorn claims to be a free-trader. I do not say that he is a free-trader. The only free-trader I recognise in the House is the honorable member for Lowan, who goes straight for a single tax and a free port. The honorable member for Hawthorn advocates revenue duties, but not a free port. We listened to a magnificent and well-reasoned speech from the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith); but he started on false premises, and his statements were incorrect. I believe in a middle course. *Medio tutissimus ibis*. That is the course which I intend to pursue. Whilst I am not prepared to repudiate any of the contracts that have been made with our protective industries, I say that the present system of excessive duties is demoralizing them and impoverishing the country, and that it utterly fails to benefit or to give better wages to the very

men who clamoured most for it. I prefer to accept the opinion of an honorable member who came into this House at the same time as myself, and who is a man of undoubted integrity and ability. I refer to the Chairman of the Tariff Board (Mr. Tucker). That gentleman informed us that he was on the first Tariff Board, and on the second Tariff Board; that he had an opportunity of hearing every word of the evidence, that he watched the demeanour of the witnesses, and weighed and sifted the evidence. I may say that the present leader of the Opposition invited me to act upon the Tariff Board; but as I had formed very strong opinions upon the subject, I respectfully declined. I myself, as Minister of Customs, had, thirteen years ago, to nominate the members of the Mirams Tariff Commission, and that commission, in their report, recommended a reduction of duties. Can any one doubt that, if the Tariff Board of which Mr. Bosisto was the chairman had continued in existence, it would have made a much stronger recommendation than the board which succeeded it in favour of the reduction of the high duties? The feeling of the people is that the high duties should be reduced, and the honorable member for Fitzroy is thoroughly in accord with that view. When speaking the other evening he laid down twelve propositions. The first was, that the paramount interest of this colony was the agricultural interest, which embraces producers and exporters, and that agriculture was the backbone of this colony. The honorable member expressed surprise at the knowledge displayed by the farmers of the law of exchange, and of the effect of a high Tariff upon our trade and commerce. What the honorable member said was absolutely correct; but he might have made an addition to it. Agriculture has been the backbone of the country; but there is another industry which we should not forget—the mining industry, and which, in my opinion, would be as great to-day as ever it has been in the past if it were properly developed. The honorable member's next proposition was, that the present Tariff was a miserable thing; and his third proposition was that, in consequence of the increased duties, wages had been reduced. How does that agree with the statement that women are earning 30s. a week in the woollen mills? Hayter's statistics show what the average wages paid in the factories are. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) told us that women

Mr. Graves.

earn from £1 to 30s. a week. I was glad to hear it; but I should like to know what the average is, especially as the Chairman of the Tariff Board declares that, in consequence of the increased duties, wages had been reduced.

Mr. TUCKER.—That was in the case of goods that must be imported.

Mr. GRAVES.—The honorable member's other statements were: (4) all the members on his board were protectionists; (5) a maximum ad valorem duty of 25 per cent. was impracticable; (6) each change in the Tariff cost the country £100,000; (7) high duties gave more profit to the middleman than to the producers and induced trade monopolies or rings; (8) there was a strong feeling in the country against high duties; (9) he was sadly disappointed with the local woollen mills; goods of superior manufacture were produced by the neighbouring colonies with not half the duty imposed here. In New Zealand the honorable member stated the duty was 20 per cent., and in Tasmania 12½ or 13 per cent. (10) The high protective duties had since their passing lessened trade, and the consumption of flannel had fallen off amazingly; (11) a Board of Trade was required to manage the Tariff; and (12) we were ruining our trade, and our harbor was deserted. These are the twelve reasons the honorable member gave why the high duties should be reduced, and they are a host in themselves. The honorable member's statements were fully corroborated by the very able speech of the honorable member for Jolimont, which was full of facts, and facts are stubborn things that cannot be controverted. The honorable member very clearly pointed out that the high duties imposed a few years ago have done the country very serious injury. I am satisfied that that is correct, and that if we are to prosper we must retrace our steps. I do not say that we should do anything that would destroy our industries. I would be the last man in the House to make any such proposal; but, whatever may be the effect on an individual industry, we must carry out the mandate we have received from the country.

Mr. SANGSTER.—You must destroy the industries if you reduce the duties.

Mr. GRAVES.—The honorable member is wrong. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) has told the committee that the woollen mills did well with a duty of 10 per cent. The high

duties were introduced under peculiar circumstances. When the present Speaker was in England as Agent-General, by an extraordinary shuffle of the political cards, the honorable member for Normanby became Premier. The honorable member announced his programme at Casterton; but he did not say one word about increased protective duties on that occasion. He said that taxation should be direct and not indirect, and that it should fall on the men who were best able to bear it. When Parliament met honorable members found that the present Speaker, who had returned from England, had been made Treasurer. Like the French kings, he had learned nothing and had forgotten nothing. He was always the same, and he thought that the cure he had adopted years ago would do again. But the honorable gentleman was mistaken. In proposing the high duties the honorable gentleman said—"We respond to the demand." The demand of whom? Of the twelve or thirteen very able men belonging to the labour party who are endeavouring to run Victoria to-day on prohibition lines, whilst their brethren in New South Wales, who have the same objects in view, are going in for free-trade. I have the greatest respect for the representatives of the labour party and I would not directly or indirectly say one word against them, but why do these honorable members advocate prohibition whilst their fellows in New South Wales are all for free-trade, and stick to Reid? It is absurd to say that they do so simply because they want a land tax.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—That is what they do want.

Mr. GRAVES.—Bunkum! Do you mean to tell me that the fifteen labour members in the New South Wales Assembly are going, for the sake of a land tax, to sacrifice all the industries that have been created under the Dibbs protective Tariff? No; they see that New South Wales with all her advantages—her central position, her coal supply, and her raw products—is wresting the trade from Melbourne, and they believe that, with free-trade, Sydney will become the emporium of the Orient; that within a few years it will command the China and Japan trade, and, perhaps, also the Indian trade. I may not live to see it; but it will come, and these fifteen labour members know it.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—You have not read what they said in the House.

Mr. GRAVES.—Yes, I have. In proposing the higher duties the present Speaker said—

"We respond to the demand that there should be increased protection. As there is a necessity for additional protection we should endeavour, with regard to at least a portion of these increased burdens, to see whether their imposition will extend the area of employment and restore the normal prosperity of the country."

At that time Mr. Gillies was ill, and his place in the House was taken by the honorable member for Castlemaine (Sir James Patterson), who in his able reply to the speech of the then Treasurer said—

"I myself was Minister of Customs in the Gillies-Deakin Government. We brought down a revised Tariff increasing the duties. We were told at that time that it would create all kinds of prosperity, and that there would be no more unemployed in the country. I am sorry to say that it had the opposite result, and by the increases of duties now proposed the revenue must suffer whilst the other end will not be attained."

Every word the honorable member said has been verified by the result, and I made a similar statement. I say that it is the bounden duty of the committee, as each item of the Tariff comes before it, not to repudiate contracts that have been made; not to imperil any of our industries; but, as far as possible, to reduce the burdens of the people. We have, undoubtedly, a big task before us. In the votes that I shall give I shall be quite satisfied to be guided by the opinion of the Chairman of the Tariff Board that the country demands lower duties; and that the higher duties lessen trade and bring down wages. Prohibition is detrimental to the interests of the colony as a whole. I have always held that opinion; but it would be idle to say of me, as was said of the Chairman of the Tariff Board, that I have turned a free-trader. The speech of the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) was not the speech of a free-trader but the speech of an honest man, who believes that lower duties are demanded by the people. In speaking on the subject of the higher duties in 1892, I stated that I could express a confident opinion without being egotistical, because I had made a study of the subject for years. Long before I entered this House I was managing for years one of the largest exporting businesses in Melbourne, for a London firm. I therefore spoke with knowledge when Sir Graham Berry brought the Tariff up to 45 per cent. I then said—

"Increasing these duties will not secure an increase of revenue income, but the reverse.

He had made this aspect of the fiscal system a study for years, and he would be prepared to retire into private life if the results did not justify his predictions."

On that occasion I showed the evils which would result from these high duties, such as the establishment of rings and shoddy manufactures. There were no more honorable merchants in the world than those in Melbourne at the time I am speaking of. They were honest from a natural desire to be so, as well as because they knew it to be the best policy. But in every community there will be found to be men who will enrich themselves by selling shoddy goods. When in 1882 I was Minister of Customs, this subject came prominently under my notice, and I introduced three Bills in Parliament to deal with it. One of these was the Tea Bill. At that time, Melbourne was the dumping place of all the colonies for tea. The tea trade was in the hands of one or two firms. With the exception of Henty and Co., the large importers have all gone. The object of the Tea Bill was to prevent the introduction of inferior tea. The second Bill I introduced was embodied in the Health Bill, which was submitted at the same time. The following portion of the Health Act, which occurs in section 43, is well deserving the consideration of honorable members:—

"No person shall sell to the prejudice of the purchaser any article of food or any drug which is not of the nature, substance, and quality of the article demanded by such purchaser, under a penalty not exceeding £20."

That is the law now. If the words "of food or any drug" were omitted it would prevent the sale of shoddy flannel, and adulterated spices, coffee, and all those objectionable things which are now in consumption. I shall now endeavour to show that the views which I held years and years ago have not altered. When speaking in 1892 I said—

"What the country requires is legislation that will, before all things, and in every way encourage and stimulate employment of the people; that will not, if possible, allow a single industry to be crushed out; that will promote the distribution of wealth instead of the accumulation of wealth; that will, by the management of the railway roads, reduce the carriage of all goods, raw and manufactured, to the lowest possible cost; that will abolish all preferential rates that directly benefit the foreigner at the expense of the local producers; that will facilitate the greater division of land. The first indispensable step to any general improvement of the masses is to restore prosperity to agriculture. 'Speed the plough' is the true industrial motto of the country. Till the land pays to cultivate, prosperity cannot return. If the class who now possess the governing power obstinately refuse

to move in the direction that the welfare of the masses requires, then certainly it is time to shift the governing power into other hands, not otherwise. . . . The working classes want protection to wages, protection to labour, protection to industries, protection from 'rings' that artificially increase the price of meat, and fish, and bread."

Three or four years ago, when the high duties were being imposed, I further remarked—

"Here let me say that you may put on protective duties until you are tired, but unless you assure to the people that they get the genuine article for which they pay through the nose, protection will be of little use. Adulteration is going on before our eyes; we are manufacturing in some places shoddy cloth instead of woollen cloth. You can hardly wear out good Victorian woollen cloth, but although the people are paying high protective duties, they are having adulterated articles palmed off on them in all directions. If our system of protection were what it ought to be, it should preserve us from the articles of manufacture which are not genuine or which have been adulterated. Besides the protection already spoken of, the working classes want—protection from adulteration; from false weights and measures; they want a tender poor law for the old, the infirm, those who can't work, a hard one for the able-bodied loafers who won't work."

The condition of things has not altered since then. You cannot take the Tariff and patch it piece by piece; it must be dealt with as a whole. If it is allowed to leave the committee without substantial reductions being made in those duties which injure the industries of the country, and encourage rings and adulteration of goods, honorable members will not be true to the promises they made to their constituents a short time ago. I will now say a few words with regard to another matter. According to the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), if the present proposals of the Government are accepted the tobacco industry in this colony will be killed. That honorable member says in the addenda to the second report of the Tariff Board—

"It is with sincere regret that we, the undersigned, find it necessary to differ from some conclusions arrived at by a majority of the board, and we fear these findings will, if carried into effect, be detrimental to the industries concerned, notably in regard to tobacco and cigars. The increase of duty on leaf will have the effect of increasing the import of manufactured tobacco, and (as in Sydney) will stamp out the manufacture of cigars altogether."

"The increase of the duty in New South Wales has caused a steady decline in the manufacture of tobacco in that colony, and we are of the opinion that it will have the same effect here. Further, the recommendation is against the evidence given before us by both manufacturers and importers, and against the evidence

of history in our own colony. During the period in which we had an excise of 1s. on manufactured tobacco the local production steadily fell off, and when it was again reduced to 6d. per lb. the local production steadily increased, and has continued to do so until the present time."

With that I thoroughly concur. When the tobacco items come under discussion, I shall endeavour to show that the statements contained in that protest by the honorable member for Richmond are absolutely true and correct in every particular. Honorable members will recollect what took place in this committee a short time ago with regard to the quality of certain flannel goods, and I hope that what I am going to say will be a complete answer to the contention on behalf of the Castlemaine Woollen Mill or the other mills. What is going on now is not fair trading, and the sooner the people of this colony demand that they shall be supplied with genuine articles the better.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is if you prevent the importation of shoddy, and trade all alike.

Mr. GRAVES.—I quite agree with the honorable member. It should be made a fraudulent act, subject to a penalty of £20, to sell an article which is not genuine. When the senior member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams) was addressing this committee on the 13th of the present month, he said—

"I think that is sufficient evidence to justify the Government in submitting their Tariff proposal in regard to the woollen industry, and also that it proves beyond doubt that during the last few years the woollen mills of Victoria have been a success. To-day there is not a mill in this colony which has 20 yards of stuff on its shelves, whereas four or five years ago the plants were only doing half work, and the shelves were full of stuff. As to the quality of the material produced, an honorable member stated on the previous day that 44 per cent. of cotton was found in the flannel which was made in the colony.

"Mr. GRAHAM.—I have seen it myself.

"Mr. E. D. WILLIAMS.—I can give that a straight denial.

"Mr. GRAVES.—Here—[holding up a piece of flannel]—is a piece of flannel from your mill, and it has 46 per cent. of cotton in it. It came from your mill this morning.

"Mr. E. D. WILLIAMS.—There are only two or three individuals besides myself who know the ingredients of the Castlemaine flannel, and I defy the honorable member for Delatite to show that there is cotton in it."

Now, I am going to take up that challenge. The senior member for Castlemaine further stated—

"I will give an illustration which will convince honorable members that Castlemaine flannel

and colonial tweeds generally are equal to any articles of the kind which are made in the world."

After throwing some mill-dust in our eyes he went on to say—

"In consequence of imitations being sent out to Victoria, the directors of the Castlemaine Woollen Mill had to go to the expense of issuing 30,000 circulars throughout the colony to certify that for the future the Castlemaine flannel would have the Castlemaine brand on every 8 yards, and it took several years to work the imitation flannel out of the market."

I hold in my hand a shirt which was sold to a man in my employment for 4s. 6d., the purchaser believing it to be made of genuine flannel. The senior member for Castlemaine stated that the Castlemaine flannel had the brand of the mill on every 8 yards. On this shirt the word "Castlemaine" appears on the selvage in two places, and the piece of flannel I exhibited to the committee on the 13th of the present month was taken from this shirt. I had a sample of the garment tested by one of the best chemists in Melbourne, with a preparation of caustic soda, when I found that it contained 41 per cent. of material other than wool. There are four kinds of cotton, and the cotton used here is cotton fibre. Cotton is tested by the length of its fibre. The cotton used here is called Sea Island Cotton, and there is 40·24 per cent. of adulteration in it. The chemical test destroyed the woollen fabric and left the shoddy, or cotton, bare. If any of these pieces of the material which I hold in my hand were touched with a match they would burn with a flame, showing that they are not wool, but cotton. It is all cotton fibre. Some short time ago I saw a letter from a Melbourne traveller to a house in Tasmania, stating that he was in the habit of supplying cotton fibre to woollen mills in Victoria, and adding—

"Let me send you a trial shipment to Tasmania."

The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) told us that Fijian cotton was mixed with the cheaper flannels, which are sold as flannelettes, and the senior member for Castlemaine said that this adulteration improved the article. But the trouble is that the article is not sold as flannelette, but as flannel; and it is as indispensably necessary that the miner, the farmer, men working thrashing machines, and others who get heated in their work, in this hot climate should have

pure flannel as it is that they should have good food. The piece of flannel which I exhibited to the committee some days ago contains 41 per cent. of cotton, and I defy any one to contradict that assertion. I do not say that the cotton does not improve it, but I say that the man who bought it did not believe that it improved it. The shirt which I have exhibited, and which cost 4s. 6d., can be purchased in Sydney at Hordern's for 3s., which is a proof that the Victorian manufacturers have a larger protective duty than they are entitled to. The 45 per cent. duty is not doing us good, and is robbing the farmer. If the manufacturers of flannel are protected here, and obtain a better price for their article than is obtained in Sydney, they at least ought to manufacture only the genuine article and not shoddy. They, however, do not do so, and it is time that the public, who pay a high price, believing that they are getting the genuine article, are protected against such fraud. The honorable member for Shepparton a short time ago purchased a pair of boots for 7s. 6d. to go shooting. He said—"I will grease them, and get as much service out of them as out of any other boots." But when he walked into the water after the birds, he had to leave the soles of the boots in the mud, and walk home without any. I hold in my hand a pair of boots which were made in Collingwood. They are to all appearances good, being well made. Their price was originally 10s. or 12s., but they are now sold wholesale for 5s. Is not protection good? Who would not go in for protection? Although the boots look good and well finished, if you take a knife and rip the sole, you will find under the thin outside shell of leather nothing but brown paper. When the boots are being made cardboard is put upon the last.

Mr. TUCKER.—It is strawboard.

Mr. GRAVES.—I accept the correction of the honorable member, though perhaps pasteboard is the proper word. Thin leather is put over the pasteboard, and, when the glue and paper melt, the whole fabric comes to pieces. I will endeavour to show that the rings and monopolies which I indicated four years ago would be the result of high duties are now rife. The public need protection against these monopolists, who get the full advantage of the protective duties, and besides producing an inferior article, and selling it at a high price, pay the operatives

starvation wages. I am ashamed to state the prices which the workmen are receiving. What the committee should strive to do is to destroy the monopolies which these few men are enjoying, and place the industries on a footing which will enable them to sell a good article again to the public at a fair price, and give the employes a fair wage for their labours. At the last general election the country spoke out as one man, and I trust that honorable members will adhere to the promises which they then made to reduce duties without interfering with any genuine business which has been established under a fair amount of protection. The country demands fair and reasonable legislation, and not that the views of the majority shall be sacrificed to those of the minority. I will not trouble the committee by enumerating all the swindles I am acquainted with in the nature of adulterated goods, but I hold in my hand a pair of boots which were sold in Bourke-street, being marked "hand sewn," while they are machine sewn, and instead of the thread being waxed it is dipped in a mixture of tar and grease. As soon as this thread begins to decay the boots will fall to pieces. If any man in London attempted to sell machine-sewn boots as hand sewn he would speedily be in gaol for fraud. It is the bounden duty of the committee to see that the people of this country are not robbed in this way, but that they should get a genuine article when they pay for it. The statements made by the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) with regard to the Albion Mills is very true. Ten years ago, if a person went to New South Wales or Queensland, he would see placarded in almost every shop window—"Guaranteed genuine Victorian tweed"; but if he goes there now he sees—"Guaranteed genuine Mossgiel (New Zealand) tweed." The same thing is to be seen at Hordern's, in Sydney. The New Zealand mill makes a better article, while the Victorian article has deteriorated. Some of the Geelong and Castlemaine goods are equal to any in the world, and it is the shoddy that I am speaking against. I have given the subject a life-long study, and I am satisfied that the able men who originally dealt with the subject in this colony, most of whom have now gone to their long account, held the correct view. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) is wrong in his view that protective

duties are not protective until they reach over 35 per cent. That is wrong in principle, and it only encourages rings and fraudulent practices, while it at the same time lowers wages. In 1865, when Sir James McCulloch, Sir George Verdon, and Mr. Francis brought down their financial proposals, the customs duties were levied on only ten articles—they were mere revenue duties. The Tariff, in fact, was similar to that which is in operation in England to-day. Sir George Verdon, who was Treasurer at the time, said—

“We have articles dutiable at the Customs. This Government proposes to increase the number of imports subject to duty at the Custom-house, and we propose to select certain imports and place a duty on these of from 2s. to 2s. 6d. in the £1, thus yielding an increased revenue, while it will also be the means of fostering colonial products and of giving employment to our people.”

Over and over again the gentlemen who then framed the Tariff recognised that all the evils which have arisen from high duties would occur if high duties were imposed. The bulk of our industries were established under a much lower protective duty than 35 per cent., and the sooner we determine what is exact fair play to the consumer and to the producer, the sooner this committee will have done its duty. The honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) asked the committee to support the establishment of a Board of Trade on the ground that there were certain articles in the Tariff (300 I think he said), which the Minister of Customs decided upon, which had virtually made a supplementary Tariff. A statement like that coming before strangers who do not understand it is a very great wrong to the colony. I hold the Tariff in my hand, and no Minister of Customs can alter it by a single farthing; it is only Parliament that can alter it. But it is inseparable from a high protective Tariff that there will be men in England who will make up articles with the object of avoiding payment of duty. The law, however, is fixed by the Customs Act. If an importer feels aggrieved the Minister of Customs states a case, which goes to the Supreme Court and is decided there; and there is not a man in Melbourne who has ever been prejudiced by a decision of the sort. When I was Minister of Customs the Tariff as regarded watches was thus stated—watches, 20 per cent.; watches in parts, free. The consequence was that the cases of watches would be sent by one vessel,

and the works by another, and the importer then claimed that no duty should be paid. As the works and the case together made up a complete watch, I compelled the importers to pay the duty; but they appealed to the Supreme Court, and the court decided that as the watches were imported in parts, no duty could be levied under the Tariff as it stood, so that virtually the duty on watches was abolished. Since then the Tariff has been amended, so that now duty has to be paid upon parts of watches as well as on watches completely put together. In no case, however, is the Minister of Customs the sole arbiter as to the duty that has to be paid; it is the law which decides the matter. The Minister gives his decision, and if the importer objects to it he can obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court. Section 35 of the Customs Act provides that if any dispute arises as to the duty payable under the Customs Act and Tariff Schedule, the importer shall pay the duty demanded and refer the matter to the Supreme Court; then, whichever side is found to be in the wrong has to pay the costs. Therefore, the objection raised by the honorable member for Fitzroy, has no foundation. Whatever customs laws are adopted by Parliament every trader in the colony is bound by them, and if he is aggrieved by any decision of the Minister he can appeal to the Supreme Court. In conclusion, I would reiterate that the men who are best served by a prohibition Tariff are the worst enemies of the people and of the country, and it is our bounden duty to amend the Tariff so as to afford suitable avenues of employment to the people. If we wish to restore and increase the prosperity of this colony we must act in such a way that we shall no longer shut ourselves up nor deserve to be known as the hermit race of the Australian colonies.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Sir, before entering on the consideration of the general subject of the Tariff proposals now before the committee, I would like to refer to the position in which the committee stands at the present time. We are supposed to be discussing the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, which the Government has chosen to accept as a motion of want of confidence, and yet, as has been pointed out this evening, business proceeds, both in this House and another place, as though there were no motion of want of confidence before this Chamber at all.

I would also like to draw attention to the fact that the Government, in choosing to consider the amendment as a want of confidence motion, have acted differently from the course which they took with regard to the amendment submitted by the honorable member for South Yarra. That amendment was far more drastic and sweeping than the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn; yet the Government did not accept it as a want of confidence motion, although immediately the honorable member for Hawthorn submitted this amendment they chose to receive it as a hostile motion. Of course, the members of the committee may have their own opinions as to why the Government have acted in this way. From a technical point of view, I think the Government have acted very wisely, and I fully expected that they would take the course they have done if the honorable member for Hawthorn saw fit to submit such an amendment. I think the honorable member committed a great tactical blunder in proposing that amendment, and I may say, for myself, that I cannot agree with it in its present form. The honorable member proposes that all ad valorem duties shall be reduced to a maximum standard of 25 per cent. Now, that would mean that the duty on apparel should be reduced to 25 per cent.; but every one, I think, will admit that whatever the duty is upon apparel it must be 10 per cent. in excess of the duty on woollen piece goods, because there is clear evidence that the makers of apparel cannot do with less if they are to have any protection at all. Consequently, the carrying of the 25 per cent. standard in regard to apparel would necessitate the reduction of the duty on woollen piece goods to 15 per cent.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Hear, hear.

Mr. McKENZIE.—That would be a reduction of 25 per cent. on the present standard; and I, for one, although I am as anxious as the honorable member can be to see the high duties reduced, must distinctly state that I would not support such a reduction as that under the present circumstances. I was very pleased indeed to hear the speech with which the Minister of Customs introduced the Government proposals. I congratulate him upon the exceedingly temperate manner in which he spoke, and I also desire to commend him and the members of the Government for what I hold to be the very wise position they have taken up in making this a non-party question, and

thereby giving a free hand to members on their own side of the House, with the very laudable object of framing a Tariff that will be best adapted to the necessities of the State at the present juncture. I feel certain that the Opposition will reciprocate that spirit when we come to deal with the different items in detail, and that members sitting on this (the opposition) side will cordially co-operate with the Government, and with moderate men in the Chamber wherever they may sit, to bring about this desirable result. Now, sir, this subject of Tariff reform is inseparable from the report of the Tariff Board, and the action which the Government have taken in connexion with that report. The appointment of the Tariff Board was the most important event that has happened in connexion with Tariff reform. It will be remembered that early in the first session of the last Parliament Sir Henry Wrixon, then member for Portland, strongly advocated the appointment of a Royal commission, consisting of members selected from both Houses of Parliament and of representative men outside Parliament, to inquire into the working of our fiscal system. Now, I think that the appointment of a Royal commission was the right course to adopt. The late Premier set apart an evening for the discussion of the motion submitted by Sir Henry Wrixon, and the result of that discussion was that the House, at the instance of the Premier, adopted a motion in favour of the appointment of a board of members of this House instead of the commission desired by Sir Henry Wrixon. I was one of the minority who supported Sir Henry Wrixon on that occasion, and I desire to say that, from the experience which I gained as a member of the first Tariff Board, in the light of present events, and from a foresight as to what is about to happen, both in this Chamber, in commercial circles in the city, and throughout the country, I am of opinion that a very great mistake was made when the commission was rejected in favour of a board. I hold that the constitution of that board was also a most important matter in connexion with the subject of Tariff reform. I think it is obvious that the members of a Tariff inquiry board should consist of moderate men—men representing as far as possible all the interests that are affected by the Tariff. Representation, I hold, should have been given to the manufacturing interest, to the importing interest, and to the distributing, the

producing, the consuming, and the industrial sections of the community. Now, while some of those were largely represented on both the Tariff Boards, others were not represented at all, and I think it is obvious that it would be impossible to obtain a board constituted of members of this House which could satisfactorily represent all the varied interests of this colony. I think the board was improperly constituted, because it ought to have been a commission, not merely of members of this House, but representing all the important interests of the country; and I also think that it should have gone upon different and wider lines than those on which both boards proceeded. That is the opinion I held as a member of the first board, and it has been confirmed by the experience of the second board. Sir Henry Wrixon was very anxious that the question of the drift of population from the country to the cities should be specially inquired into. He was of opinion that the drift of population from the country districts—from the farms and the producing interests in the country—to the cities was due to a very great extent to the present protective system of the colony; and when he was challenged upon that point he said that, at all events, it was certainly a matter for inquiry. Now, that question to my mind has not been inquired into as fully as it ought to have been. I consider that it was most important to ascertain why the people have drifted from the country into the cities; for within the last twenty years there has been a very marked change in Victoria in this respect. Inquiry should also have been made as to how it is that the number of cultivating farmers in Victoria has decreased to the extent it has done. Sir Henry Wrixon pointed out that in the previous year to that in which he spoke there were 500 less cultivating farmers in Victoria than there had been in the year before that. I remember that the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) interjected at the time that there was a greater area of land under cultivation, and I would say, both to the interjection which the honorable member then made and also with regard to the similar statement which he made the other night upon this point, that the increase in the area of cultivation is explained by the large areas which are cultivated in the mallee district, and which were not under cultivation twenty years ago. There are single individuals in the mallee district

cultivating thousands of acres, and those areas of course swell the returns; but the area under cultivation twenty years ago was made up of small farms of 10, 20, 50, or 100 acres, cultivated by a large number of farmers. These were points upon which I consider there should have been a more definite inquiry than there has been. At the same time, I feel that the boards had very great difficulties to contend with; and what I am now saying must not be accepted as in any way reflecting upon the individual members of either of the Tariff Boards. I believe that the members of both boards did their duty faithfully and in accordance with their convictions. At the same time, I am convinced that, as far as the limits of this Assembly would permit, moderate men, and only moderate men, should have been placed on those boards; and I regret that when the Premier was reconstituting the first board he did not keep this principle more clearly in view. I could not help admiring the magnificent audacity of the Minister of Customs the other evening when he ventured to refer to the report now before us as the production of a free-trade board. I do not think he believed for one moment that it was a free-trade board.

Mr. BEST.—I said it was so alleged.

Mr. McKENZIE.—Yes, but he quoted the opinion in such a way as to give it the stamp of his own authority; and such a reference at all events was apt to convey a false impression as to the real character of the board. The notorious fact is that when that board was appointed there were so many gentlemen placed on it who were known to advocate extremely high duties that others who favoured substantial reductions considered it worse than useless to take any part in the inquiry. That is notorious, and the fact that a board constituted such as this has been compelled by the weight of evidence to bring up the report which is now before us is to my mind a condemnation as wonderful as it was unexpected of the present high Tariff system of the colony. It has been said that the recommendations of the board in favour of lower duties were not justified by the evidence.

Mr. TRENWITH.—Hear, hear.

Mr. McKENZIE.—The honorable member for Richmond says "Hear, hear." While I am not prepared to dispute that point with him, because, if by the evidence is meant exclusively the evidence taken before the board of which he was a member,

then, judging from a numerical stand-point, it is possible that the honorable member is correct, and that the recommendations of the board were not justified by the number of witnesses who gave evidence in favour of reductions. That may be so—I am not prepared to say whether it is or it is not. But on looking through the evidence I find that that board never sat outside of Melbourne, excepting on one or two occasions when it visited the tobacco-growing districts; and when the great bulk of the witnesses were manufacturers and their employes it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the bulk of the evidence was not in favour of low duties. In fact, I find that it often happened that one or two or three partners in the same factory would give evidence, and that then that evidence would be corroborated by the manager, and then confirmed by a number of the employes. These gentlemen would be called forward, and the chairman would say—"You have heard the evidence of Mr. So-and-so?" "Yes." "Do you agree with that?" "Yes." "Have you anything to add?" Then very likely the witness would suggest some duty which had been overlooked by the manager or partner in the factory. However, I notice that the gentlemen who came forward to give evidence in this way were not those who were doing the sweating in connexion with manufacture; they were the men who had the plums, who held the best positions in connexion with the factories. They reminded me of Sancho Panza's conversation with the duchess, in *Don Quixote*, in which he said—

"He that leaneth against a good tree, a good shelter findeth he.' I have leaned and stuck close to a good master these many months, and shall be such another as he, if it is God's good pleasure; and if he lives and I live, neither shall he want kingdoms to rule nor I islands to govern." But it must not be forgotten that this board had before it the evidence given before Mr. Bosisto's board, which examined witnesses both in town and country. I have analyzed the evidence given before that board, and I find that there were 392 witnesses examined. Of these 250 were in favour of substantial reductions in the Tariff, and some of them advocated the abolition of the Custom-house altogether.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is not evidence; that is their opinion.

Mr. McKENZIE.—They gave evidence that they believed the Custom-house was doing harm, and, therefore, they would like to see it abolished.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is merely an expression of opinion.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I am stating this in opposition to the statement in the Tariff Board's report, that the protective system of the colony has not been assailed. There were nearly 100 witnesses before the first board who gave evidence in favour of absolute free-trade.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is not evidence at all.

Mr. ZOZ.—What is evidence?

Mr. TRENWITH.—A statement of facts.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I do not think the time is opportune for entering into a discussion of what constitutes evidence. However, that is the sort of evidence that was given on both sides, and I quite agree with the honorable member for Richmond that a far better system would have been to have requested all the different interests in the colony affected by the Tariff to appoint representatives to give proper evidence. However, we have to deal with the evidence as it stands. I would like to point out that by the system adopted of getting evidence the witnesses were volunteers as a rule—this applies to the first board, at all events. Advertisements were inserted in the local press requesting persons who wished to give evidence before the board to come forward. The result of that was that if there were any highly-protected industries in the town or district you might be perfectly certain that they would send representatives to give evidence, and they did so. Yet, notwithstanding that, it frequently happened that there was not one solitary witness who came forward to champion the present Tariff. Out of the whole of the witnesses examined at some centres—perhaps fifteen or twenty—not one appeared to advocate the present scale of duties. An analysis of this evidence also shows that the 392 witnesses examined by the first board included witnesses at Ballarat, Geelong, and at Melbourne—witnesses from the woollen factories at the first-mentioned places and from the highly-protected industries in the metropolis. Therefore, it was something that astonished me very much indeed to find, in regard to many of the protected industries of the colony, witnesses coming forward and advocating a great reduction of the duties. Another important fact is that of the 118 witnesses who gave evidence in favour of the present Tariff, a great many of them did

so distinctly for revenue reasons. Two such witnesses were examined at Rochester, and they both stated that they would like to see the high duties reduced if they could be assured that the reduction would not result in loss to the revenue, which would have to be made good by additional taxation in some other direction. Taking the evidence given before both boards as a whole, I feel bound to express my opinion that in view of that evidence the recommendations in favour of the reductions should have been much greater and more extensive in very many directions than they are. But then we have to remember that the recommendations as they reach us are the result of concessions made by individual members of the board in order to secure unanimity. In fact, they are the result of a compromise between the moderate protectionists and the prohibitionists.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—There were no free-traders.

MR. McKENZIE.—There was not a solitary free-trader on the board.

MR. WINTER.—Is there a free-trader in the House?

MR. McKENZIE.—The honorable member may draw fine distinctions as to what constitutes a free-trader, but if he does not accept the honorable member for Hawthorn as a free-trader—

MR. WINTER.—He is a 25 per cent. man.

MR. McKENZIE.—The honorable member for Hawthorn stated distinctly that he accepted 25 per cent. as an instalment only—that he was not satisfied with that reduction, but would like to go all the way. The recommendations of the Tariff Board, as I have said, are the result of a compromise between the moderate protectionists and the prohibitionists; and what I regret is that the Government should have seen fit to have made a further compromise between the extremely moderate recommendations of the board and the clamorous prohibitionists inside this Chamber, together with their “protection in danger” seat-seeking allies outside of it. And now, to come to the consideration of the proposals before us, I quite agree with the Minister of Customs that it is impossible for us to create a scientific Tariff out of the present tangled and complicated list of customs duties. Vested interests bar the way. If it were not for vested interests we could do it at once, but there they are, and I quite agree with the honorable member for Delatite that we must

respect them; we must do what is fair and just to them, at the same time doing what is fair and just to the people of the colony. I believe that in a new country such as this it may be wise, in regard to certain industries, to give them assistance in their initial stages, but I also think that in adopting the present protective system, in view of the great lengths to which it has gone, we chose the wrong way of doing the right thing. I believe we would have done better—we would have obtained the end sought far more effectively and in a far less burdensome manner to the whole community—if we had dealt with our factories as we have dealt with our dairy farmers and vigneron, by giving them a bonus on their productions, on a decreasing scale. By this means it is certain that none but really native industries would have been established, and none but those which would have a good chance of success, and of standing alone after a time. It is very likely that this system will be objected to on the ground of the cost to the general taxpayer; but I venture to say that the cost to the taxpayer would not have been a tithe of the cost of the present system, while the burden of the taxation would have fallen more equally on the whole community. For, if you view the present system of high protective duties as a tax, then it is the most inequitable that could possibly be devised, because it calls upon men to pay, not in proportion to their wealth, but in proportion to the amount of dutiable goods which they consume. This means that the working man is often called upon to pay as much as the wealthy man, and always infinitely more in proportion to his means. But it will be objected that protection is not looked upon as a system of taxation at all. There are a great many protectionists who say that that is a wrong view of the question altogether; but I accept the present Speaker of this House as a representative protectionist on this point. I would draw attention to the fact that that honorable gentleman, in 1892, proposed additional duties, and, unfortunately, a great number of them were carried. He informed us that, by means of those duties, he expected to raise £900,000 of additional revenue. That shows that he looked upon protection then as a system of taxation. I remember last session listening with very great pleasure to some remarks that fell from the honorable member for Geelong

(Mr. Higgins) on the subject of taxation. I may say that I listened with far greater pleasure to that speech than I did to his remarks the other evening on the Tariff. The honorable member laid it down as a fundamental principle that taxation should involve equality of sacrifice.

Mr. HIGGINS.—Not land taxation.

Mr. McKENZIE.—The honorable member was speaking about taxation generally. Now, where is the equality of sacrifice in this system, which calls upon the poor man to contribute as much as the rich man? No doubt it will be contended that protection does not increase the cost of the article to the consumer, but that its effect is to reduce the price to him. But if that is so, why were protective duties imposed at all? I take it that the duties were imposed for the express purpose of increasing the cost of the imported article, and thereby enabling the local manufacturer to make a corresponding increase in the price of his goods. He has done so in the great majority of cases, and the consumer has to pay proportionately. The Tariff Board in their report state that "the public undoubtedly receive the greatest benefit when fair competition exists between the importer and the manufacturer," and I quite agree with that statement. But in view of the recommendations of the board which follow it is quite clear that the board could not stop there, and so they had to go on, and the statement that I have quoted is followed by another, which I regard as extremely clever. In fact, it shows a master hand. That statement is that—"In the case of some large industries, such as boot-making, the internal competition between a number of large and small factories is sufficient to guarantee the sale to the public at the lowest price that will yield the maker a fair profit." I thoroughly agree with that statement. In fact, I will go much further, and say that internal competition in many cases is sufficient to guarantee the sale to the public at a price which necessitates extremely low wages to the employé, and exceedingly small profits to the manufacturer, at an unduly high cost to the consumer, for a second or third rate article. Now, this may appear somewhat contradictory, but it is not so, because in the case of such an article as that to which I refer, its importation is prevented by a prohibitive duty, and it cannot be manufactured here, even under sweating conditions, at anything

like the price at which it could be imported. I will illustrate this by taking an article that can be imported and sold here for 10s., but which cannot be manufactured and sold here profitably at less than 15s. If a protective duty of, say, 10s. were imposed, it is clear that more than 20s. would have to be charged for the imported article; but at the same time it is quite possible that internal competition might bring down the price to 12s. 6d. It would do so at the expense of the employé, and would return to the manufacturer the very smallest profit, although it would mean to the consumer 2s. 6d. of an advance upon what the article could be imported and sold at, and he would probably get, under these circumstances, a very inferior article. There are in this Chamber, as there are throughout the country, two distinct classes of protectionists. I accept the honorable member for Richmond as a typical representative of one of those classes. He urges that customs duties to be protective must be prohibitive, and that if 25 per cent. does not prohibit then the duty should be raised until that end is attained. With that sort of protection I have no sympathy whatever. I believe that it has inflicted and is inflicting most serious injury upon this country, and that unless that policy is speedily reversed it will continue to do so in the future. There is another class of protectionist, and I think we may accept the Minister of Customs as the representative of it; that is, if we are to judge him by his speech. I am sorry to say if we are to judge him by his proposals we must arrive at a totally different conclusion. The words of the honorable gentleman are these—"I submit that the great object of protection is, as far as possible, to enable readily adaptable and indigenous industries to compete with foreign importations." The principle which this embodies is a very different principle to that advocated by the honorable member for Richmond and the honorable member for Footscray. It is an understandable and even a reasonable position. It is the position that was originally taken up by all protectionists when the system was first introduced, and it was held for years afterwards by the leaders of that party. And so late as 1877 we have the present Speaker of this House saying, in regard to the Customs Duties Bill he was then introducing—"It is my conviction that the effect of these

duties will be to create competition between the locally-manufactured article and the article imported from outside countries." Then we have Mr. J. L. Dow, who has always been regarded as a thorough-going protectionist, telling us in 1879 that "protection, as I regard it, means a policy which, taking into account the special conditions of a new country, provides by means of a protective Tariff for the fostering of such industries as can be established, and the letting in, duty free, of anything we cannot produce ourselves, the duty to be taken off as soon as the industry gets a fair start and can go alone." That is very explicit, and it is very different indeed to the principle advocated by honorable members in the Ministerial corner. I had the pleasure also, in 1892, of listening to the honorable member for Essendon explaining, with perhaps more than his usual eloquence and clearness, the principles of protection in which he believes. He said—"I object to monopolies of any description." The honorable member argued that unless we gave some protection to our local manufacturers that we would be bound to suffer from an importers' monopoly; but he also contended that if that protection were raised to the point of prohibition we would then expose ourselves to a local monopoly, and he objected to the one as much as he did to the other. He therefore urged that we should not prevent outside competition. Now, we have the Minister of Customs himself telling us that "the great object of protection is, as far as possible, to enable readily adaptable and indigenous industries to compete with foreign importations"; and I, for one, am delighted to hear it. This means that in the future no protection is to be granted to those industries that are not genuinely native industries of this colony, and I regret that this principle was not kept more clearly in view in the past. It would have saved us from the vain and costly effort of attempting to establish industries entirely foreign to our conditions. In the next place, we learn that the Minister is in favour of competitive and not of prohibitive protection. I believe the country at the present time is prepared to extend a reasonable protection to thoroughly adaptable and indigenous industries—that is, industries that are "readily adaptable" to our conditions, and "indigenous" to our soil and climate. Now, as to the Minister's statement that he believes in

competitive and not in prohibitive protection, I would ask him does he intend to say that he has drawn the line at the point of competitive protection? Does he mean to say that the woollen mills of Victoria cannot compete with the importers with a lesser duty than 35 per cent? If he does, then will he tell us how is it that the woollen mills of New Zealand, paying higher wages and larger dividends, can not only compete in their own markets with a 20 per cent. duty, but can export some lines of goods to Victoria, pay a duty of 40 per cent. here, and successfully compete with the local manufacturer on his own ground? Will he affirm that the candle manufacturers of Victoria, with all their splendid local advantages, cannot compete with the importer, who has to purchase tallow in the London market, which has probably been shipped there from Australia, manufacture it into candles, and send it back here again? Will he affirm that 1½d. per lb. in that case does not exceed the limits of fair competition? The Minister gave us, in a few concise words, a splendid exposition of what moderate protection ought to be; but when he came to the items in his Tariff he forgot all about it—in fact, those items are diametrically opposed to the principle he enunciated. He gave us a splendid text, but when he came to deal with the separate items he ran right away from it and forgot all about it, and I think I may say of him as a member of a Scotch congregation once said to his minister—"Weel, minister, I canna help thinking that if your text had had the sma' pox there would have been very little danger of your sermon catching the infection." By the adoption of the competitive system of protection we would have the assurance that customs duties would be based upon a gradually diminishing scale, and that, as the industries progressed—the really indigenous industries—and became firmly established, they would be able to dispense more and more with the aid of the State, until at last they could stand alone, dependent upon their own strength and the protection which nature and their position has given them? It is in the nature of protection to drift forward to prohibition, and prohibition means monopoly. These words were used by the present Attorney-General. "Prohibition means monopoly"; monopoly means low wages to the employé, and in the end small profits to the manufacturer. The only way that the natural

trend of prohibition can be defeated is by rings, and I do not say that it is absolutely defeated in the end. I believe it will come in spite of rings—because so many will join the rings, if it is good enough, that at last they will break down. A great deal has been said in regard to importers' rings. I do not defend the rings of the importers any more than the rings of local manufacturers. I condemn one as much as the other; but the conditions in regard to the local manufacturers for the formation of a ring are much better than they are in regard to the importers. If a few importers have formed a ring in regard to any special lines of goods, and by means of that ring they are making very high profits, then it is certain that those who are importing other goods will come in and demand a share, until at last the ring breaks down through the increase of numbers, and the competition it has engendered. But within a small area, and with a small population such as this colony possesses, where there are limited requirements to be catered for, a very few manufacturers are sufficient to supply the demand in regard to many articles, and therefore it is comparatively easy for them to form a ring as compared with the importers. But I believe that that can only delay, and not defeat, the trend of prohibition, which is in the direction of low wages to the employés and small profits to the manufacturers. There are several other points that I would like to have taken up, but I can deal with them when the different items are under discussion. I will simply say, in conclusion, that I object to the prohibitive system which prevails in regard to many of our industries at the present time. I object to it because it induces undue local competition, and because the effect of over-competition in a restricted market is inferior goods to the consumer, low wages to the employés, and small profits to the manufacturers. I object to it because, while it increases the cost to the consumer, and thereby adds to his burdens, it does not enrich the Treasury, which is a point that I would like to refer specially to—that in the case of articles that are enjoying a prohibitive duty, although the Treasury does not receive the benefit of the tax, yet the consumer of the goods is taxed. If you refer to the returns of the Treasury to find out how much he pays you will be deceived, because it is not shown on the records; but, nevertheless, the cost of the goods is increased to the

Mr. McKenzie.

consumer owing to the prohibitive Tariff, which has enabled the local manufacturers, if successful in forming a ring, to keep the article at a much higher price than it could be imported for. Prices may be reduced where there is competition to a level that will not give a profit to the manufacturer, but at the same time that may be much in excess of the price for which the articles can be imported. I object to this prohibition, because it has robbed Melbourne of her pride of place as the commercial centre of Australia and the Queen City of the South. I object to it because it has driven the ships from our harbor, and the trade from our streets, and has fettered the enterprise and weakened the independence of our people. I object to it because it has burdened every industry in the land, and because it is the oppressor of the poor; and I trust that honorable members, no matter on which side of the House they may sit, will unite to frame a Tariff which, while it does justice to vested interests consistent with what is due to the whole community, will affirm and give effect to the principle of protection on the basis of competition and not—of prohibition.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Mr. Chairman, I feel that I am placed in a somewhat awkward position in having at this late hour to follow such an excellent and able address as that to which we have just listened from the honorable member for Anglesey. I must compliment the honorable member, and I can say that I consider that it is by far the finest speech that we have heard from the opposition side of the House. There has been a great deal of comment in regard to the position of the first and second Tariff Boards, as they have been called. There were not two Tariff Boards but one Tariff Board; but, owing to the late general elections, and to a number of honorable members having been defeated, it was found necessary for certain gentlemen to resign their seats on the Tariff Board. The Government did not appoint a new Tariff Board, it simply filled up the vacancies. I consider, therefore, that the present Tariff Board (for it can scarcely be said to be yet out of existence) is substantially a continuation of the original Tariff Board. There have not been two boards, and we have not, as one honorable member said, had the report of the first Tariff Board under consideration. We have the report of the whole Tariff Board under consideration. The members

of what has been called the second Tariff Board have been blamed for not visiting various parts of the country; but I contend that they acted properly in not going over the ground that had been traversed by the original board, and taking exactly the same evidence again. The evidence had been printed, and it was before us. The honorable member for Anglesey stated that seven of the members of the original board were out-and-out protectionists. I say unhesitatingly that they were not. They were extremely moderate protectionists, and most of them were considered in this House to be free-traders. I will take, for example, Mr. Bosisto, the chairman of the board; the honorable member for Numurkah; the honorable member for Barwon; Mr. Frank Stuart; the honorable member for Anglesey himself; Mr. Timothy Murphy; the honorable member for Kyneton; and Mr. Tatchell. Will any one say that any of those gentlemen are high protectionists? They have usually been looked upon in this House as mild protectionists, and as belonging to what we term the free-trade section. I will take now the constitution of the second board. Its members included the honorable member for Ripon; the honorable member for Dunolly; the honorable member for Borung; the honorable member for Gippsland Central; and the honorable member for Dundas; and not one of these gentlemen—although I recognise that the honorable member for Gippsland Central is a thorough protectionist—can be termed a prohibitionist as the honorable member for Anglesey has termed them. The board embraces almost every qualification that it was necessary for a Tariff Board to contain. They were men of business, men of commerce, and men who had been associated with manufactures nearly all their lives, and I say that they were properly qualified to analyze the evidence and to come to a conclusion upon it. Honorable members will see that the Tariff Board was by no means constituted of ultra-protectionists or of prohibitionists. The only out-and-out protectionists who were on the board were, it can safely be said, those who signed the addendum to the report as a protest against certain proposals made by the board. We protested against those proposals, because we believed that they were inimical to the industries of the colony; that they would ruin those industries; and that in some cases, as in the case of the tobacco

duties, they were against the weight of evidence. There is one thing that has struck me during the course of this debate, and has caused me a considerable amount of amusement, and that is the action of a number of honorable members—like the honorable member for Grant and the honorable member for Port Fairy—in declaiming against our local manufactures. Those gentlemen claim to be natives of Australia. If all Australian natives—and I am aware that there are many who take up a different attitude—were to act in the same way, I should say that they were absolutely wanting in patriotism, and that they had no love for their country. If I were an Australian native and were to take up such an attitude, I should be ashamed to call myself one.

Mr. MADDEN.—Should not an Australian native be qualified to know a bad egg if he should come across it at breakfast?

Mr. BROMLEY.—I have no doubt the honorable member came across a good many bad eggs during the election. I have been through every one of the woollen mills in the colony, and I can say without hesitation that the quality of the goods made there is equal, taking price for price, to that of the goods that are made in any part of the world. Honorable members have spoken of these goods as shoddy, but do they really know what shoddy is? I listen to a great deal of the opinions expressed by the honorable members for Lowan, Jolimont, and Brighton with respect, but when I think of the profession that those gentlemen follow, and how little knowledge they can possibly have of trade and commerce, I am amazed, almost astounded, at the audacity of manner in which they stand up in this chamber and denounce our local manufactures, and speak with such freedom upon subjects about which they know as much and understand as much as I know and understand about the science of astronomy. I admit that on theoretical questions these gentlemen, being well read and learned men, may have a good and sound knowledge, but on questions of commerce and manufacture I think their knowledge is scarcely worth accepting by this Assembly. They spoke of our Victorian-made goods with undisguised contempt, and characterized them as shoddy. But do they know what shoddy is? What is known as shoddy in the old country is made of old rags that are gathered up by rag gatherers from the various hospitals and asylums, and other places wherever they

can obtain them. They are sent to the mills, where they are torn up, and the material is afterwards consigned to the shoddy mills, where it is manufactured into goods. That is absolutely what shoddy is, and we know as a positive fact that there is nothing of that kind manufactured here. All our goods manufactured here are made from wool. Some people have asserted that bad wool is used; but I unhesitatingly assert that our woollen mills are using some of the best wool that can be procured. To bear out my assertion I will read a few extracts from the evidence of a witness who has had a large experience as a wool buyer, Mr. Squire Ward, who was examined as follows:—

"By the Chairman.—What are you?—Manager of the wool department, National Wool Company, Melbourne.

"Do you deal with the woollen mills?—Yes.

"Will you state what classes of wool are purchased by them?—They buy all classes of wool except the very best.

"Which is the greatest proportion purchased by them?—The medium wool; it varies in price; it depends on the market. The present market value is about 7d. in the grease.

"The statement has been made that the woollen mills of Victoria consume the lowest grades of wool—is there any truth in that statement?—It is not correct.

"You consider that they purchase a fair sample of the different grades of wool?—Yes, not only from us, but from the other wool-brokers as well.

"There is no foundation whatever for that assertion?—No.

"What is the highest-priced wool you have known the woollen mills buy this season?—They will have bought wool in Geelong, and perhaps have given 8d. and 8½d.

"By Mr. Gurr.—What is the highest price at which they have purchased from you in Melbourne?—Scoured wool 14d. per lb. I deal with the Castlemaine and Geelong mills.

"You have a knowledge of the materials they sell?—Yes.

"Do you consider that the materials they make from the wools they purchase is of a fair quality, suitable for the requirements of this colony?—Yes.

"Do you think they give satisfaction to the public at the prices that are paid for them?—At our woollen mills they are producing tweeds as cheaply as they could be bought in England. I know that from practical knowledge and from the Melbourne warehousemen and buyers.

"As to the flannels they make in the colony, you are aware they make a low-class flannel?—Certainly.

"It is known that they use cotton in the manufacture?—Yes, that is understood by those who buy them—the wholesale houses know that.

"A wool seller said that they did not care how they made it so long as it was made at a certain price; it was an inducement to the woollen mills, because there was the market, and because it was ordered?—Most decidedly.

Mr. Bromley.

It rests this way: If a retail man has anything to dispose of he has to suit his customers. If it is 3d. per yard worse in quality and 1d. per yard less in price, still the customer will have it.

"You do not think the public are being deceived?—The public cannot tell the difference between the imported flannel and the colonial."

Now, that is the statement of an expert who has spent most of his life in buying wool, and in manufacturing it in woollen mills, so that he knows exactly what he is speaking about. That is not the only evidence, but I quote it as the evidence of the best authority who appeared before the Tariff Board. It clearly shows how very unfair it is for honorable members to apply the term of shoddy to the goods made in the woollen mills of this colony. The honorable member for Grant said he doubted whether many honorable members could say that they are dressed in colonial cloth. I venture to say that there are a great number of honorable members who are dressed in colonial cloth. I can personally say, with the honorable member for Delatite, that I am dressed in colonial cloth from head to foot, and, like him, I wear colonial shoes. As far as quality is concerned, I have worn English shoes when in England, and I can buy a cheaper and better boot in Victoria than I could purchase in England for the money.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Then you don't want the duty here.

Mr. BROMLEY.—The effect of the duty is to give us command of our own market, and keep out foreign competition. We have in this community to work against a peculiar kind of competition, which they have not to meet in other communities to the same extent. In the first place, our seasons here are exactly the reverse of the seasons in the old country. Now, take our woollen goods. What is the unfair competition they have to meet? All the surplus summer goods left on the hands of the manufacturers in England at the end of the summer season there are dumped down upon our market at lower prices than those manufacturers would sell them in the English market in the season, because the season is over for those goods there, and they have made their profits in the home markets and in the markets of America and Europe; so that they can afford to dump those goods down on Australian markets at considerably less prices. I do not think that any honorable member would say that that is fair competition.

Mr. IRVINE.—Why not? Why should not the consumers here get those goods at a lower price?

Mr. BROMLEY.—When we had free-trade in this colony the consumers had to pay more for their goods than they have to pay to-day.

Mr. MADDEN.—What became of the surplus stocks then?

Mr. BROMLEY.—The profits went into the importers' pockets. That is how the money was obtained that was spent in building so many mansions at Toorak and other places. That is where the profits went—the consumer did not get the benefit of them.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Well let him get the benefit of them now.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Yes, if he could, but you know very well that he could not. I have been repeatedly in New South Wales before they put the duties on and since, and I say, without hesitation, that at no time during my experience could I buy things cheaper in New South Wales, taking quality for quality, than I could buy them in Victoria.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—Victorians go across the border to buy their goods in New South Wales, and come back with them.

Mr. BROMLEY.—I was over in New South Wales a few months ago with the Chairman of the Tariff Board, and we saw some things we required in a hosier's shop. We stepped in, and amongst other things we purchased some socks. I will show the honorable member a sample. This sock has not been on the human foot yet. It was one of the socks that I obtained in New South Wales—[tearing it into two pieces].

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—It shows what a bad judge of socks you are when they slipped that into you.

Mr. BROMLEY.—I purchased these socks to see how they compare with the goods that can be purchased in Victoria at the same prices. The honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) can bear out my statement that that sock has not been on the human foot at all. It is just exactly as taken out of the shop. Indeed, I tried to put it on my foot a few weeks ago, and away it went, but I thought I would save it to show to honorable members. The honorable member for Grant stated that one of his reasons for supporting proposals for lower duties was that he objects to the people of the country paying heavy

taxation to support a few Melbourne manufacturers. Now, is it true that the people of the country are paying heavy taxation to support a few Melbourne manufacturers? Wherever we have made inquiries throughout the country we have found that the prices of commodities, whether it be soft-goods or hardware goods, have gone down in all cases where duties have been put on and local manufactures have been started. I will give one item of evidence that was taken as far away as Mildura. A witness was examined there as to tinware, as follows:—

“Has there been any material difference in the price since the duty was imposed?—When I started in 1875 there were no milk dishes made here. They were sold at McEwan's and McLean's at 30s. a dozen. Since we started to make them we have brought the price down to 18s. a dozen.”

That is one effect of protective duties, and the evidence shows how much the people in the country suffer by the imposition of the protective duty on tinware. The duty on tinware has actually reduced the price to the consumer. The witness further expressed the opinion that protection benefited the farmers and others who used the goods manufactured by the protected industries. He was then asked—

“Do you think the manufacturers of tinware could stand alone if the duty were abolished?” His answer was—

“No, because the importers here would do the same as they did when I was in Canada—people from the United States would come in and undersell us.”

Now, that is one example of the evidence as to the effect of these high duties upon the country people. Nearly 50 per cent. of the witnesses who gave evidence before the Tariff Board in various parts of the colony showed that they knew little or nothing about the operation of the Tariff. One witness quoted nine articles, the high duties on which, he said, were burdensome to the farmers, and, as a matter of fact, there was no duty on any one of those nine articles. That fact can be borne out by any member of the Tariff Board who went through the country.

Mr. HARRIS.—Quite right.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is only an isolated case. Even the honorable member for Eastern Suburbs, speaking in this chamber, said the very axe which the farmer used to chop down his trees with was taxed, but the honorable member ought to have known that there is no tax

on axes at all, the axe coming in free as a tool of trade.

Mr. MADDEN.—Then it was taken off quite recently.

Mr. BROMLEY.—The evidence given by many of the country people clearly showed that they had been misled by mis-statements as to the articles taxed, and it came as a revelation to many of them when they found there was no tax at all upon certain classes of goods about which they were complaining. One witness said—"Can I go into a shop and buy a pair of moleskins such as I could a few years ago? No, I cannot buy a pair of moleskins that will wear half as long. And why? On account of the high duty upon them." That man was rather surprised when he learnt that there was no duty at all upon moleskins, and, therefore, according to the reasoning of the free-traders, he ought to have got them better than he could have got them a few years ago. But the fact, as stated by that witness, is that moleskins cannot be got anything like so good now as they could a few years ago, although there is absolutely no duty on moleskins at all. This shows the ignorance that prevails among a large section of the public as to how far the duties operate upon goods.

Mr. WHEELER.—It makes their evidence valueless.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Some of the evidence undoubtedly was valueless, except as showing how far some people in the country have misconceptions as to how the duties bear upon the articles they use, and as informing the people on what goods duties have to be paid, and ascertaining the prices of those goods at the present time. The honorable member for Grant stated that this was not a manufacturing country—that it was simply a producing country. Now, I do not exactly understand what the honorable member means by that. Does he mean to say that we are to go on for ever producing cabbages, growing sheep, and feeding cows? Was not America many years ago a producing country in the same sense that Australia may be termed a producing country to-day? And yet by means of their protective duties they built up manufactures to such an extent that they have become, and are to-day, perhaps, the greatest manufacturing nation in the whole world. Now, would it not be wise on our part in Australia to endeavour to build up our manufactures sufficiently to

supply our own markets and our own wants, so that probably at no distant date, when our manufactories are more complete, we may be in a position to export, as America is to-day? You have only to go into any of our hardware warehouses to find the extent to which America is exporting; even to this country. Fully 50 per cent. of the hardware sold in those warehouses is of American manufacture—the hammers, the chisels, and much of the ironware. How have the Americans accomplished this? Not by letting America be simply a producing country, but by building up their manufactures under a system of protection until they are a tenfold greater source of wealth to America and a tenfold greater benefit to the people of that country than our producing interests—our wool and our cattle—are to this country. If we build up manufactures within our borders—and we can build them up—I feel sure they will be of far greater value to us than the mere producing interests. No country in the world has ever become wealthy simply as a country for producing raw material. The honorable member for Grant was also very much afraid as to the position this colony would occupy if France were to put on retaliatory duties. He said—"We tax French wines, but France admits our skins and hides duty free." Why? Because they form the raw material for French manufactures, and as they cannot produce sufficient raw material for themselves they have to send to other parts of the world for it. Why do we put duties upon French wines? Because we can make our own wines; and if France could produce sufficient skins and hides for her own purposes, you may rest assured that, as a protectionist country, she would impose a duty on them, instead of admitting them free. Therefore I have not the slightest fear that France, Germany, or any of the countries that require our commodities for the raw material of their manufacturing industries will put a duty upon them, because that would be against their own protective policy as it is against our protective policy to put duties on goods which we cannot manufacture here, or which form the raw material for our manufactures. I say that we ought to admit duty free all goods that we cannot manufacture and all goods which form the raw material for our manufactures. The honorable member for Grant also stated that protection induces sweating. I would like to ask him how it

is that sweating is so rampant in free-trade England, more so than in any other country in the world? Notwithstanding that fact, which must be thoroughly well known to every honorable member, the honorable member for Grant says that protection induces sweating. No doubt, as far as this country is concerned, the honorable member's statement is partially true. If we had no protection here we should have no sweating here, because there would be no manufactures here but for our protective policy. Therefore, in that sense, and to that extent, protection does induce sweating. The statement that protection is the cause of sweating is altogether misleading, because we know that sweating exists in every country where competition is keen. We are now discussing the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn in connexion with the general question, which it is always recognised we are at liberty to discuss on the first item of the Tariff. With regard to that amendment, I venture to say that the reduction of the protective duties to 25 per cent. would be absolutely fatal to the greater part of our industries. Many of them could not possibly exist under a 25 per cent. Tariff, on account of the competition I have mentioned, and a 25 per cent. all-round Tariff would, in many cases, be burdensome. We have many duties that are below 25 per cent., and the manufacturers, from various natural causes, are able to carry on well under those lower duties. Therefore, I question if the consumer would be very much better off, or indeed any better off, under 25 per cent. duties applied all round than they are under the present system. A great deal of evidence was taken by the Tariff Board with reference to the possibility of reducing some of our protective duties, and in some instances, where the board have recommended reductions, the manufacturers themselves concurred that slight reductions might be made with beneficial effect.

Mr. T. SMITH.—The duty on biscuits, for example.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Yes, the biscuit manufacturers have now such an entire command of the market that they could absolutely do without any protective duties.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—They never wanted any duty at all; they always protested against it.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is an extraordinary statement for the honorable member for Hawthorn to make.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—It is quite correct—you ask Mr. Guest.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Well, I have spoken to Mr. Guest and also to Mr. Derham on the question, and those gentlemen told us that there was a time when the duty was necessary, so that I cannot think that they have always protested against it. At the present time, however, there is no necessity for a duty on biscuits, and I should be extremely pleased to see many more of our industries in a position to stand without protective duties, if it were possible. A great deal has been said about prohibitionists in this Assembly. Well, I believe that when we can manufacture goods equally as good and place them on our market equally as cheap as the imported goods, if there is no combination or ring existing among the manufacturers, the people engaged in those industries are entitled to a fair amount of protection. I am not, in that sense, a prohibitionist. I would like to see our protective duties kept to that point where they give us a reasonable command of our home market; but if the manufacturers attempt, by the formation of rings, to charge exorbitant prices to the consumers, the duties should be so fixed that the outside competitors would come in and compete with them. That would be the means of protecting the public interests. As the hour is late, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate, if the Premier has no objection.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned.

Progress was then reported.

The House adjourned at eleven o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, June 26, 1895.

Postal Department: Postal Deliveries in Melbourne—Storage and Transit of Fruit—Railway Department: Employment at Macedon State Nursery: Accident at Traralgon—Lethbridge Reservoir—Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill—Lands Department: Arrears of Rent—Juries Act Amendment Bill—Sessional Orders—Revision of the Tariff: Seventh Day's Debate.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past three o'clock p.m.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. STAUGHTON asked the Postmaster-General whether it was not possible to make a considerable saving by reducing the number of postal deliveries in the city

of Melbourne and elsewhere from four to three per day? He said he had left out the most important point of the information he wished to obtain, namely, what would be the estimated saving. The Postmaster-General had, no doubt, the information in his head, and therefore he would ask the honorable gentleman to allow him to add to his question the words—"And what would be the approximate saving?" That would give the country far more valuable information than the answer to the bald question he had given notice of.

Mr. DUFFY said he was afraid he did not carry all these figures in his head, as the honorable member supposed. To the question as put on the notice-paper he could answer yes. There were four postal deliveries in Melbourne, but none of the suburbs had more than three. The reduction of those deliveries was one of the economies which the department had resolved on, and it would be carried out when it could be done with due regard to surrounding circumstances and without undue harshness.

STORAGE AND TRANSIT OF FRUIT.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister of Agriculture if, in view of the important discovery made by Dr. Perkins, of America, with regard to the storing and transit of fruit, which had been fully reported on by Mr. Sinclair, he would take steps to have the Perkins system tried in this colony during the next fruit season? He remarked that, from reports he had seen in American newspapers, he felt certain that it would be an advantage to the fruit-growers of the colony if the Minister would comply with this request, because Dr. Perkins' system would introduce quite a revolution in the keeping and carriage of fruit.

Mr. TAVERNER stated that his attention was drawn to Dr. Perkins' system by Mr. Sinclair, and he had also read several reports in the American press as to the experiment tried on one of the American railways. He (Mr. Taverner) regarded it as a very important question, and he would make due inquiries with a view of ascertaining on what terms Dr. Perkins would permit the use of his system in this colony.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. STAUGHTON asked the Minister of Railways if he had authorized an official

of the Railway department to issue a circular to the railway employes asking them to apply for employment in the State Nursery, Macedon? He said he felt sure it was impossible for any man of common sense like the Minister of Railways to have acquiesced in this circular, a copy of which he had seen, and which was issued from the Railway department. It seemed to him that on the same lines they might ask a man from the Railway department to take charge of the Lunacy department of the colony. It was utterly ridiculous to suppose that men from the Railway department could work in and understand the cultivation of a nursery, and he was certain from his knowledge of the Minister of Railways that the circular in question had not been issued with the honorable gentleman's authority.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS said that personally he knew nothing whatever about the circular, but the official answer to the question from the Railway department was as follows:—

"In response to a request on the part of the Public Service Board, a circular was issued inviting applications for certain services in the department of Lands and Survey."

The explanation of that was that certain vacancies had occurred in connexion with the Forestry branch of the Lands department, and those vacancies had to be filled up by the nomination of the Public Service Board. Seeing that the Government were making no new appointments, and as it was supposed that there were superfluous hands in the Railway department, the Public Service Board had asked if there were any eligible candidates there who were prepared to fill the vacancies made in the Forest department.

Mr. MASON asked the Minister of Railways if his attention had been called to the serious accident that occurred at the railway station, Traralgon, on Saturday last, and whether he purposed taking steps to prevent a recurrence of such accidents in future? He remarked that a lady carrying her grandchild across the railway at Traralgon level crossing was knocked down by an engine which was being used to shunt some trucks and carriages, and both she and the child had each four toes cut off, according to the reports in the newspapers. It was only by a miracle, as it were, that they both escaped a fearful death. Traralgon station was a junction station on the main Gippsland line, between Bairnsdale and Heyfield, and there was an immense

deal of shunting and traffic there. The attention of the Railway department had been called to the danger of this level crossing years ago, and the matter ought to have received attention. There were three modes by which accidents could be prevented in future, namely, by the erection of an overhead bridge, the construction of a subway, or the removal of the passenger platform to the other side of the station. If some step was not taken to prevent accidents, a very heavy claim would probably be made on the department for negligence.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS stated that his attention had been called to the accident in question, and inquiry was now being made into the circumstances. That inquiry had not yet been completed, and the Railway department could not say what would be done until the whole circumstances were known. He could assure the honorable member that whatever was necessary to secure public safety would be provided in the future.

Mr. MASON remarked that he would repeat the question at a later date.

LETHBRIDGE RESERVOIR.

Mr. MCGREGOR asked the Minister of Water Supply the following questions:—

“1. Is the Lethbridge Reservoir dry?

“2. If so, as it is upwards of ten years since it was dry before, is it the intention of the department to clean it out, as was done when it was last dry, and thus increase its capacity and improve the quality of the water?”

Mr. FOSTER said that the Lethbridge Reservoir was under the control of the Victorian Railways Commissioners, but he understood that steps were being taken by them to have the reservoir examined and cleaned out.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. MURRAY (in the absence of Mr. BEAZLEY) asked the Premier when it was intended to proceed with the Factories and Shops Act 1890 Amendment Bill?

Mr. G. TURNER stated that the Government proposed to deal with the Tariff question first, then the Budget debate would follow, after which, as he promised the House last session, they would immediately proceed to deal with the Estimates. Then they had the Companies Act Further Amendment Bill, and the Mildura Irrigation Trusts Bill to dispose of, by which time he hoped they would be able to deal

with the important subject of the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill.

PETITION.

A petition was presented by Mr. BARRETT, from labourers and artisans in Melbourne and the suburbs, praying for the imposition of such duties of customs as would protect the Victorian industries and enable them to provide remunerative employment.

LANDS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DUGGAN moved—

“That there be laid before this House a return showing—1. The number of acres of land held under sections 67 and 123 of the Land Act 1890 respectively. 2. The amount of rent paid to the Crown in respect of the said sections for the year 1894. 3. The amount of arrears of rents due in respect of the same sections on account of the year 1894.”

Mr. J. A. ISAACS (*Ovens*) seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

JURIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was returned from the Legislative Council, with a message intimating that they had agreed to the same with an amendment.

Mr. G. TURNER stated that the amendment was a merely technical one, namely, the addition to the title of the Bill of the words—“and for other purposes.” He moved that the House agree with the amendment.

The motion was agreed to.

SESSIONAL ORDERS.

Mr. G. TURNER moved that the sessional orders relating to general business be suspended for that evening, so as to allow Government business to be proceeded with during the whole of the sitting. He said he was somewhat reluctant to again ask honorable members to be good enough to allow private members' business on the notice-paper for that evening to be postponed, because on two occasions already this session the House had very kindly come to the assistance of the Government in order that the debate on the Tariff might not be broken into. On the last occasion he said that he would undertake that those honorable members who were then ready to go on with their Bills—two measures having been circulated—should have an equal amount of Government time immediately the discussion on the Tariff proposals was completed. With

regard to the motions on the paper for that evening, he would point out that for Wednesday, the 10th July, there was only one notice of motion set down, so that honorable members would not risk losing very much by giving up the time set apart for private members' business that evening. He felt he might fairly ask the House to allow the debate on the main question of the Tariff to proceed uninterruptedly. Honorable members knew that if the Government business had to be suspended at half-past eight o'clock it would be impossible to finish the discussion on the first item of the Tariff proposals this week. The Government were very anxious that that discussion should be brought to a close, in order that honorable members might get to the consideration of the Tariff proposals; and, if honorable members could not see their way to comply with the request he now made, it would simply mean that it would be necessary for them to sit very late on Thursday night for the purpose of completing the discussion on the first item of the Tariff proposals. He was prepared, of course, to fall in with the wishes of honorable members in a matter of this kind, and did not desire to deprive those who had business on the notice-paper for that evening of their opportunity of bringing it forward, if they objected to give up to the Government the time set apart for private members. At the same time, he felt it would be for the convenience of the House and the Government—and he thought it would be a convenience to all honorable members—that the discussion on the first item of the Tariff proposals should be finished as early as possible the following day.

Mr. MURRAY seconded the motion. He said he should imagine that the Premier could demand as a right what he was asking as a concession. But was he really seriously treating the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a motion of want of confidence or not? Hitherto, he (Mr. Murray) had always understood that when a vote of want of confidence was submitted, all other business had to stand aside until that was disposed of. Were the Assembly following the bad example set to them by another place, which last week and this week pursued its usual course, although a motion of want of confidence was under debate in this Chamber? Did honorable members zealously desire to do the work of the country? He held that, if the Premier

was in earnest in treating the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a want of confidence motion, honorable members should support him, because in that case they could not object to the honorable gentleman demanding that one item of Government business should take precedence of all other business. But the Government broke through that rule themselves the previous evening, when the Attorney-General gave notice of a Bill. If the Government wavered and pursued an irregular course, how could they expect to be followed as leaders of the House? The Premier's course was clear and plain, and if the honorable gentleman and his colleagues did not pursue it, they were no longer worthy to hold their seats on the Treasury bench.

Sir JAMES PATTERSON expressed the opinion that the Premier's request was a perfectly reasonable one. As far as he (Sir James Patterson) had any influence with honorable members on the opposition side of the House, he had endeavoured to impress on them the desirability of finishing their speeches on the Tariff debate that evening, in order that the question at issue might be decided early on the following day. He thought there had been a sufficiently long general debate, although it was a very large subject, and a most important topic, on which every member had a right to be heard; but the sooner they got into the details of the Tariff the better.

Dr. MALONEY said he would like to know if the Premier still intended to treat the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a motion of want of confidence? If not, he (Dr. Maloney) must object to the further postponement of private members' business now proposed. (Mr. Staughton—"They cannot treat it as a motion of want of confidence now, because they have acted otherwise.") Had the Premier and his Cabinet decided not to treat the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a motion of want of confidence? (Sir James Patterson—"He will tell you that when it is carried.") But one bird in the hand was worth ten in the bush, and honorable members wanted the information now. The Premier promised private members two or three days at the end of last session to recoup time which had been taken away from them. It was evident that the time set apart for private members' business was looked upon by Ministers as a happy hunting ground;

when they wanted more time for Government business. The honorable gentleman wanted the Tariff question settled, but why did he not convene a special session of Parliament in March to deal with that subject, as he promised to do? With good management, there was no need to rob private members of one single hour of their time. If the Government had passed the Referendum Bill, this Tariff question could have been settled by the decision of the country in one day, and then there would have been no reason to deprive honorable members of the time set apart for private members' business. The Premier had promised to make up the time taken from private members, but that was simply another promise added to the burden which the honorable gentleman already bore on his shoulders. As sound business men he would ask honorable members what good were two or three days at the end of a session for private members' business? Even if they got the time it would be no good, because a private member could not get a Bill rushed through both Houses of Parliament in three days. There were two important questions on the notice-paper that might have been dealt with that evening had the Government not sought to infringe upon private members' time—questions of great interest to the people of the colony—the question of constituting Ministries on the basis of election, and the question of making provision for the aged poor and relieving them from the stigma which now attached to them when they were committed to gaol merely because they had no means of subsistence. Those questions were to be referred to the limbo of forgetfulness for a further period, because, forsooth, the Government wanted the time set apart for private members' business, owing to their failure to convene a special Tariff session of Parliament. Why should poor men of 80, and even 90 years of age, have the brand of infamy put upon them because of their poverty? It would be an honour to any Government to deal with a question of that kind in a manner that would meet with the approval of the people. (Mr. Murray—"Private members could not go on with their business to-night in face of the want of confidence motion.") If the Premier had not given notice of the motion he had now submitted, he (Dr. Maloney) would have blocked it, because he was determined to do all in his power to preserve the rights of private members.

Some honorable members might think that nothing was gained by getting a motion passed by the Legislative Assembly, but it was read throughout the length and breadth of the land, and every humane heart would rejoice with joy to learn that poverty was to be no longer treated in Victoria as a crime.

The SPEAKER.—The honorable member cannot discuss questions on the notice-paper. The question before the Chair is the suspension of the sessional order relating to general business.

Dr. MALONEY expressed the hope that the Speaker would keep honorable members close to the question. The Speaker had only to give his ruling, and he Dr. Maloney would obey that ruling immediately. It was very objectionable that private members should be prevented from bringing important business before the House. Of course, if the Speaker ruled that he was out of order, he would not allude to this notice of motion further. But he held that he was entitled, in discussing the question of whether private members' business should be sacrificed or not, to speak on these matters. The longer these motions were delayed the smaller the chance of giving effect to them. Some of the best measures which Parliament had placed on the statute-book had been passed by the Assembly during the time which was devoted to private members' business. Women first established their right to obtain justice under the law by a measure which was passed in the time devoted to private members' business. He maintained that if the House had any respect for itself it would not permit any Ministry to call honorable members together whenever it chose, and then rush through the Government business. The whole session might be devoted to the discussion of the Tariff, and why should they be allowed to take away the rights of private members? Private members joined together could make or unmake a Ministry, but if private members did not care to maintain their rights they would be swept away just as the liberties of the people would be under similar circumstances. He protested against the course which was being pursued.

Mr. McLELLAN observed that the parliamentary rule in respect to motions of the sort now under consideration was that, if there was any objection from any honorable member, that ended the matter. But he hoped that the honorable member

for Melbourne West would remember that honorable members were now engaged in considering one of the most momentous questions which had ever been before them, so that no honorable member ought to put any obstacle in the way of the Government proceeding with the business of the country. He had sat in silence during the debate on the Tariff in order that the business of the country might be proceeded with, and he was still prepared to sit in silence if the business was properly conducted; but it was really very hard to sit in silence and listen to what was being said around him. Although the standing order was to be suspended that day, he hoped that the Government would not rush the Tariff through, because there were a large number of honorable members who had not had an opportunity of saying a word upon it. He had sat in silence himself because he did not wish to interfere with the progress of business, but he would like to have an opportunity of saying a few words on the Tariff proposals before the debate was finished. He therefore trusted that the honorable member for Melbourne West would not interfere to prevent the suspension of the standing order. He (Mr. McLellan) hoped that honorable members would conclude this Tariff debate before anything else was proceeded with, because it was a question on which the welfare of the country hinged to a great extent. The decision of honorable members on this question would have an important bearing on the future welfare of the country, and would largely influence the opinion of the public in regard to the capacity of the Assembly for the administration of public affairs. Rather than obstruct the Government, he would be willing to sit in silence all through the debate, though he felt that that would not be fair to his constituents or to himself.

Mr. PRENDERGAST said he had not the slightest wish to obstruct the Ministry in their desire to bring the Tariff debate to a close as soon as possible, but he would like to know if it was the intention of the Premier to adopt the practice he was now adopting on any future Wednesdays; because if that were the intention of the Premier, private members' business would be hopelessly set aside, as in the previous session? If the Ministry would promise that full consideration would be given to private business brought forward by

honorable members, he would have no objection to the Tariff debate being proceeded with. It must not be forgotten that some of the private members' business was just as important to the people of the country as the Tariff. One notice which appeared on the business paper, with reference to the extension of the hours of polling under the Local Government Act, was certainly as important as the Tariff. He trusted that the Government would not place any obstruction in the way of private members' business in the future, and if they refrained from doing so he did not see any objection to the Tariff debate being continued during that day.

The motion was agreed to.

REVISION OF THE TARIFF.

SEVENTH DAY'S DEBATE.

The House having resolved itself into committee of the whole, the debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the Tariff proposals of the Government, and on Mr. Murray Smith's amendment that no ad valorem duty should exceed 25 per cent., was resumed.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Mr. Mason, I believe it is the wish of the committee that this debate should be curtailed as far as practicable within reasonable limits, and I do not, therefore, propose to speak at any great length. Still there are several points which I left untouched when I was addressing the committee on the previous evening which I think it necessary to deal with. I quite agree with the observation made by the honorable member for Ararat just now, that this question of the Tariff is one of vital importance to every worker in the community. Trade is practically paralyzed in consequence of this debate being continued, because merchants and traders in every direction are waiting for the decision of the committee before they can make their necessary investments or take goods out of bond. That being so, it is our duty, in the interest of the workers and of the trading community, to push this matter forward as quickly as we possibly can. When addressing the committee on the previous evening, I was proceeding to answer some observations which had been made in reference to the burden placed upon the people in the country districts through the operation of the Tariff. I was going on to point out that there really is no burden placed upon any of the taxpayers by the protective duties, but rather

that the prices to consumers have decreased. To bear out the statement I made last night, I will quote from the report of the Tariff Board its opinion with reference to the effect of protective duties on prices. And the House must remember that in the drawing up of this report there was a number of members on the board who were pledged to low duties, and who were pledged to lower the duties whenever that was found to be possible. Notwithstanding that, the resolutions which I am going to refer to were unanimously adopted by the board. The board's report contains the following paragraph:—

“On the vexed question of whether goods have been made dearer or cheaper by the imposition of protective duties we have received a great deal of evidence. It is an established fact that such goods are, as a rule, cheaper to the public than they were before the imposition of such duties, and that recent increases of rate have not, except in isolated cases, been followed by corresponding increases in price to the public.”

That statement, and the one I am about to read from the same source expressing the opinion of the people on the general policy, is founded on the evidence which the board took throughout town and country. The next paragraph in the board's report to which I desire to direct attention is as follows:—

“Although we have not examined minutely into the position of each individual industry, we have had exceptional opportunities for gauging the feeling of the people of Victoria in regard to the general policy of the Tariff. The principles of protection have scarcely been assailed, and we are convinced that a majority of the taxpayers of Victoria are in favour of a continuance of the system; but, whilst the principles have received support, a very general impression exists that the rates of duty are in many instances too high. Throughout the country, and very frequently in Melbourne, witnesses advocated a maximum rate of 25 per cent. for protective purposes. The increases made in the year 1892 were those which were most frequently objected to, and we are strongly of opinion that but for the alteration then made the outcry for Tariff reform would have been much less general.

“It is scarcely necessary to discuss the wisdom of reducing duties to the maximum of 25 per cent. at the present time, inasmuch as such a change is practically impossible. The ad valorem rates could possibly in some instances be brought down to that amount, but the immense decrease that would take place in the fixed rates would in some instances lead to great loss of revenue, and in others would at once destroy large industries, throwing numbers of persons out of work, and depreciating property to an enormous extent. The duty of 3d. per lb. on dried fruits may be quoted as an example of this. The industry of making raisins

and currants, at present increasing yearly, would, by a decrease to 25 per cent. ad valorem or its equivalent, be completely destroyed, and the vineyards of raisin grapes and currants would be almost valueless.”

I would urge upon the country members the desirability of taking these points into consideration. To reduce the duties to a 25 per cent. basis would, in my opinion, be equally destructive to many of the industries in the country as well as those in the town. I do not think that those honorable members who advocate the claims of the country districts, particularly the vine-growing districts, would pretend for a moment that they ought to support the amendment to reduce the duties to a 25 per cent. basis. There was a matter of some importance dealt with by the Tariff Board, and one which the Minister of Customs declared in his speech to the committee to be impracticable—that is the question of dealing with prison-made goods. Honorable members who object to a high Tariff on certain goods will see at once the unfair competition which we have to contend with to-day. Not only are bankrupt and surplus stocks from the mother country placed upon our market at considerably reduced prices but we have also to compete against prison-made goods from European and American prisons. With regard to this subject the report of the Tariff Board contains this paragraph:—

“Evidence was brought before us of the importation into Victoria of prison-made goods. Cigars were brought under our notice which bore a stamp clearly indicating that they had been made in the United States by convict labour, and from the statements of witnesses we believe that these are made for export only, and are not allowed in the United States to enter into competition with cigars made by free labour. We were also told that American brooms and German baskets and brushes made in prison are imported into Victoria. We think that this competition is unfair, and that the importation of goods made in prison, or by prisoners, should be prohibited by law. Such a law might be difficult to administer, but its presence in our statute-book would probably lead to a decrease of the business, and a provision that any goods of this description should be liable to forfeiture would deter importers from trading in such articles. We are aware that this question is also occupying the attention of the Imperial Legislature.”

Up to the present time no definite action has been taken by the Imperial Legislature to prevent the importation of prison-made goods into England, and it is a well-known fact that a great agitation is going on in that country for the purpose of putting a stop to these prison-made goods entering

into competition with the goods made by free labour there. I find the following report in a newspaper:—

“In the course of a debate which took place on the 19th inst., on a motion brought forward by Colonel Howard Vincent on the necessity of restricting the importation of goods made in foreign prisons by the forced labour of convicts and felons, some remarkable statements were made. It appears that in the United States and Germany prison-made goods cannot be sold in the places where they are made, so that they must necessarily seek distant markets. Mr. Keir Hardie, alluding to the argument that to prevent the importation of prison-made goods would be to violate the principles of free-trade, said—‘Free-trade in the abstract was all but an impossibility. There was no member of that House who supported trades-unionism who could claim to be a consistent free-trader. Free-trade was good so long as equal conditions were observed, but the trades unionists of this country had no intention of allowing the sweated and underpaid labourers of continental nations to enter into competition with them; let there be no mistake upon this point. This prison-made goods question was the thin end of the wedge.’ Ultimately, Colonel Howard Vincent’s resolution was carried unanimously. It will now be incumbent on the Board of Trade to take steps at once to restrict the importation of the goods in question, either by legislation or departmental action.”

It is thus quite obvious that, although our Minister of Customs states that he cannot devise a plan whereby the introduction of these prison-made goods shall be stopped, in a free-trade country, where there are far greater difficulties to contend with, active steps are already being taken to prevent the importation of such goods. That is a sufficient reason to give for the absolute necessity of retaining the protective duties, even on those articles in regard to which we can successfully compete with the mother country, even supposing the duties to be removed. Though we may be able to compete against free labour, it would be impossible for us to compete against such circumstances as I have indicated. I hold in my hand a sample of one of these prison-made cigars, imported from America, and which is not allowed to be sold in the United States, though these articles are freely sold in the Victorian market at about 5s. a box. On the bottom of each box there is a brand stating absolutely that these cigars are made by prison labour. Now, what difficulty could there be in the way of the Customs department adopting a regulation to prevent such goods from coming into competition with the free labour in our market? The bottom of each box is stamped with an announcement

Mr. Bromley.

that the article is the product of prison labour.

Mr. G. TURNER.—If such a regulation were adopted, would not the manufacturers immediately discontinue the use of those words?

Mr. BROMLEY.—I am under the impression that the manufacturers are compelled by the law of America to put those words on the box. But the cigars are not allowed to be sold in America. I do not think there are many members in the House who would care to smoke these cigars, although, on account of their cheapness, there is a very ready sale for them in this colony. Competition of that kind is grossly unfair to our artisans, and some action ought to be taken to put a stop to it. Another matter which occupied the attention of the Tariff Board largely was the fixing of the Tariff for a certain period. There is no doubt, from many observations which were made on this subject, that the frequent alterations which have been carried in the Tariff have been the means of disturbing the revenue of the colony to a great extent. It is a well-known fact that every time any alteration in the Tariff is to be made, there is a large loss of revenue, and also a partial stoppage of trade. These alterations create an enormous amount of inconvenience to all classes of commercial men, traders, and workmen. I think some resolution ought to be arrived at by this committee to provide that the Tariff should not be interfered with for a given period after it has been dealt with on this occasion.

Mr. STAUGHTON.—You cannot bind a future House.

Mr. BROMLEY.—I am perfectly aware that we cannot bind future Parliaments by an enactment, because every Parliament is in a position to repeal a resolution adopted by a previous one; but I am also aware of the fact that Parliaments, as a rule, look upon it as a matter of honour to respect any resolution which has been arrived at by a previous Parliament, when it has been shown to be beneficial to the interests of the country. There are one or two items which I particularly desire to deal with in connexion with the Tariff, namely, those which relate to the tobacco industry and the manufacture of cigars and cigarettes. I was one of those members of the board who went over to Sydney for the purpose of inquiring into the state of the tobacco

manufacture there. It is perfectly true, as has been stated, that there is a great deal more tobacco manufactured in New South Wales than in Victoria under the higher revenue duties they have to pay there; but it is also a fact that since the imposition of the higher duties in New South Wales the tobacco industry has been steadily declining. The manufacture has been falling off ever since the higher duties were imposed in 1887. In order to prove that I will give a few figures. In 1888, the year during which the increased duties came into operation for the full year, the total output was 2,620,368 lbs. In the following year the amount dropped to 1,971,392 lbs., and in 1894 to 1,732,496 lbs. That is what has resulted from the increase of the revenue duties in New South Wales. It has had a very marked effect in decreasing the output of manufactured tobacco there, and it will have the same effect if any increase in the duty is imposed in Victoria. In addition it has had the effect of altogether stamping out the cigar industry in New South Wales. In Victoria 300 hands are employed in the manufacture of cigars; this increase of duty will materially injure their position, and be the means of stamping the industry out of existence altogether. A visitor in New South Wales, if he goes to any tobacco manufactory, will not see anywhere cigar manufactories. There are practically no cigars manufactured in New South Wales. All that are sold in that colony are imported from abroad, or are Victorian made. If the proposed increase of duty on the leaf is adopted, it will be the means of striking a heavy blow at the cigar manufacturing industry in Victoria. I hope that the committee will take that into consideration, and that the proposals of the Government will be rejected, in the interests both of the tobacco and the cigar-making industry. The amount of revenue obtained from imported cigars and cigarettes in this colony in 1890 was £56,431. In 1894 the amount went down to £25,937, thus showing that the Victorian manufacturers were manufacturing for our local market. There has been little or no falling-off in the consumption, but on account of the articles being manufactured here and giving employment to our workmen the revenue has fallen to that extent. When we lose revenue in one way it is an undoubted fact that by giving employment to our workmen we

gain revenue in other directions. These men are the consumers of other classes of goods, and it is to the advantage of the State for us to give employment to our people. Although there may be a direct loss of revenue in that particular channel, there is a compensating gain in other directions. There is also another gain to the community. Ever since the manufacture of cigars has been firmly established in Victoria, the article has been much cheaper to the consumer than ever it was before. I have heard it stated on excellent authority that cigars can be obtained more cheaply in Victoria, quality for quality, than in any other part of the world. I have heard that from people who have travelled through the United States of America and various parts of Europe, and from my own limited experience I can indorse the statement. The proposal of the Government and of the Tariff Board to increase the excise duty on tobacco is directly against the evidence both of the manufacturers and the employes, and there was nothing whatever placed before the board to warrant it in recommending an increase of this duty. In our own report it is stated that—

“All branches of the trade are in a manner satisfied with the ruling rates. The manufacturers and the operatives working under them asked for no further protection, but were of opinion that any higher duty, either as excise or on leaf tobacco, without a corresponding increase in the import duty, would injure their business, and even the importers did not ask for any change in their own interests.”

That statement appears in the Tariff Board's report, and I think it is a most conclusive argument against the adoption of the proposals made by the Government, even though they take the form of a compromise on the recommendation of the board.

Mr. McKENZIE.—What about the interests of the State?

Mr. BROMLEY.—I think the interests of the State would be best conserved by allowing things to remain as they are. The consumer is getting a good article, and getting it cheaply, and I do not think that the State will be a large gainer by the proposed change.

Mr. McKENZIE.—The revenue is losing £100,000 a year.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is an assumption.

Mr. McKENZIE.—It is an assumption which is contained in the Tariff Board's report, to which your name is attached.

Mr. BROMLEY.—I have taken the liberty of demurring to the finding of the board on that subject. Some figures that I intend to give will answer the honorable member's contention. Although there may be a loss of revenue in one particular direction, there is a gain to the revenue by the employment given to our own people.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—It would be a good deal cheaper to pension them.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—There can be no doubt about it—it is a matter of calculation.

Mr. BROMLEY.—In 1892 cigarettes were sold in Victoria at 6d. a packet. An American company came here with a large amount of capital, and it is true that in a certain sense it has become a monopoly, although it is a monopoly by which the public interest has not suffered.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—It is the first monopoly of the kind I ever heard of.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Since the company commenced operations in Victoria cigarettes have been sold to the public at 3d. a packet, or 50 per cent. cheaper than before. I have two samples here of the cigarettes that are made by the same company in Victoria and New South Wales. Both of these cigarettes are sold at 3d. a packet; but those made in Victoria under the lower duty are much heavier than those made in New South Wales under the higher duty, and the consumer therefore gets the benefit. If we increase the excise duty on cigarettes, the company will have to make them much lighter and smaller than they do now, and therefore the public will be the losers. There are now some 55,000,000 cigarettes made locally per annum. These are sold at 3d. a packet, and there are about 3,000,000 cigarettes imported annually, which are sold at 6d., 9d., and 1s. a packet. The Government receive in revenue about £13,100, as against £14,700, which was the amount they received when all the cigarettes were imported. The loss to the Government is therefore only £1,200 per annum. Under the proposal that is now made the Government would receive in revenue about £38,500, taking the present consumption, and the public would have to pay for their cigarettes £137,500 instead of £68,750, which they now pay. Thus, the public would have to pay an additional £68,750 to enable the Government to earn an additional

£27,500. Although the revenue would gain to that extent, the money would be indirectly extorted from the public. The firm to which I refer, and which has undoubtedly a monopoly, although it is not a monopoly that has done any harm to the community, so far employs about 131 hands. The closing of the establishment would mean the throwing of that number of hands out of employment. There is also another large firm which employs nearly 100 hands in the making of strawboard boxes, and the branding and cutting of these boxes for the purposes of the cigarette industry; so that the number of hands that would be thrown out of employment by imposing the higher duties suggested by the Government would be over 200. At a time like this, when there is such a dearth of employment, when we have to send men to all parts of the country to fossick for gold, to go on to village settlements, and to till the soil, we ought to pause and consider well before we take such a step as that proposed by the Government. There is another item that I wish to refer to, and that is the spirit duties. I am in accord with the proposals that have been made by the Tariff Board and adopted by the Government in reference to the spirit duties. I, as a protectionist, hold that all manufacturers ought to be compelled to make good genuine articles, and I know of nothing that is more injurious to the public interest than the making of bad liquors. In view of this the Tariff Board recommended an alteration of the differential duties. The excise duty on locally-made spirits is now 11s. a gallon, and we recommended that, instead of a 4s. differential rate existing between the locally-made spirits and the imported spirits, there should be a 2s. differential rate on all spirits such as whisky made from barley malt and all brandy made from grape wine. Strenuous efforts have been made by a very large firm—that of Joshua Brothers—to impress upon honorable members the impossibility of making brandy from the pure juice of the grape, and also asserting that if a reduction in the differential rate is carried it will absolutely ruin their business. I do not think that it will ruin their business; it will have the effect of making them manufacture purer stimulants than they are now placing on the market. If they do not they will only get a 2s. differential rate, and if they do they will get a 4s. differential duty; and therefore

I think that they will be placed in a fair position. They have endeavoured to show by pamphlets, deputations, and by the evidence they had given that it is altogether impracticable to make brandy from the pure grape, and that the imported liquors are not made from malt or from the pure grape. It is for the Government, if they so desire, to take action in the direction of placing duties on imported spirits that are not made from pure malt or grape wine, and in that way to protect the public against liquors of the kind being placed on the market. But, in contradistinction to the statements made by Joshua Brothers, I will point out that there is one firm in Victoria that is making pure brandy, namely, the Bendigo Distillery Company. I understand, from evidence that was received by the Tariff Board, that their brandy is finding a ready sale in the English market, and that fact disproves entirely the statement made by Joshua Brothers that pure brandy would not find any sale. I am also informed that at one of our vineyards brandy is being made from the pure juice of the grape. It was stated in evidence that the only Victorian spirits which found any sale in the English market was the Bendigo brandy. Most of us have heard of another firm that sent home a consignment of brandy which found a ready sale, inasmuch as it was made from the pure juice of the grape; but subsequently they sent home another large consignment which was not made from the pure juice of the grape, and the result was that it had to be returned to Victoria. It has been asserted that it was returned because it was made from the pure juice of the grape; but we have it in evidence that it was not made from the pure juice of the grape, and that that was the reason why it was sent back. The Bendigo Distillery Company state—

“This distillery makes spirits—i.e., brandy—from wine only, and the gallon of spirits costs us for raw material alone—i.e., wine—3s. 4d. per gallon; whereas the cost of the raw material of spirits of so-called brandy made from malt and grain costs only 1s. 6d., a difference as you will perceive of 1s. 10d. a gallon. It must be obvious that brandy made from material so cheap, as shown above, when made from malt and grain, can readily undersell the purer article made from wine, unless some protection is vouchsafed to the former in the shape of a differential duty. . . . I think I have said sufficient to prove to you that the differential duty of 2s. per gallon in favour of brandy made from wine as against brandy made from other grain, &c., is necessary for the existence of this industry, and an immense importance to the

wine-grower, and I trust that your support will be accorded to our request.”

I am perfectly in accord with that view myself, and I hope that the committee will carry the recommendation made by the Tariff Board, and adopted by the Government, because I believe it is in the interests of the public to have as good a spirit as can possibly be placed on the market. I am confident, from the equipment of our distilleries and the resources that we have here, that the distilleries can make as good spirits as can be made in any part of the world if they will only strive to do so, and the action the Government now propose to take will be a means of stimulating them to make purer liquors than they are now placing on the market. Another item about which I desire to speak is the reduction of the duty on engineering and iron work generally. It would be a great blow to that industry, which is one of the largest and most extensive that we have in the colony, and has been built up at an enormous expense, if the duty were reduced. Let any honorable member go round our vast engineering establishments and see the magnificent machinery that is erected there. In some instances a single machine will cost several thousand pounds, and yet this industry has not prospered over well under a 35 per cent. ad valorem rate. Those gentlemen who find fault with the very high duties, as they call them, that are placed on some articles surely will not assert that 35 per cent. is an exorbitantly high duty, and seeing the vast importance of this industry we ought to do all that lies in our power to conserve its interests. I shall strongly oppose any lowering of the duty of 35 per cent. I believe that it would be unwise, and that it would have the immediate effect of closing some of these large establishments, ruining many of the proprietors, and casting the workmen out on the streets. I do not know why the proposal was made that this duty should be reduced, seeing that never at any time could it have been considered an extremely high duty. A great deal has been said with reference to rings that have been formed in connexion with various manufactures. I am convinced from the evidence we have received that there have been rings formed by manufacturers, and I am one of those who agree with the honorable member for Anglesey that rings, whether of manufacturers or of importers, are pernicious in their effects. No true protectionist would

uphold the formation of rings under high duties.

Mr. CARTER.—It is justifiable to have a ring to sell labour.

Mr. BROMLEY.—In what manner?

Mr. CARTER.—By means of a union; everybody saying that he will not take less than so much.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is a combination of labour for the purpose of securing a fair wage. The manufacturers also combine, and say that they will only pay a certain rate of wage. In addition to that they combine, and say that they will not sell their goods below certain rates.

Mr. CARTER.—Why not?

Mr. BROMLEY.—The men whose wages are kept down at as low a rate as possible have to purchase their goods at the highest possible price that can be placed upon them, which is unjust to the public, and unjust even to their own workmen.

Mr. CARTER.—Surely you have a right to fix the price of your labour or of your goods. I believe in unionism.

Mr. BROMLEY.—The honorable member may believe in unionism, but I have never known him to do anything to support it in Parliament.

Mr. CARTER.—That is compulsory unionism; I believe in voluntary unionism.

Mr. BROMLEY.—There are a number of items that I would like to have dealt with, but they will come before us later on, and I can then speak upon them. A great deal of stress has been laid by some honorable members on the advantages that would accrue from the adoption of a free-trade policy in this colony. I came out here some years ago from a free-trade country. I was old enough then to see the evils that were growing up under the free-trade policy of Great Britain. Although it has been asserted that England is free-trade, and is likely to remain free-trade, I absolutely deny the assertion. I say, not only from newspapers which I obtain from home, but from private letters and from other sources, and also from my own personal knowledge, that the protectionist principle is gaining ground rapidly amongst the working classes of Great Britain. Notwithstanding the statements that have been made during the last few years, the feeling in favour of protection has grown at such a rate that the subject has been forced on the attention of the British Parliament, and I believe that if, as the result of the forthcoming elections in England, the conservative

party come back to power they will depend largely upon the protectionist vote that they will get from the working classes. What has been the effect of free-trade in England? What is it that is opening the eyes of the working classes there to the evils of free-trade? All the other great countries of Europe—France, Germany, and Austria—have adopted the protectionist policy, and they can all send their goods into England without any duty being imposed upon them. We read in the newspapers that Belgian companies are going over to England and building in England railways and bridges, and doing all kinds of constructive iron work in what used to be considered the home and seat of the iron manufactures. This is taking place in England to-day to so large an extent that it is arousing the working classes, among whom a feeling is growing in favour of the adoption of a protectionist policy. In the hardware stores in Melbourne we see innumerable articles that are exported directly by English exporters but that bear the brand “made in Germany,” “made in Belgium,” or “made in France.” This occurs with a sickening reiteration, and this is one of the grand results of the free-trade policy in England. Any one going round our book shops at Christmas time and taking up the beautiful little illustrated works that are sent out for the purpose of Christmas presents will find that they bear an impress showing that they are published by some English firm, but printed in Germany, France, or in Vienna. The whole of this class of work is therefore leaving England. The honorable member for Hawthorn, in an interjection which he made to the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), endeavoured to make him believe that although these industries were declining there might be some other industry springing up to take their place.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—I am not aware that I said anything of the sort.

Mr. BROMLEY.—As a matter of fact, there are not many new industries springing up in England to take their place. It is the great staple industries of England that are suffering, such as the iron trade, and we are threatened now with a transplantation of the cotton trade. Many manufacturers contemplate moving their works from England to India, because they can get their labour cheaper and get their cotton on the spot, and where

will the English manufacturers be under this grand and noble principle of free-trade in a few years' time? Even some of the great economists—notably John Stuart Mill—have advocated a protective Tariff for a young country, and I say that with these examples before us we ought to be alive to our own interests and to see that our protective policy, which has been emphatically indorsed by the people of the country, is maintained in its integrity. I fear that in our present condition any departure from that policy will be the means of throwing hundreds of men on to the labour market. A good deal of stress has been laid on the fact that New South Wales has adopted the principle of free-trade, and that the labour members in the New South Wales House of Assembly support free-trade. It has been inferred from that that all the labour members there are free-traders. Such is not the case. What they want is a land tax. We want a land tax also; but in New South Wales, owing to the exigencies of the case, the land tax has been put foremost in the programme of the Government. After the labour party have got the land tax they will strive to reinstate, if it is destroyed, the protectionist policy of the country, and then, with the land tax and with protection, New South Wales will go ahead by leaps and bounds. We have protection here, and it is our manifest duty to stand by the policy of the country—a policy that has been indorsed on all hands, and that has been proved to be of benefit to the whole community. Protection has, without doubt, cheapened the price of our commodities and given us better goods than we were able to obtain before. I therefore hope that the principle will be strictly maintained. There are many anomalies in the present Tariff that ought to be removed. Duties are imposed upon goods that are not manufactured in the colony. Take, for example, the woollen industry. The Tariff Board have submitted to the House a large list of goods upon which the duties could absolutely be abolished, because they are not manufactured in the colony; and if the duties were removed it would be a means of giving a great impetus to the tailoring trade. The fact that there were anomalies in the Tariff that ought to be removed was a sufficient justification for the appointment of the Tariff Board. Those anomalies are not only oppressive to the

workers but also to the community, and I find, from a careful examination of the evidence, that it was those identical duties about which the witnesses made the loudest complaints. It was not about the duties imposed upon goods that are manufactured in the colony, and that are being sold in nearly every instance at lower prices than formerly. But where duties can be removed I say that we ought to remove them. We had a conference with the manufacturers themselves, and the list of goods submitted to the committee on which a reduction of duties might be made is the list that was approved of by them. Therefore every protectionist in this House can safely vote for the reduction of duties on those goods. This will be a relief to the community, because they are nothing more than revenue duties at present. They can safely vote for the reduction, because we have the authority of the manufacturers and of the textile workers themselves that it will not in any way injure their industry, and in cases of this kind it is our duty to give as much relief as we possibly can. But, on the broad principle of protection, I hope that every protectionist member of this Chamber will endeavour to conserve as far as practicable the protective policy of the country.

Mr. GRAHAM.—Sir, we have now had upwards of a fortnight's discussion on this question, and many of the long speeches to which we have listened have been simply theoretical discussions on free-trade *versus* protection. I think it is about time that we settled down to the practical part of the great work we have to do, and the sooner we get into the details of the Tariff the better for all parties, for the country will then know what it has to expect from our united deliberations. That the Government proposals are unsatisfactory to the country goes without saying. There is no section of the community satisfied with them. The extreme free-traders object to them, the ultra-protectionists object to them, and even the moderate protectionists object to them. I do not know but that the country perhaps has been expecting too much from the Government; but if they have been expecting much, the Government themselves are certainly to blame for arousing that expectation; because we all know that the Premier last year, in issuing his manifesto to the electors, and also on the floor of this House, distinctly promised a scientific and proper

revision of the Tariff. He said at that time that many of our duties were oppressive and obnoxious and should be revised. Again, one of his colleagues in another place (Sir Frederick Sargood), in speaking to the address in reply to the Governor's speech last session, said—

“It was no use mincing matters any longer. The present Government were prepared to stake their existence on the reduction of the high duties.”

Further, the Minister of Agriculture, in speaking in the country, stated that so far as he was concerned he thought all protective duties should be reduced to 15 per cent. or 20 per cent., with perhaps a few exceptions, which should be left as they were. Other members of the Government spoke in the same definite manner, thus leading the country to look forward with more than usual interest to this session. I may also mention that the Premier promised a special session to deal with the Tariff question; so that the country has been anxiously looking forward to the meeting of Parliament, believing that some relief was to be given. Naturally, therefore, great disappointment has been felt on all sides at the famous speech which the Minister of Customs delivered a fortnight ago. We found from that speech that the Premier's promise of a scientific revision of the Tariff was not to be carried out, and that only anomalies were to be removed. We also found that the Government were not going to stake their existence on the reduction of the high duties, but were simply going to give the committee a free hand to deal with every item as it came along. For this latter decision I personally feel very thankful, because now the members of the committee on all sides can join hands and go in for such modification of the Tariff as will be for the best interests of the country. The Minister of Customs, in speaking about the revision of the duties, appeared suddenly to wake up to the fact that there were country products that required protection, and he pointed out the terrible calamity which was likely to happen to the country producers if any attempt were made to reduce the so-called protective duties on those articles. He seemed to express very great commiseration for the farmers, and I am only sorry that he did not express that commiseration six months ago, because had he done so we should probably not have had that Shylock policy

carried out by the Lands department with regard to the selectors' rents. Every honorable member knows what I mean by this allusion. As far as the farmers of the colony are concerned, I will tell the Minister of Customs how far they prize the duties which he spoke of the other night, when he enumerated something like 31 different items of country products that were all protected, and in connexion with which he said it would be impossible to reduce the duties. Now, speaking as a country representative, I will just say that if the honorable gentleman is prepared to settle down to a proper and scientific revision of the Tariff I am quite prepared to allow a number of those items to be struck out altogether—we want no duties at all on them—and as to the balance I am quite prepared to come down to moderate duties, as low as 25 per cent. on many articles.

Mr. TRENWITH.—We are considering the farmer, not you.

Mr. GRAHAM.—I am considering the farmer also. One of the daily papers has pointed out the great benefit which the farmers are deriving from the wheat duty. Now, we all know that within the last three months has been the first time during the past ten years that the cereal duties have been operative at all. During the past three months, by a mere chance, either by overshipping or by a mistake in the statistics, wheat happens to be higher in the colony than in England, taking all things into consideration.

Mr. TRENWITH.—This is the only time you noticed it.

Mr. GRAHAM.—The same thing applies to New Zealand. In New Zealand, where the cereal duties are only 9d. per cental, wheat is about 1s. per bushel more than in Victoria. The cry is raised now that if the cereal duties are taken off we shall have importations of Indian wheat; but we all know that the millers of Australia will not touch Indian wheat, owing to its hard and gritty nature, while they can get good Australian wheat. For my part I am quite prepared to go in for a reduction of the duties which are alleged to be benefiting the farmers down to a moderate rate. If the Minister of Customs will settle down to a proper revision of the Tariff and not allow it to be a case of grab, as it has been in the past on the part of a few monopolists, he will have my assistance in bringing down many of the items that are looked

Mr. Graham.

upon as duties in favour of the farmers, because I am certain that the farmers will not suffer by some of those duties being abolished altogether and many of them reduced considerably. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) last night mentioned the stock tax. I am quite ready to see a reduction in the stock tax to 25 per cent. to-morrow if corresponding reductions are made in other directions. It has been said to-night that there are no rings in the colony, but I think it has been proved up to the hilt that rings do exist under our high protective duties. The existence of the candle ring has been proved thoroughly. Many other rings exist in the colony, but the candle ring is notorious, and its existence has been proved to the satisfaction of every unbiassed mind. I also feel certain that there is a ring in connexion with the tobacco industry, and that that ring ought to be broken up. I think the time has now arrived when the Government of this colony ought to go into the matter and take steps to control the manufacture of tobacco in Victoria in the same way as has been done in France and Italy with very great success. I think that is a matter which should be dealt with by the Government in the interests both of the State and of the public. The distilling industry is another industry in which I feel certain there is a monopoly at the present time. We have heard a great deal lately from Joshua Brothers, who have been using grain chiefly for the distillation of their spirit. Much has been said of the hardship which they will suffer if any reduction is now made in the differential duty on spirits. We know that Joshua Brothers make their spirits very largely from grain. The honorable member for Carlton referred to that matter in his speech, and there is no doubt that Joshua Brothers make their spirits from whatever material they find the cheapest. If any one will take the return obtained at the instance of the honorable member for Gunbower, he will find that for years past Joshua Brothers have used in their distillery whatever they could obtain most cheaply. Lately they used a large amount of what is known as "off wheat," which the millers would not touch. A bushel of that wheat delivered at the distillery costs about 2s., and from one bushel they can make two gallons of spirits, so that the raw material of these spirits costs about 1s. per gallon. On the other hand, take the case of the Bendigo distillery, where they are

making pure brandy. Their raw material costs them not less than 3s. per gallon, simply because they make their brandy from pure wine. Of course we have been told repeatedly by Joshua Brothers and others that the people will not drink brandy made from the grape—that they must have it blended and mixed with grain spirits. The fact of the matter is, however, that the Victorian public have never had an opportunity of knowing or tasting grape brandy till it was made by the Bendigo distillery, and it is only now that they are beginning to find out the difference between the two kinds of brandy. I think it would be well worthy of the consideration of the committee to give those who are prepared to make a pure spirit from the grape every encouragement, by granting them that differential duty which is proposed by the Tariff Board, and also by the Government. A similar remark applies to malt whisky. We all know that a large amount of the whisky that is made in the colony is made from grain, and what we want to do is to encourage the manufacture of whisky from the barley malt. Again, as regards beer, we know that brewers tell us that the people will not drink beer made from malt and hops, whereas the fact is that the people never get a chance of drinking such beer. In my opinion we ought to encourage the manufacture of the pure article in all these cases by putting on a differential duty. Therefore, I hope the committee, in dealing with the spirit duties, will deal fairly with those who are prepared to turn out pure spirits, and will not allow this adulteration to go on. At the time the differential duties were given it was never intended that the public should be deceived in the manner they have been. We have had a defence of the woollen industry first by the honorable member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams) and then by the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr). Those gentlemen defended the mixture of cotton with our woollen goods, and I must say it comes with a very bad grace from any member of this House to stand up and try to defend the adulteration of woollen goods with cotton in the manner that has been shown. I think the honorable member for Geelong last night said that there was no shoddy used in the Geelong mills. Will the honorable member say that there is no yarn made from shoddy imported into

the colony and used at some of the Geelong mills? That is a fact that can be proved. Shoddy does not come in in a raw state, but shoddy yarn is imported in an under-hand way and is used in the mills.

Mr. GURR.—There is no shoddy used in the Geelong mills.

Mr. GRAHAM.—The honorable member for Castlemaine stated that the mills in the other colonies were on their last legs, struggling for existence, owing to the low duties. Only one mill in New Zealand, he said, was prosperous, and the Queensland mill, at Ipswich, was alluded to by him as a shocking example. He said it was languishing and in a very bad condition, simply because in Queensland they had not sufficient duties to protect the manufacture. But what is the real cause of the Ipswich Mill being in financial difficulties at the present time? There was no mill in the Australian colonies more prosperous than the Ipswich Mill until the great flood which took place in the Brisbane River two years ago. That flood swept away nearly the whole of the property of the company, and this was the sole cause of their trouble. Before that disaster the company were paying good dividends—as high as 10 per cent.—and were turning out a good article, no shoddy or cotton being used in that mill. Unfortunately, since the flood occurred times have been so bad that the company have never been able to redeem their position. Again, the honorable member for Geelong last night stated that there were something like 772 hands employed in the woollen mills of this colony. Now, I have a return here up to the 1st of January last, which clearly shows that at that time, instead of 772 hands being employed, there were only 516. The falling-off in the woollen and other industries of the colony is clearly shown in the report of the inspector of factories, by a comparison of the number of factories, and hands employed in them, in 1890, as compared with 1894. I find from that return that in 1890 there were 2,507 factories employing 47,813 persons, while in 1894 there were 2,515 factories employing 34,268 persons. That is to say, while there were eight factories more last year, there were 12,545 persons less employed in them than in 1890. Where are these people gone? They are wandering about the streets, and going about the country, or they have gone to other colonies.

They have vanished. If you go to the factories of the agricultural implement makers you will find thousands of pounds worth of machinery lying idle under our high protective policy. I could name factories turning out agricultural implements in which ten years ago there were 300 hands employed, but in which to-day there are not 70. Were it not for the work they are getting from New South Wales, they would be shut up altogether. They are sending most of their work to that colony, but they are doing virtually nothing in comparison with what they did ten years ago. I would also point out that the agricultural implement manufacturers have themselves stated that they don't want any protection. We had evidence during the first Tariff Board to that effect. They said distinctly—"Give us our raw material duty free; we ask for no protection; and we will be able to supply the farmer with cheaper goods than we can at present. But we are paying heavy duties on a great deal of our raw material, and consequently we are compelled to charge the farmers more in proportion." The same thing was said by the coach-builders and waggon-builders. At Ballarat, when the first Tariff Board sat there, we called on the largest implement makers—Kelly and Preston—and Mr. Kelly said to us—"If you only give us our raw material duty free we do not want any duties at all, and will supply the farmers with the same article at a very much cheaper rate." With these facts before us it is time that something was done to bring about a modification of our present high duties. I am speaking now as a moderate protectionist, as I have always been. I hope that before the duties are settled the committee will make such modifications in the Tariff as will give thorough satisfaction throughout the whole of the colony. I do not wish to take up any further time at present, because I feel certain that when we get into the items there will be a great deal of discussion. I hope the debate will be finished this week, and that the committee will settle down in earnest to deal practically with the matter. There is no desire on my part, and I feel certain there is no desire on the part of any member of the Opposition, to harass or trouble the Government in any shape or form over this question. The temperate speech of the leader of the Opposition clearly showed that, and I think that on all sides we are

desirous of giving the Government every assistance to have the Tariff modified in the best interests of the country. In conclusion, I wish to say that I think the thanks of the country are due to the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) for the able way in which he presided over the last Tariff Board and conducted its proceedings. I could not help regretting that at many public meetings which we have read about, gentlemen—would-be representatives of the people—were found to stand up and denounce his action, and call him traitor and names of that kind. I venture to say that no man has devoted more time to this matter than the honorable member for Fitzroy, and instead of being buffeted about by those gentlemen, he deserves the warmest thanks of every section of the community. I feel certain from the speech which he delivered in this chamber that he is quite prepared to grasp the nettle and to go the whole length, not only to remove anomalies but bring down those excessive duties which the Premier himself admitted were obnoxious and should be reduced.

Mr. WILKINS.—A lot of them were put on by your own Government.

Mr. GRAHAM.—Yes, and the only regrettable circumstance in my Ministerial career was the imposition of those high duties. I admitted that at the last general election, and I admit it now frankly and freely. I feel sorry for the imposition of those duties, and I am quite prepared to go right back to the exact position we were in before the high duties which were put on in 1892 by the Shiels Government were imposed. I sincerely hope that the committee will see the necessity of many of those duties being wiped out altogether in the interests of the country.

Mr. COOK.—Sir, if there is one thing more remarkable than another in connexion with this debate it is the peculiar unanimity with which the supporters of the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn avoid saying anything about it. One would have thought, from the noise which this 25 per cent. cry had created in the country, that, when the honorable member's proposition was moved in the Assembly, a great many arguments would be put forward in support of it in addition to those which had appeared in the press. But with one or two very small exceptions hardly any further argument has been put forward, and, consequently,

I am led to believe that no other arguments can be adduced. Another remarkable feature is, that for years past the free-trade party and the conservatives generally in this country have been agitating for a reduction of duties. A 25 per cent. maximum has been the great cry for months past, and every opportunity was seized for forcing that particular issue home. Yet, when the hour came, and the man with it, we find that the same free-trade press, which had clamoured all along for an opportunity of bringing about a maximum of 25 per cent., is the first to turn round and desert the proposer of this amendment just when he wants its help most. One would have thought that, having found the man and the opportunity, the conservative press would have been prepared to support him through thick and thin, and, therefore, we cannot but feel rather surprised, or, if not surprised, at any rate amused, to find this newspaper now saying that it is far better to follow the tactics of the leader of the Opposition, to withdraw the amendment, and to let the committee deal with the duties *seriatim*. The fact is that the *Argus*—the newspaper I allude to—could see just as well as others that the Premier was a better tactician than the honorable member for Hawthorn. Wellington Turner out-generalled Napoleon Smith; and, seeing the amendment was to be treated as a want of confidence motion, and that there was not a ghost of a possibility of carrying it, the *Argus* came to the conclusion that it was more advisable to follow the tactics of the leader of the Opposition and wait for other opportunities. I don't intend to deal very much with particular items, but there are some arguments which have been put forward that it seems to me to be necessary to refute or controvert. I have here an article which appeared in the *Argus* newspaper on the 1st of June last, which contains most of the arguments that have been put forward in support of this amendment. We are asked in the article to look at the revenue receipts given by the Tariffs of Victoria, New Zealand, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and New South Wales, and then we are asked why it is that the highest Tariff gives the lowest receipts? The answer given by the article is as follows:—

“Because a low Tariff (1) encourages consumption, and because (2) under a low Tariff the tax is generally paid by the consumer to the Government, while under a high Tariff the tax

is generally paid in the shape of an enhanced price to some individual."

Now, if this proposition be true—that the lowest Tariff gives the highest receipts—it is an extraordinary thing that this newspaper should publish in the same article figures which actually controvert its statement? The highest Tariff is stated to be that of Victoria, which gives a revenue of £1 9s. 5d. per head, while the lowest Tariff is that of New South Wales—10 per cent.—which yields a revenue of £2 5s. 4d. per head. But Queensland, which has 25 per cent. duties, has a Customs revenue of £2 13s. 10d. per head, or 8s. 6d. per head more than New South Wales. Therefore, by the *Argus*' own figures, the lowest Tariff does not give the highest receipts. It is just as well to point out also that if the fixing of any arbitrary limit to the Tariff will give any specified return, that return ought to be the same in all cases. If a 25 per cent. Tariff in Queensland, as is argued, will give £2 13s. 10d. per head, then a 25 per cent. Tariff in South Australia ought to give the same return. But, as a matter of fact, it does not; for the Customs revenue in South Australia is only £1 15s. 2d. per head, or 18s. 8d. less than in Queensland, although the Tariffs are exactly the same. Then, take another case. The Queensland Tariff yields a revenue of £2 13s. 10d. per head with 25 per cent. duties, while, with 10 per cent. duties, the New South Wales Tariff yields £2 5s. 4d. per head, or 8s. 6d. less. How then any person can argue that the mere fixing of any arbitrary rate for a Tariff can affect the revenue in any given position I fail to understand. Various other circumstances must be taken into consideration, bearing upon the revenue receipts in any particular colony; and, this being so, it is impossible to lay down the doctrine that any particular Tariff will yield a particular return. If that were so, surely the older nations of the world, such as England, France, and other large and important countries, would have discovered the happy rate it is possible to charge in order to obtain the highest revenue, and would have adopted that rate and be getting that revenue. But, as a matter of fact, we know that each nation has to take into consideration all sorts of surrounding circumstances, and to fix its Tariff in accordance with the conditions those circumstances necessitate. Then, if the lowest Tariff is

Mr. Cook.

to give the highest receipts, manifestly, if 10 per cent. in New South Wales gave £1 per head, then 50 per cent. in Victoria ought only to give 4s. per head. I hardly think that any one will argue that that is so. Another of the arguments continually put forward is that as the Tariff goes up wages go down. Well, if that argument is worth anything at all, to carry it to its logical conclusion, when the Tariff has reached the prohibition stage there will be no wages at all. I believe that is logic, but some things that are logical are not true. Honorable members will remember Oliver Wendell Holmes' story of the "one-horse shay" which was built on such logical principles, each part being relatively as strong as every other part, that it could not collapse until the whole thing collapsed like the bursting of a bubble. Well, that wonderful machine was run all right, until one day it suddenly fell to a heap of dust. "Logic is logic is all I say," concludes the narrator of that story. Some things which are very clear and unmistakable in logic, when viewed in the light of practical experience and every-day work, to use an Americanism, won't "pan out." Manifestly, if as the Tariff goes down wages go up, when there is no Tariff at all we will have the highest wages. But what is the position of a person who advocates free-trade? He argues that under the lowest possible Tariff we have the highest possible wages. Yet he has to get his revenue, and he is placed in one of two or three positions. He must deduct his revenue from the wages of the people by means of a species of income tax, or levy revenue duties, and do that to the wage-earners which he is continually prating should not be done. But, if revenue duties are also bad, then he must get down to this position—that as there is no Tariff, there is no revenue; and, consequently, as there is no revenue, there is no government; and there being no government, he is faced with either anarchy or the single tax. I hardly think that even the most rabid free-trader would be prepared to support either the single tax or anarchy. Therefore, to get revenue, he must and does, according to his own argument, make some deduction from wages to carry on the government of the country. We have also been told that a low Tariff cheapens goods, and that cheapness increases consumption. Well, I do not know that the cheapness of any article causes a man to eat more or to wear more of it, as the case may be. He can only

wear and eat a sufficiency, and I do not quite comprehend how it is possible that increased consumption can come about through things being merely cheap. This doctrine of cheapness increasing consumption I fail to understand. I could understand that if wages were higher people would have a greater spending power, and consumption might consequently increase. I could understand if persons in receipt of salaries were getting more than they are at present their consumption of things would consequently increase, but the idea that the mere fact that things are cheap will increase consumption seems to me to be simply ridiculous. A man who has no wages, and nothing to spend, can buy nothing; and how can anything be cheap to him. Really, sir, this argument that productions are cheapened in accordance with reductions of the Tariff, and consumption is thereby increased, appears to me to be an absurdity. We are continually told that all trade is the result of exchange of goods for goods; and it is well for us to see how this applies to the poor farmers, for whom the honorable member for Melbourne East (Mr. Zox) and the honorable member for Hawthorn plead with such piteous tones, while the honorable member for Castlemaine (Sir James Patterson), almost with tears in his eyes, besought Parliament to reduce the customs duties on the articles the poor farmer uses, although none of them represents him, but all of them are making a stalking-horse of the poor farmer. It is rather astonishing to find these gentlemen advocating the interests of men whom they do not represent in this Chamber.

Mr. MADDEN.—They are members of the Parliament of Victoria, and represent all Victoria.

Mr. STAUGHTON.—It is very nice on your part to sneer at the poor farmer.

Mr. COOK.—I am not sneering at the poor farmer.

The CHAIRMAN.—We have had quite enough of this. The honorable member will be good enough to discuss the question, and address himself to the Chair.

Mr. COOK.—I was endeavouring to do so. I was remarking that all trade is the exchange of goods for goods, and the poor farmer, like every one else, exchanges his goods—his wheat, barley, oats, or whatever it may be—in Melbourne with the manufacturers or merchants for the goods he requires. They ship the farmers' produce

away. If there is any profit on the transaction, they very properly get it; and if there is any loss, they have to suffer it. Consequently the poor farmer makes the best deal he possibly can, and exchanges his goods where he is likely to get the highest value, and it has been proved that a better price is obtained in Melbourne for the farmers' produce than is obtainable elsewhere. Our friends forget, in advocating the cause of the poor farmer, that there are others who have to ship their surplus produce away. The poor manufacturer, whom we hear nothing at all about, has a market in this colony of 135,000 farmers for his agricultural implements, or one not nearly so great as the farmers' market in the towns, with their 864,000 consumers. Consequently the manufacturer has to ship his surplus products elsewhere, and to compete with the cheap labour of other countries. In proof of the fact that these goods are shipped, I find from *Hayter* that no less than £26,000 worth of agricultural implements were exported from this colony last year, £22,000 worth of other machinery, such as steam boilers, &c., or in all some thirteen lines of manufactured goods exported totalled nearly £100,000.

Mr. MADDEN.—Where were they sent?

Mr. COOK.—To other colonies.

Mr. MADDEN.—What do those things bring in other colonies compared with what they bring in Melbourne?

Mr. COOK.—I have nothing to do with that question at present. What I am trying to prove is that the manufacturer, who has to export his surplus products, is in precisely the same position as the farmer who has to export his, and consequently those who argue that the poor farmer has to sell his produce in the open markets of the world, and buy his requirements in the dearest market, forget that our manufacturers have to do precisely the same thing. What the mallee farmer, or any other farmer, does is to exchange his wheat for a Footscray plough or a Port Melbourne box of candles, and he gets the advantage of trading in Melbourne as well as the manufacturers. On this point the honorable the leader of the Opposition exclaimed in tragic tones, worthy of Hamlet himself—"How can the poor farmer be protected when he has to ship his goods away?" And, speaking of Hamlet, the honorable gentleman's position altogether may be likened to that dark and frowning prince.

Mr. TRENWITH.—No, Hamlet was not so mad as that.

Mr. COOK.—The honorable gentleman could not make up his mind whether he ought to go for an all-round maximum or not. He could not say whether 25 per cent. was high enough, or 35 per cent., or whether in some cases it might not be necessary to put on a duty of 45 per cent. A hesitancy and a halting manner characterized the honorable gentleman right through, and it would not require a great stretch of the imagination to think of him soliloquizing, after the fashion of Hamlet—"To be, or not to be, that is the question; whether 'tis nobler in the mind to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and plump for 25 per cent., or play the sly old dog and watch and wait events; to curry favour with the *Age*, mine enemy, and see if once again I cannot climb to power 'mid popular acclaim." The honorable gentleman could not make up his mind, and therefore he hesitated, halted, and did not know exactly what to do. Some of the other members in opposition could very fittingly fill other characters in Hamlet. The honorable member for Gunbower, with a few straws in his hair, would make a very good Ophelia, wailing—"And will he not come again." But sir, I desire to address myself to that particular exclamation of the leader of the Opposition—"How can the poor farmer be protected when he has to ship his goods away from the colony?" Now, the farmer is the best protected man in this country, and although I do not begrudge him what he has, I will point out that no other class has had such enormous advantages meted out to it as the farming class has, and deservedly so. The duties on wheat and other staples of the farmer have been the means in the past of getting men on the land, and it is a significant fact that, whilst New South Wales has three times the area of Victoria, we have twice as much land under cultivation in Victoria as they have in New South Wales, clearly proving that our protective policy has operated with such good effect that we have got more people on the soil, cultivating the land, than they have in New South Wales. I would further point out that the stock tax was put on to help the farmers, and they have also had the advantage of the butter bonus. Again, delegates were sent from here to America to inquire into the methods of irrigation, and to India and to the East, to see if fresh markets could not be opened up for our

farmers' produce. All these things have been done in the interests of the farmers. We have spent about £4,000,000 in irrigation works, and the major portion of the municipal endowment for years past, to the extent of hundreds of thousands of pounds, has also gone to the country districts. Of £36,000,000 spent on railway construction, according to the Government Statist, £29,000,000 have been spent on country railways; and last, but not least, the present Government have created a Banking Commission, one of whose objects is to try and devise a scheme to provide cheap money for the farmers. All these things go to prove that the farmers have never been lost sight of by those who have had to legislate for this country; but, on the contrary, on every possible occasion, and in every possible way, the farmers' interests have been studied. As far as the general policy of the colony is concerned, I am sure the farmers cannot have anything to complain of. They have had their full share of the public expenditure which has been incurred in providing State school accommodation and in building roads and bridges, and, when we consider in what relation the number of farmers stand to the population as a whole, it will be clearly seen that the farmers, as a class, have had enormous, almost incalculable, advantages over and above the people who reside in the cities and towns. That that is properly so I do not deny, because I hold that the farmers are the prime causes of production in this country, and we must conserve them, for we look to them to help us out of our difficulties very largely, so that it is our right and duty to help them. As I have already said, the country districts have had the benefit of railway construction to the cost of £29,000,000 out of a total of £36,000,000, leaving only about £7,000,000 for the cities; or, in other words £3,000,000 have been spent on country lines for every £1,000,000 spent on city lines. The farmers, pastoralists, and agriculturists number, according to *Hayter*, 135,202, whilst the population of the cities and towns numbers 864,798, or nearly eight to one of the farmers. If honorable members will take the interest charges they will find that out of about £2,000,000 per annum which the colony has to pay on its public debt the country provides only £270,404, while the towns provide £1,729,596, or about £8 to £1. There are some 26,000

miners in the colony, and I have included them in the population of the towns for the purposes of this argument, but even if the miners are omitted the proportion remains very nearly the same. Therefore, the farmers have nothing much to complain of in those respects. Then we have been told that unless we adopt a free-trade policy in this colony, New South Wales will get so far ahead of us that, according to the honorable member for Melbourne East (Mr. Zox), Victoria will only be like a dim shadowy speck in the distance. The leader of the Opposition also stated that at present we are shrinking and shrivelling up through lack of employment, that business is stagnating, and the honorable gentleman asked what better evidence could there be that the fiscal system we have had in operation in this colony has not been a success? Now, I do not deem it wise to go America for the purposes of a comparison, more particularly as we have been so often referred to New South Wales as the bright and shining example of the wisdom of the Cobdenite faith and the success of free-trade. Therefore I will contrast Victoria and New South Wales. It is not fair to contrast this colony with America, which is much older, or with England, which is older still. It is hardly fair to make contrasts between America and England, because hundreds of years have gone to the building up of the immense success of the manufactures and other industries of the British Empire. "Protection is the cause of all our troubles," says the leader of the Opposition, and therefore I want to draw attention to New South Wales more particularly, as that free-trade colony has been so often referred to as a country that is greatly ahead of us. Our population is about 1,100,000, whilst the population of New South Wales is about 1,200,000. Our debt is £46,000,000 in round figures, and the public debt of New South Wales £56,000,000. Our area is 87,884 square miles, and the area of New South Wales is 309,175 square miles, or more than three and a half times as large. When we come to consider the condition of the people we do not need to ask ourselves how many merchants are making a profit out of this thing or how many are making a profit out of that, but we must consider the condition of the people as a whole. I ask myself how does the body politic in New South Wales compare with the body politic in Victoria, and what conditions are the

great mass of the people labouring under in these two colonies? I find that in New South Wales there are to-day 10,000 unemployed. The honorable member for Jolimont strove to make very little of this matter as a mere congestion of the population in the cities. He said it was a matter altogether unworthy of consideration—that the unemployed difficulty was only in the metropolis of New South Wales, whereas we had unemployed all over this colony. But if the colony of New South Wales is so marvellously prosperous, as we are told it is, under a policy of free-trade; how comes it that there is a single unemployed man there at all? And why should we make light of this when we know that the head of the department of Labour in that colony has come over to this despised Victoria to make some inquiries as to how they shall cope with that great unemployed difficulty there? In face of a fact like that, I fail to understand how honorable members can refer us to New South Wales as a bright and shining example for this colony to follow. As another indication of the state of things in New South Wales, as compared with the state of things in this colony, I looked up the insolvency returns for 1894, and I found that while there were 487 insolvencies in Victoria during that year, there were 1,685 in New South Wales, or nearly four times as many insolvencies as in this colony. If that is any indication of the way in which the prosperous businesses of New South Wales are being carried on, it is a strange one.

Mr. ZOX.—Have you got the amounts?

Mr. COOK.—I am coming to that point. It is perfectly true that whilst the insolvencies in New South Wales were four times as numerous as in Victoria during 1894, the total amount was greater in this colony than in New South Wales.

Dr. MALONEY.—One-half the Victorian insolvencies do not appear.

Mr. COOK.—But I have the compositions as well. In Victoria the total liabilities aggregate to £2,093,236, and in New South Wales to £1,527,985, whilst the assets in Victoria amounted to £1,103,520, and in New South Wales to £905,763. The total of the Victorian assets is exclusive of £3,772,408, the amount set down by a certain Miss Spence as the value of her assets. If that item were added, it would, of course, show a greater amount of assets than liabilities in Victoria, but I have excluded it, because I think it would be unfair

to include it. I do not know very much about Miss Spence, but it seems to me rather remarkable that any one person should have such an enormous amount of assets. While the total amount of liabilities in Victoria is greater than in New South Wales, the proportions of assets to liabilities in both colonies are about the same, but the astonishing fact is that there were four times as many insolvencies in New South Wales as there were in Victoria in 1894, proving conclusively that the amount of distress is far wider spread there than it is here. Besides, we know that during last year there were many untoward circumstances in this colony all tending to large insolvencies. Men had been speculating very extensively in land, and in consequence of the great shrinkage in values they had been compelled to go under. In New South Wales the shrinkage in the value of land was not so keenly felt, so that in reality New South Wales is in a worse position than Victoria. Notwithstanding the wonderful prosperity of that colony, New South Wales did not resist the banking crisis any more than Victoria. The banks there toppled over, as the banks did here, and, so far as the great mass of the people are concerned, they are in a worse position in New South Wales than they are in Victoria. As an indication of that fact, allow me to give the charities returns, compiled by Mr. Coghlan, the Government Statist of New South Wales. These figures I have taken from the statistical register of New South Wales. I have here Mr. Hayter's figures of the total cases of relief treated in Victoria last year. These statistics show that whilst there were 136,707 cases relieved in Victoria last year, in New South Wales the number of cases relieved was 291,822, made up something in this fashion—City Night Refuge, Sydney, shelter, 25,446; meals, 52,818; Sydney Rescue Society, shelter, 17,734; meals, 40,401; and with others added a total of 291,822. So that here again we have a very striking indication—a most glaring instance—of the fact that, notwithstanding the wonderful prosperity of New South Wales, they had to relieve more than double as many cases as we had to relieve in this colony.

Mr. McLELLAN.—That is because we let our people starve.

Mr. COOK.—No, it is not.

Mr. ZOx.—I suppose twelve meals will count as twelve cases.

Mr. COOK.—The same thing applies here. In Sydney they are treating their unemployed with far less liberality than we treat the unemployed in this colony, where we have sent men track-cutting, cutting down railway grades, opening up the country, and doing really good work. Notwithstanding justifiable complaints in connexion with some of the wages paid in Victoria, we are doing very much better for our unemployed in every possible direction than they are doing in New South Wales. As a most striking indication of that fact, honorable members have only to learn that the Government of New South Wales have sent over the head man in their Labour department to inquire into the methods we have adopted here of alleviating the distress. Therefore, notwithstanding all that has been said about the marvellous prosperity of New South Wales, these things all go to prove that, as far as the great mass of the people are concerned, they are not so prosperous, but, as a matter of fact, they are in a worse condition in New South Wales than they are in Victoria. Those three or four instances are quite sufficient to prove my contention. We are told by the supporters of the 25 per cent. maximum that in order to bring this colony into a better position we must endeavour to secure more production; but they end there, and do not show how it is to be done. The leader of the Opposition, in the course of his speech, said—

“When you have the people continuously employed you have peace and comfort everywhere . . . but when you have enforced idleness throughout the country you have a most unsatisfactory state of things.”

I do not think that there is a member who will not agree with the leader of the Opposition in that. When we have a people fully employed we have all that is necessary to secure peace and comfort, provided always that they are receiving a fair rate of wages. Consequently, I would have liked the leader of the Opposition to point out how we are to get our people fully employed. The people cannot be put into producing interests by merely cheapening this or that article, and by fixing a merely arbitrary duty. I agree with the honorable member that it is necessary to increase our products, and that in order to accomplish that certain things must be done. And it is here that I begin to agree with some of the remarks of the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton). Protective duties in Victoria

have tended to establish manufactures, have cheapened goods in certain lines of trade, and have opened up a diversity of employment to the people; but there is one thing that protection has not done—it has not done away with poverty. Therefore we must look to the establishment of other producing interests; but in what direction must we look for them? I think that the real cause of the present depression in Victoria is not our protective system, but something far different. There is more distress in New South Wales where there is no protective system. What we have really been suffering from is excessive borrowing. What we want is not protection from high duties, but protection from politicians such as have ruled in the past and run the country into enormous indebtedness, and failed to find adequate employment for the borrowed money. The real causes which have led to our present distressed condition are bad government, excessive borrowing, speculation in wild-cat schemes, the building of railways in far away unoccupied blocks; the payment of heavy interest charges, money monopoly, and land monopoly. Our troubles are not to be attributed to protection, as is alleged by some of the advocates of the lower duties. At the same time, I think that there are anomalies in the Tariff which ought to be looked into, and I will vote for some of the proposed reductions. I do not believe that the higher the duty is the better the duty is. I believe that the local manufacturer ought to have the advantage over the importer, and that the two should be kept in a state of friction, in order to prompt them to produce a better article, which would be the means of giving an advantage to the community, instead of giving the advantage to rings or monopolists. Where there are anomalies in the Tariff, and where I am satisfied that the *bona fides* of the case warrant it, I will vote for a reduction of duties, and where the reverse is the case I will vote for an increase. It is not the high duties which have brought about the present state of things, it is the causes I have mentioned, which causes are still in operation. There are a few hard facts which may be cited in proof of my statements. There are in this colony something over 1,000,000 people, and the public debt is £50,000,000, while private debts amount to about the same sum. That makes £100,000,000, or £100 per head for every man, woman,

and child in Victoria. Then there is this important factor in the real cause of distress: the interest charged amounts to about £4 per head for every man, woman, and child in the colony. Here is the prime cause of our distress. In addition to all, however, there has been a heavy fall in prices, which has made things worse. Consequently, unless something is done to relieve the distress, by adopting a more forward policy, things will continue to grow worse. What we want is not relief from high duties, but relief from debt. One astounding, almost paralyzing, fact is that out of twenty-two millions and some odd hundred thousand acres of land alienated from the Crown, 868 men own more than one-third of the quantity. How can we have any production to speak of when land monopoly is being carried on like that? Here, then, is another of the root causes of the depression—Enormous areas of land which are kept idle, instead of being put to legitimate uses, and there is thus no opportunity for the people to increase their products. It is clear that unless increased facilities for producing are given the products cannot be increased. With facts like these staring us in the face it is not to be wondered at that our debts are weighing us down, and that we cannot find adequate employment for our people. I find that nine honorable members sitting opposite to me own 165,885 acres of land, or about 18,428 acres each, while four members of another place own 294,602 acres, or about 73,602 acres each. Yet 10 acres is held to be a sufficient area on which to dump a village settler, with instructions to endeavour to increase the volume of the produce of this country. As long as Victoria is Victoria, men will not be able to make a living on 10 acres, and yet it is to this class of settlers that we are asked to look for the much-needed increase in the volume of our products. Until some radical change is made in that direction the volume of our products will never increase, and the burden of our debts will remain the same. We must throw open the land and get producers on to the soil, but this cannot be done while existing land monopoly continues. It is useless to put men upon 10-acre blocks, when, as soon as the Government subsidy is withdrawn from them, they must abandon their holdings. Let us initiate land reform and put producers where they should be, and then,

and then only, will our products increase. Coming again to the alleged wonderful prosperity of New South Wales, I find on reference to the most authoritative statistics that there are, as I have already said, more cases of charitable relief treated in that colony than here; also that there are more insolvencies and more vagrants in that colony than here. In fact, statistics show that all through New South Wales is practically in a worse condition, as far as the great mass of the people are concerned, than Victoria is. And as far as protection to farming is concerned, I have endeavoured to prove that with the enormous amount of money spent on railways, State schools, bridges, and that kind of thing, the farmer, irrespective of the duties put on wheat and other staples, still receives a larger amount of protection than any other class of the community. It is, therefore, a fallacy to say that the farmer has no protection. To my mind, the proper method to pursue in all cases is to keep the importer and manufacturer in close competition with one another, in order that the public may obtain the resulting advantage and so avoid monopolies and importers' or manufacturers' rings. But not until we have adopted a more forward policy of land reform will the problem of how to increase the volume of our products find a proper answer. And not until that is done will the colony free itself from the burden of heavy debts and high interest charges.

Mr. McLELLAN.—Sir, I should have no desire at all to address the committee, were it not for the fact that when I was before my constituents I was asked a question as to whether I would support any decrease in the heavy duties which are being levied in Victoria, and I gave an affirmative pledge. Of course, I mean to redeem that pledge as far as lies in my power, dealing with the circumstances with which I am surrounded, and the various classes of honorable members—protectionists, free-traders, and others with no particular or definable views. My desire is to lighten the burdens of the people as far as is consistent with justice to others who may be affected by changes in the Tariff. I am delighted to be able to follow in the debate after the last speaker, because he tried to prove conclusively that our position is much better than that of New South Wales. I may inform the honorable member that a newspaper has been placed in my hand which makes a

statement which is better than all the misstatements made by the honorable member, and which shows exactly how very superior in point of volume of commerce New South Wales is to Victoria. The honorable member told us that New South Wales has more unemployed, more insolvencies, and more people in receipt of relief than Victoria has. He detailed those miserable circumstances in respect to two colonies, though these are statements which ought not to be put forth to the world at all. If there is any manhood in us we ought to endeavour to draw a veil over those distressing cases, instead of dragging them into publicity. It is not wise on the part of any honorable member to prate about the poverty of either colony, because there can be no tangible poverty in either of them. New South Wales is an immensely rich country—a vast territory which far surpasses ours. We have one of the richest countries under the sun; it is blest by wealth, attractive climate, and everything else that tends to build up a nation, and if, along with all these blessings, the Almighty had given us intelligent legislators and an industrious population we should not have been in our present condition. As things are, however, we have sent out 10,000 unemployed people, not into happy homes, but on to bare sterile ground or swamps, such as the Minister of Mines can describe, and where it is impossible for human beings even to make a living. Even if the settlers on these places had sufficient food and clothing it would be impossible for them to reside on the damp soil and in the general misery which surrounds them. This is a state of things which ought not to exist. But it is not the Assembly or the people of the country who are to blame for this. The depression from which we are suffering has run round the world, and has overtaken the colonies one by one. I trust that we may gain wisdom from this visitation, so as to be in a position to guard against anything of the kind in the future. But if we listen to nothing but drivel in regard to the condition of our people we shall have other crises and other periods of difficulty, for which we shall be as little prepared as we were for the present depression. If we are going to build up the nation let us set about it on an intelligible principle. I have no doubt that when this crisis is passed the colony will be found to have

sufficient wealth, because there is now in Victoria more gold and wealth of every description than there has been at any previous time in the history of the colony. With that fact before us, what have we to despair of? What we have to do is to set about the task of adapting ourselves to the circumstances, and making use of every possible advantage, not only for the farmers and working classes but for every class in the community. If we can point out to the people how this vast wealth can be employed to develop the industries of the colony—to assist the miner to produce gold, the farmer to produce larger crops and better stock, and the squatter to produce better sheep and better wool—Victoria will soon rise in the scale of nations; while otherwise she will remain a small colony beset by difficulties which have been brought upon us not by ourselves but by circumstances which had their origin outside of this country altogether. In respect to the alleged commercial inferiority of New South Wales to Victoria, I hold in my hand a newspaper which shows that there are now expected at Sydney 64 steam vessels and 92 sailing vessels from foreign ports, while in Melbourne 52 steam vessels and 40 sailing vessels are now expected. Do we expect to become great by shutting out the commerce of the world? The thing is an absurdity; it is impossible for any nation to become great if it has no shipping or commerce. I wish that honorable members would study this fact for themselves, because it is one which is damning in its nature to the character of Victoria. Last Saturday, for the first time for some years, I thought I would have a look at our noble Bay. Going down to Port Melbourne, I found that that miserable thing the steamer *Gem*, which trades between Williamstown and Port Melbourne, was the only craft which for a whole hour came near the railway pier, which cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to erect. That money is lying valueless now while it ought to be bringing in revenue to the country. At the town pier there were only two vessels, one being the old Bethel ship, in which some good old parson talks to the sailors. With the exception of these two, there was not a single vessel in our noble Bay. When I contrast that state of things with the shipping there was in the Bay when I first arrived in the colony, in 1850, the comparison is very unfavorable to our trade at the present time.

It is very bad taste on the part of an honorable member who has been sent here to maintain the credit of the country, and to do the best he can in the interests of the whole population, to begin to wash the dirty linen belonging to this colony before the public gaze. That ought to be done in some back-yard, and there are plenty of them in a filthy enough condition in East Bourke Boroughs. There is no necessity for decrying the position of any of the Australian colonies at the present time, because we have an enormous wealth, but what we want is an industrious population to give employment for that wealth in producing commodities that will command a market throughout the civilized world. We have a good climate, good land, and very rich gold-fields, and there is no reason why there should be any poverty here if we, as a Parliament, did our duty towards the people.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Hear, hear.

Mr. McLELLAN.—The honorable member by his "Hear, hear," I suppose, intends to cast a reflection upon myself and others, but I can tell the honorable member that if it were not for him and the party with which he is connected, and the policy that they have pursued for a number of years past, Victoria would not now be in its present position. We were told by the honorable member for East Bourke Boroughs that cheapness does not increase consumption. Was there ever a greater fallacy? How many thousands are there who, if the ordinary commodities of life were brought within their means, would not live more luxuriously, and wear better and more costly clothing than they do at present? I think that everybody must recognise the absurdity of the honorable member's statement. It is just about as true as the statement that was made by another member in the Ministerial corner, that the increase of a duty does not increase the price of an article—that by making it dearer you make it cheaper. It would be just as reasonable to say that by taking a piece off the end of a walking-stick you add to its length. These are fallacies that have been drummed into the ears of the working classes of the colony, and they have not the smallest foundation in fact. I desire now to deal with the remarks of the honorable member for East Bourke Boroughs (Mr. Cook) in regard to the way in which the farmers have been treated, and with the farmers I intend to bracket the miners, because they are both in the same position.

The honorable member said that the municipal endowment was given for the benefit of the farmers; that the railways were constructed for the farmers; that the irrigation system of the colony, which cost an enormous sum of money, was also constructed for the farmers. The fact is that all these things are taxes upon the farmer's land, and he would be better without them altogether. He has to pay interest upon the loan moneys that have been expended in the construction of these works, and he derives no benefit whatever from them. The honorable member alluded to the fact that certain persons had been sent to America, and certain other persons to India, in the interests, as he said, of the farmers. Individuals, who canvassed the Government to get employment from them, have had very nice trips to those countries; but have they brought back any information to the farmer that he did not possess before? I am not aware of it. If they have brought back any such information I shall be glad to learn what it is. Up to the present time I have heard of none and have seen none. In fact, these gentlemen are friends of honorable members in the Ministerial corner. All their friends are employed in this sort of way—on boards and commissions—and in squandering money throughout the length and breadth of the world, for which there is no return to the people whatever.

Mr. HANCOCK.—It was the Patterson Government which sent them away.

Mr. McLELLAN.—I do not care what Government sent them away, or what Government brought them back; I say that the farmer knew as much before they went as he does at the present time. It is also urged that the butter bonus was of advantage to the farmers. It may have been of a little advantage to the farmers at the time when it was granted, but it was only a farmer here and there who was able to avail himself of it. To the farmers, as a class, it was of no great benefit. The farmer has been taxed on everything. He is taxed on his clothes, on his boots, and on his wearing apparel. We give him shoddy to put on his back; we give him flannel to wear next to his skin that has just about as much heat in it as a cabbage-leaf would have, inasmuch as it is a mixture of cotton and wool. It is surely a deplorable thing that, after we have subsidized our woollen mills and supported them for so many years, the consumptive poor should not be able to purchase a

good piece of flannel, but should have given to them rubbish that is detrimental to their health. This is an iniquity that ought to be stopped by legislation, and that instantly. Just fancy a poor patient in consumption. The doctor recommends him to get warm flannel and warm shoes. He buys flannel which contains 46 per cent. of cotton, and he buys a pair of shoes the inner sole of which is composed of strawboard, as we saw last night; so that, instead of having a warm foot, he stands on a paper board that is as wet as a sponge. What can befall a weak individual under such circumstances but rapid decline? If the Government do not put a stop to this sort of thing it will redound to their eternal disgrace. We have had many exposures in regard to the Tariff. There are the swindles in respect to tobacco, to cigars, to whisky, to woollens, and to boots and shoes, and honorable members even complain that the hats that are made in the colony are of such a quality that they soon become green. I sympathize with the manufacturers of those hats, because I know they are not to blame. How can the poor manufacturer prevent the sap in the greenness of the wearers' heads from oozing through the hats? It is that which is to blame, and not the hats themselves. I am not speaking against members in the Ministerial corner at all. They deserve credit for anything that they do that is for the benefit of the working classes or of any class in Victoria, and I would be the last to reflect upon them for any patriotic endeavours in that direction; but when I see the working classes of this colony—misled by these gentlemen—wearing adulterated clothes, partaking of adulterated food, and having boots and shoes to their feet unfit for any human being to wear, I ask myself to what purpose is it that this Legislature, in the greatness of its soul, has protected all these industries by high duties? Is it in order that the working classes may be swindled of their honest earnings and reduced to a state of health that unfits them for their daily toil? Is that what we have accomplished by our protection? Is that what we have accomplished by our free-trade? I care not one straw whether it is free-trade or protection that has done all this, but I do say that the Government should rise in their places and take such measures as will prevent this adulteration and swindling in the future. They should insist that the people shall be

able to get warm flannels, healthy boots, wholesome unadulterated food, and everything that is necessary to raise and maintain an industrious and manly population. Are the Government equal to this task? What is this paltry proposal of theirs to accomplish? What good do they expect to do by their 2d. per lb. on paraffine or their reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. on candles? Will such proposals bring about a better state of things in Victoria? I am ashamed of my youthful friend the Minister of Customs, because I thought he had a larger soul, and that he would take a broader and more compassionate view of things, and that when he had the opportunity he would rush like a giant to the assistance of the poor of Victoria. He has made a speech, which he has circulated bound or not bound at all in virgin white, as an emblem of his effort. I am not censuring him. But what benefit do the Government expect to derive from this Tariff if it is passed tomorrow? Is there any man in the Government who is capable of rising in his place, and of giving us a comprehensive view of what the Ministry expect? Is there no honorable gentlemen on the Treasury bench who has the courage and ability to deal properly with the present deplorable condition into which our people have fallen for want of employment, and the present deplorable condition of our industries? Is there no man in the Government who can grapple with all these difficulties, and point us to a glorious future by showing us how we are going to retrieve our position and rise again to our former degree of prosperity? If I were on the Treasury bench in such company I would hide my diminished head. I would not have sat in a Government that would have allowed such an important discussion as this, in which the whole interests of Victoria, the whole interests of our people, the whole of the relations existing between ourselves and the adjoining colonies, and to some extent the welfare of the Southern Hemisphere, is involved, without a single Minister having as much to say as boo to a goose. There is the exception, of course, of the Minister of Customs, who has done very well considering his age, and I am proud of him, but that is not what we want. I recollect the time when there were men on the Treasury bench who would, under such circumstances, have been equal to the situation, and whose oratory would have entranced every one within the circuit of this Assembly. They would

have demonstrated to the House, and to the people of the country, that their proposals were such as any statesman ought to be proud of, and such as were worthy of being submitted to an intelligent people. We have had nothing of that sort. Are we going to have it? We have had one very good speech from the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker), and we are under an everlasting debt of gratitude to him for the exposures he has made. It required a man of mind, and of firm nerve, to make such statements, and to bring up a report such as that that he has submitted to us. What can we say of his comrades on the Tariff Board? They are like Lot's wife. They put their hand to the report, and when they saw that it was unpopular, they looked back upon the plains of Sodom and Gomorrah, and back upon the luxuries and lusts of those cities that were consumed for their vices. Then they withdrew and came down to the Assembly, to their eternal shame, and declared that although they had signed the report in open day, and with all their senses about them, they repudiated their own act, and wished to be relieved from the responsibility of it. Sooner than I would put my name to such a report, if I did not approve of it, I would have my right arm cut off. I would not come down here and whine and say that I did not mean it. Could there be anything more monstrous than for a man to be guilty of such conduct as that? If I had the power I would sweep him from this Assembly, and I would not permit him to return to it again. What we want now are men who understand what they are doing; men with minds that can cope with our difficulties, and not tiddle-taddle with them in the way the members of the Tariff Board have done. Is there any sense in it? I say, "No," and it redounds to the credit of the honorable member for Fitzroy that he, despite all the abuse, and all the sneers and jeers of what I might call an insignificant lot, has brought up a report worthy of a statesman, and worthy of this Assembly. I trust that no matter what the consequences may be, the committee will have the nerve to give effect to the recommendations contained in that report, and let the people of the colony have the benefit of them. I did not wish to praise the honorable member simply because he is my own representative, and for that reason I had intended passing him by;

but when I saw the treatment he was getting I could not withhold my expression of approval at his manly conduct. Would to God that we had now, and that we may have hereafter, men with mind and nerve like him who, when they see what is right, will do it no matter what the consequences to themselves may be, whether it is the loss of a paltry seat or the displeasure of a constituent! If we had such men we would have prosperity, and it is because we lack statesmen who possess the qualities that characterized our statesmen in times past that we cannot deal with the difficulties we are in at the present time. If we want to increase our prosperity and to give work to our unemployed we must restore confidence to those individuals who have unbounded sums of money lying idle at the present time. If we can give confidence to those individuals, so that the money may be circulated, we could then commence again with new industries, and in new grooves and in new directions. But while there is no confidence amongst those who possess wealth, we shall have no enterprises started and no prosperity amongst us. I had hoped that the Premier and Treasurer would have done something to earn those titles. Premier and Treasurer of Victoria are high titles, and the present possessor of them no doubt deserves them, because he has shown many good qualities. What we want now, however, instead of this debate drifting aimlessly on, is some man at the helm who will guide the ship of State and who will say, this ought to be done, and that ought not to be done; but to see the Premier with his arms folded, doing nothing—reclining in repose—I say to the honorable gentleman, that will not do. He must come out and tell us what he expects by these alterations of the Tariff. How much does he expect to gain by 2d. per lb. on paraffine, and what does he expect to be the effect of the alteration of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per lb. on candles? How much does he expect to gain by the other paltry and insignificant changes which he proposes to make? The whole thing is, “as you were,” and we, an intelligent body, are about to waste our time in endless and useless talk without any reform whatever. The honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) the other night, in one of the longest speeches he ever delivered in his life, gave us three of his lectures all knocked into one. There was not a single phrase in his speech which

Mr. McLellan.

I had not heard over and over again; but I don't intend to reply to any of his statements with the exception of one outrageous assertion which he made, and that was that the protective duties in this country increased the farming production and had assisted the farmer. Was anything more fallacious ever uttered? If the honorable member had been in this Assembly when we used to make the chamber ring with our speeches in respect to land reform—if he had been here when the Nicholson Land Bill was passed; if he had been here when the Duffy Land Bill was passed, although that Act, unfortunately, was a failure; if he had been here when the Grant Acts of 1865 and 1869 were passed, he would have found reason in those Acts for the great increase of our agricultural products. He would have known that it was Mr. Grant's ambition to throw 4,000,000 acres of the best lands of the colony open for selection in one day, and that was continued throughout the best agricultural lands for many years. Had that nothing to do with the increase in the number of our farmers? Had that nothing to do with the increase of our agricultural products? I think it had. I have here a little book which, if the honorable member would take the trouble to read it, would give him a good deal of information on the subject. The honorable member for Dandenong will recollect the selections which took place at Beaufort, Ararat, Hamilton, and elsewhere, when the whole of the best lands of the colony were thrown open for the first time to the industrial classes of Victoria. The author of this book, which is entitled *Farming in Victoria*, goes on to say—

“The most successful attempt that has yet been made in the way of effecting this most desirable end was made by the Honorable James Macpherson Grant, Minister of Crown Lands. His Land Act came into operation in March, 1865. As this has been more successful than any other legislative measure in providing farms for the people, it may be desirable to state its leading outlines. They were as follows:—1st. Certain districts were selected for settlement called ‘Agricultural areas,’ and these were divided into blocks varying from 40 to 640 acres. 2nd. No person was entitled to select more than 640 acres within the space of any one year. 3rd. The block selected by a man was to be held on lease for not more than seven years, at a yearly rental of 2s. per acre, payable half-yearly and in advance. 4th. The selector engaged to make improvements upon his land, such as fencing, clearing it, putting up a habitation and other buildings, opening wells and the like, to the value of £1 per acre within two years of the date of selection. 5th. No assignment of the land

could be made to another man by the selector until the desired improvements had been effected, and not in any case until after the expiry of three years; the resident selector could at the end of that time secure the freehold of his land at £1 per acre, and the non-resident selector could at the end of that same time require his land to be put up by auction at the upset price of £1 per acre with allowances for improvements, such improvements to be paid for at the time of sale in the event of another than himself becoming the purchaser. 6th. A selector became entitled to the privilege of commonage on the agricultural area so soon as one-fourth of the whole had been selected. 7th. Lands might be leased for other than agricultural purposes; also swamps, morasses, &c., for reclamation. 8th. Two millions of acres were always to be kept open for selection. There were also numerous other provisions in the Act which it is of no consequence here to detail. The large quantity of 4,000,000 (four millions) of acres of suitable agricultural land were at once declared to be open for selection."

I would ask whether that or protection had most effect in increasing the number of farmers in Victoria? The author further points out that two or three years later 10,000,000 acres had been selected under this Act, and a page or two further on he refers to 20,000,000 acres being selected and in occupation by farmers. Who will venture, then, to tell me that it was protection which brought about this result? Nothing of the sort. It was the liberal land laws which I myself was a party to enacting in this Assembly that placed the industrial classes of Victoria on our lands, and it has been my ambition ever since to keep them there. Now we have single-taxers and other classes of politicians who seem to have no knowledge at all of political economy, and who sneer at such men as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill. It is wonderful that I should have lived to be a member of this Legislative Assembly where those gigantic intellects can be sneered at—and by whom? Well might the shade of Adam Smith or John Stuart Mill exclaim, like Othello—

"I am not valiant neither, but every puny whipster gets my sword."

I think that if we are to be guided by those statesmen who have distinguished themselves in the mother country and have led one of the most intellectual bodies in the universe successfully, we ought to consult their writings and their doings more than we have done hitherto. It was the highest ambition of the ablest men who ever sat in this Assembly to be able to quote those philosophers in support of their views, and it will always be my ambition to do the

same. But it is impossible to liken those giant intellects and mighty minds to some of those gentlemen whom we hear sneering at them to-day. As I once heard a corporal say, in the Castle square of Stirling, "You can never make soldiers of tinkers." There are one or two fallacies which I heard lately, and in regard to which I would like to warn this Assembly. We have been told, for instance, that we are going to have a Board of Trade—a certain number of gentlemen appointed to deal with all alterations in the Tariff. Now, that is a recommendation which has not been properly considered. We have already stuck one excrescence upon our Constitution, but it has only been stuck on with a spittle and it has no standing at all in law—I refer to the Committee of Public Accounts. It is foreign to our Constitution, and we are not bound by anything it says or does any more than we are bound by the opinion of a stranger in our public streets. As to the proposed Board of Trade, I may say that when there were men in the Treasury who understood finance, and when political battles were fought keenly in this Assembly, the idea of the Treasurer of the colony allowing emissaries of the Opposition or even his own friends to know what was going on in the Treasury would not have been dreamt of. Mr. Ebdon, Mr. Harker, Sir George Verdon, Sir John O'Shanassy, and others would as soon have allowed his Satanic majesty to put his foot in the Treasury as a member of the Opposition. If the Opposition wanted any information that ought to be supplied to them as a matter of public duty, they had to ask for it in the House, and it was furnished in the form of returns which were not only laid before the Assembly, but before the whole country. What will happen if we have the Board of Trade which is proposed? We will have perhaps five or six of the greatest schemers in Victoria upon it. We will be letting the greatest meddlers from the Chamber of Manufactures into the secrets of the Cabinet when we are about to make changes in our Tariff; and we would thus be giving those meddlers information which would be worth thousands of pounds to them, and which would not only enrich them but enrich the whole of their friends. Of course, if this Board of Trade is merely for the purpose of settling petty disputes, there need be nothing said about it, but if it is for the purpose of getting into the secrets

of the Executive Government, and of knowing what changes of duty are to be proposed, it is one of those things that ought never to be brought into existence. Let a man be as pure as the snow-drift from heaven, he is liable to temptation; and if this board is appointed, information which should be confined to only one man in the colony—the Treasurer—will go abroad like thistle-down, and private individuals will profit by it, while the revenue will suffer.

Mr. BEST.—We don't propose anything of the kind.

Mr. McLELLAN.—I am only pointing out what my view is in respect to the appointment of any such board. There is only one man who ought to have the information as to the intended changes in the Tariff, and that man ought to be a man of unimpeachable integrity, and with an iron nerve and a strong will. I have been in several Cabinets myself, and in all changes in the Tariff, although the members of the Cabinet were always consulted and the proposed changes discussed, there was not a man in the Cabinet who knew the exact changes which were to be made until the Treasurer came down to this House and delivered his Budget statement; simply because the work of revising the proposed alterations never was completed until the very last moment. Under no circumstances will this Assembly be safe, or will the Executive be able to do its duty to the country, if any such body as the proposed Board of Trade is called into existence. It is simply one of those wild proposals which are foreign to our Constitution. If it existed at the present time it could not be kept pure, and the people of the colony would be made the victims of the cupidity of members of that board in connexion with any changes in the Tariff. If the information with respect to such changes were in the possession of a dozen men, and those men were of the type that might be expected, it would be impossible to prevent the information from leaking out, to the disadvantage of the State. For my part, I would not like to be subject to the temptations to which I would be exposed if I were a member of such a board; and if it existed it would be impossible for us to have any certainty with respect to our finances. There are only a few other things that I desire to say. If we wish this country to prosper, we must be equal to our position; we must give

the people confidence by our actions here; and it is not by sitting like dumb dogs in a corner that we can accomplish that. We must put such proposals before the people as will assure them that there are men in this Chamber equal to the great task which they have undertaken. Why should there be all the poverty in Victoria that exists at present? Why should unfortunate creatures be taken off the streets and sent to swamps and sterile hills to perish? There they are with their wives and families during this cold frosty weather, living on a few shillings a week, which the Government supply them with to obtain food. They can have no clothing, because I read the other day that a beautiful girl—a girl who ought to be an ornament to society—was going about in one of the village settlements with a bag with two holes in it for her arms as her only clothing. Must we not feel ashamed of such things occurring in a civilized country, and cannot we act in such a way as to prevent it in the future? Can we not find employment for these unfortunate people? Can we not do something to give them some encouragement? Is it by duties of 2d. on paraffine or 1½d. on candles that any reformation is to be brought about? The Minister of Mines has been cutting tracks for the wombats and opossums in his own district, but as for doing anything for the human race it is beyond his conception. I wish he would bring in a law to deal with all those village settlers who still remain alive, and who have not got the seeds of consumption and death in their bodies by being located in the swamps. We have plenty of territory, and let every one of those individuals be transferred from those miserable swamps on to healthy land, where they would be able to earn a living for themselves and their families. The system of village settlements hitherto has been a wretched misconception. To place men and women upon those swamps, and then to come and assure us that they are comfortable under such circumstances, is an insult to our intelligence, because we know perfectly well that comfort under such circumstances is quite impossible. I wish the Premier would give us some assurance as to what the Government really intend to do—that he would get up and make a speech like a man, and tell us what he expects from this meddling with the Tariff. What results can he expect from it? For

my part, I expect very little. So far as lowering the heavy duties is concerned, no doubt that will have a good effect; but as to encouraging those men who have a large amount of capital to expend it upon industries in the colony, the proposals of the Government can have no effect whatever, nor can they have the effect of drawing the unemployed out of Melbourne and placing them on the soil, where there are a thousand and one industries with which they could profitably employ their time and make a comfortable living for themselves and their families. When I was before my electors I gave certain promises, and every one of those promises will be redeemed. I would gladly vote for the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn if it were not for one or two exceptions that I do not want to bring within the 25 per cent. limit. I am not interested in those industries. I have no shoddy, no boots made of papier maché, and nothing of that sort to sell, and as I promised my constituents I would vote for reducing the high duties from 45 per cent., and the higher duties still to a lesser amount, I am prepared to assist the Government to do that. I have no other ambition than to serve the interests of the colony, and whatever I see is desirable to be done to advance the prosperity of this country I will try to accomplish. No pledge I ever gave would bind me for one moment after I discovered that I had done wrong in giving that pledge. I am not saying that I am going to break my election pledges; on the contrary, I am going to keep them, but if it were necessary for me to break any pledge I have made in order to promote the welfare of my adopted country, I would say perish that pledge, because my country would be my first consideration.

Mr. WHEELER.—Mr. Mason, if it had not been for the concluding words of the honorable member for Ararat, I was going to congratulate the free-trade party of the colony on the accession of another honorable member to their ranks. I always believed that the honorable member was a moderate protectionist. We met in this chamber 30 years ago, and we have been pretty much on the same line of politics ever since. The honorable member and I took part in the revision of the first Tariff introduced into this colony by the McCulloch Government. The honorable member was a supporter of that Tariff on moderate lines, and his concluding

remarks to-night convince me that he is a moderate protectionist still—that he still adheres to his old principles. This is one of the most important debates we have had for a long time, and it ought to be carried on in all earnestness and in the most conciliatory spirit possible. The Minister of Customs introduced the Government proposals in a very clear, excellent, and lucid speech, and I felt very pleased when he said that this revision of the Tariff should not be made a party question. It shows that the Government are prepared to give their supporters, at all events, a free hand when we come to discuss the details. The leader of the Opposition also delivered a very excellent speech, in which he too stated that he was not prepared to discuss the Tariff question on party lines, but desired to assist in passing customs duties which would operate in the interests of the people. Having those announcements from the Government and the opposition sides of the chamber, we start fair. The leader of the Opposition would not sanction the adverse amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, and I compliment him for that. This is not a time to discuss the Tariff on party lines. There is a change coming over our commercial prospects, and we should be careful not to do anything that will complicate matters or that will darken the silver lining which now appears on our political horizon. It is almost a pity that we have the Tariff under discussion at such a time as the present. However, the Government have done very wisely in giving us a free hand in regard to the details, and in determining the various difficulties that will arise I think we should adopt a give and take policy. The Tariff should not be revised in the interests of either free-trade or protection, but in the interests of the whole community. No doubt many items require alteration, and they will be altered very materially before we have finished our deliberations. I may say at once that I cannot support the proposal for a maximum of 25 per cent. I consider 25 per cent. duties far too much in some cases, and too little in others. Some industries could do very well with a 10 per cent. duty, while others will, in all probability, require perhaps 40 per cent. duties for some time to come to enable them to carry on. Each item in the Tariff should be discussed on its merits, and not on hard-and-fast lines. Some duties are doubtless higher than is

good, but I will refer more particularly to them later on. If we were to fix a maximum of 25 per cent., I believe that a number of the industries we have established under our protective policy would suffer very seriously, if indeed they would not be put out of existence altogether. A very large sum of money has been invested in buildings, machinery, and appliances in our protected manufactories, the proprietors of which have been induced to so invest their capital by the policy of this country for some years past. These industries have given labour to thousands of people in the colony, and whatever reductions are made in the protective duties they now enjoy ought to be made gradually. To deal with the Tariff properly on scientific lines, with a view to the least possible injury to the manufactories established here under protection, I think we should have a sliding scale, under which the protective duties would be gradually reduced, and instead of fixing the Tariff for a period of five years it would be wiser to revise it again in, say, three years, and make any further reductions that may then seem wise and desirable. In a matter of this kind we should go step by step.

Mr. MCKENZIE.—We cannot bind our successors.

Mr. WHEELER.—The experience of the next three years would enable us to say whether there should be any further reductions of the Tariff or it should remain as revised now. There is a change of feeling coming over the country, and the people desire that reductions should be made in the higher duties, although the principle of protection has not been seriously assailed. A large number of honorable members who have taken part in this debate have testified that there is a strong feeling in the country in favour of reductions being made in the higher duties. We have a strange anomaly in this colony at the present time. For some years we have had trade in a state of stagnation, enterprise has been virtually dead, and, singular to say, our banks are overflowing with money, which they either cannot or will not lend. There seems to be a great want of confidence, and until we restore confidence we shall not have much better times. No prudent man cares to invest in any enterprise at present. He naturally feels that he cannot look forward with any certainty as to what the prices of articles will be in a short time to come. We do not know what the prices of our

produce will be six months hence, and every man who has capital to invest feels that he is running a risk in going into any undertaking. The prices of a large number of our commodities are fixed in the old country. Mark-lane, London, rules the price of our wheat; and the markets of England, America, and the continent determine the price of our wool. Now, if wheat were to remain at its present price, and we could have the good fortune to get 2d. a lb. more for our wool, we should very soon unload all the banks of the country, which would give an impetus to the trade, enterprise, and prosperity of this colony that nothing else will give. We all look forward with great pleasure to having a return of the prosperity we so long enjoyed in Victoria, and I do not think it is wise for honorable members to talk about the colony going to the dogs. It is not true, and it is uncalled for. In my opinion the country is sound to the core. Its recovery is only a question of time; and when money is so cheap and plentiful in the colony surely it is the proper time for men to go into manufacturing industries, and for those who have manufactories already established to extend them. Money is remarkably cheap. Some of the banks are only giving $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for six months' deposits, and 3 per cent. for twelve months' deposits. The Savings Banks have found it necessary to cut down their 3 per cent. interest to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., because there is such a large amount of money coming in. It seems a strange anomaly that we should have all these means at our disposal and that the trade of the country should still remain in a state of stagnation. Some honorable members attribute the present state of affairs to the protectionist policy of the colony; but that is not correct. Some of the protectionists may say that it is owing to the old free-trade policy of the early days; but that is not the case. Many things have conduced to bringing about the present state of affairs. We have another strange anomaly in Victoria, namely, a Banking Commission going about the country seeking where or how to find cheap money for the farmers while our banks are teeming with wealth. There is plenty of money in the banks and in private hands if we only had the legitimate business to employ that capital. That leads me to say that we ought to be very careful in revising the Tariff to give every possible encouragement to capitalists to invest their money, and not cut down the present duties too seriously, because

that would be calculated to drive out of existence some of the industries we have already established. Another consideration should not escape our attention. If we cut the present duties down largely, it must have the effect, for a time, of seriously reducing the revenue. I don't say that it will permanently reduce the revenue, but the Government are not in a position to lose the revenue they now obtain through the Custom-house. If they do lose any large amount of revenue through this revision of the Tariff, they must put on taxation as a matter of course. A good deal has been said about the high duties that were imposed by the Shields Government. I admit frankly, and at once, that the effect of those duties has been very disappointing. They were imposed in the hope that they would meet a falling revenue, and find employment for the people of the colony. We were disappointed in the results, which were not what we expected, but perhaps the reverse. Still, it should be remembered that at the time those heavy duties were imposed the country was overtaken by a financial depression that has existed more or less ever since, and not only over this colony but throughout the world there swept a wave of depression. It would be unfair to say that the alterations made in our Tariff in 1892 have been actually the cause of the depression in this country. We might as well attribute to them the depression in England, America, and other parts of the globe. It would be just as fair and reasonable to say that those high duties were responsible for the depression in other quarters of the globe as to say that they were responsible for the depression in this colony.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Why?

Mr. WHEELER.—Because the depression was world-wide, and was the result of other causes.

Mr. McKENZIE.—But those high duties did not affect other parts of the world, whereas they did affect Victoria.

Mr. WHEELER.—We are only suffering in common with the rest of the world. Statistics have been quoted to show a great falling-off in our export trade, but that is largely accounted for by the great shrinkage in prices which were very much higher five, six, or seven years ago than they are to-day. Wheat came down to less than one-half the price it was then, and wool has fallen about 20 per cent. in value in the same period. We have to supply

an extra quantity to make up the same value, and it is the value that has fallen off and not the weight. The honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) spoke eloquently about what protection had done to bring down the price of oats in this country; but I want to put the other side of the matter, and show that the protectionists are wrong in that inference. I will tell honorable members exactly the real cause of this colony being flooded and over-stocked with oats. It is only within the last two or three years that we have found a kind of oats that we can sow on our plains. Wherever we can grow wheat in this colony we can grow Algerian oats. Algerian oats produce a very heavy crop, and they will grow in the driest parts of Victoria. Thousands upon thousands of acres have been put down in Algerian oats, and the country is now producing far more oats than we can consume. That is the real cause of the low price of oats, and not protection.

Mr. McKENZIE.—And it has rendered the protective duty on oats quite inoperative.

Mr. WHEELER.—Just so. When the duty on oats was imposed it was operative. At that time we were swamped with New Zealand and Tasmanian oats, and the duty served its purpose in securing our own market for our own producers, but the duty is entirely inoperative now.

Mr. McCOLL.—It was not very operative when it was imposed, because the Government gave three months' notice of it, and our market was flooded with oats for a year or two.

Mr. WHEELER.—While I am not here to defend our high duties, but to say that it is undesirable to retain some of them at their present standard, I consider it is nonsense to attribute the present position of the colony to the fiscal system we have adopted for years past. There has been a great falling-off in business in many articles that were not interfered with when the Tariff was revised in 1892. Business has gone down in those articles exactly the same as in articles on which high duties were imposed. It would be just as reasonable to say that our high protective duties were the cause of the financial collapse—the closing of the banks. I think we may trace that disaster to the boom that we had here, unfortunately, for two or three years. Still I am pledged to vote against some of the high duties, and I intend if

possible to redeem that pledge, but I want the committee to make fair and reasonable reductions, and take all things into consideration, so as not in the slightest degree to prejudicially affect the industries we have established under our protective system, while at the same time giving relief to the working classes and the farmers. The Tariff Board made recommendations with regard to about 150 articles, and the Government have adopted their recommendations except in regard to about 27 different articles. I must say that I am a little disappointed with the Tariff proposals. I was in hopes of seeing more fairly substantial reductions recommended by the Tariff Board, and I regret to observe that where the board have made such recommendations the Government have gone between, with a sort of half-way or split the difference policy. The Government would have done far better to have adopted the recommendations of the board. The Chairman of the Tariff Board made a most excellent speech, and deserves great credit for the work he has done in the interests of the country. He heard every witness give evidence, and brought up the report, which he explained clearly and thoroughly to this committee, at the same time telling us the feeling of the country in regard to the revision of the Tariff, and pointing out how much the colony has paid for its protective policy. The honorable member has been a protectionist ever since I have known him, and I was very pleased to hear the manly and fearless way in which he spoke on this question. He has had a great deal better opportunity than many honorable members to get at the real groundwork of Tariff revision. He attended every meeting of the board, heard every question put and every answer given. I place a great deal of confidence in what the honorable member said, and I feel that he deserves the thanks of this community for the services he has rendered in connexion with this matter. I said just now that I would refer to some of the causes of our recent troubles. Many things have contributed to bring about the troubles that we have had during the last few years, and not the least of them were the strikes that have taken place, and that were so disastrous to our commercial prosperity, and perhaps still more disastrous to the working men of the country. The boom also brought us further disaster, and another cause of our great troubles was our

Mr. Wheeler.

excessive borrowing. That has been a great feature in our difficulties. From 1884 to 1892 we borrowed £25,000,000 for railways and waterworks in this colony, and the honorable member for Jolimont told us that during the same period there were private borrowings to the amount of £40,000,000, so that there must have been £65,000,000 of money obtained in loans during those eight years, and an average of £8,000,000 of borrowed money expended each year. The artificial state of prosperity brought about by that expenditure of borrowed money landed us into the troubles we have encountered and are faced with to-day. That has been one of our greatest misfortunes. Money was lavished in all directions. While we were spending £8,000,000 a year of borrowed money, no wonder we were in a state of artificial prosperity, no wonder everything went smoothly along. But we were living in a fool's paradise, and now that we have stopped borrowing money we begin to feel the shoe pinching. Another matter that is worthy of some consideration is the fall in the population of the colony. I have no statistics to offer to the committee, but I simply take for my guidance what I have read in the newspapers and the fact that I know myself that people are leaving the colony. I believe that our population is decreasing rather than increasing. It must also be borne in mind that nearly half the population of Victoria reside in the city. It is impossible for the colony to be prosperous while half its population reside in the city. This was not the case before the boom. Prior to that period the population was fairly distributed throughout the colony, but the boom brought the people to Melbourne, and they have never been able to get away from the metropolis. The attractions of the Railway and other departments of the Government service are also responsible for a large proportion of the population making the metropolis their home instead of going back to the country and producing there. The sooner we get the people back on the land the better it will be for the whole community. The natural increase of the country at the present time is no compensation for the pick of the bone and muscle which is leaving it. I would also point out that we have no reliable record of the number of people who leave Victoria. We have the shipping reports, but they do not give a correct statement of the people who leave the colony. Hundreds of people are going over the

border without any record of their movements being kept. They go away to Western Australia to seek "fresh woods and pastures new," and we know nothing of their movements. The Minister of Mines ought to do everything that lies in his power to stimulate mining at this juncture. The prospecting vote should not be cut down, but a sum of money should be placed on the Estimates with the object of trying to keep the population in the colony. Diamond drills ought to be put into operation wherever there is a chance of developing the mining industry. The present Government, and the previous Government also, are entitled to praise for the action they took in regard to boring for coal. If that had not been persevered in we should now have been without the coal industry, which is one of the most important industries we have. Everything should be done that possibly can be done to stimulate and assist mining. The Minister of Mines has a good knowledge of mining, and he can do a great deal for it if he will only put his shoulder to the wheel. Another thing which we want badly, as the leader of the Opposition pointed out, is markets for our produce. I know that an effort has been made by the present and the late Governments to open trade relations with other countries. When we take into consideration the Victorian exports of butter, meat, poultry, fruit, and other things, which have been so successful, we ought to be able to export a thousand other articles if an effort were made to obtain cheap freights to enable us to compete successfully with other countries. It has been urged that the Tariff, when revised, should be one which shall last for some years. I agree that it is not wise to be tinkering with it every year. We certainly ought to endeavour to place it on a basis which will be satisfactory to all the parties concerned, and if alterations are made they should be of such a character as will justify their retention for some years. It is of no use to alter items to the extent of 5 per cent., and I am aware that these frequent Tariff changes have a most disastrous effect on the trade of the country. I desire to say a word or two in regard to the items of spirits and tobacco. I quite agree with the recommendation of the Tariff Board which the Government have adopted in regard to spirits, namely, that the duty shall be reduced from 15s. per gallon to 13s. per gallon.

I hold that we have been absolutely giving away £60,000 or £70,000 a year to support an industry which has been of little or no value to the colony, because the statistics show that it gives employment to only a few people. It has always been contended that the farmer benefits by the protection of this industry, but, as an honorable member has pointed out, a shipload of the article serves for a whole year. I look upon the 4s. differential duty as being so serious a thing that the people will not stand it much longer. I am prepared to accept the recommendation of the Tariff Board, and I am glad to find that the Government have adopted it. It is a reasonable instalment, but the promoters of the industry concerned will have to carry on with a smaller differential rate. As to the tobacco duties, I think the recommendation of 1s. excise duty is a reasonable thing. If this duty is imposed it will not make the slightest difference to the tobacco-growers. They will not lose one penny whether the article is free or is made subject to this duty. The present manufacturers have the advantage of a large differential rate. If the Government will put 1s. excise duty on tobacco they will make money, on the same plan as the Government of New South Wales do. I do not want to take up the time of the committee with remarks on the question of protection, which has been so eloquently dealt with by a number of honorable members. I may remark, however, that protection is of no earthly use to the miner. The miners of this colony have supported protection for years; in fact, they have been the best protectionists in Victoria. But they have got nothing in return for it, and I maintain that now we should give them relief in some direction if possible. The only hope the miner had in supporting protection was that his family would be brought up to some kind of business. That was the reason given by a great many of the miners for supporting protection; but they have been absolutely losers under the system, having received nothing in return for what they have paid. I think that explosives should be allowed to come into the colony duty free. That would assist not only the miners, but the mine-owners. I notice that the duty on agricultural implements is to be reduced from 20 per cent. to 15 per cent., and the duty on portable engines from 25 per cent. to 15 per cent. I think that the portable engines ought to have gone on the free

list. Those engines cannot be made in this country and sold at a paying price. They are used in mining, farming, and in many other occupations, and the country would have been benefited had their price been reduced, especially as no labour is employed in making them in Victoria. The duty fixed on indiarubber belting is 20 per cent., and I hope that the Minister of Customs will wipe that out. This belting is used by farmers, by miners, and others wherever machinery is employed, and there certainly ought not to be a 20 per cent. duty upon it. I am not aware that any indiarubber belting is made in Victoria. If the Minister of Customs will assure me that there is a manufactory here which can make it I will admit that there is some justification for the duty, but at present I must regard it as a mere revenue duty, and one which ought not to be placed upon an article which is used in every branch of industry. All the people who use threshing-machines use this indiarubber belting. I hope that when the committee comes to deal with the items of the Tariff separately the items will be dealt with in a conciliatory spirit, and that the committee will endeavour to make such alterations as will be fair and reasonable for the manufacturers and for those who have to pay the tax. It is only reasonable that we should have an instalment of protection; but there is a distinct feeling in the country that the higher duties must come down. The report of the Tariff Board makes reference to this fact also, and I think that the Government will only be doing what is right if they meet the committee in these matters of reduction in a conciliatory spirit, so that justice may be done to all the parties concerned.

Mr. A. W. H. WHITE.—Sir, I quite agree with the last speaker that this question is not one which should be discussed in any party spirit. I am not aware that there is any individual or party in this Assembly who desires to discuss the matter in such a spirit. I was returned as a Tariff reformer pledged to the reduction of the customs duties to a maximum of 25 per cent., and, being thus pledged, it is hardly necessary for me to say that I will support the amendment of the honourable member for Hawthorn. I do not propose to take up very much time at this late stage of the debate with remarks upon the subject of free-trade and protection; but I would particularly like to refer to this question as it affects the farmer. I think it will be

generally admitted that the farmers, agriculturists, vigneron, graziers, and miners are the groundwork of the colony. They are the foundation on which all our other industries and trades rest. Anything which is to the disadvantage of the farmer must necessarily be to the disadvantage of all classes in the community. I think it will also be admitted that the farmer must live mainly by his exports. If, therefore, the policy of protection gives the farmer a smaller return for what he produces, the profitable nature of his industry is interfered with, and he is not in a position to purchase manufactured goods from the local manufacturer to the same extent as he otherwise would be. The real question not only for the farmers and manufacturers, but for the nation generally, is this: Will a pound of meat or fruit or a bushel of wheat purchase as much to-day in exchange for manufactured goods as it would twenty years ago? There is no doubt that the answer to that question must be "No." All classes of goods have fallen in value of late years. There has been a general decline, but the fall has been much greater as regards the products of the farmer than any other commodity. To illustrate this I will take the prices which were ruling twenty years ago. In Mark-lane, London, a quarter of wheat then was worth 56s., or 7s. a bushel. Last year prime Victorian wheat was worth 22s. 6d. a quarter, or 2s. 9d. a bushel. Twenty years ago a double-furrow plough—which is, of course, a necessary implement for the farmer—could be purchased, manufactured in the colony, for £24. The price of the same implement to-day is from £21 to £22. The decline in the price of articles of that kind is nothing like the decline in the price of the farmer's produce. Therefore the system of protection from a farmer's point of view is not a good one. It is altogether inimical to his interests. It is a fallacious system, and it must also be bad for the cities in the long run. There are several other things used by farmers and others which I may mention in connexion with this argument, such as reaper and binder twine, on which there is a duty of 1d. per lb. The price in 1890 was 8d.; in 1891, with Manilla hemp at £32 per ton, twine was 8d.; in 1893, with Manilla hemp reduced to £23 15s., twine was still 8d.; in 1894, with hemp at £19 15s., it was quoted at 8d., until manufacturers and importers fell out, when the price was

reduced to 7d., and later to 5½d. One importer admitted that he sold in Tasmania at 20 per cent. below Melbourne price. I know myself that there was that difference in the price between the twine sold at Echuca and that sold at Moama. Is that to the advantage of Victorian farmers? Would it not be better for the farmers to have the duty entirely removed?

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—The price now is 5d.

MR. A. W. H. WHITE.—That is owing to the fact that the manufacturers and importers fell out. There is another duty which presses very hardly upon the farming industry, namely, that on threshing plant. A threshing plant is absolutely necessary to the wheat-grower. He may not own the plant himself, but he has to use it, and if it is increased in price he has to pay more for the use of it than before. Mr. Dalrymple, the importers' agent in the colony, whose figures can be depended on, supplies the following facts with regard to the charges on threshing plant:—

"Amount payable by farmer on threshing plant, consisting of 8-h.p. portable engine and 5-ft. threshing machine:—On engine—freight, shipping, insurance, lighterage, wharfage, cartage, fitting—£31 10s. 10d. On thresher—freight, shipping, insurance, lighterage, wharfage, cartage, fitting—£70 17s. 4d. Natural protection, £102 8s. 2d. Duty on engine, £51 11s. 6d.; primage, £2 1s.—£53 12s. 6d. Duty on thresher, £32 3s. 6d.; primage, £1 12s.—£33 15s. 6d. Amount payable on plant as duty and primage, £87 8s., plus 5 per cent. for payment of these charges (duty and primage), they being cash out of pocket."

Owing to the duty on this plant the farmer has to pay £91 more than he would have to pay under free-trade conditions.

MR. E. D. WILLIAMS.—How many farmers have a threshing plant?

MR. A. W. H. WHITE.—The farmers use threshing plants if they do not own them. Buggies and carts would be much more used in the country but for the excessive charges. I find in the evidence given in the report of the first Tariff Board that Mr. John Donellan, coach-builder, at Bendigo, said—

"We maintain now that the trade is so restricted that we have to employ very few hands, because the public demand is for a cheap article, and owing to excessive duties we cannot make this cheap article."

His examination proceeded:—

"If you could get all these things in free would there be more demand for carriages?—Certainly; the demand now is for cheap vehicles, and if we can make them cheap enough every man in the land will have one."

"Of course you pass on the duty to the consumer?—Yes."

"Charging probably something more?—Yes, and the merchant's profit as well."

James John Marsh, coach-builder, Bendigo, was examined as follows:—

"Do you think, if the duties were considerably reduced, that you could make the buggies very much cheaper to the consumer?—I do; and I think more would be made."

The evidence of all the other coach-makers was to the same effect. I have received from large vehicle makers in my own district requests that I would assist in reducing the duties on the goods which they require in their industry. Agricultural implement manufacturers have made admissions similar to those of the coach-builders. In the evidence given before the first Tariff Board, published in their report, Samuel May, implement maker at Horsham, is examined as follows:—

"Do you think that the result of the protective duties enables you to add the duty to the article you make?—Yes."

"Are there many implements imported?—Not many ploughs, the imported things are mostly chaff-cutters and corn-crushers."

"Are they made in this colony?—Some of them."

"Do the people here use the locally-made machines?—Mostly imported; the imported ones are only one-half the price with the duty."

Alfred E. Buncle, the well-known agricultural implement maker of North Melbourne, is also reported to have answered questions as under—

"Is it correct to say that South Australia can beat you in the open market in manufactures?—I have heard it stated that they can supply rather cheaper than we can."

"If the duties were knocked off and the local competition destroyed, would the colonial producer obtain any solid advantage by importing straight from Great Britain?—I expect we would have to make them a little cheaper to compete."

"If the duty were reduced 10 per cent. would it necessitate your reducing your price?—Yes."

"Do you think the farmers would get the benefit of that?—Yes."

"They would get a cheaper machine, and that would be to their advantage?—Yes."

Nearly every agricultural implement maker gave similar answers. I turn now to a question which affects our vignerons or fruit-growers—that of the duty on sugar. When a former Government increased the duty on sugar by £3 per ton, an advance was made in the country of 3s. per bag, and this affected fruit-growers who went in for preserving their fruit. A duty of that kind cannot be justified in any way. It is sometimes said by protectionists that duties do not increase the

price of an article, but if we take the case of kerosene in Victoria and New South Wales we shall find an absolute refutation of that statement in the prices ruling in the respective markets of the two colonies. In New South Wales there is a duty of 6d. per gallon on kerosene, which is a protective duty imposed with the object of inducing the manufacture of oil from shale. The prices ruling in the years 1893-4-5 in the city markets, were as follow:—In 1893 the price per gallon of kerosene, 150 test, in Melbourne was 7½d., and in Sydney 1s. 3d.; in 1894, in Melbourne 7¾d., and in Sydney 1s. 1d.; and in 1895, in Melbourne 7¾d., and in Sydney 1s. 2d. If any evidence is required to show that a protective duty increases the price of an article I think that this should be sufficient. No better illustration could, I think, be given. I was rather surprised on Saturday last to find, on the evidence of the Paris correspondent of one of the Melbourne daily papers, that in France, where we have recently been told such progress has been made under high protective duties, the people are not altogether satisfied with the state of affairs—that they do not admire the system quite as much as some Victorians would have us believe; that many of the leading economists of the country are opposed to it; and that the people themselves are rapidly forming the opinion that it has been bad for them, and that it would be an advantage to do away with it. The following is the extract to which I refer:—

“M. Leon Say continues his efforts to rouse the country to comprehend its financial dangers. He has delivered a most powerful address at Bordeaux, urging the repeal of the existing prohibitive duties, and the negotiation of reciprocal commercial treaties on the basis of a national Tariff. As at present existing the industrial and commercial situation of France is going from bad to worse. She sees customers falling away from her, the foreign markets retaliating, and the stream of future prosperity thrown into channels created by successful rivals. M. Say perceives the horizon growing blacker and the Dan to Beersheeba barrenness extending.”

MR. MADDEN.—Is that from the *Argus*?

MR. A. W. H. WHITE.—No; it is from the Paris correspondent of the *Age*. I do not understand how it ever got into the *Age*, but it was published in that newspaper on Saturday last, and it is a complete refutation of the articles which have been written locally without any knowledge of the existing condition of affairs in

France. It shows that the Paris correspondent of the *Age* is better informed on economic subjects than some of the writers in this colony. The question of the reduction of the ad valorem duties to a maximum of 25 per cent. is one that peculiarly affects the country representatives, and I hope that those country representatives who were returned at the last general election pledged to such a reduction will support the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn. I do not see how they can easily get away from it. I gave such pledges to my friends that I would feel that I was entirely breaking faith with them did I vote on the other side. Since the general election the cause of Tariff reform has, judging from the local papers, gathered force in my constituency. Those who were lukewarm in the matter six months ago are now determined that they will not submit any longer than is absolutely necessary to the extreme protection which has for some time past been the policy of the country. They recognise that it has not performed what its advocates promised for it. The miners and the farmers alike are dissatisfied with it; they find that the high duties, instead of creating prosperity, have done nothing whatever to make the position of the workers better than it is in the other countries where such a system does not prevail. It is not contended by free-traders—at least I should never take up such a position—that protection is wholly and solely responsible for the existing condition of affairs. We know that the depression is world-wide; but what we say is that protection instead of making things better makes them worse, and that the condition of affairs in the labour market, and therefore in the industries of this colony, is very much worse than it is in other countries which have not adopted the same fiscal system. Holding these views, I shall certainly support the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn as a step, and only a step, in the direction of free-trade. Later on we shall, I hope, go further. But nothing less than such a reduction should satisfy those who desire Tariff reform, and I trust that all Tariff reformers will support the amendment.

MR. BURTON.—Sir, the question we are considering is one of the most important that has occupied the attention of this House during the time that I have been a member. The quality and tone of

the debate are such that we can all have the utmost satisfaction in taking part in it. An absence of all personalities and of warmth of language calculated to raise friction has been noticeable during the debate. For this we should give our thanks to the Minister of Customs, who led off the debate, and also to the honorable member for Hawthorn for the way in which he submitted his amendment. A great deal of good has come from the amendment, although I do not agree with it. The raising of the question has enabled the committee to consider the whole subject of the Tariff from a broader stand-point than we should have done if we had merely taken the proposals submitted to us in the report of the Tariff Board and by the Government. The honorable member for Ovens gave an answer to the amendment when he quoted the opinion of the greatest free-trader in Australia (Mr. Reid), the Premier of New South Wales, to the effect that, whatever might be wise in New South Wales, it would now be impossible to carry out a free-trade policy in Victoria; that the vested interests were so great, and the number of human beings dependent upon them were so numerous, that any man with human feelings would have the greatest difficulty in altering the system. Having adopted the policy of protection, I am of opinion that we must adhere to it, at any rate, on moderate lines, but I admit that there is much that can be said in favour of a reduction of duties. Previous speakers have dwelt principally upon what are called the producing classes; but, strange to say, the producer is said by one set of speakers to be the farmer, and that set of speakers ignores altogether the manufacturing interest and belittles it as much as possible. On the other hand, the representatives of the manufacturing interest slight and ignore the opinions and wishes of the farming community. There is another great producing interest about which I intend to speak to-night, and that is the mining industry. My remarks will be confined principally to the requirements of the mining community. Strange to say, with the exception of a few honorable members representing gold-fields districts—the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Lazarus), and incidentally the honorable member for Daylesford, the honorable member for Maldon, and the honorable member for Ovens—the miners have not had

that consideration extended to them in this debate that they are entitled to. Before we proceed further, it would be well to ascertain what is this great manufacturing interest that so much has been said about, and I intend to quote a few figures, and to compare with the manufacturing interest the mining interest, which, as I say, has been ignored. I have taken the statistics from the *Victorian Year-Book* for 1893, and I find that the number of manufactories of all classes in the colony is 2,952, and that they employ 43,192 persons. These manufactories use 1,712 steam and gas engines. It will be apparent to any honorable member who is acquainted with manufactories that the amount of steam-power employed gives a fair index to the amount of labour that will be required in any particular industry. The 1,712 steam and gas engines, represent a total horse-power of 28,644, and that, added to the number of persons employed, enables us to form an accurate opinion as to the extent of the manufacturing industry. In the same year the number of miners employed in gold mining alone—not to speak of coal mining—was 23,518, and the number of steam-engines in use in connexion with the mines was 1,112, of a horse-power of 27,780. Honorable members will see that the horse-power employed in gold mining is within 1,000 of the horse-power employed in the whole of the manufactories of the colony. This is a very important consideration when we are dealing with the relative values of the various industries of the colony. The value of the machinery employed in the mining industry in 1892 was £1,772,524. The value of the machinery employed in connexion with the manufacturing industries is not readily obtainable, because the table gives the value of machinery, houses, land, and buildings together, and, therefore, the comparison would not be a fair one. Taking the figures I have given, it will be plain that the mining industry is almost equal in numbers to the manufacturing industry, because the persons employed in the mining industry are all adults—men who are the heads of families, and who are earning a living and producing gold; whereas in our factories the head of a family may have five or six members of his family in the same establishment. The disparity between the number employed in the two industries is, therefore, not as great as it would

at first appear to be. The number of miners employed in gold mining has been gradually increasing since 1892. In 1892 the number was 23,518; in 1893, 25,519; and in 1894, 27,889. There is another aspect of the question to which I desire to call attention, and that is the production of gold. In 1892 the quantity of gold raised was 654,456 ounces, of the value, at £4 per ounce, of £2,617,824. And it must be borne in mind that mining does not enter into competition with any other industry; that it is altogether dependent upon itself, and that it benefits not only this country but the world at large. I find, from statistics that I received from the Mining department to-day, that in 1893 the quantity of gold raised had increased to 671,126 ounces, of the value of £2,684,508. In 1894 there is a still further increase. The yield of gold for the year ending last December was 673,680 ounces, of the value of £2,694,720. Surely an industry of such large dimensions should not be treated lightly or passed over, as it has been in this debate, as though the persons engaged in it were not entitled to have any voice whatever in the settlement of this question. The miners of the country are determined to have a voice in the matter, and above all things they are determined that they shall be freed from the unjust duties that are now placed on their tools of trade. Another point that is worthy of notice is the average earnings per head of the mining population. Taking the lucky and the unlucky, the average for 1892 was £111 6s. 3d. There is no other industry in the colony that can show such a record, and it is an industry that we must not turn a deaf ear to. Our prosperity has been largely built up upon gold mining, and it will be a sorry day for the colony if ever this industry is neglected. During the discussion statements have been made, and they are verified by the papers, that the tools of trade of every other industry are exempted. The farmers have taken care to have nearly all their agricultural implements exempted.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—No.

Mr. BURTON.—At any rate the bulk of their tools of trade are almost free from duty. What is a duty of 15 per cent. compared with some of the duties that are imposed on mining machinery? The same remark applies to the vigneron, and I am not complaining of it; I am

proud of it. No tools of trade should be taxed; they should be just as free as the air we breathe and the water we drink. I find that even the carpenter's basket and the shoemaker's last are free from duty, but the principal tools of trade of the miner—that is, his candles, his fuse, his explosives, the machinery that he uses, the belting—in fact, beginning at “A,” and finishing up with the last letter in our schedule, every tool of the miner is taxed, and taxed heavily. The article we are now discussing—acids—is a tool of trade of the mining industry as it is required largely in connexion with the crushing mills and the various other processes by which gold is refined. This item should certainly be free. I am pleased to find that the Government are wise in this respect, and that they are proposing to reduce the duty; but my opinion is that there should be no duty upon it at all, and that the risk of carrying a dangerous article like that across the sea should be quite sufficient protection to any person who is engaged in the manufacture of it in the colony. Beginning at acids and finishing up under the heading of “W”—woodenware—the tools of trade of the miner are taxed. Under the latter heading are the bellows which he uses in sharpening his tools. It has been said (and I think unfairly) that the protection which has led to the establishment of certain industries in connexion with the mining industry particularly has failed in its object. It is not fair to our manufacturers to say that they have not been successful in producing an article that commends itself to those who require it. Although I intend to attack the candle duties and to argue that fuse and candles should be free, I do not assert that good articles are not produced in the colony. A few years ago a candle was produced in the colony that was proved to be superior for mining purposes to any other candle that was ever introduced. I will not name the candle, because all miners know it. It was produced in the colony about fifteen years ago, and it would stand a test against the best candle that was ever imported for durability, illuminating power, and being fit to handle. Whilst I say that, and give all credit to the manufacturer for producing a good candle, I am sorry to say that during the last few years—whether it is owing to undue competition or not I cannot say—the mining candle that is placed on the market is not the article it was

formerly. It has deteriorated in quality, and is not so durable. It is only fair to say that the establishment of a candle factory some 25 years ago, and the duty given to assist that industry, had the effect of almost driving the foreign candle out of the market. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the duty of 2d. a lb. is a tax on the miner's tool of trade. There are 27,000 miners engaged in the gold mines; but taking the number who use candles as 15,000, and assuming that each of these persons consumes 2 lbs. of candles a week, that gives a total consumption by the miners of 1,560,000 lbs. weight per annum. If the miner got the benefit of the duty of 2d. per lb. it would represent to the mining industry a total of £13,000 per annum.

MR. G. TURNER.—Would they get the benefit of it?

MR. BURTON.—There is not the least doubt that they would not get it all, but they would get part of it. I have made inquiries about the price of imported candles. If the Government will accept the Tariff Board's recommendation and reduce the duty by 1d., it will be a fair thing to the manufacturers; it will maintain the principle of protection, and not unduly tax a miner's tool of trade. The miner will then get his candle at a lower rate. Let me draw the attention of the Premier to a statement that was made by one of the candle manufacturers of the colony (Mr. Kitchen). He denied that there was any difference between the price of candles in this colony and in New South Wales. I have here a circular that has been sent to me, in which, alluding to the statements made by certain honorable members, it is said in one case—"This is not true"; in another—"This is false"; and in a third—"This is absolutely untrue." I will not quote the circular, but will only refer to Mr. Kitchen's statement that there is no difference between the price of candles here and in New South Wales. That gentleman afterwards admitted that there was a difference of $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and strange to say, while the Tariff Board's report was under consideration, the miners got the benefit of that $\frac{1}{4}$ d., the price of candles being reduced. That proved that there was still something that the candle manufacturers were taking from the mining community which they had no right to take. I am not one of those who make wild statements, and I would not assert that there is a difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the price of candles in Victoria and in New South Wales. I

know that there is no such difference, but there was a difference of $\frac{1}{4}$ d., and I feel certain that it was owing to the fact of this admission having to be made to the Tariff Board that the miners got the advantage of that $\frac{1}{4}$ d. I feel quite certain that without injuring the industry 1d. per lb. duty could be placed upon candles. The industry would still have a fair share of protection, which we all recognise as the policy of the country, and would at the same time be able to supply the miner with his candle at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 1d. per lb. less than present prices. A reduction of 1d. per lb. on the price of candles would give relief to the miner to the extent of £6,500 per annum.

MR. G. TURNER.—Would that go into the pockets of the miners or of the shareholders?

MR. BURTON.—I presume the honorable gentleman means by "miner" the working miner. It is a great mistake to speak of the miner as though there was a difference between the miner and the mine-owner. Every miner in the colony is a mine-owner, because he has some interest in the mine in which he is working. A petition signed by 4,000 miners, principally from Bendigo, and a petition signed by 400 or 500 miners from Stawell, have been presented to the House in favour of a reduction of the duty on candles. There is not a miner in the colony who would not sign such a petition, because they all feel that they have been unjustly taxed on their tools of trade, and they object to the proposal that is now made to impose a duty on india-rubber bolting. They will resist all these taxes on their tools of trade to the very last. In a pamphlet from one of the firms of candle manufacturers it is represented that the great difficulty candle manufacturers have to encounter arises in connexion with the sale of by-products. What does the establishment of an explosive factory in the neighbourhood of Melbourne mean? Is it not a fact that the factory for the manufacture of nitro-glycerine compounds, where gelatine and other compounds of that character are made, gives a ready sale for the by-products of the stearine candle industry, and yet the candle manufacturers say that they have to send the by-products out of the colony? That is not so. As we make our own explosives, the candle factories have a ready home market for the by-products about which they complain, and which they make a reason for the retention

of the duty at the rate proposed by the Government rather than that proposed by the board. In this pamphlet it is also stated that the demand for the reduction of the duty comes, not from the consumer, but from those who seek to gain by the destruction of the local factories. Surely the large number of petitions which have been presented from the mining community is sufficient to prove the inaccuracy of this statement. They were not bogus petitions, as was stated by the honorable member for Footscray, who said that a petition could be got up about anything. They were petitions signed by men who knew what they were doing, who have a settled policy in their minds, who are as strong protectionists as any member of the House, but who object to their tools of trade being taxed. Surely such petitions should not be characterized as bogus petitions, that could be got up anywhere in the streets. When men on the gold-fields sign petitions so largely, they do so with their eyes open, and they know the purport of them. In case my remarks may give rise to the impression that I am in favour of the lowering of all duties to a maximum of 25 per cent., I may say that I look upon that proposal as impracticable. Whatever I might be prepared to do in a new country, without any settled policy, I may say that, as we have adopted the policy of protection, I shall not be a party to any action which would ruin any of our local industries. Wherever it can be shown that an industry can be started with a fair duty, then I say that honorable members should give that consideration to it which its importance demands.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—How are you to ascertain that?

Mr. BURTON.—There are members in this House who are capable of speaking of every industry in the colony. It is quite certain that the proposal of a general reduction to 25 per cent. without discrimination is not a thing which the honorable member for Hawthorn would ask us seriously to carry out. At the same time I am very glad, as I have said already, that the honorable member submitted his amendment, because it has enabled us to have a wider and more intelligent discussion than we should otherwise have had. I need not prolong my remarks any further. Had I not felt it necessary to refer to the handicaps and difficulties under which the mining industry has been labouring for a length of time I would not have

occupied the attention of honorable members so long. It is only right, however, that honorable members representing gold-fields constituencies should speak on this subject with no uncertain voice. I am only sorry that we have been robbed of the services and voices of five of the men to whom we would naturally look for the greatest support—I allude to the Attorney-General, the Minister of Mines, the Minister of Railways, the Chief Secretary, and the honorable member for Ballarat West (Mr. Vale).

Mr. G. TURNER.—That shows how well the miners are looked after in the Ministry.

Mr. BURTON.—It seems to me that if those gentlemen had been free from the trammels of office, and were sitting in this corner like me, and carrying a free lance, they would have said that they would not submit to the taxation of the tools of trade of the miner any longer. I hope that this debate will continue in the good spirit in which it has been conducted up to the present, and that the result will be of great benefit to the country. I feel quite certain that if honorable members will exercise their calm and deliberate judgment, as I am pleased to see that the Premier has given us an opportunity of doing, we will come out of this ordeal with a sensible Tariff at which no one will be able to point the finger of scorn. We will come out of it with a protectionist Tariff, because the policy of the country is protectionist; but it will be an intelligent protectionist Tariff, not one built on crass ignorance, as the present Tariff is with regard to the mining industry.

Mr. A. ANDERSON.—Sir, representing as I do the mining industry, and also the producing industry—which are the industries that are likely to pull this country through its difficulties—I feel it necessary to make a few remarks on this subject. In my travels through my constituency and other parts of the colony I have found that since the last election there has gradually been a demand all round for a lowering of the duties, and for doing away with any of the duties that are of a prohibitive character. During the time when England was a protectionist country, and was gradually getting back to free-trade, a certain person was determined to inquire as to who among the political writers of the world were supporters of free-trade and who advocated protection. He went into the British Museum and examined all

the works of the different writers on the subject, not confining his inquiry to English writers on political economy, but including those of France, Germany, Belgium, and other countries. As the result of his investigation he found that there were 65 writers who were free-traders, and only three moderate protectionists, the latter being men of no note. Now, I contend that those were 65 scientific witnesses. They were not connected with trade in any way but simply devoted themselves to inquiring what was best for the country. The fact that there was such a great preponderance as 65 to 3 among intelligent writers whose minds were unbiased by any connexion with trade tended to convince this investigator that there must be something in the arguments which those writers adduced. Since that time England has steadily proceeded in the direction of free-trade, and certainly her position has not retrograded from that period. Now, if we were building a bridge, and we asked the opinion of 67 engineers as to the method in which that bridge should be constructed, and if we found that there was such a preponderance as 64 to 3 in favour of a certain method, surely we ought to attach some importance to the opinions of those experts. Not only do the 65 writers to whom I have alluded say that free-trade is good for an old country, but also that it is the proper policy for a young country. It has always been urged that in a new country protection is necessary, but those writers contend that in a new country free-trade is even more necessary than in an old one. And why? Because in a new country the trade of that country ought to be established by its natural products—by the producers of gold, grain, hides, skins, and other natural products of the country. These writers also point out that protection interferes with capital, which is so necessary to the development of a young country. There is no doubt that a certain amount of capital has been sunk in manufactories in Melbourne, and in the buildings connected with them, which would have been much better spent if it had been devoted to the development of our natural resources. Protection also interferes with freight, and cheap freight is one of the necessities of the producers, because it is well known that the producers cannot get their produce taken away cheaply unless vessels are coming to this country with goods.

It has also been pointed out that protection interferes with the producer in the matter of exchange. If a certain amount of money has to be sent home, it does not go home in sovereigns, but goes home in produce, and in the matter of exchange the producer is handicapped by the system of protection. Again, there is no doubt that protection injures the producer by raising the prices of those implements which he uses. For example, I myself am a buyer of articles in Melbourne for use in Victoria, and also a buyer of articles for use on the other side of the Murray. The other day I went into an ironmongery establishment to buy a chaff-cutter, and I asked the price of an imported chaff-cutter which I saw there. I was told that the price was £18 if I wanted it for use in Victoria, but only £14 if I wanted it for the other side of the Murray. The difference in price is due to the fact that to enable the merchants of Melbourne to compete with free-trade New South Wales there is a drawback of £4 allowed on chaff-cutters sent across the border; whereas the £4 extra would be charged to any person buying the implement for use in this colony. This is a great handicap to the Victorian producer, and the same handicap exists in connexion with a great number of other articles. From my own experience I am aware of how much business from the neighbouring colonies is lost to the port and to the merchants of Melbourne by the protective duties which exist here. The honorable member for Stawell referred to the miners, and certainly the miners have gained nothing by protection. If there is one class in the community which has suffered by protection, and one class which deserves credit for having supported it, it is the mining section of the community. In the early days, when mining was falling off, the miners had an idea that it would be better to adopt protection in order that their sons might get employment; and with that unselfish view they supported the introduction of the protection policy, and they have been truer to protection than almost any other class, while no section of the people has suffered so much from the high duties. I would remind honorable members, moreover, that no industry is more beneficial to the country and more beneficial to the whole world than the mining industry. It is not one community alone that gets the benefit of the gold which is taken out of the earth by the miner, but the whole

civilized world benefits by his work. The farmer also suffers in many ways by protection, and I was rather surprised to hear an honorable member last night say that the vigneron did not suffer. Now, I happen to be a vigneron myself, and I know we have to pay a duty of 25 per cent. on wine presses, and heavy duties on casks, corks, bottles, and nearly everything we use in our industry. The vigneron, therefore, suffers considerably, and his is one of the producing industries which are gradually increasing, and which deserve encouragement. Nothing should be allowed in any way to interfere with the producer of natural products; on the contrary, every encouragement should be given to him, so that he may produce as cheaply as possible, because he has to compete in the markets of the world. As far as my vote is concerned, I shall feel bound to give it for the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn. I do not think the vote on that amendment is at all likely to endanger the Government. If that were the case I should feel in a great difficulty, as I have not the slightest wish to do any injury to the Government, and I am sure that the honorable member for Hawthorn had no such intention in proposing his amendment. I feel, therefore, that I have a free hand to vote in the matter. Further, I may say that I will take every opportunity in dealing with the items in the Tariff in detail to vote in the direction of a reduction of the duties all down the line, because I believe that in doing so I shall be voting in the best interests of the country constituencies, of the people at large, and also in the best interests of every working man in the colony.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—Sir, I had no idea that the debate was likely to come to such an early close, although I do think it is desirable that we should proceed to consider the various items of the Tariff in detail as soon as possible. At the same time, I think I ought to have something to say on this important subject, in view of the fact that my constituency is an important manufacturing centre. I join with a great many honorable members who have expressed the opinion that the Government have to a certain extent shown some unwisdom in proposing a revision of the Tariff at this particular time. It seems to me altogether an inopportune time for dealing with such an important subject, and in spite of the statements which have been

made over and over again in this chamber, I feel certain that the country is not so desirous of a revision of the Tariff as some honorable members would make us believe. It has been said repeatedly that the miners and the farmers are very anxious that there should be a substantial reduction in the high duties. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Lazarus), however, told us that when he first spoke of a reduction of duties at a public meeting in his constituency his statement was received with silence, while on the second occasion that he mentioned the matter it was received only with a faint cheer. Now, that seems to me to be the strongest evidence that the miners of Bendigo have still great faith in the present duties.

Mr. McKENZIE.—But he did not say it was received with a faint cheer on the last occasion that he spoke.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—He did; or else I misunderstood him. He said that the first time his allusion was received in silence, while on the second occasion it was received with a faint cheer.

Mr. LAZARUS.—I went further than that.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—I do not remember what the honorable member said further. However, with regard to the farmer, it has been argued that he will benefit very largely by a reduction of the duties. Now, it seems to me that this is a time when various members of the Assembly and a great many people in the country are feeling about for some cause for the depression, from which every section of the community is suffering, and from which the farmers are suffering particularly. Honorable members have been telling the farmers that the existing duties have brought about the great depression in their industry, and that therefore now is the time for them to go in for a reduction in the Tariff. The fact is, however, as has already been pointed out, that the real cause of the depression, especially in the farming industry, has been the falling prices all over the world, and the Tariff has not been in any way responsible for that. If the Tariff were responsible for the depression, how is it that it was during the time of the high duties that we had the greatest era of prosperity? It would be just as fair to say that protection in this colony has lowered the price of wheat in the home market, and caused the people in Siberia and India to go in for wheat-growing, as to

say that the existing Tariff is responsible for the depression. Another statement which has been made is that the encouragement which has been given to the manufacturers in this colony by putting on high duties has brought about sweating. Now, I believe that competition has caused a great deal of sweating, and that matters are in a very deplorable condition in that respect, but the remedy for sweating is not a reduction of the duties, but proper legislation to deal with this evil; and I trust that such legislation will be soon introduced and carried into law. Even admitting, however, that the arguments used in this regard are valid, I submit that it is better to have the people of the colony under present conditions working for small wages than it would be to have them walking about the streets without being able to earn any wages at all, as would be the case if the duties were reduced, and the manufactories closed in consequence. We have also been told that we are attracting a large number of people into our manufactories, whereas the real object should be production. Yet the same honorable members who use this argument tell us that production does not pay. Now, I would ask them, if a number of the factories were closed—as I am certain they will be if the reductions of duty proposed are brought about, and the employes consequently turned out of work—how would it be possible to put them on the land to produce with any advantage when we are told over and over again that production does not pay? It seems to me, from the little experience I have had recently in going through the country, that the real reason why the farmers are suffering at the present time—or, at all events, the reason that their sufferings have been intensified—is because they have been in the hands of those friends who are now advising them to go in for a reduction of duties, and have had to pay such high interest that they cannot carry on. At the time wheat was about 5s. per bushel the farmers were borrowing money, and paying at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum interest; now they are selling wheat in this colony at about 3s. 3d. per bushel, and have been selling it as low as 2s. 3d. and 2s. 6d., and still they are burdened with that heavy rate of interest—7 per cent., 8 per cent., and sometimes 9 per cent.

Mr. MADDEN.—Which they don't pay.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—Which they have to pay or else give up their holdings. And if

they have been able to save any money in times of prosperity, that money is now being taken away from them to pay interest on what they have borrowed. When bankers and others who have lent money find that the farmer cannot pay, if they see that there is any possibility of his paying hereafter, they let him stay on the land; but if they see that he is so crippled that there is no likelihood of his ever being able to pay, they turn him out of his holding, and in many cases now holdings are occupied by caretakers, and yield no return at all. At the same time, the farmers of this colony are being driven by this excessive interest into New South Wales and other colonies.

Mr. MOULE.—They charge the same interest in New South Wales as they do in this colony.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—The statement has also been made during this debate that high duties lead to monopoly, and monopoly means high prices to the consumers. But I will give an instance where in this colony there is virtually a monopoly, and yet that monopoly has not led to high prices. In the saddlery trade there is a saddle made called the stock saddle. That saddle is made in this country, suitable to the requirements of the country, and no such saddles are imported, because in England they do not understand our requirements in the matter. Virtually, therefore, the local makers have a monopoly in the manufacture of that article, and yet by a healthy competition the price of this saddle is kept down to a fair and reasonable amount. It has also been said that if we allow articles to be imported, the importer will not increase the price to the consumer if he has an opportunity of doing so through want of local competition. I can show, however, from another example in the same trade, that this is not the case. There is another kind of saddle—the hunting saddle—which is made in this colony as well as imported, but a great many people prefer the imported hunting saddles.

Mr. RUSSELL.—They cannot make a hunting saddle in this colony. I speak as one who knows.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—I can also speak with some experience in the matter, seeing that I have been twenty years in the trade, and I say that they can. But I was about to state that, even although the imported hunting saddle is brought in 5s. cheaper

than it can be made for here, it is sold for as high a price, and in many cases higher, than the local article. This shows very plainly that importers do form rings whenever they have an opportunity. I sincerely regret that the Government have seen fit to take up the question of the revision of the Tariff at the present time, for I am certain that they had more important work to do. I am also sure that the country was not crying out for a revision of the Tariff. Of course the country now is agitated on the subject because of the debate which has been taking place in this chamber, but I think that the outcome of the discussion will not be in the direction that the honorable member for Hawthorn, who has proposed a 25 per cent. maximum, desires. He will find that when the people are properly educated on the question—when a number of them read the speech which was delivered by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith)—they will say that the honorable member for Hawthorn and his friends are wrong, and the country will not support the general reduction of present duties. As long as the people believe that they do not pay more for an article they are quite willing that the local manufacturers of that article should have protection. The miners, we are told, are against protection, but I do not believe that this is the case.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—They are against excessive duties.

Mr. BEAZLEY.—Although both the farmer and the miner have done a large amount of good for the colony, and are both desirable colonists whom we could not do without, it must be remembered that other sections of the community have also done a large amount of good for the farmer and the miner. As regards mining, it must be remembered that the people generally have contributed yearly the prospecting vote in order to assist the miners; and, moreover, the miner could not carry on his work unless he had the savings of the manufacturers and the people of Melbourne to help him in prosecuting it. It has been stated over and over again in this chamber by the mining members that the cost of producing the gold is equal to, or even more than, the value of the gold. It would, therefore, not be possible for those people to carry on unless investors other than miners were found ready to help them. It is the duty of one section of the community to render assistance to

other sections that require it, and the manufacturers do require these protective duties. I can speak from my own knowledge, and say that one or two of the most important industries of this colony will be considerably crippled if these duties are reduced. The honorable member for Delatite made a theatrical display of a pair of boots with a little bit of paper under the soles. Of course, shoddy articles of any sort are not desirable; but abolition of the duties on boots and shoes would not benefit the wearers of that class of boots in the least degree. I do not know whether that was an imported boot or a locally-manufactured article, but it would certainly be easier to stop the manufacture of such goods within the colony by legislation than to stop their importation. The possibilities, and, in fact, almost certainties, are that if the duty were removed that class of shoddy goods would be more freely imported, and the people would be more likely to have shoddy boots imposed upon them. In Germany, the soles of boots are said to be made completely of brown paper, and but for our protective policy the chances are that we should have that sort of boots imported into this colony. We have the opportunity of regulating manufactures in our own colony, but not of regulating goods that are imported free. The honorable member for Delatite told us that one of his men bought a flannel at 4s. 6d. which he could have got in Sydney at 3s., but I have ascertained that had he gone to a cheap shop in this colony he could have got the same article at 2s. 9d. This shows that the honorable member's display was simply theatrical, and that it really did not have any great bearing on the subject we are discussing. I sincerely trust that at the end of the Tariff revision we shall find protection unimpaired. It will be all the better for the colony. We can legislate so as to provide cheap money for the farmers, who will help to lift the country out of the present depression. By that means we will avoid making any addition to the ranks of the unemployed, which we shall do if we reduce our protective duties, and in course of a little time prosperity will return to the colony, and the miners and the farmers will then be not so ready to blame protection for their troubles.

Mr. J. ANDERSON.—Mr. Chairman, this matter is of such great importance that I would not be satisfied with myself

if I gave a silent vote upon it. It is very evident, to my mind, that there must have been a strong reason for appointing the Tariff Board. There have been two boards appointed to inquire into the Tariff as it stood, and to ascertain for Parliament and the country, if possible, whether there were any errors and anomalies in our Tariff. It would have been a piece of "tomfoolery" to have asked honorable members who constituted those bodies to devote their valuable time to taking evidence and reporting to this Assembly had the work not been necessary. Some honorable members have expressed themselves as opposed to any reduction of the present customs duties, but that is not a fair position to take up, because the evidence and report of the Tariff Board go to prove most clearly that certain articles are too heavily taxed, and that certain industries are not sufficiently protected. Surely it is the duty of honorable members to consider both those propositions. I must say that it came to me as a great surprise, and I believe that 99 out of every 100 persons in this community are equally surprised, to learn that a foreign element is introduced into the woollen blankets and flannels made in this colony. I venture to say that the people of this country were under the impression that the woollen mills of the colony, established by protection, were turning out real woollens and flannels, and that when people bought the goods manufactured in those mills they believed they were buying articles made of pure wool. It is not honest, fair, or just for a woollen mill that has been established by the protective policy of the country, and enabled to compete in our own market with the manufacturers of woollen goods in other countries, to make and sell to the public as woollen an article which is largely composed of cotton. To say the least of it, it is misleading, and it is practising tricks of that kind that will bring our local manufactures into disrepute. It will damage to a very serious extent the reputation of the woollen goods made in the colony; because, if there is anything in the world that will cause people to be suspicious it is having an article palmed on them as something which it is not. That is what has happened in regard to these Victorian woollen goods, and I regret it exceedingly. When I stood for Melbourne East, I was

catechized more about reductions of the high duties than on any other question; but, being a protectionist, I will not assist honorable members who desire to reduce the protective duties on industries that have been established here, if the effect of reducing the duties will in any way be to damage those industries. At the same time, I am aware that there are lots of articles heavily taxed which are not made here, and never will be made here, and those duties ought to be wiped off altogether. I cannot vote for the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, because, in the first place, the Government regard it as a motion of want of confidence. I am sure that it was not in the honorable member's mind to propose a motion of want of confidence.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—It is not in their minds either.

Mr. J. ANDERSON.—At all events they have said so. I do not think that either this House or the country desires a change of Government at the present time. Therefore I will not vote for the amendment, for no other reason than that; because if the majority was against the Government, as matters stand, the Government would have to resign, and that would be a very sad thing, not only for this Assembly, but also for the country. The present Government have done and are doing good work, and they ought to have a fair show of completing the work they have undertaken. I believe they will succeed in balancing the State ledger, and it was requisite for that to be done, because we were drifting very considerably. I will keenly watch all down the line when we come to the items in the Tariff proposals, and endeavour to give an honest vote in every division with a view to guarding our protected industries in a fair and becoming manner. I have been through one manufactory successfully established here under protection, and I do not hesitate to say that it would be a cruel wrong to interfere with that industry. It is an industry that ought to be encouraged in every possible way. It employs a vast number of hands, and turns out a first-class article. I allude to the hat industry. I made full inquiries when I was there, and the books were shown to me. I find that they get an average of about 5s. per hat, but all the profit they obtain is about 2d. per hat; although, strange to say, those very hats are sold to the wearers as high as

10s. 6d. or 11s. 6d. each. The price of the hat from the time it leaves the mill where it is made to the time it is put on the wearer's head is increased 100 per cent. How that is to be accounted for I am at a loss to understand, but it is a fact that can be proved. As showing that the hat industry is a success, I may point out that it employs 370 odd hands, and I was surprised at the remarkably good wages earned by the work-people. There are other industries similar to that well worth preserving, but there are a great many, I will not call them industries, that have been established here but have made little or no headway at all, and never will. The committee should take the case of those so-called industries into serious consideration, and I would suggest that we should refuse them any support because they are doing no good, employing no labour worth mentioning, and circulating very little money, so that they have no right to existence at all. In conclusion, I may say that I will endeavour to give my vote on every occasion according to my principles, and according to the pledges I made to the people who sent me here.

Mr. MCGREGOR.—Mr. Mason, I am sure if the question before the committee is not exhausted the members who have spoken to it have exhausted themselves, and I think that the people generally are exhausted with attending to the voluminous arguments which have been used. Since the presentation of the report of the Tariff Board we have heard the policy of the country alternately praised and condemned—condemned by the free-trader with his axiomatic truth and self-evident proposition, while the protectionist has maintained that the free-trader's views are prompted by the interest he has in the importer. I may say, however, that I have confidence in the gentlemen who represent the free-trade interest here, and that I am sure they are honest in their desire to carry out their views. Now, what has protection done for this colony? It is said that under it we have established 3,000 factories in which £15,000,000 are invested, and which employ 40,000 hands, besides having developed an artisan class who can take their place with any people on the earth. Notwithstanding all that has been said about the woollen industry (and the comment of the Tariff Board that it is not in such a satisfactory position as might have been anticipated, no substantial advance

having been made during the last ten years), I have figures in my possession which will place the case for the mills in a more satisfactory light. The senior member for Castlemaine and the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) have explained to the committee what is being done by the mills in their electorates. I now propose to show what has been done in the Sunnyside Woollen Mill, at Ballarat, which is owned by the Ballarat Woollen and Worsted Company Limited. The progress of the above company is shown by the following statement, comparing its operations at the present time with its operations ten years ago:—In May, 1885, the Ballarat Woollen Company's wage-sheet was £250 per fortnight. In May, 1895, the fortnight ended 29th of last month, this company's wage-sheet was £446 4s. 9d. In May, 1885, the total employées numbered 113, and in May, 1895, the total employées numbered 210, showing an increase of 97. The pay-sheet for fortnight ended 29th May last, shows—Men employed, 61; average wages, £3 18s. 8d. per fortnight. Women employed 38; average wages, £2 11s. 4d. per fortnight. Boys employed 39; average wages, £1 1s. 8d. per fortnight. Girls employed 92; average wages, 16s. 10½d. per fortnight. The cost of machinery added during the past three years was £5,950 0s. 8d., being £996 17s. 11d. in 1892, £3,482 16s. 3d. in 1893, and £1,478 6s. 6d. in 1894. The turn-out for the year ended 31st December, 1885, was equal to 123,117 yards, and for the 31st March, 1895, was equal to 235,447 yards, the increased turn-out being 112,330 yards. The sale of manufactured goods in 1884 amounted to £16,830, and in 1894 to £37,039, showing an increase of £20,209. It will thus be seen that the woollen mills are making good headway. If there are any of our mills which are not doing well, I attribute it to bad machinery, mismanagement, and want of the right kind of workmen. I quite agree with the remark of the leader of the Opposition that there is a great deal of depression and misery in the colony. That honorable member said that 50 men were looking on at one man working; but if the protective duties are materially reduced, instead of 50 men looking on while one is working, there will be 50 men going round the country looking for work and unable to get it. Is protection responsible for the misery which exists in the colony?

I say that it is not, and that there are many contributory causes. There is the case of the farmer who bought a piece of land and subsequently paid for it, and then bought another piece which he had to mortgage, with the result that he is borne down by the payment of high rates of interest. It must also be remembered that during the boom time large numbers of men came from the various centres of population to the city, and that many financiers financed the money out of the pockets of the widow and the fatherless by making compositions of 1s. in the £1, there being no legal power to stop them. In 1893 there were 200 cases of institutions not connected with protective industries which closed their doors. The Colonial Investment and Agency Company had £120,000 deposits, and they paid the depositors £9,374, or a little less than 1s. in the £1. The Freehold Investment Company paid 4d. in the £1, and the Henry Arnold Company 6d. in the £1. Honorable members will certainly not attribute to protection the fact that in 1893 200 companies not connected with protected industries failed with an average capital of £40,000. The depression has been chiefly caused by the operations of men who, if justly treated, would be in gaol. In the years 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890 the imports of Victoria were £39,000,000, or £10,000,000 imports over exports per year. During the same period the imports did not exceed the exports more than £500,000 in New South Wales. During the same period South Australia's exports exceeded her imports. In 1891 and 1892 Victoria had £8,500,000 sterling of imports in excess of exports. In New South Wales and South Australia the exports exceeded the imports. In 1893, for the first time since 1880, the exports exceeded the imports in Victoria. In 1892, New South Wales exported over £1,000,000 worth more than she imported, composed principally of coal, wool, and silver. These figures show that we shall soon be able to take our place by the side of New South Wales because our imports must necessarily decrease in proportion to the increase of our exports. I am a protectionist, and I notice that some of the free-traders in this committee have developed into fair traders, while some of the protectionists have degenerated into prohibitionists. I am not in favour of prohibition. I would be in favour of the imposition of duties for revenue purposes only, and

the imposition of a land tax for the purpose of obtaining revenue. However, I will now conclude, as I shall have an opportunity of again speaking when the several items of the Tariff come before us.

Mr. PRENDERGAST moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. G. TURNER said he proposed to ask honorable members to assist him to close the debate on the following evening, even if they had to sit late.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until the following day.

Progress was then reported.

The House adjourned at four minutes to eleven o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, June 27, 1895.

Revision of the Tariff: Eighth Day's Debate.

The SPEAKER took the chair at two o'clock p.m.

REVISION OF THE TARIFF.

EIGHTH DAY'S DEBATE.

The House having resolved itself into committee of the whole, the debate on the Tariff proposals of the Government, and on Mr. Murray Smith's amendment that no ad valorem duties should exceed 25 per cent. (adjourned from the previous day), was resumed.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—Mr. Mason, I feel like an honorable member who spoke on the previous day; although I moved the adjournment of the debate last night for the purpose of speaking to the question to-day, I am almost sorry now that I ventured into the breach at all, because the debate has gone upon the debating society lines which are adopted when similar questions are discussed in connexion with the merits of different men who aspire to enter Parliament. Very little light has been thrown upon the question by either side, and we continue to fight the same old question, speaking to our constituencies on the same old party lines. I maintain that the arguments used by a great number of protectionists in proof that pauperism is caused in other countries by the decrease of duties has really nothing to do with the issue at all; also that the

arguments used by free-traders drawn from the circumstances of other parts of the world have nothing to do with the question at all. When facts or figures of this nature are quoted, we must consider the different positions of the countries from which they are taken. We shall find, on inquiry, that entirely different conditions obtain in England as compared with those of our own country, and that pauperism in England may be the result of causes which have nothing to do with free-trade or protection. And the same remark applies to New South Wales. Some protectionists assert that protection will cheapen the price of an article. I say that the protection or free-trade which cheapens the price of an article will do it at the expense of the workman, and consequently at the expense of the whole people in addition. My idea of protection, as I want to see it carried out to the fullest extent in this country, is not to cheapen the price of articles, but to prevent our manufacturers from having to compete unfairly with cheap labour made articles from other parts of the world. I believe that our protective system should build up, side by side with the protection given to the manufactories, a guarantee for the payment of a proper rate of wages, for fixing proper hours of labour, and for procuring proper factory supervision, so that our workmen may be healthy and contented. It is said that rings exist here. Is it only among protected manufactories that rings exist? Why, they exist in free-trade countries to precisely the same extent as here. They exist in free-trade England, if you can call that country free-trade, for I fail to see that it is a free-trade country. They exist in protectionist America, in semi-protectionist New South Wales, and in fact everywhere. This is not an argument against protection, but it is an argument in favour of legislation being adopted to prevent the formation of rings. The American legislators have succeeded by the introduction of special enactments in breaking down a number of monopolies which were prejudicial to the interests of the people. These monopolies have existed frequently in connexion with railways, some of which have been closed down to prevent other companies from running their lines, and where objectionable practices of this kind have been attempted the State has stepped in and put a stop to them. It is extra legislation which we require

Mr. Prendergast.

here to deal with the monopolists and ring-makers. Supposing that a candle ring existed here (and I do not believe that it does), is that any reason why we should not have protection for our candle industry? Certainly not. The candle manufacturers of Victoria may sell their goods at a reasonable price, and I do not want to have low prices, because that means poverty. When goods are sold at reasonable prices, the manufacturers can pay fair wages to their employés. During the depression the candle manufacturers have neither reduced the wages of their workmen nor the number of them. My authority for this statement is that of the men themselves. Consequently this industry has worked well in Victoria. The candle manufacturers have employed a large number of people, and they are working for the interests of the people when they get a fair price for their goods and pay a fair wage. We do not want candles reduced to 2d. or 3d. a lb., because that means that wages will have to submit to a corresponding reduction. Protection has enabled us to manufacture boots in this colony, but it has not prevented that intense internal competition which has brought about the sweating of employés in Melbourne. The Tariff Board say in their report that "protection has kept down the price of boots," and it is a very bad thing that it has been able to do that. But the workmen, while not going against protection, have been demanding the establishment of a maximum day's labour and a minimum rate of wage; and when those things are in force the fact that we manufacture boots in this colony will be a blessing to us. By establishing this industry here we have secured a great deal that is good, and we shall have secured a great deal more that is good when all that should follow on it has been adopted. A curious thing in the report of the Tariff Board is the fact that the members are continually bemoaning the circumstance that the revenue is being depleted by the taxation on certain articles which we import. If anything would justify me in being a protectionist it is the thought that the system enables us, by making articles here, to exclude those articles from other parts of the world. Let us look, for instance, at the tobacco industry. The board say—

"They (the importers) did not think that the manufactured articles should be more largely taxed, as this course would lead to Victorian

tobacco, upon which the duty is lower, supplanting imported tobacco, to the detriment of the revenue."

They object to the very thing which I, as a protectionist, want to compass. The report of the board proceeds—

"Although the general trend of the evidence of the trade would not justify any alteration of the duties, the board has taken into consideration the facts of the case as disclosed by Government returns and information obtained officially. The revenue for the past five years shows a steady decline."

That is the revenue from imported tobacco, and to my mind this is also an additional reason why we should keep the present duty on tobacco. The report further says—

"The decline of revenue has been due mainly to the decreased consumption of tobacco, but not entirely so. A portion is to be accounted for by the fact that the manufacture of Victorian tobacco, contributing, as shown above, about 1s. per lb. to the revenue, has remained about stationary; whilst the consumption of imported tobacco, contributing 3s. per lb., has steadily fallen away. The decline in consumption is not quite so great in proportion as the decline in revenue, and some of the loss of duty is attributable to the fact that importation has fallen off, whilst local manufacture, although it has fluctuated, has on the whole held its position."

"Another factor which tends to decrease the revenue is the increased use of Victorian leaf."

I would ask the Victorian farmers whether they think that the board are justified in recommending a duty of 1s. per lb. on Victorian leaf, while they state here that the present duty has been the means of increasing the production of colonial leaf? That is in direct antagonism to the protection we should have. The report further states with regard to leaf tobacco—

"This year the acreage under crop is double that of the previous year, and the increased yield may lead to a loss of revenue."

This is surely a most extraordinary statement to come from men claiming to be protectionists. They advocate an increased duty on tobacco so that more imported tobacco may be sent in to increase the revenue returns at the expense of the growers here; and this kind of folly pervades the whole report. The board say—

"Victorian-made tobacco is sold cheaper than imported tobacco of equal quality could be sold duty paid; the consumer, and not the producer, obtains the benefit of this difference in price. The remitted duty may go largely to support the local industry, but certainly not wholly."

And, again, there is this sentence in the board's report—

"The question is whether the colony should give up a large portion of such a legitimate and

productive tax as that on tobacco for the sake of local industry."

I say it is a direct attempt to smother the tobacco industry in this country. In one place the board are against the men who grow the tobacco, and in the next they are against the men who smoke it, taxing them for the purpose of obtaining revenue from the Custom-house. There are more legitimate means of obtaining revenue than that. To a number of men who smoke tobacco, it cannot be considered a luxury. Tobacco is almost a necessity to a very large number of people who smoke, and what is proposed is a very heavy tax upon them. I do not see why an increase should be demanded in one direction and a decrease in another; people being obliged to smoke only such kinds of tobacco as will increase our revenue at the Customs. I do not think the Government have gone far enough in this matter. I maintain that they should abolish the duty on colonial tobacco entirely and tax the imported article. By that means the industry would be helped, and the amount of tobacco produced in the colony would be largely increased. At the present time, we have a good quantity of tobacco of a certain quality produced here, which, mixed with a small proportion of American leaf, makes as good a tobacco as any in the world. Our tobacco industry, it must be remembered, is now in its infancy, and before our manufacturers have arrived at the proper method of curing the article they must use other tobaccos with it to give it a particular flavour which people have an acquired taste for. The report states—

"The board does not agree wholly with the evidence given by the interested persons examined. They recognise that the revenue has been largely depleted, and is likely to be subjected to a still further diminution if the wide difference between the import rate on the manufactured article and the combined rate on the leaf and the excise is maintained. They think that this difference should be lessened."

The board think it should be lessened because there is too much colonial-grown tobacco used, and they want to encourage the production of American tobacco with a view of increasing the revenue. I maintain that the proposals of the board in connexion with this matter are proposals which have been built up for the purpose of providing that there shall be a revenue Tariff, under which a lot of money

shall be derived through the Custom-house, while the people who own land shall continue to escape the taxation which they ought to be paying. It is quite clear that a number of gentlemen who have expressed very great sympathy with the workers, and who have also proclaimed themselves Custom-house taxers, are men who want to strangle the industries of this colony, while at the same time they desire to avoid imposing any taxation whatever on land. They can only avoid direct taxation by taxing the whole of the people and obtaining revenue through the Custom-house. In that aspect of the question I have always declared myself a prohibitive protectionist. I am in favour of such taxation as will give the people a complete right to manufacture goods in their own colony, instead of importing them from other parts of the world. The revenue should be raised from the people who monopolize the land. It is only those who can afford to pay who will be made to pay under that system. A most extraordinary portion of the board's report is that which occurs under the heading "Coffee and Chicory." The report states—

"The duty on ground coffee is 3d. per lb., but raw coffee is admitted free. Under this system local makers have a complete command of the industry of preparing coffee, and importation has practically ceased. The coffee which appears in the import returns of the Customs department consists almost wholly of essences and special preparations. The duty of 3d. per lb. therefore yields very little revenue on the ordinary coffee of commerce."

Let me compare that with a subsequent paragraph of the report in relation to cocoa and chocolate—

"The manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate have not the command of the market, as in the case of coffee; large quantities are still imported, and the local makers are subjected to a keen competition. They believe that their manufacture is equal to the imported, but the latter, owing, they think, to the attractive system of advertising adopted by British firms and other causes, finds a large sale in Victoria."

"We believe that an excise on these articles or a duty on raw cocoa would seriously injure the business of local manufacturers, and we recommend that the duties should remain as they are at present."

Here the argument is applied one way in one case and another way in another case. It is stated that the duty on coffee has kept the manufactured article out of the colony, and that the very thing which has produced the success of that industry in the colony has been the high duty, while the same effect has not occurred in the

case of the cocoa. The board propose, because the duty on coffee has been effective in keeping out certain articles, to reduce it; but, as the duty on cocoa has not been effective in keeping out that article, they propose to let it stand as it is. It is clear that if we decrease duties we enable manufacturers in other parts of the world to compete against us. But in the case of cocoa, whether the English manufacturers are able to compete or not, the board do not propose to apply the same argument which they apply in the case of coffee. This is one of the most remarkable arguments in the report, and I cannot understand it. The same thing occurs in reference to candles. The report says, "the present duty on candles is almost prohibitive," and yet they further propose to reduce the duty to 1d. per lb. in order that more imported candles may be brought into this colony.

MR. STAUGHTON.—In the one case there is the raw material in the colony, and in the other there is not.

MR. PRENDERGAST.—Where protection is effective the board propose to reduce it to make it ineffective. As a consistent protectionist, who desires to protect the manufacturers of the country, and do away with the collection of revenue at the Custom-house as far as possible, I shall oppose these proposed alterations when they come before the committee. With reference to another item, the report on the Tariff has the following paragraphs:—

"There are three starch manufactories in the colony, which produced altogether 1,377,000 lbs. of starch in the year 1894, whilst the importation amounted to 402,014 lbs. in the same year; the business is, therefore, almost entirely in the hands of the local makers."

"We cannot recommend a reduction in face of the evidence that it will close the factories, and we think the duty should remain as at present."

The very argument which the board want to apply to starch they will not apply to candles and other things.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER.—The raw materials of some of the things are produced here, which is not the case regarding other things.

MR. PRENDERGAST.—The argument with regard to free-trade and protection is a most remarkable one. It reminds me of something I heard during the existence of the previous Tariff Board. We were talking about English shoddy costing in

England from 9d. to 1s. 2d. a yard. A free-trader said—"Here we have tweeds at 1s. a yard"; and a protectionist said—"Dear me! if it were not for the blooming protectionist duty we should be able to get it for nothing." That is just as illogical as the arguments which are now being employed.

Mr. TUCKER.—No such question was brought before the board at all.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—I am referring to the previous board.

Mr. TUCKER.—It is the same board.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—Bad as the condition of employment may be in connexion with the boot industry, can any one say that the boots would be cheaper if the duty were increased? They could not be made cheaper. The man who wants to purchase from the English market is like the man who, while his own children are starving at home, would feed his neighbour's children. The free-trader wants to keep other people in other parts of the world while his own people are starving for want of work. The protectionist who will not introduce measures to safeguard the interests of workmen is in much the same position, because unlimited internal competition has such bad results. Unlimited internal competition having occurred in the boot trade, the workmen are being sweated without any benefit being secured by the public. A great deal has been said on the subject of shoddy. Does anybody expect that pure flannel can be sold at 7d. or 9d. a yard? The manufacturers should be compelled to stamp the article according to its quality, and any person selling an article which was of inferior quality to what the buyer supposed it to be should be made amenable to the law. If people go to a shop and the shopman produces Castlemaine flannel which he offers at 2s. a yard, and then Castlemaine flannel which he offers at 7½d. a yard, would any man suppose that both the articles were made of precisely the same material?

An HONORABLE MEMBER.—We must protect those who do not know.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—If we do not manufacture cheap goods here we shall have cheap goods imported from other parts of the world. Honorable members may remember Dr. Hassell's work on food and its adulterations. It was found in England that sand was put into sugar, and

that other articles of food were constantly adulterated. Laws were then introduced obliging the manufacturer of coffee to use a brand showing that it contained chicory, if it did contain chicory; and manufacturers generally were compelled to disclose to the public the substances contained in other articles which they sold. Our legislators will not be acting in the interests of the people unless they enact similar laws here. I am confident that if Castlemaine or Geelong flannel—or so-called flannel—were placed side by side with English flannel of the same quality it would be found to be just as healthy and cheap. As long as the craze for cheap articles lasts it must be supplied by manufacturing cheap articles. Does anybody suppose that the Castlemaine Woollen Mill manufactures inferior flannel with the object of selling it to the people at the price of the best flannel? No, certainly not. The senior member for Castlemaine stated to this committee, before he was challenged in regard to it, that a certain percentage of cotton was put in the Castlemaine flannel; but flannel so treated is not sold as genuine flannel. The Castlemaine Mill produces several kinds of flannel, from the cheapest to the best, and it is sold at prices accordingly. I find that there is a 36s. duty on felt hats manufactured in the colony. In South Australia the duty is 15s. per dozen upon hats of the same quality. Last September I went through a hat factory in Adelaide, when the directors told me they could manufacture nothing but the cheapest quality of hats, because the protective duty there was not sufficient to enable them to manufacture the superior quality. But in this colony, with a 36s. duty, we can manufacture all qualities—some as good as can be made in any part of the world. And where colonial hats are not worn at the present time, but English hats are asked for, this is not because the colonial article is not as good as any that can be imported, but because such people have a prejudice against things colonial. They live in the colony and make their money in the colony, but they purchase goods from other parts of the world because of a prejudice they have against colonial manufactures. They are "so English, you know," that they desire to patronize English goods. I was glad to hear one statement from the honorable member for Numurkah with reference to the tobacco industry. He said he would like to see the State take over the control of the

manufacture of tobacco, and I may say that I am heart and soul with the honorable member in that idea. I hope he will move in this direction in the House, and if he does so he will find no stronger supporter than I am. I am satisfied, from the figures in connexion with the tobacco manufacture in France and Austria, that if the Government took over the matter here it could be made a huge success. Moreover, experience has shown that tobacco manufactured by the State not only returns a large revenue to the Government, but at the same time secures that all the employes working at that industry receive fair wages.

MR. REID.—Tobacco made in France and Italy is the greatest rubbish in the world.

MR. PRENDERGAST.—I suppose the honorable member was in those countries for a couple of days, and therefore feels qualified to speak about this subject. One of the worst things that have afflicted Australia has been persons coming to these colonies, staying for a few days or weeks, and then going home and writing an account of Australia. The honorable member for Toorak seems disposed to act in the same manner with regard to France. Now, one of the things we have to fight against in connexion with our local manufactures is the manufacturing of goods in foreign prisons. The *Journal of the Department of Labour* in New Zealand, in its issue for May, 1895, says—

“It is stated that the daily average number of ‘prisoners whose work eventually reaches outside trade’ in Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, and the Thuringian States combined is 29,200. In Saxony the average number of persons employed in prison labour (otherwise than for the use of the prisons) in 1892 was 3,673. The average number of prisoners employed in Wurtemberg (otherwise than for the prisons) was, in 1892–3, 1,269. At Hamburg the average number of prisoners employed (otherwise than for the prisons) in 1893 was 886.”

Again, in France, in the central prisons the number of persons employed in industrial labour in December, 1891, was 7,637; in correctional establishments the number was 2,411; in subsidiary prisons, 11,857; in certain prisons where hard labour is worked the average number was 323; and in the Algerian prisons the number of prisoners employed in industrial occupations was 972. In the United States the number of prisoners employed in manufacturing different things in 1892 was 45,277. The articles manufactured by these prisoners

were probably exported to other parts of the world to compete with free labour, and a very large proportion finds its way to this market. It is said that Great Britain has no protection, but only a small list of dutiable articles—which by the way returns a very large revenue. But, while they have no protective duties to prevent the introduction of articles of inferior foreign manufacture, they have a sentimental kind of protection, which consists in requiring articles made in other countries to be branded “made in Germany,” “made in France,” and so on; so that any truly patriotic Englishman is enabled to buy the products of the labour of his own country instead of the prison-made goods of other parts of the world. The approximate value of the prison-made goods in the United States in 1892 was £5,492,934, and most of those articles found their way into other parts of the world, some of them to Australia. One witness appeared before the Tariff Board with a box of prison-made cigars, which he had bought at a large establishment in town. It must be evident that our fairly-paid free labour here cannot possibly compete with the low-priced products of prison labour in other parts of the world unless there is protection. On the question of cigars I may mention that it is stated that some of the best cigars can be imported from the West Indian Islands to the United States for 18 dollars a thousand. Now, the makers in America cannot possibly compete against such articles except with a large protective duty, and if we want to protect our cigar manufacturers we also must have a large duty. In America the result of the protective duty is that 98,600 people are employed in the cigar and cigarette industries, whereas in Victoria I am sure that there are not 500 employed in those industries, and I believe that, according to the Tariff Board’s report, there are not more than 300. What is the duty in America? On 1,000 cigars imported at £3 8s. 6d. there is first the duty, 16s. per lb., which amounts to £8. Then there is also a 25 per cent. ad valorem duty, which makes 18s.; and, further, there is an inland revenue duty of three dollars, or an additional 12s. Thus, 1,000 cigars imported into America at £3 8s. 6d., cost, with the duty upon them, no less than £12 18s. 6d. Now, the duty on 1,000 cigars in this colony would not amount to anything like that. Indeed, from the prices current issued by grocers, I find

that cigars can be landed in this colony from £1 per 1,000 upwards. The price at which some of these cigars are sold in this port would not represent one-quarter of the wages bill necessary to make them, or the cost of the material used. I maintain that the revision of this duty proposed by the board should have been extended so as to impose an extra duty on manufactured cigars coming into this colony, and that duty should have been increased from 6s. per lb. to 10s. per lb. Even then it would not have been nearly as heavy as the duty in America on imported cigars. As to the manufacture of tobacco, I hold that the system of allowing persons to have private bonded stores in connexion with the manufacture of either cigars or tobacco is not fair to the whole of the workmen. A large number of the men who have to manufacture on £5 licences have to pay considerably more for their tobacco than those manufacturers who are allowed to have private bonded stores. The small makers — the £5 licence men — have to pay 1s. per lb. on the gross weight of the tobacco, but the man who has a private bond takes the tobacco in there without paying duty, and only pays duty on the manufactured article. There is a 25 per cent. deduction for material lost, and the man who has merely a £5 licence has to pay duty on this 25 per cent., which the man with the private bonded store escapes.

Mr. TUCKER. — Our recommendation would stop that.

Mr. PRENDERGAST. — I agree with the report to that extent. There is no doubt that the board put their finger on a blot in that respect, which I hope Parliament will remedy by legislation. It would be well in connexion with the manufacture of tobacco and cigars to follow the lines of the board's report to a certain extent and to decrease the amount paid for a licence. For my part, I would like to see a system adopted under which any one who manufactured 10,000 lbs. of tobacco would pay a fee of £5 per annum, with an increased fee for the manufacture of 10,000 lbs. up to 100,000 lbs., without any higher tax beyond that.

Mr. BEST. — That is a matter for regulation; no alteration of the law is necessary for that.

Mr. PRENDERGAST. — Then I hope that the Minister will take the matter into consideration, because I am confident that it would be for the benefit of the people.

Some of the best cigars ever manufactured in Victoria are manufactured by the £5 licence men, and these men are suffering a penalty. They have to sit down and manufacture these cigars for certain hours of the day or night, and then go out and sell them afterwards; this is not giving them a fair chance to make a living. The tobacco licences and cigar licences should be altered so as to permit the makers of these articles to have the freest scope in making and selling them to the community. Another matter deserving consideration in connexion with the question of free-trade and protection is that of the patent laws. For my part, I would not give any man protection under the patent laws for more than two years, unless he manufactured the article in the colony. Let any man who wishes to patent an article be given protection for two years, and then let him be compelled to manufacture the article here, or else forfeit his patent. The proprietors of sewing machines and other articles have exploited our market for years past, without those articles being manufactured in the colony. In the same way proprietors of patent bicycles are permitted to exploit our market, whereas if we altered the patent laws, and only allowed two years' protection, our people would be afforded work in the manufacture of these articles. With regard to the proposed Board of Trade, I hope sincerely that the Assembly will not permit such a body to come into existence. We have too many boards already, and we find them nothing but an obstruction to business. The Railways Commissioners have constituted themselves into a kind of board, and they are ruling the Railway department in spite of the Ministry or the Minister, and the sooner they are shifted the better. The Metropolitan Board of Works, the Harbor Trust, and all those other bodies which were created for special purposes have been most extravagant, while they have done very little in the interests of the community. Certainly they have done nothing that could not have been done equally well by the Government, and if the Government had the control of the operations of these boards it would be more amenable to the people than such bodies are at present. Why should such large and important works as the water supply and sewerage of Melbourne be handed over to a body like the Metropolitan Board of Works, which is ruled over by a few persons who never at

any time represented the voice of the majority of the people? I certainly hope that there will be no extension of the principle of boards in the direction suggested in connexion with the proposed establishment of a Board of Trade. I feel confident that the Minister and the responsible officers under him are as capable of dealing with these matters as any men who could be appointed by Parliament, and certainly the Minister would be more in touch with Parliament than any board that might be established. No Minister would dare to override the law, but would have to administer it as it exists, and the Minister would also make recommendations with more knowledge of what is required in the interests of the country than a board would be likely to do, because he could deal more intimately with the matters brought under his consideration. Further, if such a board were appointed it would clash with the Minister of Customs, just as the Railways Commissioners clash with the Minister of Railways.

An HONORABLE MEMBER.—No.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—We have heard the same statement made with regard to all boards when they were going to be appointed, but, unfortunately, experience has proved that what I have said is correct. To refer to another matter of great importance, I desire to say that I hope to introduce at some stage during the discussion of the Tariff a motion to provide that the minimum rate of wage shall be introduced in connexion with our protectionist policy. The manufacturers who desire, and who are seeking the support of the workers to-day for the purpose of keeping their businesses intact, should recognise the justice of a minimum rate of wage, and ought to make a demand along with the working classes that the wages should be based on a certain scale, that the system of eight hours' labour should be observed, and that good factory legislation should be introduced for the purpose of providing that only fair competition shall take place, so that working men shall have a fair opportunity of living comfortably in a country which is intended not for the few but for the whole of the people.

Sir JAMES PATTERSON.—The minimum wage in the factories would close every one of them.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—A portion of the honorable member's constituency did not think so, or they would have placed

him in a higher position on the poll at the last election. Further, while I am a supporter of protection up to the limits of prohibition, I am an opponent of that form of protection which means increased customs taxation in the form of lower duties. I am an opponent of that free-trade which means 10 per cent. and 15 per cent. duties. I would sooner see absolute free-trade, with the abolition of the Custom-house, than that bastard form of free-trade which means 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. The workers of this colony have been appealed to lately by men who have obtained a very large quantity of the land of the country; and it has been urged that if the workers look after their own interest, in the shape of high wages, they should vote for a reduction of the duties. I believe, however, that the workers of the colony are wise enough to know that the men who say this are really looking after their own personal interests, because they desire a decrease in the rates of customs duties, for the purpose of obtaining an increased amount of taxation through the Customs, and thereby securing that the lands shall escape their fair share of taxation.

Mr. AUSTIN.—Sir, a large number of honorable members in the Ministerial corner say that there was no expression of opinion given by the country at the last general election in favour of Tariff reform. Now, when the present Government took office, immediately after coming from the country, what do we find as one of the prominent statements in the Governor's speech? That speech states—

“My advisers are conscious that the Tariff is in an unsatisfactory state, and demands careful revision.”

This is sufficient to show what was the feeling of a Government, the members of which came direct from the country, and it proves conclusively that the present Ministry, when it took office, knew that the country was crying out for Tariff reform. I certainly must congratulate the Minister of Customs on the manner in which he brought forward the Tariff proposals; but I think the honorable gentleman would have done more justice to himself and this Chamber if he had brought the whole of the Tariff before the committee for revision in the first instance, and not have waited to do so until the committee practically demanded that course. We are here, I think, not to reduce the Tariff partially, but to reduce the

Tariff as a whole. We do not want the Tariff question dealt with in pieces—a portion this year and another portion in another two years or so. I think that once we have gone through the Tariff and settled it, the matter should not be brought before the House again for five years, because there is no doubt that continual changes in the Tariff are an extremely bad thing for trade. For my part, I think we should encourage our natural industries, and not encourage, as we have been doing, our artificial industries. I consider that the natural industries of this country are wheat-growing, wool-growing, butter-making, mining, and, I think, also candle-making should be a natural industry of Victoria. Governments in the past have done a good deal in the direction of helping mining, and I hope this Government will continue in the same course. I trust that they will not curtail the prospecting vote, because I believe that that vote, if judiciously expended, is certainly money well laid out, and further, I am of opinion that it is to mining we will have to look to a very great extent to bring the country back to prosperity. I think the Government could also afford to step in and help the farmer by giving him a bonus, so that he could produce hemp and flax. I believe the Government are doing this in a small way now, but I think there should be a bonus for the production and export of these articles. We can produce flax in this colony as well as they can in any part of the world, and we ought to encourage our exports in every possible way. Anything in that direction would have my hearty support, and I believe the support of many honorable members. The honorable member for Melbourne North found fault with the recommendation of the Tariff Board as regards the tobacco duties. Now, I think tobacco is a commodity from which we should be able to get a large amount of revenue. Smoking is a luxury and nothing more. It is to a certain extent a filthy habit; but people will indulge in it, and I think those who smoke should pay for doing so. I consider that the recommendations of the board were a step in the right direction, and that we should get more revenue from the tobacco duties. I believe, therefore, that the Government would have been perfectly right if they had carried out the recommendations of the board in their entirety. There is one point, however, in which I agree with the honorable member for Melbourne North. I

refer to the £150 licences. I certainly think that the licensees should all be placed on a level, and that we should not allow one man to have a private bond in which to manufacture tobacco to the disadvantage of the smaller makers. The recommendation of the board was that the licences should be £5 all round, and I think if that recommendation is carried out we should have a far healthier trade in connexion with the manufacture of tobacco than there is at present. There was one matter referred to by the Minister of Customs in regard to which I was sorry to hear him go beyond the sworn evidence given before Tariff Board. I allude to the American Cigarette Company. The Minister stated that the capital invested in that company was only £10,000, whereas the board had the sworn evidence of Mr. Aston that the capital was £35,000, which is a long way above the amount stated by the Minister. I certainly think that the proposals of the Government are wrong so far as cigarettes are concerned. They have, in my opinion, gone too far, because I believe that by their proposals we shall lose a large amount of revenue. They have put an extra duty on machine-made cigarettes; but I, for my part, think that all cigarettes should be made by machinery. It is much more healthy to have cigarettes made by machinery than to have every cigarette passed through a person's hands in the process of making. I believe that instead of the manufacture of machine-made cigarettes being discouraged it should be encouraged. I am told that the American Cigarette Company can make cigarettes by hand cheaper than by machinery, but they are made by machinery because it is the more wholesome and perfect manner of manufacture. It is well known that since this factory started making cigarettes these articles have been cheaper in Victoria by 50 per cent. than they ever were before, and I think that is a point which the Minister overlooked when proposing the duty now suggested. I think the excise duty on cigarettes should be collected by stamps. If this were done it would do away with Customs bonds in connexion with these articles. The system of stamps is adopted in America, and is carried out very successfully there. In the American law there is a clause providing that if any boxes of cigarettes are found without stamps the Government can seize the factory from which they came, and I am informed that there have

been two or three cases in which that power has been exercised. As I desire to make some reference to the remarks of the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker), who was the chairman of the board, I wish to say, as a member of that board, that a better chairman I never sat under. If all the members of the board had stuck as closely to the business as the chairman did the House would have been able to sit in March instead of not being able to deal with the Tariff until now. The sittings of the board, however, were hampered by there being on it gentlemen who were members of two boards, to both of which they could not attend with full justice to the country. The honorable member for Fitzroy, in speaking of rings, referred to the existence of the cigarette ring, and stated that there was a cigarette ring. There certainly is a ring in connexion with the manufacture of cigarettes, but the honorable member forgot to tell us that the effect of this ring had not been to raise the prices to the consumers. The distributing firms who buy their cigarettes from the company buy them at rates which enable them to sell them to the retailers at such prices that the retailers can sell the cigarettes at 3d. per packet, and still make a fair profit. Therefore, this is not a ring to keep up prices, as has been the case in connexion with other rings. Cigarettes are sold now 50 per cent. cheaper than ever they were in the colony before. I have already said that candle-making should be one of our natural industries. The candle-making industry started when there was no duty, and the candle-makers were perfectly contented to embark on their industry without any duty. Now, however, because the duty is high they object to a fair reduction. They have formed a very big ring, a monopoly, and it has been at the expense of the consumer. I think, myself, that with tallow at their doors, with all the machinery they require, and after having protection for twenty years, if the candle-makers are not able now to carry on with a duty of 1d. per lb., the industry is one which we should foster no longer. It is quite true that candles are cheaper in Sydney than they are in Melbourne. That was stated in evidence before the board, and although that evidence has been disputed, we have the further evidence given by a letter written by the candle-makers to the Premier

Mr. Austin.

himself. In that letter they admit that candles are cheaper in Sydney by a small percentage than they are in Melbourne. They do not tell us what the percentage is, but the letter affords direct evidence of the fact that candles are dearer in this colony than they are in New South Wales, where the duty is only 1½d. per lb. I am sorry to say that the evidence given to the board went to show that trade is leaving Melbourne, and I am afraid that in the near future, instead of Melbourne remaining the Queen City of the South, Sydney will occupy that position. Direct evidence showing that trade was leaving Melbourne was given before the board by a gentleman whose firm is one of the biggest monopolies in this colony. Mr. E. N. Grimwade, of Felton, Grimwade, and Company, gave evidence to the following effect:—

"Does your firm export to the other colonies? Yes, but we have, unfortunately, found our export business slipping away. Take Western Australia. We have sent representatives over there about six times, and we have done a good deal of business. A chemist makes us up an order; in it would be tinctures; our tinctures cost us about 2s. 6d. per lb., after paying the duty on the spirit—that is, using duty-paid spirit. We do not care to say to a chemist, 'We cannot fulfil your order for tinctures,' as he would not care to split up his orders, so our business grew a little, and where it was small we used to fill the orders from our stock. I put them in at prices that caused us a small loss on the tinctures in themselves. We have a permanent representative in Western Australia, and he sends amongst the orders for a good quantity of tincture. We found that we could not go on giving the customers the duty, so we have had to make arrangements with a Sydney firm to give his quotations for tinctures, which run from 8d. to 1s. per lb., and as we get an order from Western Australia we sort out the spirits part of it and send the order on to Sydney, and get them to execute it and ship it to Perth to our order."

That is proof that trade is drifting away from Victoria owing to our protection. This is one of our largest manufacturing firms, and it appears that they mix their tinctures in Sydney because they can do it more cheaply there. The same questions were not addressed to other witnesses; if they had been, I have no doubt that the answer would have been similar to that given in this instance. A good deal of attention has been devoted to the woollen industry during this debate. I may say at the outset, that I was very sorry to hear honorable members like the honorable member for Emerald Hill and the honorable member for Grant condemn the products of our woollen mills as they

did. If honorable members in the House do this what can we expect from the people outside? If we cannot speak well of our productions I think that we ought to leave them alone. I do not believe in running down an article simply when it suits my own ends. I would be the last to do that, and I do not think it is an honorable thing to do. Some honorable members have found fault with the evidence that was given before the Tariff Board. They say that the evidence of the importers was false, but that the evidence of the manufacturers was all true and good. I do not believe in flattering a man outside of the House, and in taking advantage of my privilege inside the House to call him a liar. As the lawyers say in the courts, when you prove that a witness has made a false statement you must set aside nearly the whole of his evidence, and I intend to quote an instance in which evidence that appears to have been false was given by a gentleman who is a manufacturer and a member of this House. I refer to the honorable member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams). The following is the passage to which I allude:—

“On account of what?—The increased duty enabling us to turn out three times the work for less management, and the machinery the same, with certain additions. On the same principle we have added to our buildings twice and to our machinery three times, but up to the last four years the mill was only run for the benefit of the employes. The last four years we have paid regular dividends of 7 per cent., and reduced the liabilities from £10,000 to £5,000.

“That was the actual dividend last year.—Yes.”

This evidence was given to the first Tariff Board, at Castlemaine, before the honorable member had obtained a seat in the House. The honorable member came before the second board, and a similar question was then put to him—“Is your company paying dividends?” I desire to call the attention of the committee to the different answer he then gave:—

“Is your company paying dividends?—We paid a small one last year. We paid none this year. Unfortunately, we are not able to pay a dividend.

“By Mr. Gurr.—If the duty were reduced would you be able to pay a dividend?—No.

“By the Chairman.—How is it you cannot pay a dividend with all this output?—We have been devoting our profits to the improvement of our machinery; we do not set any aside. We expend it as fast as we make it. That is the reason we cannot pay a dividend.”

In one case the honorable member said that they paid a dividend, and in the

other he denied that they had paid a dividend. This clearly proves that he gave false evidence before the board. It is very difficult to say whether evidence that is given before such a board is true or not, because there is nothing that affects a person more than when you touch his pocket, as you do when it is proposed to reduce a duty upon which he depends. A little further on the honorable gentleman gave the following evidence:—

“How long is it since you paid a dividend?—We paid a small one last year, at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum. We only paid it for one half-year at that rate.

“Is that the only dividend paid for some years?—No; there were seven dividends in nineteen years of 2 or 3 per cent., and one of 4 per cent.”

Now, I do not know which of these statements to believe—the statement that the mill paid 7 per cent. during the last four years, or the statement that it only paid seven small dividends in nineteen years. When we get such evidence from manufacturers, those honorable members who represent the interests of the manufacturers should not speak as they have done in terms of disparagement of the importers.

Mr. E. D. WILLIAMS.—The evidence in the one case was given eighteen months before the evidence in the other. The statement that the mill had only paid small dividends for a number of years was quite correct, but in the interim between the first and second evidence a dividend of 7 per cent. had been paid.

Mr. AUSTIN.—I do not think that the honorable member's explanation is very satisfactory. I myself think that the duty on woollens has been altogether too high, and that the time has come when it should be substantially reduced. If I cannot get the duties reduced to as low a point as I think desirable, I shall be prepared to accept the largest reduction that the committee will grant. I should prefer a maximum of 25 per cent., and I think that our industries should prosper under such a duty. The woollen mills did prosper well with a duty of 10 per cent., and, according to the information given to me at Geelong, they paid a higher rate of wages than they pay now; and they also paid dividends, as I know, because I was a shareholder. And yet we now find the mills languishing with a duty of 45 per cent. The reason is not that the equipment of the mills is bad, it is the way in which they have been doing their business.

Mr. GURR.—The duty is only 40 per cent.

Mr. AUSTIN.—Yes, 40 per cent.; the difference is not very great. I am sorry to observe that our woollen mills are using less wool and more cotton than formerly. It is a deplorable thing that after we have given them so large a measure of protection they should make not shoddy but inferior flannel. Honorable members misrepresent it when they call it shoddy. It is not shoddy, but an inferior flannel, and I would like to see our mills producing a superior flannel. They should be able to do that with a 40 per cent. duty. In 1892 the quantity of cotton imported was 80,065 lbs., the value of which was £1,293; and in 1894 the quantity was 164,935 lbs., of a value of £3,592. These figures afford proof that cotton has been more largely used recently, and I think that this result is attributable to our high duties, which have forced our people to use cotton. I quite agree with the honorable member who preceded me in the view that all goods that are brought into the colony should be branded, and I think that if the recommendation of the board in that respect were carried out it would be a good thing for our manufacturers.

Mr. WINTER. — You mean branded "made in Victoria."

Mr. AUSTIN.—Yes, or made anywhere else. There is a prejudice against goods that are manufactured in the colony, and that prejudice has been largely created by the action of a certain class of persons who purchase colonial goods. When they are of the best quality they sell them as imported; but if they are not of the best quality they offer them to their customers as colonial. In other instances they import inferior goods and sell them as colonial, with the object of trying to damn our own industries. If all the goods that are made here were branded it would be a means of affording protection to our own industries. The people would not then cry down our local manufactures, but would learn to appreciate their quality, and would be glad to wear them. I have had great difficulty in getting a suit made of colonial cloth, for the simple reason that the tailors would rather sell me a suit at £7 than at £4. I believe that a suit of colonial cloth has been sold to me for £7. I was left under the impression that it was made of imported cloth, and in that way I have not the slightest doubt that I have been

imposed upon. It has been shown by the evidence given before the board that protection has not been attended with all the advantages that were expected from it to the workers. It has been alleged that protection has reduced wages, and I believe that that is a positive fact. The wages in the boot trade at the present time are very much lower than they were some years ago, and boots are altogether too cheap to enable the workmen to get a fair return for their labour. In 1894 there were 39,846 hands employed in our factories, and 37,015 hands employed in the factories of New South Wales, so that there is a slight difference in favour of Victoria; but the New South Wales factories employ men's labour to a far greater extent than the Victorian factories. Owing to our protective Tariff the manufacturers have had to pay low wages and employ a larger number of female hands. We have factories in our midst that are run almost wholly by females, and this explains the difference in the number of hands employed. No matter what industry you take, you find that the number of females employed is much greater in Victoria than it is in New South Wales. The honorable member for Hawthorn has moved that no ad valorem duty should exceed 25 per cent. In many cases the ad valorem duties are mere flea-bites as compared with the fixed duties. The fixed duties are very much higher than they ought to be. People do not realize what a severe tax they are for the simple reason that they are fixed. Hats are protected to the extent of 3s. per hat, and yet there are hats imported at an invoice price of 1s. 2d. or 1s. 3d. Now, that is an enormous duty. If the duty on hats had been an ad valorem instead of a fixed duty, the country would have cried out against it long ago and demanded a reduction. I was returned at the last general election as a Tariff reformer. I pledged myself to vote for a reduction of the duties to 25 per cent., and I intend to keep that pledge. The amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn is rather inopportune, but at the same time I feel in duty bound to support it. I do not think that it will be carried; but I am not going to break the pledge that I gave to the electors, because I know that if I had not advocated a reduction of the high duties I would not have been returned. The feeling of the people, not only in the farming, but also in the mining districts, is strongly in favour of a reduction of those high duties, and

that feeling is particularly strong among the miners in my own district. It was from them that I got the loudest cheer when I said that I would support a reduction of the duties to a maximum of 25 per cent., and it was evident to me that they had looked at the question and had changed their views very considerably. Recently, when before my constituents, I addressed them on the subject of free-trade and protection, and I used the well-worn illustration of the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) of staples and nails. The honorable member told us that as the duty on nails was increased the price was reduced. I believe that to a certain extent that is true. The honorable member finished up by saying that we have a £7 10s. duty on nails, and that nails are now selling at £12 a ton. I have myself purchased large quantities of nails, and it appeared to me that the honorable member was rather at fault. At the same time he told us that the price of staples was £32 a ton wholesale. When I was in Geelong, yesterday, I thought that I would put his statement to a practical test. I went into the first ironmonger's shop in Geelong, and I bought a lb. of staples and a lb. of nails. I asked the gentleman who attended me to give me staples of the same gauge as the nails, and what did I find? I bought the nails for 2½d. a lb. and the staples for 3d. a lb., so that there was only a difference of ½d. This certainly does not agree with the honorable member's statement.

Mr. TRENWITH.—Very likely my reference to them brought down the price.

Mr. AUSTIN.—I do not think so; it shows that the honorable member was misled in regard to his figures. The honorable member for Lowan stated that the honorable member for Castlemaine (Mr. Williams) should not advocate the cause of the woollen mill owners, because he is an interested party. If we are going to introduce considerations of that kind into our debates many of us will often have to leave the chamber. I would, for example, have to leave the chamber when the stock tax is under consideration, because I am an interested party, and the honorable member for Lowan would have to leave it when any subject relating to barristers was being dealt with. We know that the barristers look very well after themselves in this House. I do not desire to delay the committee much longer, but I do wish to refer to one industry that has recently sprung up in our midst. It is an

industry that should not be encouraged—I refer to the match industry. A factory for the manufacture of matches has been in existence at Richmond during the last eight or nine months. It employs about 53 hands, and of those 53 hands 48 are females. In fact, it is a factory of females for the making of matches. I find that, with a small wage-sheet of £1,250 a year, this factory can make very nearly all the matches we require, and that its establishment involves a loss to the revenue of something like £10,000 per annum. When the duty was imposed it was never intended that it should be a protective duty in any shape or form. Parliament desired to discourage the people of this colony from using wax matches, which were considered to be dangerous, and it was for that reason that so high a duty was imposed. It would be a good thing for the country if we could stop the match factory altogether. We have evidence that the climate is not suitable for the manufacture of matches. It cannot employ its hands all the year round on account of the heat, and the industry is a dangerous one. On these grounds alone it should not be encouraged. Although we have a factory in this colony, I find that the same firm export their matches from London to Sydney, and sell them there for 2s. 5d. per gross, whereas they sell them here for 3s. 4d. It is, therefore, clear that the duty on matches increases the price to the consumer.

Mr. TRENWITH.—What was the price of matches before they began to manufacture them here?

Mr. AUSTIN.—I do not know. There is only one other matter to which I desire to allude, and that is with reference to something that took place on the Tariff Board. The honorable member for Carlton, in a speech that he delivered recently, said that the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) was the best protectionist on the Tariff Board. To a certain extent he was right; but he also stated that the honorable member had to give his casting vote on eight occasions, and that on each of those occasions he gave it for higher protection. In that the honorable member for Carlton was wrong. Our chairman did not give his vote always for higher protection. Two manufacturers came before us and stated that they could manufacture a certain article if a duty were imposed upon it. In this instance the protectionists went for free-trade, and

the fair-traders went for protection. I refer now to printing paper. The chairman had to give his casting vote, and he voted for free-trade, although we had evidence that paper could be manufactured here, and that one city newspaper was for a time kept going by the local manufacturers. And yet the protectionists would not agree to the imposition of a duty to assist this industry.

Mr. STERRY.—Mr. Chairman, although I disagree with the recommendations of the Tariff Board in the small recommendations that they have made, and I also disagree with the reductions proposed by the Government, I think that the thanks of the committee are due to the members of the board for the great amount of time that they devoted to the task, and the trouble that they took in collecting a mass of valuable evidence, which will be of great assistance to honorable members in arriving at what may be considered a fair conclusion. There is an impression amongst a large majority of the people that select committees, boards, and Royal commissions of this kind receive substantial fees for each sitting. Of course that is not true, and I merely mention the matter in order that a misunderstanding may be removed. Honorable members do not receive a single cent for such services, and they are, therefore, all the more entitled to the thanks of Parliament and of the country. The evidence taken by the Tariff Board, and the report which they have submitted, point conclusively to the fact that the people of this colony are worse paid, that they wear worse clothes, have fewer luxuries, have less employment, and are more heavily taxed than the people of any of the other Australian colonies. That undoubtedly is the outcome of the inquiry—at any rate, that is how it presents itself to my mind. The Chairman of the Tariff Board is entitled to the thanks of Parliament and of the country for the manly and outspoken manner in which he has explained the position in relation to the higher duties. He has told us that the increased duties on woollens have led to sweating, to low wages, and to a number of other evils; and I am afraid that the same remarks apply to many other industries. I was pleased to hear the honorable member say that it did not apply to the boot trade. I have always looked upon the boot and leather industry as one of the successes of protection. We not only

now largely manufacture boots and shoes, but I think that the manufacturers have the whole market, and, notwithstanding what has been said about the quality of the boots and shoes, a good article can be obtained at a very moderate price. In addition to that, our tanners are large exporters of leather. One tanner informed me to-day that he was shipping this week over 100 bales of leather. We may, therefore, claim that this industry has been fairly successful. No doubt it has been assisted by the fact that the bark from which the tanning matter is obtained is grown here. The freight on the bark to the old country is £5 a ton, and that goes a long way to enable the local manufacturers to compete with the importers. In regard to what are called shoddy boots and shoes, it must be remembered that all classes of the community have to be catered for. It is not every man who can afford to pay 10s. for a pair of boots, if he can get a pair for 5s. That may be all the money he can spare, and there must be a cheap article manufactured to supply the wants of the people. I am told that one firm is manufacturing bluchers at 2s. 8d. a pair, and I have seen boots of that kind offered retail at 2s. 11d. a pair. The selling price of the same article in London is 3s. 9d. a pair. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) pointed out that the duties on the raw material injuriously affect the coach-building trade, and he spoke as an expert. It is unnecessary for me to repeat what he said. He mentioned certain patent axles, hickory rims, hickory spokes, and other articles which are not manufactured here, and the duty on which restricts the trade of the coach-builders. These duties have also interfered with the intercolonial trade. I know that some years ago the coach-builders exported large numbers of buggies to Sydney, and found a ready sale for them there. The prices in Sydney are now so low that the whole of the trade has been taken from this colony, and the coach-building trade affords an example of the evil results of over-protection. It is in a most languishing condition. The duties have not only prevented vehicles from being turned out at a price at which they could compete in the other colonies, but the price has been so high that it has restricted the sale of them here, and put them beyond the reach of a large number of people who would purchase vehicles if they could get them at a more moderate price.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—What about the burst-up people who have been selling their traps?

Mr. STERRY.—I am quite aware of what the honorable member alludes to, and I can tell him that the general experience of coach-builders in this colony is that nine-tenths of their customers go in for second-hand traps simply because they cannot pay the price of new ones. The Chairman of the Tariff Board told us that it puzzled him, as I suppose it puzzles a great many more, to understand how it is that the New Zealand woollen mills flourish with a duty of 20 per cent., and employ more hands and turn out a better article than the woollen mills of this colony, where the duties range from 40 to 50 per cent.

Mr. LONGMORE.—They don't turn out a better article.

Mr. STERRY.—We have the assurance of the Chairman of our Tariff Board and other gentlemen's assurances to that effect, and the honorable member for Delatite submitted samples here the other night, and challenged any one to dispute the statement that the New Zealand woollen cloth is a better article.

Mr. GRAHAM.—And they pay better wages to their employes in New Zealand.

Mr. STERRY.—So we are told. I do not expect the labour members to support these views, but men who are in the trade assure us that the New Zealand tweeds generally, and the Mossiel tweeds particularly, are much superior to the Victorian tweeds.

Mr. BROMLEY.—That is distinctly untrue. I have had opportunities of judging them myself.

Mr. STERRY.—That may be so, and I am not giving the statement as a fact.

Mr. BROMLEY.—It is an assertion that suits your purpose.

Mr. STERRY.—No, it does not. The appeal made by the Chairman of the Tariff Board in this chamber on behalf of the farmers of the colony is worthy of the utmost consideration. When we remember that he represents a constituency that is not thought to be altogether in sympathy with the farmers, I think we must admit that he took a bold stand. It must be allowed that in making those statements the honorable member had no axe to grind. Now, it has been claimed by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) notably that our protective duties have benefited the farmer, but I think the honorable member would have

a great deal of difficulty in satisfying the farmers on that point. Although I do not go that length with the honorable member, I do think that the duties on grain when first put on, and grain was imported here, had a beneficial effect for the farmers.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—There are duties on bacon, eggs, and about 24 farmers' products altogether.

Mr. STERRY.—Well, the farmer would be very glad to forego many of those duties if he could have his tools of trade and his clothing duty free.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—And his reapers and binders.

Mr. STERRY.—No, reapers and binders are not dutiable.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—And they are cheap in consequence of being free from duty.

Mr. STERRY.—No, they are not cheap. It has been said that if there was a protective duty on them they would be made in the colony. I know that reapers and binders have been made here, because I bought one of the first that was made in the colony. I think the firm was Corbett and Sons, and their manufactory was on the Sandridge road. The price was £55, as against £70 or £75 for an imported machine. But even at that price the Victorian reaper and binder was not half so good as the imported machine. Indeed, the locally-made reapers and binders were failures. The one I bought did very unsatisfactory work. I had to dispose of it and buy an imported machine.

Mr. PRENDERGAST.—When was that?

Mr. STERRY.—About twenty years ago. We have not the means of making those malleable castings which are made in America, and the working parts and the timber were of a different character; in fact, in every way the Victorian reapers and binders were inferior to the imported machines. The firm found they could not sell them, because those who tried them were not able to manage with them, and they consequently discontinued making them. As to protection having benefited the farmer, I can only say that if raising the price of everything the farmer uses has been a benefit to him, then the protective duties have benefited him. I have here a comparison of the duties imposed in the various colonies on agricultural implements and machinery. On ploughs, the duty in Victoria is 20 per cent., New South Wales 10 per cent., New Zealand free; harrows—Victoria 20 per cent.,

New South Wales 10 per cent., New Zealand free; scarifiers—Victoria 20 per cent., New South Wales 10 per cent., New Zealand free; winnowers—Victoria 20 per cent., New South Wales 10 per cent., New Zealand free; forges—Victoria 35 per cent., New South Wales 10 per cent., New Zealand free; dairy machinery—Victoria 20 to 35 per cent., New South Wales 10 per cent., and New Zealand free. The duty on portable engines in Victoria is 25 per cent., in New South Wales 10 per cent., in Tasmania $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., in South Australia, a protected country, free, and in New Zealand also free.

Mr. TRENWITH.—What are the prices of portable engines in the different colonies?

Mr. STERRY.—I do not know what the prices are, but I presume that if a man pays 20 per cent. duty on an article it makes that article 20 per cent. dearer than if he had no duty to pay on it.

Mr. TRENWITH.—There you are wrong.

Mr. STERRY.—Perhaps I am, but I think that is the natural consequence of imposing a duty. I will now take some of the general duties as they apply to the farmers in common with the majority of the people. For instance, take the following duties in Victoria, New Zealand, and New South Wales respectively—

—	Victoria.	New Zealand.	New South Wales.
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Apparel and slops	50	20	10
Shirts ...	50	20	10
Flannel ...	40	20	10
Leather manuf- tures ...	45	20	10
Hosiery ...	35	50	10
Bedsteads ...	40	20	10
Blankets ...	35	20	10
Brushware ...	35	20	10
Cloths and tweeds	40	20	10
Furniture ...	40	25	10

It appears to me that only a very small portion of the community are benefited by the imposition of high protective duties, including, of course, the few monopolists who own the manufactories. The Tariff Board recommend a further duty on mining explosives, and I cannot allow that to pass without comment. The mining industry is sufficiently handicapped already. Mining for gold and minerals is a precarious occupation. The results are very uncertain, and a number of our mines are getting down to great depths, where they have water and very hard ground to contend

with, and, worst of all, bad ventilation. These things are very heavy handicaps against the mining industry, and it is necessary for the health and safety of the miners that none but the best and least injurious explosives should be used. We have found from experience that nitro-gelatine explosives and galignite are the most effective and least injurious of all the nitrous compounds, so that Parliament should be very careful about imposing any duty which would raise the price of those explosives which are so necessary to the progress of the mining industry. I know that the local manufacturers are turning out a very satisfactory article, and I believe they have a fair share of the market; but whether they are doing sufficiently well to satisfy themselves or not, I think it is a most unfair thing to propose that the 26,000 to 30,000 men now engaged in the mining industry should be burdened with taxation to the extent of £8,000 or £10,000 a year, which would really be taken out of the wage-fund of the miners and put into the pockets of the manufacturer for the purpose of keeping his factory going. I must compliment the Government on not having adopted that recommendation of the Tariff Board. The honorable member for Footscray asked the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Lazarus) the other day whether it was the miner or the mine-owner he was so anxious about. Well, I may inform the honorable member that miners, as contractors, as contributors, and as wage-earners, and, to a large extent, as small shareholders in mining companies, are interested in everything that tends to raise the price of mining materials.

Mr. HANCOCK.—We don't admit that the imposition of a duty will raise the price.

Mr. STERRY.—The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) made some remarks in reference to the fuse industry. The only fuse factory that there is in these colonies that I am aware of is the one at Bendigo, which turns out a most excellent article, a great deal superior to the fuse imported before that factory was started. The Minister of Railways will bear me out in saying that the fuse imported into this colony at that time was very uncertain and unsatisfactory. I think that was largely due to the coating of the fuse being suitable for a colder climate, and not for a semi-tropical climate like ours.

Mr. H. R. WILLIAMS.—We used to lose scores of miners' lives through bad fuse in those days, whereas an accident through bad fuse scarcely ever happens now.

Mr. STERRY.—Quite so. The honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) said there is no duty on fuse. I don't know where he got that information from, for on inquiring at the Custom-house I was informed that between January and December, 1894, the sum of £433 9s. was collected as duty on fuse imported into this colony. That shows, at any rate, that the local factory has not got the whole of the market. Now, it has been stated that Victorian-made candles are sold in Sydney at 1d. to 1½d. or 2d. per lb. less than they are here.

Mr. TRENWITH.—That is not so.

Mr. STERRY.—I am not vouching for the statement, but if it is true the manufacturers here are exacting a very unfair profit from the pockets of our people. It is only fair that while mentioning that statement I should quote from a circular which has been issued by Kitchen and Sons and Apollo Company Limited, Mowling and Sons, and Walker and Nation, as follows:—

“Your courteous attention is requested to the following contradiction of statements made in the course of the Tariff debate, calculated to unfairly injure the candle industry:—

“Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—Now, here is an industry which is sending its candles all through Australia, and selling them, I am informed, in New South Wales at 1½d. per lb. less than in Victoria.” (*Hansard*, p. 342.)

“That is not true. No candles have been exported to New South Wales by any of the Melbourne candle-makers during the past ten years. Not one of the present candle-making firms has ever exported a candle to New South Wales.

“Mr. IRVINE.—One of these gentlemen [emissaries] came to me, authorized by one of the principals of those candle-making firms, to solicit my support against the reduction of the duty on candles.” (*Hansard*, p. 390.)

“This is false. No agent or ‘emissary’ authorized by the candle-makers waited on Mr. Irvine. This will be confirmed by each of the firms interested.”

Now, although this is not a sworn statement, I presume that its truth or otherwise could be easily proved, and if it is true the sooner the false statement it contradicts is denied, and the denial published throughout the colony, the better.

Mr. TRENWITH.—There is the refutation of it.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Why they have been to honorable members all over Parliament House during the week; we have all seen them.

Mr. STERRY.—I have not seen them.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Were the men who saw the honorable member for Carlton authorized by the firms to do so?

Mr. BROMLEY.—I don't know—that is an equivocation.

Mr. STERRY.—I have always been a moderate protectionist, believing it to be a proper policy for a young country to adopt.

Mr. HANCOCK.—What is moderate protection?

Mr. STERRY.—Certainly not 50 per cent. duties. I believe that protection did good to this country up to a certain stage, but we have gone protection mad of late years.

Mr. HANCOCK.—In what respect?

Mr. STERRY.—In putting on protective duties of 40 and 50 per cent., which in many instances mean 100 and 150 per cent. before the protected articles reach the consumers. The duty on coach-builders' axles range from 60 to 200 per cent. Axles made in this country are very good of their kind, but they cannot make case-hardened axles here, because the making of those axles is a sort of trade secret, and the axles made here are not suitable for first-class new work, but only for repairs where old traps require new axles.

Mr. BROMLEY.—Axle-makers say that case-hardened axles can be made here.

Mr. STERRY.—The coach-builders and their employes are unanimously against the duty on axles. Although I am not going to vote with the honorable member for Hawthorn, because I do not desire that the colony should go from one extreme to another—from high protection to free-trade—I shall reserve to myself the right to vote for reductions of all the higher duties as they come up in committee. I am aware that industries have sprung up under our protective system, that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been invested in them, and that they employ thousands of people. Therefore, I am not going to assist in crippling or sweeping away any of those industries. The honorable member for Brighton asked when protected industries came of age—when they would be old enough to go alone? Well, I remember when the 20 and 25 per cent. duties were first asked for and put on, the manufacturers said—“If you give us the protection of these duties for ten years we shall then have established our industries, and you can begin to reduce the duties until you wipe them away

altogether." But instead of having those gradual reductions we have had continual increases.

Mr. TRENWITH.—Protection proved to be so good that they wanted more.

Mr. STERRY.—And they still want more.

Mr. HANCOCK.—And the articles get cheaper and cheaper.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—A little more protection and we will get the articles for nothing.

Mr. STERRY.—I do not agree with the honorable member for Footscray in this matter. Ten years was fixed as the time requisite to establish our protected industries, but we have had the protective system in force something like 30 years, and the duties have been piled up, some of them, as high as 50 per cent. And the honorable member for Footscray and his friends think that those duties are not high enough yet. Well, as the reductions having been so long delayed, I think we have all the more reason to make them now? Those who have been protected in these various industries must have reaped considerable benefit from the very high duties imposed, and therefore they are now in a better position to stand substantial reductions. At the proper time I intend to move—

"That all tools, implements, and machinery, not on the free list, used in horticulture, viticulture, channelling, and draining, and for making and repairing of roads, be placed on the same list with agricultural implements."

We have really built a Chinese wall of protection round this colony, and almost entirely shut ourselves out from all trade intercourse with the other colonies. I think it is quite time we began to demolish that Chinese wall. But I am afraid, if some of the honorable member's friends had their way, the protectionist wall around this colony would be raised high enough to keep out all the other colonies' productions. The sooner we endeavour to assimilate our Tariff with the Tariffs of the other colonies the sooner we shall have inter-colonial free-trade, and that, I believe, is what the great majority of the people of this country, and the majority of the people in the other colonies, desire. Until we get that we have no chance of bringing about the federation of Australia.

Mr. BOWSER.—Mr. Chairman, while I admired the earnestness and eloquence of the honorable member for Hawthorn, I could not help feeling that the only effect

of submitting his amendment would be to pitch the friends of Tariff reform into the arms of the Government, a performance to which I have no objection, since, in this instance, I shall vote with the Government, the amendment having been taken by the Premier as a motion of want of confidence. Personally, I believe that a large majority of the people of this colony are in favour of a reduction of both the fixed and the ad valorem duties, but I do not think it can be shown, either by the results of the last general election, or by any demonstration of public opinion since then, that there is a general desire to cut down our protective duties to a point where reductions would injure our local industries, and especially those which have been established at such a great cost, and which are in a fairly prosperous and successful condition and likely to become permanent. The labours of the Tariff Board were arduous, and their report will remain a monument of patient care and toil, and of insight and knowledge of the details of the Customs department and of the peculiarities of the Tariff, which are so difficult to get at by any one who is not acquainted with manufactures. But with all respect to the Chairman of the Tariff Board, I must confess to some feeling of disappointment. I think that the verdict of the board is hardly in accordance with the evidence. While I am in favour of moderate protection to our industries, I am totally against the superannuation of our industries, and I should have liked to know precisely where protection ends and superannuation begins, in order that a healthy balance might be preserved between the cost prices of articles manufactured here and of similar articles imported duty paid. I see also from the board's report that whole classes of our people have borne these high duties in order to maintain local industries, some of which are sound and successful, and likely to become permanent, and, therefore, ought to be protected and supported; others are artificial and will eventually pass away, while others again have become monopolies which must be broken up. Every influence has been used here with the object of creating more employment for the people and raising their wages, but it is to the interest of the manufacturer that the price of labour should be cheapened. Where our industries are natural and have prospered, the very competition which we relied upon to cheapen the cost of the

article has struck most at labour. But we have left out the factor that this colony has a small population, providing only a moderate number of consumers, and that it is isolated from its natural sources of trade with the neighbouring colonies through the policy of protection. Victoria has invited a policy of reprisal from the other colonies. Our farmers have been cut off from the advantages of trade with New South Wales, and the markets which our manufacturers looked forward to have been greatly limited under the influence of protection. I will ask the attention of honorable members to a class of the community who, although they have been most loyal to this system of protection for the last 25 years, have not shared to a large extent in its advantages in the shape of improved wages or profits. I refer to the producing classes. I find the following paragraph in the first report of the Tariff Board:—

“In many parts of the country, especially where the principal industry was the growing of cereals, we found the condition of the farmers to be very critical. The low prices obtained for wheat, stock, and all farm produce had reduced many to severe straits, and the land was in far too numerous cases heavily encumbered with mortgages, for which high rates of interest were being charged; under this grievous burden many had been compelled to leave their holdings, numerous foreclosures having taken place. Some change we feel to be absolutely necessary to avert further disaster amongst them.”

No class of the community has been more loyal to the protective system than the workers on the land. It was the dream of the old pioneers that Melbourne should become the manufacturing centre of Australia. But that dream has only been very partially realized. Melbourne has, however, within itself supplied skilled mechanics. The farmers' sons in too many cases have drifted into service on the railways and in the metropolitan tram company; and, however honorable and necessary these employments may be for the purposes of the State, they do not develop to a very high degree those qualities of self-help, with which I consider those men to be liberally endowed, and which would, applied to the land, tend much more than most other things to make a nation great and prosperous. During the past few weeks I have been informed by a member of the public service in New South Wales, as showing the exodus of our farmers from the northern districts to that colony, that 100,000 acres of land have been

taken up in that colony by Victorian farmers within the last two years. Our farmers migrate with their families and their stock and implements. I also notice that our rival, Sydney, has struck during the last few years, a telling but perfectly fair blow at the business of this city. A very large amount of trade which was previously done by Victoria with Deniliquin, Wagga, Wilcannia, Corowa, Albury, and other places in New South Wales goes to Sydney. The places which I have named have for the last twenty years been doing a business with Melbourne. They are geographically the natural customers of Melbourne, but Sydney now sends goods by sea to our metropolitan city at very low rates, and gratis in some cases. These goods are carried across Victoria by our railway lines to Albury, and they are sold to customers there, where it is impossible for Melbourne merchants to compete, because they are handicapped in favour of Sydney by high charges. In other respects, also, the trade of Melbourne has, of course, greatly dwindled. It is an axiom of Mr. Gladstone that in a time of depression it is a great mistake to increase duties, but that national blunder has been exemplified here, and we have seen its effects on every hand. I do not believe that our troubles are to be entirely attributed to the protective policy. I think that we are suffering with the rest of the world from a cycle of depression, which has been accentuated by blunders made by those who were too enterprising and progressive. We are now paying the penalty of those mistakes. When we come to discuss the items of the Tariff in detail, I shall speak upon a number of other things connected with the mining, wine, and other industries, to which it is not necessary now to allude.

Mr. KERR.—Sir, I feel some difficulty in discussing this question at the present time, owing to the great length to which the debate has extended, but I cannot allow it to end without saying a few words. I have been a protectionist ever since I knew how to vote, and I have no hesitation in saying that the protectionist policy of this colony has done a great deal of good for it. The farmers are very much in evidence, and I am glad to find that they have so many friends. No doubt they will receive some benefit from this discussion. But I would like to point out that perhaps the farmers may find that their interests are as much bound up with the

protected industries of this country as with anything else. There is one thing which the farmer should never forget, and that is that he wants consumers for his produce. It is all very well to say that he is compelled to export a considerable amount of his produce—there is a very large amount of it which must be consumed in the colony. You may export wheat, oats, butter, and cheese, but you can only export some of these things at a certain season of the year. It is not profitable to make butter for export for more than six months in the year, and what is the farmer to do with his surplus during the remainder of the year? It is, therefore, very necessary for him to find a population here which will be consumers of his produce. In addition, the farming community produce eggs, pork, and fruit. Protection is a matter which concerns the farmers very much indeed, because if Melbourne to-day were as great a consumer of butter as it was four years ago, the price of milk would now be 1½d. per gallon more than it is to the farmer. That is an important consideration. We find also that the farmer is compelled to seek a market for his eggs and pork, because it is only during certain seasons of the year that these things can be exported. It is, therefore, well for the farmers to weigh whether the protected industries shall be interfered with.

Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—We must bring out people from England to eat the stuff.

Mr. KERR.—I agree to that, if we can find work for them when they come out. The prosperity of the people is dependent on the employment which is provided for them. In every country in which labour gets a good return the commercial class benefit by it. As a protectionist, I believe that labour would benefit under my policy. I deny that protection is the cause of sweating. Sweating is just as rife or more so in free-trade England as it is here, and it is an evil which can be put down by other means. It has been said that the high woollen duties are the cause of sweating in the factories. Surely it is strange that that should be the case when it is remembered that all these factories are worked in connexion with importing houses. Fully half the material which is made up in the factories is admitted into this colony duty free. If such is the case it must follow that when these materials are admitted duty free good wages

should be paid to the men who make them up. But we find that the making of cotton shirts and moleskin trousers is given to sweaters, whose employes work in dens fourteen hours a day for 9s. or 10s. a week. Sweating does not proceed from protection, but from the efforts of employers to undersell their neighbours, and until this Parliament legislates to prevent it the same thing will continue. It is a very strange thing that America, which is the home of protection, and which is held up to us as a shocking example, should have prospered so well under that system. Not only is America able to manufacture her own articles, she has become now a large exporter. She is gradually supplanting England in iron manufactures, and she will do so more and more as time goes on. Though England at the present time may have the maritime supremacy, the time is not far distant when America will cut her out by bounty-fed goods in American bottoms. It is very singular that Canada should have adopted the same fiscal policy that rules in America. One might say it is only natural that Canada, seeing the example of protection in America, would have shunned it, and that, being the offspring of England, she would have adopted a free-trade policy; but instead she has adopted the policy of the adjoining States, feeling convinced that it is the best for her own people. We have also the fact before us that some of the English industries have been closed. At one time there was a large number of sugar refineries in England; now they have all been closed, owing to the introduction of the bounty-fed sugar of Germany and France. For years past the Governments of the two last-mentioned countries, to promote the extraction of sugar from beet, have paid a bounty on all exported sugar, and by that means they have been able to undersell the sugar refiners of Great Britain. During the years in which these bounty-fed sugars were exported the people of France and Germany were enabled to perfect the manufacture, so that if the bounties were withdrawn they could still hold the English market. This proves the value of establishing industries by protection; in course of time such industries will be able to export in addition to supplying the people of the country in which they are. The industry which has come under the lash more than any other during this

debate is the woollen industry; it has been a sort of football in the committee. Scarcely a member who spoke has had a good word to say for it, yet perhaps we have not in this colony a more successful industry at the present time. The honorable member for Ballarat East (Mr. McGregor), in the course of his speech last evening, gave some figures which ought to prove conclusively that this industry is flourishing. The figures he quoted cover a period of ten years from the time at which the duties were 25 per cent. until they reached 40 per cent. The fact of the matter is that the 25 per cent. duties were not sufficient to establish the industry; but during the last ten years the industry has flourished, and it is now on a firm and solid basis. It is not true that this has been accomplished at the expense of the consumer. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) pointed out, from an inspection of the books of the Geelong mills, that the consumer is now getting his goods cheaper than he did three years ago. I have examined the books of the Ballarat mill, and I find that the prices are 15 per cent. lower than they were three years ago.

Mr. MADDEN.—What became of the capital of the Ballarat mill?

Mr. KERR.—The company reconstructed, like the banks, and the capital is still there.

Mr. MADDEN.—The mill is there, but not the capital.

Mr. KERR.—The capital is there; it is in the mill. The value of the plant there to-day is £60,000, and it could not be put there for 1s. less.

Mr. MADDEN.—Who paid the cost of putting it there?

Mr. KERR.—The present shareholders. The original shareholders in the Ballarat Woollen Company are much in the same position as the original shareholders of the reconstructed banks, with the difference that the preference shares of the Ballarat company are now at par, while the shares of the reconstructed banks are not. It is immaterial what the company has done with its capital. If I can prove conclusively to this committee that the consumer is getting his goods 15 per cent. cheaper under the 40 per cent. duties than he did under the 25 per cent. duties, that is sufficient evidence that he is not being defrauded.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Then you can reduce the duties to 25 per cent.

Mr. KERR.—The honorable member for Ballarat East (Mr. McGregor) proved to us that the number of employes in the Ballarat mill has been nearly doubled in the last ten years. One mill out of the seven employs 210 hands, and the whole of the remainder only employ 652 men, which is a most remarkable thing. The record of the wages paid at the Ballarat Woollen Mill also proves that there is no sweating there. The payment to women of £2 11s. 4d. each per fortnight is very fair. Another important consideration is the amount of outside labour which is employed, independent of those who are engaged in the factories. During the past ten years the buildings have been improved at a cost of £500 per annum. This represents bricks, mortar, other materials, and labour. During the same period the proprietors of the mill have also paid £300 a year to the local foundry and £2,000 a year for firewood. What is all this but wages? It proves how this industry benefits the community, while the farmer is indirectly advantaged as well. It has been said that the woollen mill companies in this colony cannot produce an article equal to that of the other colonies in which the duties are lower. The answer to that is that there is more woollen machinery in this colony than in all the other colonies put together, and the material turned out here is as good as that made in any of the other colonies. Some of the machinery employed in Victoria has been sent to the neighbouring colonies to be erected there. That shows that we are ahead of those colonies. The question to be answered is this—why is it that our woollen industry needs the present duty to keep it in thorough working order? Every industry depends upon three conditions—first, the cost of raw material; second, the cost of labour; and, third, the cost of capital. I think we have pretty good evidence that the usual rate of interest paid here by the owners of local industries is 8, 9, or 10 per cent., and I maintain that there is not an industry in the colony which can carry on with those rates of interest and make a profit. We experienced that for years in the Ballarat Woollen Mill. We found that we simply made profits to pay them to the banks. It is only since we reconstructed with preference shares that we have been able to get out of the hands of the banks. In free-trade England, when an industry has cost £100,000, the banks will lend on it to the

amount of £60,000 at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while here we cannot borrow from the banks under $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. What large profits an industry must earn to pay such rates of interest. Again, the proprietors of every large industry have, to a certain extent, to accept bills in order to carry on. It must be a very good customer now who can get his bill discounted by the bank for $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while in London three months' bills are discounted at the rate of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. per annum. These are very important points to bear in mind in reference to the working of any industry. The senior member for Castlemaine and the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) stated that wages here are 50 per cent. higher than in free-trade England. The statement made that the average wage paid in a Yorkshire mill is 13s. 8d. a week as against £1 2s. 3d. per week in the Ballarat mill is rather under than over the mark. If we have to pay to our employés 50 per cent. more than is paid to the men who manufacture the goods which are sent over here to compete with us, it is clear that we must have some differential rate to enable us to meet this competition. Again, in this colony the hours of labour are less than in the old world. They are 48 per week here and 56 per week in England. In other words, the men here work six days a week, while the men in England work seven days a week. That means that the cost of production to us is 15 per cent. more than in England, and that 15 per cent., added to the 50 per cent. additional price for labour, makes 65 per cent. In addition to that, we are not able to obtain here all the things which are necessary for carrying on the woollen trade. Dyes, &c., have to be imported, and that means 20 per cent. on the cost of production. When we come to consider what mill-owners here have to contend against, the protective duty is not at all excessive. The statement that the consumers have been defrauded is entirely false. Let us take the products themselves. It has been said that, owing to the large price that has to be paid for the local article, the woollen mills cannot possibly compete with the imported article. Against that statement there is the evidence of the placards which are now appearing at the railway stations and on other buildings that Ballarat-made suits of clothes, composed entirely of wool, can now be obtained at 25s. per suit. Surely that is not an excessive price. I do not believe that in

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free-trade England you could get these suits for the same money, yet we are told that the consumer is paying an enormous price. There is a tailor at Ballarat now advertising that he makes suits to order from the local tweeds at £2 5s. per suit. The material is all wool, and it is fit for any man to wear, no matter what his position in life may be. It has been said that some of our mills are making goods which are mixtures called union goods, but is it not better for us to make union goods here if they are required by our people than to import them? The reason why the mills were not able to do better in years past was because they allowed the importers to have the monopoly. Having now adopted a wiser plan, each mill is following its own course, and there is not a single member in this Assembly who, if he were engaging in any business, would not seek to make the goods which it would pay him best to make. If our mills have no right to make union goods then no grocer should be allowed to sell tea at 1s. a lb. The duty on tea, whatever its value, is just the same—3d. per lb.; and yet we find that for every 1 lb. of tea valued at 2s. 6d. imported there are thousands of lbs. imported at 6d. per lb. And why is this? Simply because the consuming public will have shilling tea, and they are entitled to have it if they want it. In the same way, if the public want union goods and cannot afford to pay higher prices for all-wool goods, they are perfectly entitled to have union goods, and the mills have a perfect right to produce such goods, and to sell them. If we were to stop our mills from manufacturing such goods they would be imported to-morrow. Apparently, it is a crime to do here what the mills in Yorkshire may do without reproach. Honorable members talk as if the mills were doing something wrong, unjust, and unfair; but if a man who goes into a shop and buys a suit of clothes at £1 thinks he is getting all-wool goods, then he is a bigger fool than I take him for, because it is evident that it would be impossible to sell such goods at the price. The mills are adopting just and proper lines to supply the needs and wants of the community, and are adapting themselves to the circumstances in which they are placed. The question which seems to be uppermost at the present time is, how are we going to deal with this matter? The state of things is simply this—if you cannot produce at a certain price you must produce for less,

and therefore loss must be entailed somewhere. The question is, where is that loss to occur? And in my opinion it must come out of the wages of the employés. Therefore, if you place the woollen mills in such a position that they can no longer manufacture at a profit and retail to the public at the prices at which goods can be imported, the result will be that the wages of the employés must come down. I would ask honorable members when considering the question to bear these facts in mind, and to endeavour to deal justly with those industries which have been established in the colony, and which have been the means during the recent crisis of averting a great deal of hardship which would otherwise have been entailed on the masses.

Mr. MURPHY.—Sir, I must confess that I was not prepared to speak on this question to-night, as I thought the debate might be extended into next week; but on an important subject like that of the revision of the Tariff I feel that I cannot give a silent vote. There is no doubt that the question of the Tariff is a most important question for all the interests in the community. As to the farmers and miners, no sections of the community have made greater sacrifices than they have done in the interests of establishing industries in this colony. Seeing that Victoria possessed such valuable natural products, the miners said—"Let us give an opportunity to the young people of obtaining employment," and they did this by supporting the policy of protection. No one could be a greater advocate for that policy than I have been, but after 30 years of nursing and cherishing these protected industries, what do we find? Are we at the present time in a better position than any other portion of the Australian colonies? I must admit that there has been a large amount of capital expended in machinery and in establishing manufactories, which have given employment to the people. That system was all very well until the other colonies started in the same way, and then we were completely hemmed in. Here we are placed in the grandest position of any portion of this island continent, and yet, by our prohibitive duties lately, we have driven the shipping away from our shores, and we have been so blinded to our own interests as to allow another colony to obtain supremacy as far as the shipping trade is concerned. At the same time, I am not one of those who would

knock down any industry that has been established in this colony, because I believe that would be injurious to the interests of the community. Although I happened to be one of the fourteen favoured members who were returned at the last election unopposed, so that I was not compelled to make any pledge to my district as to how I would vote in matters of this kind, nevertheless, I feel that I would be very ungrateful, knowing the feelings of my district, if I were not to vote in accordance with what I know to be the desire of my constituents, and what I believe to be the interests of the colony. As far as I can judge of the feeling of the farmers and miners, they certainly seem to think that the high protective duties in force at the present time in this colony are detrimental to the interests of the country; and I shall certainly support the reduction of those duties which are of a prohibitive character.

Mr. HANCOCK.—What about whisky

Mr. MURPHY.—The whisky in my district is made from the purest malt; it is not sham whisky made from a lot of rubbish. We have there brandy made from the purest wine; and, in connexion with this, I may say that I think the Government should take active steps to see that only pure liquors are made and sold. We have raised the duty on wines and spirits until now people can get nothing but rubbish to buy, because the retailer must sell at the same price as he did before the duties were raised, and the people are compelled to drink what is almost poison. As far as the woollen industry is concerned, I remember that years ago I used to listen to prominent protectionists who talked about shoddy being imported into this country from all the fever dens of Europe, and being sold in competition with our pure woollen goods. But what do we find now? We are told that shoddy is imported and introduced into the woollen manufactures in this colony, and sold to the users of those goods. As far as the Ballarat Woollen Mills are concerned, I am proud to say—and I really think they should be made an exception in anything that is done with regard to the woollen duties—that they buy wool at the highest price, and use only the best material. They employ no cotton, shoddy, or any other rubbish in the manufacture of their woollens. Although I have not the honour to represent Ballarat, I think that the Ballarat Woollen Mills should be

protected against shoddy industries. With regard to mining, there is no doubt that the production of gold was the original cause of bringing a large population into this colony. And I believe that, even up to the present day, we have only been, comparatively speaking, scratching the surface as far as gold mining is concerned. No doubt years ago in Ballarat the alluvial diggings were worked out, but now there are quartz reefs at Bendigo in which gold is found at a depth of over 3,000 feet. Allowing for the height of Bendigo from the sea-level as compared with Ballarat, what must Ballarat be in the future as regards mining at deep levels? Looking at the great number of factories which we see in Melbourne and the various industries which we have established, it certainly seems strange that we should now have come to a stand-still, and that we should allow another colony, even though it be the mother colony, to take the supremacy of position which we used to occupy. Why should we not do everything in our power to retain the command of the shipping trade? Even if we were to allow Williamstown or Geelong to be a free port, would it not be desirable to adopt such a course for such an object? Then there would be work in every form for a lot of those unfortunate men who, having served their time in foundries and other establishments, cannot get work, and have to go to the village settlements. There is no doubt that Victoria ought to occupy the supremacy of position among the Australian colonies, owing to its natural advantages of situation. The establishment of industries in Melbourne had the effect of bringing half the population from the country into the city, and what do we find now? That during some years past Premiers have been brought to their wits' end to devise help for the poor people walking about the streets without having any work to do. Instead of the population of the country being brought to and centred in Melbourne, if it were distributed over the face of the country in producing, we should be in a better position than we occupy. In fact, if the capacities of the country were properly developed, we might have a population, not of 1,000,000, which is dwindling down, but of 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 of industrious people, with foundries and other establishments in full work, and with ships taking away our surplus productions to other parts of the world, and to the

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other colonies under intercolonial free-trade. We have every facility in this colony that a manufacturing country requires, and we need not be afraid of free interchange with the neighbouring colonies. For years we have had to depend on New South Wales as far as coal was concerned, but now we have found coal in Victoria, so that even in regard to that necessity of manufacturing operations we are comparatively independent. As I have already said, I am not one to take part in levelling down those industries which have been established, because I believe that such a course would be madness. A lot of the farmers may say—"Oh, what have we gained by protection?" But I believe in giving every fair play to protection, because those who are employed in the factories are also consumers, and it is requisite to have consumers where there is production. We have now, however, to fight against the whole civilized world in regard to our products—such as wheat, wool, and meat. Even the rabbits that were formerly regarded as a curse in this country are now fetching profitable prices in the London market. In connexion with this, I would ask the Government to do away with the Vermin Act for the suppression of rabbits, because rabbits lately have paid just as well as sheep. There is no doubt that we have had a great deal of extravagance in the past. The honorable member for Essendon, when in office, no doubt did everything for the best, but the most extravagant Government that ever reigned in this country was the Gillies-Deakin Ministry. The honorable member for Essendon, when we were living on borrowed money, went off to America, and going up the Rocky Mountains, and looking down on the plains, saw how the waters which flowed from those mountains irrigated the plains and rendered them productive. Then he returned to the colony, and, with the best and most honest intentions, he assisted to swamp the country with borrowed money, in connexion with which not only the present but future generations will have to suffer. Again, years ago there was passed the great and glorious Education Act, by which the people were to be so enlightened that they would actually go to heaven without dying. But what do we find now? That Act has cost this country over £14,000,000; and it is to the credit of the Minister of Public Instruction and

of the Premier that the present Ministry are doing their best to bring down the expense of the education system to something like a reasonable limit. Although I am in opposition, I am bound to say that the Premier, in my opinion, is doing his level best to bring this country into a proper state. As to education, I quite agree that if any man is too poor to pay for the instruction of his children, by all means let the instruction be given free; but why should there be free instruction in the cases of those who are well able to pay? If such people had to pay for their children's education there would be an opening for private schools, and for people getting a living in that way. Moreover, it must be remembered that, although we have nominally free education, the people pay for it indirectly, if they do not directly. Whatever honorable members may say about New South Wales, it cannot be denied that Victoria possesses a splendid natural position, and a magnificent climate. What we ought to do is for all sections to unite to forward the interests of the community. That would be much better than for any one section to be celebrating, for instance, something that happened 200 years ago, as will be done on the 12th of next month. We are all an English-speaking people, we all have the same Creator, and are prepared to defend our country against any enemy—Russian, French, or Japanese—who may come here. And why should we not let past events die? Let us learn something. Surely it is only crawling vermin that would create disunion amongst us, and so raise up an enemy in our midst when we should be united to meet any common foe. From the natural position of Victoria there cannot be the slightest doubt that it is destined to be a great country. When we are dead and gone there will be millions of people here, and, instead of piers with grass growing upon them as at the present time, and factories standing idle, there will be a great, industrious, and prosperous people. Why should such a state of things exist in a colony like this, as that the Government should have to send unfortunate men to village settlements where, as the honorable member for Ararat remarked last night, they may only find swampy graves? Surely it is ridiculous to send a poor man to attempt to make a living on a few acres of bad land on a village settlement, when men with areas

of over a hundred acres can scarcely make an existence just now, owing to the low prices of produce. Let the Government give every encouragement to the people to live on the land in such a way that their industry may be profitable. Why attract the people from the country to Melbourne to starve? The number of poor people whom one meets in the streets at present is very distressing, and I think some remedy should be found for that state of things. At any rate, as a British community, we should all work together for the progress of our country and let bygones be bygones. Let us rise above all narrow-minded prejudices and be united Australians, whether we be English, Irish, or Scotch, working together for the progress of our adopted country.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Sir, after the very able speeches that we have heard I feel somewhat diffident in entering upon the subject of Tariff reform at all. It is hardly necessary for me to say that I am not going to vote for the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn. I have no intention of speaking at any length upon the question; but some things have been said which I think should have been left unsaid, and some things have been said which I think are not altogether true. To make statements of that kind is, I think, unfair, as it is calculated to mislead the Chamber. One honorable member stated that surely I could not stand up and defend protection, seeing that I represented a shipping constituency. Well, I do not know that protection has spoiled Port Melbourne very much. We have a large candle factory there, we have a large distillery there, we have chemical works there, we have a large biscuit factory there, and we have a large sugar refinery there.

Mr. MADDEN.—And a very long pier.

Mr. SANGSTER.—A very long pier, and all the ships that came to that pier would not give one-half as much employment in Port Melbourne as the industries established there at present are doing. There is more tonnage coming to the port now than there was at the time the piers were full and double-banked, and when vessels had to lie out in the Bay because they could not get berths. The reason for the apparent change in the quantity of shipping is simply that the vessels which used to come here were sailing vessels, whereas they are now chiefly steamers. If honorable members wish to see the piers of Port Melbourne full of shipping and the Harbor Trust wharfs full of

shipping, they have simply to stop the steam-boats from coming here and the piers and wharfs will soon be as full as ever. We had the intercolonial trade, so far as articles from the old country are concerned, simply through the sailing ships making Melbourne the terminus, and from here sending the goods on to Sydney and other ports. Now, however, the steam-boats touch at every port round Australia, and this does away with our intercolonial trade, so far as goods imported from England are concerned. The lines of steamers which come out here touch first at Adelaide, where they discharge the cargo for that port; then at Melbourne, where they discharge the cargo for this colony; and then go on to Sydney, with the cargo for New South Wales. A steamer at the present time discharges as much cargo in a day or a day and a half as the ordinary sailing vessel used to do in four or five weeks. And it is the same with loading. We know that a sailing vessel lying in Melbourne waiting for wool in the old days would be six or seven weeks in loading, while one steam-boat can come in and take more wool in three days than one of the old sailing vessels could do in six weeks. Honorable members know that that is the case, and that is the reason why the grass is growing on the piers of Port Melbourne instead of having sailing vessels lying alongside there, and the port presenting a busy appearance. Nevertheless, just as much tonnage comes here as ever there did before. Honorable members speak of New South Wales as having the supremacy in connexion with shipping; but the fact is, that owing to the geographical position of Sydney the steamers make that port their terminus instead of Melbourne. A great effort was made by the Victorian Government at one time to get the mail companies to make Melbourne their terminus, but the effort was unsuccessful. The mail companies would not tender for the mails if Melbourne were to be made the terminus, because they would have to send on their Sydney cargo by other vessels, and therefore they could not make the trade successful under such circumstances. The honorable member for Lowan referred to certain persons as the emissaries of the candle manufacturers. It would be just as reasonable to say that I am an emissary of the ship-owners. The persons who came here to give honorable members information about certain industries were not the manufacturers, but the men in their

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employ, who realize that their bread and butter may be taken from them if any material reductions of duty are made. The honorable member for Sandhurst South quoted the boot industry as being one of the successes of protection, for the reason that we now get our boots at a lower price than formerly. The boot industry has been referred to by honorable members on the opposition side of the House as one of the failures of protection, because not only are boots cheaper than they were formerly, but wages have been reduced. Our protective policy has nothing to do with wages directly, but it keeps men employed here, instead of giving employment to men in Belgium or Germany. There are no English candles in the Victorian market now, simply because they cannot be sold at a price which would enable them to compete with the local products; but candles are made in Belgium and Germany which can compete with the local product, and the very persons who are crying out in favour of the workers are determined to bring the local manufacturers down still lower, so that they may also bring down the workers to the level of the workers of Belgium and Germany. That is the whole meaning of the cry for a reduction of the protective duties. It is ridiculous to say that the protective duties have increased the price to the consumer. It has been argued that because we have the raw material here our manufacturers should be able to make candles without the duty, and to compete with the foreign article. They can do that, but not unless the workers are prepared to accept the same wages as are paid to men in Belgium and Germany. If it is the wish of honorable members that the wages of our working men should be reduced to 1s. or 1s. 6d. a day, and I believe that some honorable members would like to see that done—

Several HONORABLE MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. SANGSTER.—I feel confident that they would from the arguments that they have used. If wages are so reduced our manufacturers can make candles and compete with the imported article without the duty. The complaint of honorable members representing the mining interest is that the miners have to pay $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. more for their candles on account of the duty, and they ask why they should have to bolster up men who are getting 5s., 6s., and 7s. a day when they can get men in Belgium and Germany to make candles for

them at 1s. and 1s. 6d. a day. That is what the arguments that have been used mean. It is pointed out that we have the tallow, whereas the foreign candle-makers have to get the tallow sent home to them.

Mr. LANGDON.—Which is ample protection.

Mr. SANGSTER.—You think it ample protection, because you do not care what the wages of the men are so long as you get a cheap article.

Mr. LANGDON.—That is unfair.

Mr. SANGSTER.—It is ridiculous to say that protection increases the price of an article. We have tallow here, and if we can manufacture candles for ourselves, why should not we do so? I came to this country because I believed that I could get higher wages and better conditions than in the old country. I have got them, but it has been with a struggle. There are people of a certain class who seek to take those advantages from the workers, and who are determined to put their hands on their shoulders and push them back into the hole that they were in when in the old country. The manufacturers of this colony do not make much larger profits than the manufacturers in any other country, but the cry is that they are getting all the profit, and that the labourer is not receiving his fair share. If honorable members are in earnest in desiring that the labourers shall receive their fair share that can easily be done, and we shall be glad to assist them in every way we can. But as soon as the labourer makes an attempt himself to get a larger share of the profit those very persons put their hand on his shoulder and push him back. He must not do that. The honorable member for Delatite exhibited to the House a boot the upper sole of which was, he said, made of cardboard, whilst another honorable member said it was strawboard. I have seen such boots repeatedly, not in Victoria, but in another country which has not adopted a protective policy. I have seen seamen come on board ship with a splendid-looking boot purchased at a very high price, and the first day when a bit of sea came on board the soles came off and the poor fellows had to go bare-footed for the rest of the voyage. Honorable members may not believe that, because it did not occur in Melbourne. So far as boots of this class are concerned, all that protection has done has been to make them cheaper. It has not made the boot any worse in quality. The same boot is sold

all over the world, but protection and improvements in machinery have reduced the price. There are several industries in my own district that should be maintained. Those industries have, during the period of depression through which we have been passing, employed a much greater number of men than all our shipping, and have given them better pay. The ship-owners and the persons who import goods into this colony are just as ready to sweat their employes as are other manufacturers.

Mr. LONGMORE.—More so.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Yes, more so. It was discovered recently that some of the ship-owners were trying to sweat the Government, and those firms, I honestly believe, are sweating their employes to the same extent. The wharf labourers are paid by results, and if the ship-owners were handing in false pit certificates, or "P.C.'s," to the Government it is probable that they are also handing false "P.C.'s" to their employes. A good deal has been said during this debate about the cost of reapers and binders. I have made inquiries on the subject, and I find that the Buckeye reaper and binder is sold in California at £47, and that it is sold in Melbourne at £55 10s. or £60. The freight to California from the place where the reaper and binder is made is much higher than it is from New York to Australia. I am informed by a man who imports some of these machines that the cost of landing one of them in Melbourne is about £6, and yet, in a letter that was written to the newspapers by Mr. McLean, of the firm of McLean Bros. and Rigg, it is stated that the cost is £27, and that the whole of the profit of the firm is £3 10s. That, of course, is a reasonable profit, but, if it costs £27 to one importer, it is a strange thing that it should only cost from £6 to £7 to another. However, the £6 or £7 is not the whole expense, because the reapers and binders have to be delivered to the farmer, and to be put in order.

Mr. DUGGAN.—For which the farmer pays.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Do they pay for that over and above the price of the machine?

Mr. DUGGAN.—Yes.

Mr. LANGDON.—No, the importer always sends a man out to put the machine up and to see that it is in working order.

Mr. SANGSTER.—I was informed that that was done. I am only stating these facts to show that certain statements that have been made are not correct. The

same thing has been pointed out before, but honorable members have tried to throw dust in the eyes of the people. I think it must be admitted that the farmer, when in the hands of the importer, is in a very much worse position than when in the hands of the local manufacturer who is protected. Notwithstanding all that has been said about candles and other articles, they are much cheaper now when they are made in the colony than they were formerly, and I have not the least doubt that they are of superior quality. I had an opportunity a few days ago of inspecting one of our local industries. A gentleman asked me and some other members of the House to insist upon the duty being taken off salt, because, as he said, it was impossible with the Geelong salt to cure beef. If the beef was put up in casks it was found when the casks were opened that it was just a black dirty-looking mass. One of the honorable members for Collingwood went with me to look at a cask of beef being opened. The beef had been for nearly twelve months in the cask, and only Geelong salt had been used. When the cask was opened the gentleman who had made the complaint had to admit that he never saw a better cask of meat. It was perfectly pure, and no better cask of meat was ever sent on board ship. This gentleman candidly confessed that he had been deceived. He said—"I brought you here to see a complete failure, but, instead you see what is a complete success." It is the same in regard to many of our industries as people would find if they would only get rid of their abominable prejudice. It is a prejudice that has been caused, to a large extent, by honorable members of this House who, in order to gain their particular ends, talk in disparaging terms about our local productions. Honorable members have persistently stated that protective duties increase the price of an article to the consumer. It is also pointed out that our harbors are empty because there are no ships coming here with goods. We know that this is not altogether correct. As I have stated, the steam-boats have to a large extent driven the sailing ships away, and a steam-boat remains here forso short a time that people hardly realize that it may have taken on board 1,000 tons of cargo. In regard to spirits, there has been a differential duty of 4s. a gallon since 1862. It is now proposed by the Tariff Board and by the Government that

the differential duty shall be 4s. a gallon on whisky wholly made from malt, and on brandy wholly made from wine. On all other spirits the differential rate is to be only 2s. Why should this restriction be placed upon the colonial article and not on the imported spirits? Will the Government put the same restrictions on all spirits that come from the old country that are not made from malt or from wine. Why should they seek to handicap the local industry by making such a distinction? If the local manufacturer produces a good spirit why not give him credit for it, and allow him to have the advantage of the higher differential duty? If the Government will say that they will only allow good spirits to be placed on the market, whether they are imported or of colonial manufacture, then so much the better, but we have the evidence of some able men that pure malt whisky and pure wine-brandy are almost unknown in the trade.

Dr. MALONEY.—More is the pity.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Well, the public do not want it. One of the distilleries is in my district. An honorable member recently asked for a return of the quantity of colonial wine used in that distillery in 1894, and the quantity was given as 32,755 gallons. That is a small quantity. I made inquiries as to the quantity that had been used during the last five years, and I found that it was 400,000 gallons, or an average for each year of 80,000 gallons. The honorable member who asked for the return may have known that there was only a small quantity of wine used in that particular year. I will not say that he did, because I will not impute a motive of that kind to him, but the figures I have given make a very material difference. Honorable members have been talking about bad boots, bad clothes, bad food, and bad drink, and yet the Tariff Board and the Government recommend that the differential duty on refined sugar be 10s. instead of £1 a ton as at present. Our sugar refiners have held nearly the whole of the local market for refined sugar, but now it is proposed that the duty be reduced, and that the sugar refined by Chinese and kanaka labour be admitted to the colony. Any one who has been in a sugar factory, and has seen the way in which the Chinese and kanakas work, would say that they would rather have a duty of £2 on sugar and have the whole of their sugar refined under their own

Mr. Sangster.

supervision than have to use sugar refined by the cheap labour of China and the Mauritius. We have one large sugar refinery here, and it is said that they can do without the duty. But the reduction of the duty will destroy the local industry, and that is what the monopolists desire. If they can succeed in doing that then they can raise the price of sugar, and we shall have the Chinese and Mauritius sugar supplied to us. I have not said all that I desire to say, but I shall have an opportunity hereafter of dealing with the different items as they arise.

Mr. REID.—Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to detain the committee very long. In the first place I may say that I feel bound to vote for the amendment which proposes that no ad valorem duty shall exceed a maximum of 25 per cent. I promised my constituents to support a reduction of the duties to 25 per cent., and I consider that it is my duty to keep faith with them. What strikes me as being an extraordinary circumstance in connexion with this debate is the position that is taken up by those honorable members who represent what they call the labour party in this country. They are supporting the large manufacturers and the great monopolists of the colony.

Mr. WINTER.—Who give employment.

Mr. REID.—It is all very well to talk about the employment they give, but I heard the honorable member for Geelong say that certain of these manufacturers were making a profit of 15 per cent. on the goods that they were selling. Does the labourer who works for these men get any share of that profit? If he does it is a very small share indeed.

Mr. SANGSTER.—Help us to increase it.

Mr. REID.—It is stated that there is one manufacturer in Melbourne who is making £22,000 a year, and that he only pays his employes, who are nearly all women and children, £2,200 a year. Not one penny of that large profit is given to the working people. I could understand the labour party asking for protection if a portion of this money was given to the employes. If they went in for the co-operative principle in these protected industries, I could understand the working men helping them to the best of their ability. But the whole profits are handed over to a few monopolists—to half-a-dozen or twenty large manufacturers in this colony—who are working these men and sweating them down until they are almost compelled to

starve their own families. When I was a representative of Fitzroy in this Chamber, 25 per cent. was considered a very heavy duty, and 30 per cent. was the highest protective duty asked for. I remember that one time Mr. Munro moved for a protective duty of 35 per cent. on woollens, and I opposed him, as did a good many other honorable members. But the last five or six years the protective duties have run up from 25 to 50 per cent. The thing is monstrous. Protectionists in the old days never thought of asking for more than 25 or 30 per cent., but now nothing will suit them but duties up to 300 per cent. Some of the protective duties are up to 300 per cent. I say, again, it is a monstrous thing. How does the woollen industry stand? In 1889, when there was a duty of 25 per cent. on woollens and other articles, there were 57,000 men employed in the manufactories of this colony, whereas, now there are only 43,000 employed—a reduction of 14,000 in the meantime. I verily believe that if we were to reduce that protective duty to 25 per cent. there would be equally as many hands employed in these manufactories, if not more than there are at the present time. In New South Wales the duty is only 10 per cent., and in New Zealand 25 per cent. The Mossiel factory, in New Zealand, makes the best woollen cloth of any of the woollen mills in these colonies, because nothing but wool is used in its manufacture. I visited the manufactory some years ago, and bought some stuff to make up into clothes, and I really could not wear them out; yet a soft-goods merchant who holds a very high position in Melbourne said to me—"You must have cotton in the cloth or it will not wear." Why cannot our woollen mills make similar cloth to that which is made at the Mossiel factory? I am in favour of all agricultural implements being admitted into this colony duty free. That is the proper course to pursue. Our agriculturists are the best men in the country, and we have to look to them to pull the colony through its present difficulties. Mining is a very good industry, and affords employment for a large number of people; but the land will always be here for cultivation, and, therefore, we ought to offer every facility we can to the agriculturists of this country. It would be unfair and unjust in the extreme to continue to tax the commodities they use in the way we have been doing for the last few years.

I would put all of those things on the free list. I paid a visit to the candle factory, and I must say it does credit to the colony, notwithstanding what people may say about it, and as long as the candle-makers will be content with a duty of 25 per cent., I shall be very happy to support the industry up to that point; but I do not intend to go beyond 25 per cent. Some years ago I had to buy a large quantity of candles for a mine I was interested in, and I paid 10d. per lb. Now they are from 4d. to 6½d., so that the people of the country are getting a very great benefit from the establishment of the candle industry here. I don't agree with the Minister of Customs with regard to the wine duties, and I think he ought to have adopted the recommendations of the Tariff Board. They would be much more in accordance with what is right for this country, because I do not think that one single drop more colonial wine would be used in the colony if you raised the duty on imported wines to 20s. a dozen. Therefore I shall propose a reduction of the duty on wine. Besides, I think the Government are losing about £30,000 a year in revenue by the course they are taking. The Minister of Customs made one rather extraordinary remark. He said it was quite impossible to come down to a maximum of 25 per cent. all round, and in illustration of his argument he stated that we could not possibly reduce the duty on spirits and other articles he enumerated to 25 per cent. He said—

“Let us see what the effect would be:—Spirits would be about 1s. 6d. per gallon; wine, which, I understand, is said in this colony to enjoy protection of 500 or 600 per cent., would be 1s. 6d. per gallon; tobacco would be 4d. per lb.; rice, 3s. per cwt.; sugar, 3s. per cwt.”

Does the honorable gentleman not know perfectly well that nobody anticipates such a thing?

Mr. BEST.—Read on.

Mr. REID.—I will read on—

“Sir JOHN MCINTYRE.—This is making a farce of the thing.”

So it was a farce, and the honorable gentleman knows it. He knows perfectly well that the spirit duties in any country, even in free-trade England, are imposed for the purpose of obtaining revenue. Therefore, the honorable gentleman's statement was perfect nonsense. Now, I know that some honorable members on the opposition side of this chamber are against me on the question of the stock

tax. I should like to have seen the stock tax swept away altogether. I do not believe in it. I believe we will never get reciprocity with the other colonies unless we give way in regard to the stock tax. It has caused the loss to this colony of nearly the whole of the revenue that we used to get from Riverina. It stops the people there from trading with this colony as they used to, and it would be of the greatest advantage to Melbourne if the stock tax were abolished. I am sorry that the Government cannot see their way to relieve not only the people of Riverina but our own people, and enable them to get their meat supplies as cheap as possible. The stock tax does not do the farmers one bit of good. Not one in twelve of them grew stock for sale. They bought the meat they required, and grew wheat. The stock tax benefits nobody but the large holders of property in this colony. It is unjust to the farming community and to our neighbours in the other colonies to impose such a very high duty on stock coming over the border. Some honorable members seem to blame the large landed proprietors for all sorts of things, and stigmatize them as monopolists. The honorable member for Dandenong had a good hand in making those men purchase their lands in the old days. When the first Land Bill was submitted to Parliament, not one of those men wanted to buy a single acre of land. They would sooner have been without it. I know that of my own knowledge. I was a squatter at the time, and I did not buy a single acre of land, with the result that I was better off afterwards than those who did buy land. They were forced into the position of buying the land, however, because they would otherwise have been ruined.

Mr. LONGMORE.—They demanded the right to buy their land in 1846, and got it conceded to them by the British Government. They wanted to annex the whole colony.

Mr. REID.—I was not saying anything about rights. I say that there ought never to have been one acre of ground in Victoria alienated from the Crown except the land in the towns. The land ought to have been rented on long leases, whether in small or in large farms. That would have been the proper way to deal with the land of the colony; but the honorable member for Dandenong and some other honorable members, who knew more about

land than we did, were in power, and the consequence was they made a mess of it. They sold the land to these men, and they are now trying to get it back again. The proper course for any Government to take would be to purchase large properties within a radius of 60, 30, or even 10 miles of Melbourne, and settle the people on those lands. Then the settlers could get their produce to market. But instead of adopting that course the Government have shunted them to distant parts of the colony where, if they can grow cabbages they cannot sell them, and they settle them on 10 acres each, out of which it is impossible for them to make a living for themselves and their families. I would settle them on 100 and 200 acres within 10 miles of Melbourne if possible. At the last election I advocated the purchase of 1,000, 2,000, or 3,000 acres of land by the Government for the purpose of utilizing the unemployed. I would have the unemployed of Melbourne sent there to trench the whole of that land, and I would settle the people upon it, after planting it with vines and fruit trees. I would take an account of all the cost of preparing and planting the land and charge the settlers with it. By means of an expenditure of £10, £8, or even £5 an acre the Government would be able to prepare the land for settlement, and hundreds of families might be settled there on 10 acres each, with vineyards ready for them to work in. That would be the best solution of the unemployed difficulty.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Settle them on the Werribee Plains.

Mr. REID.—I don't care where they are settled so long as it is on good and cheap land within reasonable distance of Melbourne. I think it is unjust for honorable members to speak of the large landed proprietors of this colony in the way some of them have done, because I know that those men were compelled to purchase the land they hold, on account of the way in which the Government of the day cut up their land, and in order to save themselves and their families from utter ruin.

Mr. BAKER.—Sir, as an old farmer I desire to say a few words on this question. It is evident to me, from the speeches we have heard in the course of this debate, that many duties will be very largely reduced, I think, far beyond anything the Government have proposed or the

Tariff Board have recommended. I have been a protectionist ever since I was able to read, and I think that such reductions of our customs duties will cause a great loss of revenue, and that we will have to face another of those great deficiencies with which we have been faced during the last few years. I feel certain of that. I feel sure that this or some other Government will have to adopt some very oppressive scheme of taxation next year in order to make up that deficiency. Perhaps we will have the unimproved land values tax brought up again, and if we have, those who support heavy reductions of duties now, and who oppose the unimproved land values tax, as I did and always will as long as I live, will get very little sympathy from me if they have to suffer the imposition of that tax next year in order to make good the deficiency in the revenue, which I am certain will be brought about by the heavy reductions of duties that will be made. All the efforts at retrenchment and the savings made in all directions will be practically thrown away when the customs duties are so largely decreased; at any rate the deficiency in the revenue will be so great that we shall not feel the benefit of all the retrenchments and all the savings that have been effected. The loss to the Treasury will have to be made up somehow. Now, there have been two main arguments advanced in favour of heavy reductions of the Tariff. One of those arguments is that protection has reduced wages and diminished employment in this colony, and the other is that New South Wales has got ahead of us in population and trade. As to the want of employment, we must go back to 1883 to find out the cause. At that time there was a rather strong Ministry formed, and the country was beginning to prosper under protection. The head of the Government was one of our leading free-traders, Mr. Service, and he plunged wholesale into borrowing. During the first two years and eleven months of the existence of the Service Ministry, Parliament authorized loans to the extent of £14,000,000, and in the following five years, the Gillies Government induced Parliament to authorize them to borrow about as much again. One-half of that money was wasted. There was a railway boom, a waterworks boom, a tramway boom, a public buildings boom, a harbor

works boom, and through the borrowed capital coming in in the shape of goods we had a shipping and a customs boom, the revenue of the Customs department being inflated for the time. An enormous amount of money was spent in draining swamps. We had also a public service boom, for that Ministry appointed thousands of persons to the public service, taking them out of other employments, when work was very plentiful, and putting them in the public service under certain conditions, one of which was that they were entitled to pensions and other privileges. The present leader of the Opposition was in that Ministry for the last nineteen months of its term, and I do not know that he did anything to prevent the increase of the public service at that time. The borrowing on the part of those two Governments, and the expansion of the Customs and other revenue and of the railway traffic of the colony, caused a great deal of private money to come out here from England for investment. I suppose there was as much came out through private agencies for investment as there was through the Government agencies, and those heavy borrowings from the old country caused the land boom. Some people excused those Governments because they lost their heads, as others did in the land boom, but I consider that it was the result of that excessive borrowing that brought about the land boom. Then we had a mighty building boom. Building was going on in all directions, and people lived very expensively. Of course it took an immense number of people to carry on all those booms, and thousands were attracted from the other colonies and the mother country to Victoria. All at once it was discovered that we had wasted a great deal of that borrowed money, and John Bull would not lend us any more. Consequently, as all those works stopped at once, employment ceased, and the thousands of persons who were engaged in those works could not be absorbed by our protected industries. That was the cause of the want of employment. The only thing that continued to do any good after the failure of those booms was our protected industries, which continued to employ a lot of people. I forgot to mention that the people's savings, to the amount of £60,000,000, were locked up in the banks that failed about that time, and as the owners of that money could not get it they could not employ labour, and that is

Mr. Baker.

another reason why employment has been scarce. Again, the prices of produce fell all over the world, and fell very much here, because we are as far from the markets of the world as we could possibly be. The more wheat our farmers grew the poorer they got. That came on the top of the stoppage of all these works. No doubt it was very good judgment on the part of the free-traders to take advantage of such a state of affairs and say that protection was the cause of all these misfortunes. Of course, some of the people who were thrown out of employment did get work in our protected industries, and the excess of employes naturally caused sweating. Consumption fell off, people were not able to buy the same quantity of either locally-made or imported goods, and even the sales at the Flemington cattle-yards fell off to the extent of 50,000 fat cattle a year. That was all through the want of employment and the locking up of the people's savings in the banks, but protection is blamed for it all. I think it is a wonder that the distress was not very much greater, and, in my opinion, the colony stood the trial very well, considering that all those works were stopped at once. The farmers in all directions have been deceived by the arguments of free-traders that it is protection that has caused want of employment, low prices for stock and produce, dear money, and all the misfortunes which the farmers have to bear. We were told the other night that the farmers of the colony are very intelligent men, and can see through things as well as most men, but my experience of farmers, and I have been one of them for 37 years, is, that they are the victims of any agitator who comes amongst them. They have not got the time to study political questions for themselves, and they don't understand how things are worked here. They have even been induced to vote for candidates who advocate the confiscation of their land. Thousands of them have been led to believe that all their misfortunes, and all the misfortunes of the colony, have been brought about by protection. Our protected industries still live, and we have it in evidence that after all these misfortunes those industries are prosperous. I am very glad to hear it. The other argument against protection is that New South Wales has got ahead of us in population and trade. That they have got ahead of us in trade has been questioned, and I do not know whether we

are ahead of them or they are ahead of us; but if the people of New South Wales only know how to develop their territory as the people of Victoria have developed their "cabbage garden," there would be now in New South Wales 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 of people. New South Wales got the start of Victoria by 40 or 50 years, and the people of that colony have a territory three and a half times as large as ours. They have a splendid harbor. I have travelled over some parts of New South Wales, and I was surprised to see what a lot of table land they have, in places where the climate is very similar to the climate of Victoria. In travelling from Victoria to Sydney by rail you are on table land for about 200 miles, at 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. In journeying from Sydney to the Queensland border you pass over 200 miles of country which is 3,000 feet to 4,000 feet or 4,500 feet above the level of the sea. In those districts they have snow. Then, again, in travelling to Bourke you pass through 200 miles of country which is about 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, so that the area of table land in New South Wales, with a climate like that of the cooler parts of Victoria, is greater than Victoria altogether. As a farmer who knows something about soil, I must say that they have a great deal of fine land in those districts, land which they do not seem to know the value of. They look on it very much as we looked on land in Victoria 35 years ago, as not fit to grow wheat, and as useless to settle farmers upon. We were told in those days that it would be folly to settle men on land then used as large sheep runs. I was one of those who selected in 1865, and I was told by the squatter on whose land I selected, and by the squatters around, that I could not live there, that we could not find water, and that we would be all out of the district within three years. The manager of the station told us that he could manage those 40,000 acres with four men, except during the shearing season. Well, Mr. Chairman, we went on the land, we found water in any quantity, we grew from 50 to 60, and even 70 bushels of wheat to the acre, and by means of the rotation of crops and cultivating the land, we are able to grow as many sheep on the same area, in addition to our crops, as the squatter kept before. The liberals of those days, headed by men like Heales, Brooke, Grant, Don, Wilson Gray, Graham Berry,

and Longmore, carried that liberal land legislation which gave this colony 80,000 or 90,000 farmers. The settlement of those people on the land was bitterly opposed for years by the squatters, of course, by the merchants, and by the majority of the lawyers. However, the liberals carried the day. I find that the same idea prevails in New South Wales now which prevailed 35 years ago in Victoria, namely, that the land is not fit for farming, but is only fit for sheep. I have seen large areas of beautiful soil in that colony which is only used for sheep, with the result that the people are not able to grow produce enough for their own population of a little over a million, though a great start was given to the producers by the Dibbs duties. I have business in New South Wales, and I find that our potatoes and onions go to Sydney by boat, and are then carried by rail across a country which could grow anything which we grow here. The people of that colony told me that when the new duties came into force they expected that these articles would be grown there. When I was in Sydney I went to Redfern, which is the place to which the farm produce is chiefly sent, and I saw many truck-loads of hay which had been ruined by the ignorant method adopted of making it. In fact, nine out of ten of the loads were spoiled by ignorance shown in the making. The Victorian farmer will have to teach these people how to grow produce properly and make the thing a success. I have travelled on the Hay line, and I have found that nearly the whole route is very good wheat ground, but the people do not know how to develop it. On an average, the land of Victoria is somewhat better than that of New South Wales, but the superiority of our land does not counterbalance the difference of area. If we took from New South Wales two-thirds of its territory, and reduced that colony to the size of Victoria, what would become of Sydney and its trade? If we added to Victoria two more pieces of territory of equal size to our present territory, what would Melbourne be compared with Sydney? When the people of New South Wales learn the value of their country we shall have no more chance of keeping on a level with them than Belgium has of keeping on a level with France, or Newfoundland has of keeping on a level with the United States, in point of population. Let

us look matters straight in the face. A comparison of the number of sheep in the two colonies shows the superiority of New South Wales.

Mr. MURRAY.—Under what system are the New South Wales people to develop their land?

Mr. BAKER.—They must develop it by inviting Victorian farmers to go over there. The other night the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) raised a laugh by expressing the opinion that a duty on potatoes could be of any value at the present time. Four years ago the price of potatoes was very much what it is now, and the duty on potatoes then was 10s. a ton. In spite of the low prices which prevailed, 7,604 tons were sent into this colony from Tasmania and New Zealand, all of which paid a duty of 10s. a ton. The price continued to fall, yet potatoes continued to be sent here until the price came down to £1 a ton, and at last both imported and colonial potatoes were being given away. At a conference of farmers held in the Melbourne Town-hall some time ago, it was shown that the account sales of Mansfield farmers who sent potatoes to this city exhibited a loss to the farmers, and also that the Tasmanian exporters suffered a great loss. Thousands of tons of potatoes were left to rot in the fields at Bungaree and Lancefield; the railways lost the carriage of them, and the farmer lost his labour and the money he had spent in producing them. After that period the duty was increased to £1 a ton, and that has had its effect since, because the duty tends to regulate the price. Before the grain duties were increased by the Gillies Government in 1889, we imported from New Zealand and Tasmania 3,666,156 bushels of feeding grain valued at £608,989. Most of that was stored here. About that time the tramways were being constructed, and the omnibus horses were being done away with. Barley and other cereals were stored, and in the end the farmers had to sell them at a small price because the New Zealand produce was still in the stores, and a great deal of the grain was being destroyed by weevils. Millions of bushels of New Zealand feeding grains were stored here, and it took three years to work that quantity off. That was one of the things which contributed to the depression. The area of land under barley and oats was reduced to the extent of 95,000 acres, and the railways lost a vast amount on freights

accordingly. The increase of the duties on these articles accomplished a great deal of good. They are fixed duties, and they amount to more than 100 per cent. in some cases, yet there are people who want to cut them down to 25 per cent. Such people would oppose a protective duty of 1 per cent. When the stock tax was imposed the country was almost unanimously in favour of it. It was carried in this House by a very large majority, composed of both free-traders and protectionists. We were told afterwards that, when prices went down in consequence of the splendid seasons, it was protection which brought down the prices. I was travelling in New South Wales during a part of this time, and, when conversing with squatters, I could see that we were receiving immense benefit from the stock tax. I often heard a squatter telling his neighbour that so-and-so had sent sheep across the border, and that when the account sales were furnished to him he found that the price realized did not cover the freight and commission. Another squatter told his neighbour that a certain gentleman was afraid to order trucks for stock at all because the result was failure to pay the freight and commission. We obtained £2 a head more for bullocks, and the price of sheep increased in proportion. The prices did not keep up, but they would have been very much lower but for the stock tax. Some people say that the lowering of the spirit duties would increase the revenue by largely increasing consumption. I said to a friend of mine—“If we reduce the duty to 2s. per gallon as proposed, is it to be supposed that any one will drink a single nobbler more?” He replied—“No; but we will drink more in our houses and increase the revenue that way.” I do not believe that that will be done. We are giving away revenue by reducing these duties. I will support the Government in nearly everything they have proposed, but I will not support their proposals in regard to this item. In the main I will support the Government as long as I have a seat in this House, and as long as they remain in office. I do not desire to bother the committee with many observations upon reapers and binders. I am one of a committee who have to report on the best way of getting these things out here at a smaller price, and we can only report that the only thing to be done is to go to America and buy them second-hand from the farmers there. At the

farmers' conference, held in the Melbourne Town-hall last winter, the importers and manufacturers of twine were represented by good speakers. A majority of the conference were free-traders, but before the two delegates I refer to had finished their case there was not a free-trader in the room who was not against them. We were told that the importers of reapers and binders had been for years giving the manufacturers 20 per cent. commission for selling the twine. I understood from the manufacturers that the monopolists wanted more than 20 per cent. commission that year. The manufacturers, however, said they would not pay more than 20 per cent. commission. The importers sent out circulars with the object of having the duty removed from twine, and nearly all the farmers fell into the trap, until this conference threw some light on the subject. Then the importers offered to sell at 1d. a lb. less than they had been charging; the manufacturers offered to sell at 1d. a lb. less than that; and now we are getting twine at a very low price. I have never seen better twine than that which we now buy from Miller and Donaghy. I remember when twine was 13d. a hank, and now we can buy it for 9d. a lb. A great deal has been said in regard to the difference between the duties in New Zealand and in Victoria. In New Zealand duty is paid to the amount of about 25 per cent. on the total value of the goods imported; spirits and tobacco, of course, have fixed duties far beyond that. In Victoria the duty on the total value of the goods imported amounts to only about 11 per cent. Much has been made of the wealth which Victoria has derived from gold, but the wool and coal of New South Wales are quite sufficient to balance the Victorian gold account. One thing in which we compare favorably with New South Wales is the good order and good feeling which are preserved in this House between parties. We do not have the rows here which occur in the neighbouring colony. The interjections which are made are always offered good-naturedly, and there is never any unpleasantness or ungentlemanly conduct. Much kindly feeling is also shown here by honorable members to untrained speakers, who are nervous like myself, and that is a thing for which I thank honorable members all round.

Mr. THOMSON.—Sir, I do not know that I should have taken part in the debate at this late hour, had not I been a

member of the Tariff Board. However, I feel it to be my duty to make a few remarks. I do not intend to occupy time in dealing with the different items in the Tariff, because that can be better done when they come before us seriatim. Too much time has been occupied by this debate, and there is no doubt that a great deal of it will be repeated when the items of the Tariff come up separately. I will leave those items alone on this occasion. It will be remembered that when the high duties were brought in by the Shiels-Berry Ministry, it was thought that they would be the means of adding to the revenue. At that time I was sitting on the Ministerial side of the House, and I felt that they would not bring about any such desirable result. Except in the cases of luxuries I object to a high duty. At that time a certain number of members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House, and who were the representatives of country districts, crossed over and voted against the high duties, showing that even then there was a strong feeling in the country that the proposed duties were too high. Subsequent experience has shown us that we were not wrong in that view. I am not going to say that these high duties are responsible for the present depression. I think there has been far too much argument in regard to free-trade and protection introduced into the discussion of this matter. In the first place it was found necessary to appoint a board to deal with the Tariff. The matter was first brought under notice by Sir Henry Wrixon, and then a board was appointed by the Patterson Ministry. That board did valuable work, and a number of its members being defeated at the last general election, new men were appointed to fill their places. That is how I came to be a member of the board. I believe that one of the greatest causes of the depression is the circumstance that we have been living too much on our capital. Now, our capital has to a great extent given out, and we must look elsewhere for money. No doubt we were kept going by our large borrowing from other countries. In England the agricultural industry has declined considerably. Farms, which a few years ago were let there at a very high rental, are not now bringing in half the amount. Then it must be remembered that the returns from our products have fallen 40 or 50 per cent. In this colony there are farms which a few years ago were let at a high rental,

and the owners cannot now obtain rents within 50 per cent. of the former amount; nor can we obtain for products half of what we obtained only five or six years ago. It has been said that the main object in view is to cheapen all our commodities. I do not know that that is a good thing to do in every case. If we cheapen things, the masses as well as the producers will have to suffer. When our products are selling at fair prices, the masses are in a good position, and the agriculturists are able to get along. If an improvement does not take place in our present condition, we shall have to face a terrible calamity. Things have gone down to such a degree that the workers' wages are dependent on the savings of the capitalists, and this cannot go on for ever. The capital must eventually run out, and then we shall have to face the difficulty. It is for us here to say what are the best means to adopt to put the country in a fair position. No doubt the high Tariff has a great deal to do with our present position. The effect of the high duties has been felt more in the country districts than in the metropolis. The prices of products in the country have fallen more than have prices in the city. The prices of wool, grain, butter, and all the farmers' produce have fallen to a much greater extent than those of goods produced in the city. It must be remembered that our manufacturers have been assisted for years by large bonuses, and that prices have thus been kept up by artificial means. The country now asks this committee to meet it in a liberal spirit, and allow a fair reduction in the amount of the duties. The present position was largely brought about by disastrous strikes in the city, which led to enormous losses, which might have been avoided by arbitration. There are also middlemen in all occupations of life, who cut down the prices to producers to a very great extent. I believe, however, that the chief cause of the present depression has been the high rate of interest which the producers have had to pay for money. There is not the slightest doubt that if the farmers had been receiving money at anything like a fair percentage they would be in a better position than they are in at the present time. I desire now to allude to the recommendations of the Tariff Board, and in referring to the second board, of which I was a member, I must allude to some of the remarks which have been made by

Mr. Thomson.

different honorable members regarding that board. It was stated by the Minister of Customs that the board was principally composed of free-traders. If he did not make that statement directly, he said it was so alleged. However, I do not think the honorable gentleman meant his remark seriously for a moment, but rather made it as a joke. Other honorable members have said that the board was composed of protectionists; in fact, the honorable member for Anglesey last night said that it was a notorious fact that there were so many gentlemen placed on the board who were advocates of extremely high duties that others considered it would be worse than useless to take part in the board's proceedings. Now, that remark would lead the country to believe that, to a great extent, those who were appointed to that board were next to prohibitionists.

Mr. McKENZIE.—I said some of them, and that is absolutely correct.

Mr. THOMSON.—I at any rate do not wish to be classed as a prohibitionist. I have always maintained that I was a fair trader, and I did my best while on the Tariff Board to maintain that principle. I certainly think that the board was not constituted in the way to obtain the very best results, but at the same time I consider that it was the duty of every member of the House, if he thought he could in any way bring that board into agreement, as it were, with the wishes of the people, to assist in doing so. I took my seat on the board, after letting the Government know that I still intended to have a free hand in dealing with any of the items of the Tariff when it came before the Assembly. I do not think it is binding upon any member of the board to give his vote exactly in accordance with the board's report. In the main I will support the report, but there are many items in the board's recommendations which I do not approve of. Nevertheless, I did not think it would be judicious to protest against those items as some other members of the board did when the report was framed. Remarks have been made which would lead honorable members to believe that the first Tariff Board was a free-trade board, while the second one was not. But the recommendations of the two boards proved the direct opposite. Those who read the reports of the respective boards must come to the conclusion that the reductions recommended by the

second board are far greater than those recommended by the first board. There is no doubt, however, that the first board did a lot of valuable work. They collected a great deal of evidence, which was of great use and assistance to the second board, but they did not complete the work. We had to finish the task which was undertaken by the first board in a great number of instances, and the immense quantity of work which we had to get through took up a greater amount of time than was anticipated by the Ministry would be required for us to send in our report. The Government were blamed for not calling the House together earlier, but I do not think they are to blame in the matter, inasmuch as we were behind-hand with our report; but we worked long hours, and often sat four days a week, in order to try and have the report prepared within the estimated time if possible. Although we were not able to do that, I may point out that other boards have occupied more than eighteen months without taking anything like the same amount of evidence or doing the same amount of work. Many of the reductions recommended in the report are not nearly so great as might have been expected from the expression of feeling that was given by the country at the last general election. But the moderate members on the Tariff Board cannot be blamed for this, because they could not be expected to sway the board exactly as they wished. I certainly think that if the board had been composed of moderates, it would have been likely to bring about better results. In connexion with any board containing extremists—I do not care whether the extremists were free-traders or prohibitionists—the results are not likely to be so good as from a board composed of moderates. During the debate in this chamber, also, I think that the question of free-trade and protection has been introduced to altogether too great an extent. At election time I would not pledge myself to a 25 per cent. maximum, and I do not regret not having done so, though I am quite prepared to reduce a number of the duties quite as much as some of those honorable members who did bind themselves to that maximum. There is much in the report of the board which I think will be of very great use in the future. There is one paragraph especially, in connexion with the effect of high duties on wages, which I consider very important, because I think it shows pretty clearly that the workers

are now beginning to see that high duties do mean low wages. The Minister of Customs, in his speech, when referring to this matter, stated that there was not a great amount of evidence to show that high duties mean low wages; but I may point out that there were a large number of representatives of the tailoring and other industries who were very strong upon that point.

Mr. BEST.—I said so.

Mr. THOMSON.—In connexion with this matter, I was glad to notice that the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton) seems to think also that the time has come when the workers need not expect any great assistance from prohibition. I was especially pleased to hear such remarks coming from a labour member, and particularly from one who, to a certain extent, represents a country district. It shows that the feeling is getting about in the country that the workers are cutting the ground underneath their feet by assisting prohibitive duties. Another important clause in the board's report is that in regard to prison-made goods, and I am sorry that the Government could not see their way to carry out the board's recommendations in this respect.

Mr. BEST.—We agreed to do so.

Mr. THOMSON.—The Minister has not said anything definite on the subject.

Mr. BEST.—Oh, yes, I did.

Mr. THOMSON.—I am glad to hear it, and I hope that effect will be given to the recommendation. There is not the slightest doubt but that it will have a tendency to check the importation of prison-made goods into this colony. Another recommendation of the Tariff Board was for the appointment of a Board of Trade. There can be no doubt, as I found even from the small experience which I had as a member of this board, that no one can deal with matters relating to trade so thoroughly as a man who has spent all his life in connexion with it. I know that many arguments can be brought against the appointing of a Board of Trade such as is recommended; but I would point out that at present we are only tinkering with the Tariff, not dealing with it as it ought to be dealt with. That can only be done, in my opinion, by appointing a Board of Trade, whose duty it would be to watch over and protect the interests of the manufacturers and other classes of the community. In referring to the Tariff Board, I feel bound to call attention to the

valuable service rendered by our chairman. He has had a vast amount of experience on that board, and he has certainly made good use of that experience. He is thoroughly up in all matters connected with the Tariff, and if we had a number of men in Parliament as conversant with the subject as he is it would not perhaps be necessary to appoint a Board of Trade. Unfortunately, however, we have one Minister of Customs to-day and perhaps another to-morrow, and it is impossible for any Ministry in a few weeks or a few months to get a thorough grasp of these matters. It has been said, and I think wrongly said, that the Chairman of the Tariff Board has become a free-trader. I only wish that that was the case; but if those gentlemen who say that the honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) has become a free-trader had only sat with him on the board, and seen the votes which he gave, they would have no doubt whatever as to whether he is a free-trader or a protectionist. I must say that I myself felt sometimes very much annoyed at the way the chairman voted. It is very hard, when there are eight or nine divisions, and a tie in each case, that you never can get the vote of the chairman; and that was what occurred in this case. If it had not been for the chairman the report of the Tariff Board would have been slightly different from what it is, but the moderates could never rely upon getting his vote. On one occasion, however, he became a free-trader, and that was when we brought up a recommendation for a duty on printers' paper. On that occasion all the free-traders became protectionists and the protectionists free-traders. We thought that then, at all events, we had the majority.

Sir JAMES PATTERSON.—What was the division on that question?

Mr. THOMSON.—There were nine members present—four for the duty and four against, and, unfortunately, the chairman gave his casting vote against my view again.

Mr. ZOX.—How did he vote?

Mr. THOMSON.—He voted against the duty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. on printers' paper. I am not quite satisfied with that division yet. I believe the board were wrong, and later on I hope this committee will take an opportunity of reversing the decision. I thought a few minutes before the vote was given that I had the numbers in my favour, but, unfortunately, a quiet remark

from the chairman brought over a member to his side and gained him the victory.

Mr. TUCKER.—I believe in a free newspaper press.

Mr. THOMSON.—With regard to the alterations made by the Government in the recommendations of the board, I regret that in nearly all cases the Government have gone in for an increase of duty, and I think that was a step in the wrong direction. However, I do not intend to go into the details at the present time, as they will be fully discussed when we come to them. In some respects I have no hesitation in saying that the report of the board is against the evidence that was taken. This applies particularly to the duties on starch, candles, and biscuits, because in those cases the evidence was in favour of a further reduction than the board recommended. In connexion with starch I will read the statement which the board make in their report. They say—

“Evidence was placed before the board, both by importers and manufacturers, upon the subject of the duty of 2d. per lb. on starch. The importers represented the price of starch as being from £17 to £19 a ton in England; the duty, therefore, equals about 100 per cent. ad valorem. The expenses on starch for freight, lighterage, cartage, &c., afford a considerable amount of protection, equal to 15 per cent. ad valorem, whilst it was also contended that the importation gives employment to more labour than the manufacture. A reduction of 1d. per lb. was advocated.”

Yet, notwithstanding this paragraph, the board recommend that this duty should be kept at 2d. per lb. I say that that recommendation is against the evidence, and I think when the committee deals with the matter this will be clearly proved. I shall also be able to show that there are other items which have not been reduced in accordance with the evidence. The duties on those articles are, at the present time, at too high a rate, and although I was a member of the Tariff Board I shall use my utmost efforts to bring those duties down to something like a fair and reasonable amount. I think also that the subsidies that have been paid to a number of the large industries could stand a further reduction. Those subsidies are not for the benefit of the workers, but for the benefit of a few of the manufacturers. It has been remarked by some honorable members that the farmers are more heavily protected than any other class in the country. Now, I do not think that statement is quite correct. I admit that the farmers have had a fair share of

protection, but not for the great number of years during which the city industries have enjoyed protection. At the present time the protective duties are of very little use to the farmers—so little use indeed that in a great number of instances I shall be prepared to support a very substantial reduction. The woollen manufactories have had their case very ably stated by different members representing the constituencies in which those industries exist. The honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Gurr) said that there was no shoddy manufactured here, but in my opinion that statement was merely a quibble. The fact is, I believe, that the material which is required to make shoddy is sent home and given to the workers in another country to work up into yarn, and that yarn is sent out here to be worked up into shoddy. Now, I think if we want shoddy here it would be better to give our own people employment in making it. I certainly think it is a mistake to provide labour for other countries. In connexion with the duty on candles, the honorable member for Port Melbourne stated that the candle manufacturers require all the protection which they have at the present time in order to keep them going. Now, it is a remarkable fact that as soon as the report of the Tariff Board came out candles were reduced in price, and there was no apparent reason for the reduction; if there had been a fall in the price of tallow the reduction might have been expected, but, as a matter of fact, tallow went up 10s. and 15s. a ton, showing that this was not the reason of the reduction in price. Candles are one of the articles on which I think we might have a very substantial reduction. I do not wish to take up the time of the committee any further. I hope that when these proposals come to be discussed in detail they will be discussed, not from a prohibitionist point of view, nor from a free-trade point of view, but from the point of view of what is likely to bring about the best results and to lift our country out of its present state of depression. While I am in favour of reducing a large number of duties, I shall be in favour of increasing others. I certainly think, however, that our people at the present time want relief very greatly. If our farmers do not get some relief they must clear out of Victoria and go somewhere else; and to lessen the number of producers will be a very serious blow to this colony. We want increased population in

the country districts, because it is to the land that we must look in the first place to assist us out of our difficulties, and we can only increase production by giving the producers every assistance that we possibly can. If we give the producers that assistance I believe that this colony will have a fair opportunity of retrieving its position and returning to the flourishing condition in which it formerly was.

MR. DEAKIN.—Sir, any observations which I propose to offer to the committee will be mainly, if not wholly, restricted to some aspects of this question which appear to me to have been but lightly touched upon as yet. Their consideration will necessarily lead me a little aside from the main current of this debate, and they may possibly prove of no special interest to honorable members. Nevertheless, I believe that they will demand the attention of this committee prior to the performance of the important duty upon which we shall enter as soon as the first item is submitted to the vote. Had it been possible I would have preferred to have allowed this already prolonged debate to have closed without in any way lengthening it; but as it appears to me that one or two of these aspects are of sufficient importance to demand attention, I venture to trespass on the consideration of the committee. Robert Browning, in one of his plays, draws the character of an amiable cynical onlooker of political affairs, who, at the beginning of the play, says—"I have seen three and twenty leaders of revolts"; and at the end of it—"I have seen four and twenty leaders of revolts." It has been my lot, though I am not one of the oldest members of the House, to have taken some part in four revisions of the Tariff—counting the present—and, in consequence of that experience, I approach the issue without exhilaration. On the contrary, if one fact more than another has been impressed upon me by this experience, it has been that this House, cumbrous and unsatisfactory as it is in dealing with certain questions, is never seen to less advantage than when dealing with the details of the Tariff. I know of no problems submitted to us upon which we need more guidance and more elaborate information, and I know of no votes which we are called upon to cast that need more cautious deliberation. The industrial classes may well say—"You take away our lives when you do take the means by which we live." When we proceed to deal with the Tariff we

are laying our hands upon the springs of livelihood of a great part of this community. In a time of depression like that through which we are now passing, when pence are counted where pounds were scattered, more than ever do I feel individually a heavy burden of responsibility. In the consideration of this question the way has been smoothed very largely for us by the labours of the Tariff Board, and by the indefatigable industry and insight of its chairman. At this juncture it would be unfair to omit a reference to the extremely able speech in which the double-burdened Minister of Customs (who is in charge of two of the most important departments of the State) has laid the views of his colleagues before the Chamber. One of the suggestions emanating from the Tariff Board, which has scarcely received that criticism which is its due, is the proposition that for our past policy of periodical commissions of inquiry into the Tariff we should substitute something like a perpetual commission of inquiry, in the shape of a Board of Trade—a body composed of trained and qualified men, whose finger should rest upon the pulses of commerce and production, and who should keep this House in touch with the constant changes that are made in the channels of commerce. The most ardent fiscal theorist would not venture to assert that it is possible to pass a Tariff for any country which would endure for all time, and, indeed, the more study there is given to the question the more I think it will be admitted that if a self-adjusting Tariff were possible, readily adapting and re-adapting itself to circumstances, it is really what we desire. That is clearly impossible; but here we have one means suggested for the purpose of keeping us in that close and permanent communication with all the developments of trade and fluctuations of production. This would enable the House to deal with the Tariff whenever it might be necessary, on the recommendation of a well-informed body, whose chairman would, I presume, be the Minister of Customs of the day. We must either rely upon such a body and its intimate acquaintance with this subject, or we must face at some time or other, as we have been accustomed to do in the past, large arrears of questions relating to the Tariff. This introduces what I may, perhaps, without offence, call a Tariff orgie on the floor of this chamber—a confused battle of influences

and interests in which, in many cases, the issue is determined by something very like a hazard of the die. It is impossible when proposition is crowded on proposition, when amendment follows amendment, when one industry is dealt with after another to avoid the formation of alliances within this Chamber, whose members, acting as they believe in the public or in their common interest, sacrifice their personal views to a greater or lesser extent. The consequence is often utterly unsatisfactory. We are now called upon to face issues which require a knowledge of the practical circumstances of every producing industry of this country—those directly and those indirectly affected as well. What man in this community—shall I except, or shall I not except, the Chairman of the Tariff Board and the Minister of Customs?—is there who can claim that close and familiar knowledge of detail which is necessary before such questions can be dealt with to the entire satisfaction of those concerned—I mean of those concerned in the House; that they should be dealt with to the entire satisfaction of those concerned outside is, of course, beyond the scope of our ambition. With this view I would recall to the committee the desirability of at some time facing this issue as to the establishment of a Board of Trade. That the proposal will require very careful formulating is true; that the powers intrusted to such a body will require to be guarded—even though it had the Minister at its head—is also true; but any proposition of that kind at least promises something better than the condition of instability and fluxion in which we now find ourselves. Our present practice leaves the Tariff, and the industries dependent upon it, at the mercy of every wave of popular opinion. Although the Tariff issue was submitted to the country at the general election, who can say that it was not confused with two or three other issues of equal magnitude? And who can claim that the House represents, with anything like exactness, the mature opinion of the people? The electors are still being educated by this debate, and by the discussion which is accompanying it in the press of the colony. It is possible, if we submitted the issue again to the verdict of the ballot-box, we might get from many constituencies a different verdict to that given by their present representatives. Of course such a condition of things is inseparable from our,

system of representative government. So much the worse for our present unsatisfactory system of representative government, but to discuss that subject would lead me too far to-night. I shall have accomplished my first point if I have recalled attention to the difficulties that face us in the task upon which we are entering, and to the necessity of devising some means by which, instead of facing these arrears of work relating to the Customs, and dealing with them, partly wholesale and partly higgledy-piggledy, we should have an opportunity of dealing with the industries of this country, so far as they are to be affected by fiscal legislation, with full information before us, with grave deliberation, and with an absence of party spirit, which the existing method can never give us. This debate has had amongst its chief features the interesting duel between the representatives of the distinctively free-trade and the distinctively protectionist parties. The honorable member for Hawthorn and the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) deserve all the compliments that have been showered upon them by their respective adherents. Far be it from me to attempt at this stage to enter upon any criticism of either, except to say that those who most attentively read and pondered the utterances of those gentlemen will find the educational process largely conducive to scepticism. They will become sceptical as to the extent to which fiscal conclusions may safely be drawn from scattered facts placed in the hands of accomplished advocates. When the honorable member for Hawthorn passed from his high deductive flights to touch the common earth of fact, one of the chief illustrations which lingers in my memory was that in which he contrasted the boat-building industries of Victoria and New South Wales. If an innocent bystander had been asked what particular industry depended so absolutely upon different natural conditions that it could not possibly be cited as having any bearing upon this question, he would probably have picked this. Let me ask those honorable members who have spent a Saturday afternoon—I will not say a Sunday afternoon, as that might offend their susceptibilities—on the Sydney harbor, and have noticed how it is flecked with the white wings of hundreds of beautiful boats and many steamers, to contrast the aspect of our own less beautiful and less

safe harbor. Must they not admit that it is entirely owing to natural conditions that they cannot see one craft floating here where the sister colony can show 100? Is this not a sufficient reason why the boat-building industry in the sister colony must far surpass ours, and surpass it even to a greater extent than the figures quoted by the honorable member for Hawthorn would seem to denote. Again, not to add a party complexion to my remarks, I should have been pleased if the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), when driving home with hammer-like force in his trenchant way the numerous inductive illustrations with which he bestrewed this Chamber, had carried them a step further. He apparently concluded his argument with the demonstration that under protective industries, or some of them, the goods they had to sell were offered at lower prices now than in the old free-trade times. If we are to make that comparison final it must be made between the goods produced by our protective industries to-day, and the same goods as now sold in a free-trade country. Otherwise it appears to me that his illustrations, full as they are of suggestiveness, and casting as they do a great deal of light on this question, lack that last fact which is necessary for their completeness. Then, again, if I single out but one more thoughtful and valuable speech delivered by one of the new members—the honorable member for Jolimont—I may be permitted to express my surprise that in an address exhibiting so much careful inquiry and critical acumen the products of a colony three times as large as our own, with inexhaustible mineral wealth in the shape of coal, should have been contrasted with this country as if on terms of equality in these respects. How can it be held that any verdict affected on the one side by the enormous production of wool, and in its maritime aspects by magnificent resources of coal, can permit figures which included these items to be cited as having any direct bearing upon the issues of protection and free-trade? But I do not desire to lose myself in the "Serbonian bog" in which armies of disputants have sunk debating the abstract principles of free-trade and protection. I have merely cited these as some of many personal comments which I might have submitted to the committee, had the points not been dealt with effectively already. I have, therefore, abandoned those arguments which I have had

the pleasure of hearing stated by my brother members. Let us come now to a consideration of the situation as we face it. We find in this country a protective Tariff and industries that have been established under it. We find industries that have been indirectly benefited by it, and a few other industries that have been neither directly nor indirectly benefited by it. It has been alleged that the last increases of the Tariff in 1892 were injurious to some of the industries directly affected, more still to the industries indirectly affected, and especially to those callings to which protection it is alleged no longer brings a special benefit. It appears to me that, in order to deal with these facts fairly, we must free our minds as far as possible from mere abstract postulates or doctrinaire axioms. For the time being I am no longer a protectionist. If I were a free-trader, I would say that I was no longer a free-trader. I take the existing situation, and looking at it, put to myself the question—a very simple question to ask, but an extremely difficult question to answer—what do the present and permanent interests of this country demand of us at the present time? In order to answer that question permit me to say that if any protectionist members of this House be in a position to speak freely upon the Tariff of 1892, possibly I may claim to be that member. Certainly among the protectionists I know none who opposed the bulk of the increases then suggested more determinedly or more absolutely than I did myself, particularly on the ground that they were unwise from any point of view, and largely on the ground that they were unwise from the protectionist point of view. That was the position which I endeavoured strongly to emphasize at that time. I have now the gloomy, and as I discover the frail and futile satisfaction, of finding myself in the uncommon position of having proved a true prophet. Prophecy is a business that does not pay; when you prophesy hard and severe things of the future you are ridiculed and condemned when you make the prediction, and you are censured if what you predicted does come to pass. But putting aside the predictions which in August, 1892, I ventured to submit to the House, the chief objections which I then urged to the increases were that they were proposed without sufficient inquiry, and that they were indiscriminate. There was also the difficulty that they had a double object.

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I have never known a billiard stroke or a gun shot with a double aim that did not succeed in missing both. It was said that we might rest quite safe in dealing with those proposals, because if they hit protection they would raise up industries, and if they missed protection they would raise revenue. The result has been satisfactory neither from a revenue nor from a protective point of view. We now find ourselves face to face with these facts set forth in the finding of a jury to whom these issues have been submitted in a preliminary way, under the authority of the House. We do not approach this question as we did in 1892, each man according to his own lights, and without specific instructions from his constituents. We have just come from the country. We have before us the report of a Tariff Board. We are bound, I think, to accept the board's finding as *prima facie* justified by the facts. Those who do not take this view have cast upon them the responsibility of showing from the evidence, or from other evidence at least equally reliable, that the board has been mistaken in the conclusion it has drawn. That is clearly open to any one. That task will fall upon each and all of us. I am not saying that we should accept the board's recommendations blindfold. To do so would be to derogate from the dignity of Parliament and to destroy our individual independence; but for the purposes of this argument we may fairly and reasonably accept the findings of that board to this extent. It makes out a *prima facie* case against the increases of 1892, and in favour of certain decreases. But first we have to deal with the proposition of the honorable member for Hawthorn for an indiscriminate decrease of duties. It is many years, if my memory serves me aright, since the 25 per cent. limit was first passed. The honorable member proposes to turn back and cover that distance at one stride. All above 25 per cent. is to go at once. He has taken into consideration neither the capital invested in an industry, the hands that it employs, the scope of its trade, its fitness for the circumstances of this colony, the profits it earns, nor the wages it pays. He has made no distinction whatever between the industry which employs a man and a boy and the industry which employs 1,000 hands. All are treated in the same drastic fashion. It is a proposition, so far as I can judge it, as reasonable as, and no more reasonable than,

it would be to insist that every one of us above 5 feet should be condemned to wear for evermore the same-sized hat, the same cut of coat, and the same length of trousers. We cannot deal with industries which have grown up under the faith of legislation passed by this House in this fashion. We must have regard to their circumstances, or to the effect such a change would have upon them and upon the colony. I assume that the proposition is nothing more than a declaration of principle, and that it is put forward rather to raise a standard and to indicate an aspiration than to seek to give practical effect to it. I will, therefore, not proceed to deal with it further, as one would be obliged to do if it were serious. Looking at it from a practical stand-point, no more unstatesmanlike proposal could be submitted to the House.

MR. MURRAY SMITH.—I mean it quite seriously.

MR. DEAKIN.—I am certain that in this subject the honorable member is serious and in earnest, and I should be the last man to endeavour to cast a suspicion upon that seriousness and earnestness by any word of mine. I trust that I can appreciate an opponent of the standing and sincerity of the honorable member, and not descend to misrepresentations in discussing his views which have been expressed with impressiveness. It seems to me that the force and fire of the honorable member's remarks are derived from considerations quite apart from what he will pardon me for terming this ridiculous proposal for a 25 per cent. maximum. The weight which his remarks evidently and properly have had arises from the fact that the honorable member attacked—as we delight to hear him or any one else attack—monopolies, unreasonably high prices, unreasonably long hours, and unreasonably low wages. I freely admit that these can be found within the walls of protective Tariffs as well as outside of them. They can be found in every country, irrespective of its adoption of a free-trade or protective policy. When the honorable member attacks those evils which he says exist in Victoria (and I do not desire to deny it) he appeals to the sentiment of social justice, and it is on these grounds that he has won whatever response he has won and will win from the public. If he desires to aim at that goal he will have to break away from his old friends and take up with new allies.

The only body that I know of that has made proposals for dealing with monopolies, long hours, and insufficient wages is the Protectionist Association of Victoria. That association has passed resolutions declaring that industries which enjoy the benefits of fiscal legislation and are placed in a special position of favour by Act of Parliament, though it be on public and national grounds, can reasonably be required to submit themselves to such conditions as to minimum hours, rates of wages, and monopolies as this House may think fit to adopt. These conditions can be imposed under protection better than under free-trade. When the time comes, and I think it has come, for social legislation dealing with these issues I shall certainly claim the vote of the honorable member—without, however, any anticipation of getting it. The honorable member, if I understand his political doctrines aright, is forbidden by their very nature from lifting a finger to cure the very evils of which he complains. It was very reasonably put by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) that if the honorable member for Hawthorn desires to discover monopolies, insufficient wages, and excessive hours, he need not confine his attention to protective countries. I hesitate myself to make any comments upon the condition of things in Great Britain, because I think that honorable members are familiar with the facts, and because it always has an ungracious sound if one reflects on the country of one's ancestors. That country placed in circumstances different from ours—the weary Titan bearing the vast load of its world-wide empire—has to face conditions to which we are strangers. Its enterprising and courageous people may be trusted to deal with them in their own way. Nevertheless, I cannot fail to point out that if the honorable member desires to study monopolies, starvation wages, and hours that have no legitimate limitation, he can find illustrations in the country that knows more free-trade than any other on the face of the earth. But, instead of taking that unpalatable course, I will remind the honorable member of what his own prophets and teachers have plainly and frankly told us are the inevitable consequences of the principles both he and they enunciate. I utter no word against them. No man has greater admiration than I for the magnificent structure raised by the intelligence of the political economists of

our own and other countries, but what the honorable member desires in order to cure—not to cure, but as he would have us believe to cure—monopoly, insufficient wages, and excessive hours is unrestricted competition—absolute freedom of trade and production. I would refer him to the political teacher upon whom, if upon any, the mantle of John Stuart Mill has fallen, the late Professor Cairnes. He confessed that after the most careful consideration he could neither find in the maxims of abstract justice a key to the working of economic laws, nor could he hold out any hope that the working of economic laws would lead to the realization of justice. I would refer him to a name that stands as high in America as did that of Professor Cairnes in England, the great American free-trader, Professor Walker. He says he is bound to admit that unrestricted competition (such as the honorable member desires) widens the distance that already exists between the different classes of society, and increases the burdens of those who are least able to bear them. I would point him to the highest authority among living economists, to the man at all events whose acquaintance with the economic literature of all ages is almost without rival—Professor Marshall. He confesses that when unrestricted competition was admitted into England before the Factory Acts, its immediate consequence was, by impairing the physique of its employes, to degrade the race. I judge the honorable member's doctrine out of the mouth of his own teachers, when I say that whatever hope we may have of dealing with the questions of monopolies, insufficient wages, and long hours, we can look for no help from the school of political paralysis and *laissez faire*. It is a necessity that we who adopt the opposite policy—the policy of interference—should be at times condemned and very rightly censured for mistakes. A policy of activity and of effort must mean the possibility, nay, even the certainty, of errors of judgment. But those mistakes can be corrected. I have always looked upon our fiscal and other legislation as purely experimental, to be adapted, from time to time, to the circumstances which arise, upon which we must bring to bear our best and ripest knowledge and maturest judgment. We need not be afraid to say that there were times when we have gone too far, or too fast, or that we did too much. That may be

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admitted. Still we have to realize that democracy has taken into its hands once and for all the power to legislate for its own future, and means to exercise it, or perish in the attempt to conquer inhuman social conditions.

Mr. MURRAY.—Hear hear; do away with the Upper House.

Mr. DEAKIN.—Protection is only one condition of industrial stability. But I ought to indicate how it appears to me that this particular form of securing industrial stability has a bearing on the issues which the honorable member for Hawthorn and others have raised. If we have monopolies in Victoria, we have the power of dealing with them in the Victorian Parliament. If we have excessive hours, or insufficient wages, we have the power of dealing with them also in this Parliament, providing our constituencies will authorize us to exercise that power. But sweep away your protective Tariff, disregard your own industrial protection, and you then have to deal with the monopolies, the insufficient wages, and the excessive hours of other countries of the world. With those you are utterly incapable to cope. So far as we sincerely desire to overcome these difficulties, it is our own fault if we do not master them in a protectionist country. There is nothing in protection to prevent us from mastering them. On the contrary, the fact that we are dealing with the industries of our own land, under our own immediate supervision, enables us to determine their conditions, as it is futile for us to expect to determine the conditions of industries in other lands. I do not wish to be led too far into the discussion of these general questions, but I will be bold enough to say, in conclusion, that it appears to me, in these days, when the teeming millions of the populous East are about to be brought into immediate industrial relations with the civilized Caucasian world, that more than ever will the value and necessity of protection be thrust upon the minds of the thinkers of the world. I will be bold enough to say that even the great mother country, with all her enormous advantages and boundless resources, will yet have to face this issue. I will also add that those who aim, as I believe the honorable member for Hawthorn does, at Imperial federation, will never see it accomplished, or at all events cemented, until it is accompanied by an Imperial customs union, in which the advantages of protection would be secured to its

peoples against the rest of the world. One observation by the way, though not particularly relevant, ought to be made here, or I shall probably forget it. We are faced in this Tariff discussion by speeches from those who uphold foreign trade, in which they declare that all the evils that this community has to face at the present time arise from the increases of our protective Tariff in 1892 or earlier increases. Now, some of the advocates of free-trade in this Chamber have either uttered or have been associated with those who have uttered on other platforms the dictum that these same evils and all of them arise from mono-metallism. When I read a pamphlet on bi-metallism I find that all the evils which foreign traders lay at the door of our protective Tariff are ascribed to our present contracted currency. I do not find the Tariff mentioned as the source of evils and miseries which here our free-trade friends set down to protection, and for which they declare that free-trade is the only remedy. Then, again, I find the most extraordinary absence of recollection on the part of the same foreign traders when they are advocating reduced railway freights, and urging the development of our export trade. What they then want is not free-trade but simply a reduction of railway freights; that is the way, they say, to meet the low prices which are ruining the farmer and ruining other industries. It is not protection, it is not mono-metallism, but low prices and high freights that are ruining agriculture, trade, and commerce. And the same gentlemen who ask for lower railway freights to meet those low prices use the same complaints over again which they have used for free-trade at one time and for bi-metallism at another. And so on. There is no disguising the fact, if any of us desired to disguise it, that we in this country, like all other countries, especially new countries, are at present passing through a period of serious stress or strain, and every man with a new policy to introduce lays all the evils from which we are suffering at the door of the policy he wishes to alter. At present all the evils with which we are afflicted are being laid at the door of our protective Tariff. Low prices and bi-metallism are out of court. These and many other causes of the present state of things in this colony are overlooked, and all attention is concentrated on one issue. This is an utterly unreasonable way of regarding the circumstances of the case.

There is no proportion between our duties and the depth of our depression. Surely we should take into account the state of things in other countries, should look at the condition of things in America, where there is a protective Tariff, and at the condition of things in England where there is not, should glance at New South Wales, where there is a low Tariff, and here where there is a high Tariff, and see how far the same depression is largely common to all, despite their fiscal differences. If we do that it must surely clear our minds of the cant that would attribute the evils from which we are all suffering to this one pitiful little local cause. The Tariff cannot and does not do it all, nor is it responsible for more than a fraction of our difficulties. I do not suggest that the increases of 1892 ought to remain. I do not say that because those increases have not created the whole of our present difficulties that they ought not to be curtailed. But I find myself faced with the existing conditions, with the confession from members on both sides of the chamber that employment is scarce and hard to get, that wages are low, that the great mass of the people are more or less suffering, and that the general outlook of the country is not bright and inspiring as it ought to be. That makes me feel all the more tenderly solicitous to do nothing to destroy needlessly the employment of a single man in this community, to do nothing whatever that might imperil a single sound industry. If there ever is a time when we can afford to undertake experiments of that kind this is not the time. I put these considerations partly because they tend in a certain sense against myself. Take the increases of customs duties which I voted against in 1892. Those increases were passed by a majority of the Assembly, and I no longer feel as free in regard to them as I did before they were passed. I feel, in dealing with our local industries, that I must require to be satisfied that I am taking a step which will be justified by all the results, and that I am not doing a cruel wrong to men who have put their trust in legislation. I have heard some few expressions from the other side of the chamber which I have been sorry to listen to—expressions of almost venomous antagonism to those who have embarked their capital in the protected industries of this colony. After the deliberate sanction of the Legislature has been given to certain industries, are the unfortunate people who put their capital or

their labour in these industries to be treated as if they were pirates, to be despoiled of ill-gotten gains? On the other side, take the Tariff Board's report. It seems to me that the critics on the opposition side of this chamber are correct when they say that the language of the board's report was much stronger than the recommendations with which it concluded. I take it that that is so because the members of the board had in their minds some such reflections as I have been briefly recalling. The speech of the Minister of Customs also went further than his practical proposals. I have no doubt that the Minister and the board and all of us have felt the same difficulty in facing industries established under the sanction of this Assembly. So far as I can gauge the temper of the committee, I surmise that there is a decided majority in favour of some reductions of customs duties, in favour of more reductions in some directions than the Government propose, and in favour of more reductions in other directions than the board propose. It becomes a question, therefore, how far it is possible for those honorable members to be true to their principles, give effect to their views, yet wreak no unfair injury upon our established manufactories. I understand that all the Government's proposals for reductions of duties are to come into force at the end of this calendar year. On certain points I do not think the Government have gone far enough, while on other points others think they have gone too far; but, speaking in the rough and at large, I think that the alterations of duties which the Government propose are such as might reasonably be adopted by this House, so far as their amount is concerned, without any fear, seeing that they are to come into operation at the end of this calendar year. I would suggest to those ardent spirits who desire to go further and adopt, say, for instance, the Tariff Board's recommendations, that if they feel constrained to take that course, and are in a majority in this Chamber, they should realize their responsibility, and seek to achieve their object by steps, and not at one bound. Let them ask for those additional alterations in the Tariff, but agree that they shall not come into force until the end of the next calendar year, 1896. If by chance a majority of honorable members desire to go still further, I trust they will take the same matter into consideration, and fix a still later date for bringing such

Mr. Deakin.

proposals into operation. This Parliament has just commenced its life, and may live its allotted term of three years, during which period the country will then be assured of no further alterations of the Tariff. And, even if this Parliament does not live its allotted term of three years, I do not think that the next House will rush into another revision. Let us beware of plunging the country into still greater depression. I have another comment to make which may not fall upon favorable ears. There is an appearance, suggesting to me at least an apprehension—although that apprehension may not be justified by the facts—that this Tariff question is to be dealt with in what I can term a factious spirit. A number of men in this Chamber appear determined to maintain at the present high level—if it is a high level—all the duties their constituents have got, and may possibly unite to lower the duties which affect the constituents of another part of this country. To put it plainly, I hope that there will be no factious assault by country members on town interests. Honorable members from country districts will do well to recollect that, even if they offered to reduce certain protective duties—

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—That is a somewhat unfair assumption.

Mr. DEAKIN.—I say it is an apprehension which I have ventured to entertain. I think this is a very mild, and, as far as I can judge, a just way of putting it. At any rate, I have felt that apprehension, and I have heard utterances, which I am not going to quote, but which I could quote, in support of that view. It struck me, at the time I heard them, that possibly they were the mere ebullitions of personal feeling, and that when we came to deal with these issues we should find that difficulty vanish. It is part of my duty to make this reference, however unpleasant it may be to me or to them. One of the most regrettable of possible incidents in this Tariff discussion would be a combination of country members to retain their own duties, or such of them as they consider of any value, and who would make that the excuse for dealing unfairly with the duties imposed to protect town industries. To take such a course as that would, in my opinion, be unwise in their own interests, and destructive of the true spirit of parliamentary government. It would mean a further introduction into this Chamber of that

spirit of localism which their leaders, at all events, have been amongst the first to deplore.

Mr. McCOLL.—The threat was the other way.

Mr. DEAKIN.—I have never known a town combination to reduce duties on country products.

An HONORABLE MEMBER.—What about the stock tax?

Mr. DEAKIN.—Well, the stock tax furnishes an illustration of another matter that I might have omitted but for that interjection. It is a tax on which protectionists are not agreed, and to which I, for one, from its inception to the present time, have been absolutely opposed.

Mr. WEBB.—Now you raise the question of town *versus* country.

Mr. DEAKIN.—But the stock tax was carried in this Chamber by the votes of the foreign traders as well as by the votes of protectionists.

Mr. GRAVES.—And against your Government.

Mr. MURRAY.—How is every vote carried?

Mr. DEAKIN.—The stock tax was carried by the votes of men who announced that they were opposed to the whole protective Tariff, and believed that in voting for the stock tax they were striking a blow at protection. It was carried by the votes also of those who were professed free-traders on every fiscal question except the stock tax, and it was carried against the vote of a large and influential section of the protectionists of this Assembly. Take another illustration, the sugar duties, and a third, the primage duties. I say, sir, that those three duties—the stock tax, the sugar duties, and the primage duties—have done more to make the Tariff of this colony unpopular than all the protective duties put together. That was one of the chief practical objections to the stock tax which I suggested at the time its further increase was proposed. I warned the protectionists in this Chamber that the inevitable effect of the stock tax would be to cost us the votes of a large body of men otherwise true to the protectionist cause. I uttered a similar warning with regard to the primage and sugar duties when they were proposed. Some few protectionists voted for those duties. I called their attention to the certainty that any of the evil effects which must inevitably follow the imposition of those duties would be attributed to protection. I cautioned the

protectionists at the time that in voting for such duties they were taking a course which would tend to make the Tariff as a whole unpopular, and that the stock tax, the primage duties, and the sugar duties, would one day be made the stalking horse for an attack on protection. My predictions in regard to those sequences have unfortunately and unhappily proved true. The disorganized condition in which protectionists find themselves in the country and in Parliament at the present time is largely due to the fact that they were not strong enough to resist and reject those injudicious duties. If I had one reason more than another for speaking at all to-night, it was that I desired, with all humility, to venture to suggest to the members of this committee what, as it appears to my judgment, is the temper of mind in which we are bound to approach this question. I seek to point out to the ardent Tariff reformers that here, as elsewhere, revolution implies an inevitable reaction. If they are strong enough to carry revolutionary reductions in our Customs Tariff they will bring upon their heads the responsibility for the great distress that will follow. The after reaction will drive us still further in the opposite direction later on. Our great difficulty in dealing with the Tariff is that the electors are subject to waves of feeling in regard to the importance of Tariff matters; at one time all is sunk in favour of local industries and high duties, at another, as at the last election, the fiscal issue is confused with other issues, and the verdict of the country, so far as it was given on the Tariff, was in favour of a measure of Tariff reform. We are subject to these fluctuations. They are apt to mar our prosperity, and to defeat the aim of protection. What stability can be given to the industries of the country, what steadiness to wages or regularity to employment, or what permanence to our commercial relations, if we have continual changes in the Tariff? The strongest free-traders in this Chamber, or out of it, will tell you frankly —“Better have a bad Tariff fixed for ten years than the best possible Tariff liable to be changed every three or four years.” These frequent tinkering with the Tariff are most disastrous in their effects, and yet they are coming faster and faster upon us. Surely I am justified, in view of these considerations, in urging those honorable members who desire to effect still greater reductions of our protective duties than the Government now propose, not to

seek to obtain their end by revolutionary means, not to do more than clear-headed business men would do in dealing with the Tariff if the country was their own property, they paid all wages, received all profits, and were interested in the prosperity of the whole people. Let them deal with it with the same care, the same caution, and the same deliberateness as they would exercise in dealing with their own interests. I say to my friends of the high Tariff, the prohibitive Tariff party, that it appears to me they will be deaf to the warnings of the times if they persist in an unyielding attitude. They will provoke again what we are now suffering from, an inevitable reaction, if their desires are pushed too far. A certain measure of protective duties this country can carry, not only with benefit to the people who are interested in our local industries, but also with benefit to the whole community. If you go beyond that stage you will undoubtedly inflict injury. If you fall below it, you will as unquestionably misuse your opportunities. Our duty is to strike the happy medium. If we have the good sense to do that, if we revise the Tariff in that spirit, and we can do it at this time when no Ministerial fortunes depend on our decisions, we shall do well. We are bound to look at the Tariffs of our neighbours, and to take into account the fact that we cannot have our Tariff too high above theirs without giving them certain advantages and putting ourselves under certain disadvantages. We have done this before; we did it in 1892. We gave a fillip to certain industries, but it was an artificial fillip, the good effects of which have not been and cannot be maintained. What is the consequence? The consequence of those undue increases is this committee pledged to revise them. But for the increases of 1892 this question would not be now before us—we should have escaped the whole of these difficulties.

Mr. MURRAY.—Why not go back to the 1892 Tariff?

Mr. DEAKIN.—That would be a short cut out of our present difficulties. It has the one defect that it would be dealing indiscriminately with a question that we cannot afford to deal with indiscriminately. But, on the whole, and in the main, if the war-cry of this committee is "back to the Tariff before 1892," I believe it will be supported by the country. I trust that I have not occupied too much time. I have surely not occupied more time than the

importance of the debate demands, and certainly not more than is justified by the gravity of the issue, which is one of the most vital ever submitted to this Chamber. I look forward to the reduction of many of our customs duties from a protectionist's point of view, because if a protectionist will not reduce duties when his reason satisfies him that they ought to be reduced, he is no true protectionist, he is making a fetish of his opinion, treating it as a patent medicine, as a panacea for all the ills of the body politic, which protection never claimed to be. Protection never claimed to be more than the application of human skill and knowledge to the solution of fiscal problems. If we do reduce the Tariff reasonably to about its proportions prior to 1892, taking into account the circumstances of each industry, and dealing discriminatingly with each, I believe we shall take a course that will have one result of immense value. We shall give the country confidence that for many years to come those engaged in trade, commerce, and industry may rest satisfied that there will be little or no tinkering with the Tariff. This Assembly will have taken a step back, thereby proving that it does not intend to commit the country to prohibition, but it will have taken that step temperately and slowly, showing that it does not intend to establish industries in one session merely to destroy them the next. Let us prove that there is stability in the decrees of Parliament, that the two parties to the fiscal issue have come into unity, into harmony, on a natural basis, putting aside doctrinaire ideas and dealing with the question as practical men. The speech of the leader of the Opposition was couched in a perfectly fair and reasonable spirit, harmonizing admirably with the proposals made by the Minister of Customs. I should myself have felt bound to support the honorable member for South Yarra, if he had gone to a division on his sweeping amendment, as a matter of principle; as a matter of practice I favour a slower and surer growth. The speech of the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Hamilton), much censured though it has been, was an admirable, straightforward, sensible, and business-like deliverance from another stand-point. Sympathizing with men of these views, welcoming protectionists of every mode and temper, and welcoming the criticisms of free-traders as well, I feel that we have now an opportunity of dealing with this question in a

businesslike way. Reasonable reduction means permanence of reasonable duties. Miserable as is the task before us, and heavy as is our burden of responsibility, if we set up this aim and secure it by patient and public-spirited action, we shall feel, in the end, that we have at least merited the approbation of the country.

Mr. CARTER.—Mr. Mason, the honorable member for Essendon is always eloquent, and, like the honorable member for Normanby, he is usually poetic. I find that the quotation he gave us from Shakspeare was also quoted by a member of the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco, as reported in the *Sacramento Sunday News*, of 16th May, and that the honorable member omitted to favour us with other lines, which I think he should have given to this committee. The gentleman in question was speaking, not in favour of duties, but in favour of bounties, and he quoted these lines, a portion of which the honorable member for Essendon quoted—

“You take my house, when you do take the
prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I
live.”

But this gentleman also quoted some lines from Byron, which seem to me to describe our position at the present time perhaps more happily than the honorable member's quotation from Shakspeare; in fact, they appear to me to be almost a summary of the honorable member's speech—

“There is a moral in all human tales;
’Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First, Freedom, and then Glory—when that
fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at
last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but one page.”

Does not that sum up the whole position? The honorable member for Essendon, brilliant in speech, is like one of those bright delusive lights seen over swampy country. You may follow it here, and follow it there, but you don't know where it will lead you, and generally you end by finding yourself all at once up to the neck in a bog. The honorable member has shown us excellent reasons why we should do nothing, but he has not told us any reason why we should do anything. The honorable member tells us that for this committee to attempt to deal with the Tariff question is merely to bring about an orgie in the chamber, and the next

minute he tells us that we are bound to deal with the Tariff. In 1892, he says there was such an orgie, and that he has assisted in four of them. But the honorable member omitted to tell us of those orgies which occurred previous to 1892, when he was engaged in assisting to increase the duties. He only tells us of 1892, when he was not in the Ministry. I should have been glad if the honorable member had led us to some direct issue, but he has not recommended anything. He has found fault with the Government, with the Tariff Board, with the legislation of 1892, and with all the alterations in the Tariff which have taken place on the last four occasions on which it has been dealt with; yet he adds that to do anything now will be merely an orgie, because we are not fitted to deal with the question, and we must therefore stand still and do nothing. If we are not to have another orgie, which the honorable member says is improper, we must leave the matter where it is. Then the next minute he insists that we must not leave it where it is. He is inconsequential. His speech is very brilliant and very beautiful, but what does it all lead to? Are this committee, as sensible men, prepared to let matters rest as they are? I would point out that on the previous occasions to which the honorable member for Essendon referred the country was not prepared for a change. In 1892 the Government did not propose a change; the change was forced upon them suddenly in committee, without the country having had any opportunity of expressing an opinion on it. The circumstances are very different now, because the country has been considering the question for about eighteen months, while the Tariff Board have been taking evidence all over the colony and have presented a report. Surely when the committee deals with proposals of the Government, and with the recommendations of people from all parts of the country, there will not be an orgie but a debate, which will lead to a practical result, and which will be to the benefit of the community. The honorable member said that if he were a protectionist he did not know if he would continue one, and that if he were a free-trader he did not know if he would continue one; in fact, he did not know whether he was a free-trader or a protectionist. I am hanged if I know which he is, and no member knows from his

speech whether he is in favour of the continuation of the present duties or not. As far as I can understand his remarks, he is inclined to leave them alone; he is in what may be called a nebulous state. The honorable member for Essendon devoted the most of his speech to replying to the honorable member for Hawthorn. I am sure that the latter honorable member must feel highly complimented to find that perhaps the two most eloquent men in this committee, the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) and the honorable member for Essendon have devoted the greater part of their speeches, I do not say to answering, but to replying to his arguments.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Love's labour lost.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Much ado about nothing.

Mr. CARTER.—When the honorable member for Essendon spoke on the subject of federation he was much more distinct in his views than he is now. He said he thought that prosperity was to be found in federation, because it would lead to intercolonial free-trade. He also said—

“He had pointed out that the unconsidered increase of duties had really been the first step towards the death of protection.”

What he wanted then was intercolonial free-trade. I did not gather from his speech to-night that he was so enthusiastic in regard to intercolonial free-trade as I had hoped he would have been. In an extended market we shall find great relief from our present troubles. We have overtaken the supply of the community, and we must look for an extended market. I would like to contradict the statement of the honorable member that venom has been exhibited by different speakers against the protected industries, and he expressed the hope that there would be no factious opposition. As far as I have observed this committee, it has been the most good-tempered debate of an important character which we have ever had in this Chamber. There is no venom on either side. Every honorable member has been actuated by conscientious motives, and, whether we are protectionists or free-traders, we give each other credit for honesty of purpose. I take this opportunity of saying, the first time the accusation has been made, that there is nothing in this Chamber to justify it. The honorable member for Essendon spoke of the horror of a sudden sweeping away of all

these duties. I have not heard anybody suggest that any such thing should be done—not even the most extreme free-trader. I never heard any one propose that these duties should be swept away altogether. On the contrary, every free-trade candidate at the last general election said that they must not be swept away suddenly, and that if it were decided to do away with the duty on an article which had induced any person to embark in an industry, that person was entitled to some compensation. I now take the earliest opportunity I have had of drawing attention to a remark made by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), and which I trust was only made on the spur of the moment, because it gave great offence and pain to a number of my constituents. That honorable member, speaking of the witnesses who gave evidence before the Tariff Board, said they would—“Lie as fast as horses could eat oats.” The remark must have been made without any thought, and I hope that the honorable member will withdraw it. I informed him of my intention to mention this matter, but I do not see him in his place. A statement that the gentlemen who gave their evidence on oath before the Tariff Board were guilty of committing perjury is one which reflects discredit on no one but the person who made it. With regard to the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, that amendment puts me and a great many other honorable members in a most awkward position. We are quite in favour of what the honorable member for Hawthorn wants to accomplish, but we think that we should get it by accepting the Government's offer rather than his. The Government have straightforwardly said—“We have put these recommendations before the committee, and we leave them to honorable members to deal with them in such a way as they think proper.” If the honorable member for Hawthorn wishes to reduce any duty to 25 per cent., he can do that under the Government proposals just as well as under his own; and when he asks us to vote for something which the Government declare to be equivalent to a motion of want of confidence, I am placed in the position that I must either vote against the 25 per cent. reduction, which I want to see carried out, or against the Government, which I do not want to do. Supposing the honorable member for

Hawthorn had a majority for his amendment and the Government were defeated, what would be the next change? It would only lead to more turmoil, and that should be avoided. In fact, the amendment is one of those things which should be dealt with under the saying "All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient." I trust that before we come to a division those who support the honorable member for Hawthorn will see their way to relieve us from the inconvenient and awkward position we are in. The adoption of an abstract resolution can lead to nothing; it does not reduce a single duty or accomplish any good, but it puts a number of honorable members in a false position. It is of no use to play with fire. I would like to ask honorable members to be so good as to dismiss from their minds for one moment the words free-trade and protection, with the object of considering what those terms mean. I take it that free-trade in other words simply means freedom to interchange commodities, while protection simply means prevention of interchange of commodities. That is all.

Mr. TRENWITH.—In that case we have no protection, because we do interchange.

Mr. CARTER.—The prohibitionist would prevent us from interchanging commodities to our advantage, and to the advantage of those who produce them. Moderate protection is not prohibition, but it hinders interchange. Protection is a hindrance to the interchange of commodities. If customs duties are placed on articles produced in another colony, those articles are neither imported or exported as freely as they would otherwise be, and that must be prevention of interchange. I believe in a system of interchange, because we must obey the laws of nature. Nature herself has ordained that certain things can be produced more advantageously in some places than in others. I will take the very simple example of the island of Cuba, which is only a few miles from Jamaica. The tobacco which grows in Cuba, and produces the beautiful Havanna cigars, will not grow in Jamaica. On the other hand both countries grow sugar, but you never heard of Cuban or Havanna rum. Pimento or all-spice only grows in Jamaica, and nowhere else, except in some parts of Spain. You may endeavour to grow the Cuban tobacco leaf in Jamaica, and you may endeavour to produce rum in Cuba, but you cannot succeed because nature is against you. Then

again, there is the Cognac district in France, which produces the finest brandy, and the Bordeaux district, which produces the finest claret, while the valley of the Rhine and the surrounding hills grow the hocks. You may take the vines and plant them in any of the other wine-growing districts, but you cannot get the same results. At the Cape of Good Hope there is a little farm called Constantia. It is the only place in the world where constantia can be produced. In Cheshire the best cheese is made, and in Dorsetshire the best butter, and it is impossible to reverse the positions. At Burton-on-Trent the best ale is made; you cannot make that ale in London out of Thames water, and you cannot make it in Scotland, but there you can make whisky which cannot be made in England, and the same thing applies to stout made in Dublin. In some parts of Gippsland and the western district of this colony it is found that cheese just like the English stilton can be produced on one piece of land, while the man on the next farm cannot produce the same article. There is something in the soil, the atmosphere, or the climate which enables one part of the world to produce certain things better than another. Freedom of exchange enables us to exchange our best products. Gold, wheat, wool, and all sorts of farm produce are the things we produce best. I do not say that we are celebrated for the productions of boots, clothing, or many of the industries which we have endeavoured to force. If we do not produce the best woollens it is the fault of the manufacturers, because they do not make them. If the manufacturers think they are going to secure the trade of the world by making inferior articles which can be made much better in Europe than here, they will find themselves shut out. But if, like the Mossiel Mill in New Zealand, they try to make some things better than the other manufacturers produce they will have a greater sale for their goods. Let us take the article of brandy for example. Our fault in regard to vine-growing is that every man thinks that if he has got a grape vine, no matter what sort of vine it is, or where it is planted, he has only to crush the berries and he can make wine, distil the juice, and obtain good brandy. The fact is, however, that it is necessary to discover the particular places where certain descriptions of vines will produce the grapes most suitable for the making of wine and

brandy. There was at Moonee Ponds, before it was swept away in the land boom, a little vineyard owned by Mr. Davies, which produced admirable wine. Only a week ago I saw some of that wine. It was twenty years old, and I would have been very glad to have given 10s. a bottle for it. It is as beautiful a hock as could be found anywhere. The owner of this vineyard, who was a member of this House in the old days, planted several species of grape. I told him that the Madeira grape was the one which suited the locality best, and it is from that grape that he has obtained the result I speak of. Light wines are grown in the valley of the Yarra, which, with age, become equal to some of the best wines of France. In the Goulburn Valley, brandy is produced equal to good ordinary French brandy, and I have seen good brandy which was made at Bendigo. But it does not follow that because you can make good brandy at one place you can make it at another. The Government should bring out experts from the old world who will apply their knowledge and experience to this colony, and who will know what vines will suit particular soils, and what grape will make the best wine or brandy. The Government should encourage the wineries just as they have encouraged the creameries, so that when the farmer has produced his wine he will be able to sell it to somebody who knows how to prepare it for the market. A London trade circular, dated the 24th of May last, has come into my possession. How can we expect to progress when a paragraph like the following occurs in this London publication:—

“Spirits (Brandy).—The falling-off in consumption still continues, while stocks keep accumulating. Unfortunately, there is no large supply of high-class spirit, and really good Australian brandies would soon create a demand here, but it is a pity that the reputation of Australian brandy has been injured here by shipments of grain spirit, and by glaring misrepresentation to the public.”

The Australian brandy referred to here is the spirit we have been paying £50,000 a year to produce. This circular arrived by yesterday's post, and it is only by accident that I saw it. If that is the sort of thing which is published in London about us, what is the use of our paying people to make such brandy? I have no objection to giving encouragement to the producers of spirits by way of bonus on the exports as in the case of butter. While I do not believe in customs duties to prevent

interchange, I am in favour of bonuses to promote interchange; in the latter case a fixed amount is put on for a fixed period, and it gradually dies out. The butter bonus is now dead, and we exported last year £1,000,000 worth of that commodity. Have all our protected hat industries and such things ever produced £1,000,000 worth of goods? In the case of butter, we have an article which the country is attempting to produce in a superior way, and in one year we have sent home half the annual interest of our national debt in the form of that commodity. If encouragement is given to those things which the country is specially adapted to produce, we shall promote the production of those articles for which we have not only the English market, but the world open to us.

Mr. LONGMORE.—Give us the grass for cows that is locked up now.

Mr. CARTER.—That has nothing to do with the Tariff question. As soon as we produce an article better than other people can produce it we shall find a market for it. The better the article the greater the demand, and the greater the demand the higher the price. The misfortune is that we have not encouraged the making of good articles and the payment of high wages; on the contrary, the production of inferior articles has been brought about by the constant cut-throat competition of one manufacturer against another. We have done nothing to encourage excellence of manufacture. We have done everything the other way by constantly going for the cheapest article, and we do that whether we are free-traders or protectionists. As soon as a man starts an industry and seems to have a little success, some one sets up in opposition to him, and then a third competitor comes on the scene; these manufacturers cannot alter the cost of the material, and as they cannot live without making a profit, they cut down the wages. Some of the woollen mills at the present time have people employed at 6s. 8d. a week. Is that the sort of wage we ought to be paying in these times? When the minimum wage is fixed throughout the country what will become of the woollen mill wages of 6s. 8d. a week? When the mills have to pay their hands 30s. or £2 a week they will not be able to produce even shoddy at a profit. I say that with the free interchange of commodities we not only have the advantage of obtaining a better

article, but we have the further advantage that we get it at the lowest price. An honorable member tells me that he does not want to buy things at the lowest price, but I guarantee that he always tries to do it. This honorable member wishes us to think that when a shopman says to him—"The price of this article is 2s. 6d.," he replies—"That is too little, I will give you 4s. 6d.; I do not want you to lose money by the transaction." All the honorable members who have so persistently stated that they do not want to see things sold at low prices, because it is disadvantageous to do that, do not act on that principle themselves. I undertake to say that if we had beef falling here ready prepared in nice joints, as manna fell in the wilderness in the ancient time, the honorable member who addressed himself to this point would not refuse to pick up the food and eat it any more than the Jews refused to pick up the manna in the olden time. He would accept the bounties of nature. If we could have boots imported from the moon and given to us free, we should all wear them. The protectionists and free-traders alike will always buy at the cheapest market rate. Some twenty odd years ago, I pointed out to honorable members that Bastiat summed up the whole thing when he remarked that, if the object of protection was to secure employment to the people, why not do away with that terrible free-trade influence—the sun—because it was only necessary to construct a roof over the country in order to make plenty of labour necessary to provide heat and light. Then the people could employ all their time in digging oil wells, catching whales, and making candles, because it would take the whole population to supply the heat and light required. If the only object of protection is to secure employment for the people you can secure it in that simple way. But, unless protection leads to some good result, what is the use of it? However, quite apart from the question of free-trade as regards the rest of the world, surely we may have it amongst ourselves. Surely there can be no reason why we should continue that imaginary line of demarcation between this colony and South Australia. Surely there is no reason why that little river—the Murray—should separate us from our brothers in New South Wales. Surely we might be permitted to interchange our commodities without any let or hindrance. It must be to the mutual advantage of each colony to do so; and

what can be the benefit of keeping up this perpetual folly of maintaining a wall around this small colony and saying—"We won't trade with the people outside it." Suppose the Japanese were to blockade this place, and we could not get any interchange at all, what would become of us? I think even the honorable member for Dandenong would be sighing for a little free interchange of commodities. He would have no more tea to drink, and he might be tempted, in the absence of tea, to drink some colonial whisky. It is terrible to contemplate such a result as that. I say that instead of discouraging production by putting on duties at the Custom-house I would encourage it by lessening its cost, and the way to lessen the cost is to let in everything that is wanted to assist the development of those things for which we have some natural capacity as much as possible. But at present what do we do? Say a man wants to start a woollen mill. We tax everything he uses—the material he employs for building, the machinery he erects, and everything that he uses in his industry. That is how we assist the woollen industry, and the same remark applies to everything all through the country. The farmer is taxed on everything he uses. There is not a man who drives a buggy, cart, or vehicle of any description who has not to pay 200 per cent., even on the axles on which the vehicle is carried. Axles which in Sydney can be bought for 9s., and in America for 6s., have to pay here 12s. in duty alone; and therefore in this colony instead of axles costing 9s. they cost over 20s. Surely it is not assisting the producer to put a tax on his plough and on all the implements which are used in his industry. Surely that system cannot be other than detrimental to him. The cheaper we can enable the producer to produce the better will he be able to compete, not only with the other colonies but with all other countries, and it is only by being liberated from those restraints with which he is now surrounded that he can get along at all. Take the poor miner, for example. We say we want to encourage mining. In times past we have given a good deal of encouragement to mining; but what do we do now? We tax everything the miner uses. If I had my way everything that is used by miners would be admitted absolutely free. If you could reduce the cost of mining by only 10 per cent., gold-fields which are not

now workable, because it does not pay to work them, could be made workable. I believe, however, it is now proposed to put extra duties on some of the explosives which the miners use, while there is some hesitation to reduce the duty on candles, which are also used by the miners. The pick, shovel, and everything the miner uses is taxed, and surely the first and most practical way of relieving the miner would be to take off those taxes, and thus enable him to produce gold so much cheaper, while the price he would realize for the commodity would be just the same. The same argument applies to the man who grows wool or the man who grows farm produce. The cheaper you enable him to produce, the more will be the profit that we derive from nature; but, as far as I can see, to keep the people employed at unprofitable work does not add to the wealth of the community. Then, with regard to manufactures, if you will only encourage them by a bonus or by some other way in which they can compete for excellence; if, in connexion with such things as brandy, you will prohibit the shipment of inferior articles, I think that in that way you will encourage production and the export of things which will pay. Now, I find in making inquiry with regard to axles that there are certain things which I had not heard mentioned before. This country produces certain woods, which I am told by those who are acquainted with the subject are found to be better for the wheels of heavy vehicles, and especially for artillery, than any other woods in the world. People who are using these woods and I believe shipping them, inform me that grey box, ironbark, and redgum are three woods which, cut at the proper time, and properly dried, make the best wheels that can be found to sustain any great weight. If we encourage the introduction of these woods into Europe, where they keep up such tremendous forces and have such great quantities of artillery, that would be an entirely new industry. Then, I quite agree with the honorable member for Essendon that any sudden rises or sudden falls in the Tariff are detrimental to the country, and they would be absolutely unfair. The increases of the Shiels Government in 1892 caused an enormous loss to the people engaged in the brewing and wine and spirit trades. The shares in the different companies were knocked down in value to the extent of, probably, a couple of million pounds, and

Mr. Carter.

altogether it would be very moderate to say that those increases caused the people right through the country—teetotallers and clergymen had shares in many of these companies—to drop about £5,000,000.

Mr. G. TURNER.—Oh!

Mr. CARTER.—The putting on of those high duties absolutely ruined the trade right through the country.

Mr. GRAVES.—And lost revenue too.

Mr. CARTER.—And, as the honorable member for Delatite points out, with the exception of the beer duty, they also caused a loss in the revenue. I do not wish to take up any more time, and will simply say in conclusion that, while congratulating the Government on the very fair way in which they have placed this matter before us, I regret that the Minister did not say a word about retrenchment, or with regard to any alteration in the electoral law as to the constitution of this House. The question of retrenchment in the public service was avoided altogether.

Mr. G. TURNER.—Would you expect anything about retrenchment in a Tariff speech?

Mr. CARTER.—The Minister of Customs alluded to a great many things besides the Tariff, and I would only point out that if the Government would simply carry out the existing law with regard to the public service, it provides all the means of retrenchment necessary without any fresh legislation on the subject. To sum up matters shortly, I believe that all members of the House wish to do the best they can for the country. There is no party feeling this time between the members of this Chamber; in fact, we have no parties, and it will be very hard indeed if, notwithstanding the very lugubrious forecast of the honorable member for Essendon, we do not succeed in amending the Tariff in a direction which will be beneficial to the country. I think the Government have proposed too long a time in suggesting that the alterations should come into force on the 1st of January next. There are many of them that might come in very soon—within a couple of months.

Mr. HARRIS.—Oh, no.

Mr. CARTER.—Two or three months would give plenty of time for the alterations in the spirit duties. Those articles of which people hold large stocks might want a longer time; but I think that if the Government shorten the time they

have proposed it will be better for the revenue. If we will all pull together and endeavour heartily to assist the Government, instead of trying to thwart them by useless amendments, it will be much better for us, and we will be more deserving of the thanks of the country. Before I sit down I will make one more appeal to the honorable member for Hawthorn. If he will spare me the painful position of either not voting at all or voting against him, I shall be very glad.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Don't mind me.

Mr. CARTER.—But the honorable member must be aware that he is placing me and many other members of the House in a false position by his amendment.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Why?

Mr. CARTER.—Because by not voting for it it looks as if we were opposed to the reduction of duties to 25 per cent. There are some, I hope, that will be reduced as low as 10 per cent.; but if we are to be limited to 25 per cent. I think it really shuts us out from getting that which we want. I think it would be better to take a vote on the first item, and then fight for all we can get afterwards.

Dr. MALONEY.—Sir, I would compliment the honorable member who has just sat down on the splendid arguments which he has brought forward, if the facts supported those arguments. For instance, he made a statement with reference to the woollen industry which is not correct, if the book which I have in my hand gives a proper list of the Victorian Tariff. According to this authority, all machinery for carding, spinning, and weaving is admitted free, and therefore machinery used in connexion with the woollen industry has no duty whatever upon it. As a conscientious protectionist, I would like to see a duty placed on that machinery, so that the engineers of the colony would have an opportunity of constructing it, which I believe they are quite capable of doing. Again, the honorable member spoke about building up a house, and hiding the sun from the earth. Surely he has heard of the islands of Guernsey and Jersey, where there is one farm of 13 acres, which is covered altogether from the sun, and those 13 acres of glass-covered ground yield more than any other 1,300 acres in the United Kingdom. The honorable member also spoke of alcohol being distilled from grain, and

sold as grape brandy. I quite agree with him that that is certainly a sham. But is that any argument against protection? There is only one way in which to stop adulteration of that kind, and that is to make the manufacture of spirits a State monopoly. No Government would dare to sell brandy as distilled from wine if it were really distilled from grain. The honorable member spoke so keenly upon adulteration that I would refer him to the remarks of the greatest orator who ever spoke for free-trade in England. I allude to John Bright. That gentleman, in one of his speeches, said that "adulteration is only another form of competition." This was the utterance of the greatest apostle of free-trade. The honorable member, as a conscientious free-trader, believes that everything should be admitted free into this country, while I, as a conscientious protectionist on the other hand, go in for prohibition. Between us two—the free-trader on the one hand and the prohibitionist on the other—there stands in the centre the dancing figure of the revenue Tariff man. For the honorable member to blame protection for everything that has happened in a protectionist community is neither logical nor sensible. Is it not a fact that in England 7,000,000 acres of the people's lands have been enclosed in 80 years? But would it be fair for me to use that as an argument against free-trade? Certainly not, although it happened in a free-trade country. The condition of the masses in free-trade England is shown in a book entitled *Merrie England*, by Robert Blatchford, which created the greatest stir of any publication of late years. The volume is stated to be produced by trades-union labour on English-made paper—it is not printed on German-made paper, as so many so-called English books are. In this book I find the following extract from Dr. Russell's pamphlet on Life in One Room:—

"Of the inhabitants of Glasgow, 25 per cent. live in houses of one apartment. No less than 14 per cent. of the one-roomed houses, and 27 per cent. of the two-roomed houses, contain lodgers—strange men and women—mixed up with husbands and wives and children, within the four walls of small rooms. There are thousands of these which contain five, six, and seven inmates, and hundreds which are inhabited by from eight to thirteen."

What about the workers there? Then there is a statement which gives some colour to the slur which is passed upon the United Kingdom by German savants,

namely, that there is a disease called the English disease. The extract goes on—

"Of all the children who die in Glasgow before they complete their fifth year, 32 per cent. die in houses of one apartment, and not 2 per cent. in houses of five apartments and upwards. From beginning to rapid ending, the lives of these children are short parts in a wretched tragedy. I can only venture to lift a corner of the curtain which veils the life which is lived in these houses. It is impossible to show you more."

This extract shows that 30 out of every 100 children are murdered through being herded together in these one-apartment houses. That is in free-trade Britain. We may come to that here, but if we do, as this is a protectionist community, we have the power, as the honorable member for Essendon pointed out, of altering and remedying such a state of things. But if we had free-trade, and we had to take the products of the cheap labour of other countries, we would not have the power of altering it. Then let me read a small extract from the same book about English slavery, which shows clearly the state of things which has existed in England. The extract says—

"It was not until the wages of the workmen had been reduced to a starvation level that they consented to their children and wives being employed in the mills. But the manufacturers wanted labour by some means or other, and they got it. They got it from the workhouses. They sent for parish apprentices from all parts of England, and pretended to apprentice them to the new employments just introduced. . . . It was often arranged by the parish authorities, in order to get rid of imbeciles, that one idiot should be taken by the mill-owner with every twenty sane children. The fate of these unhappy idiots was even worse than that of the others. The secret of their final end has never been disclosed, but we can form some idea of their awful sufferings from the hardships of the other victims to capitalist greed and cruelty. Their treatment was most inhuman; the hours of their labour was only limited by exhaustion, after many modes of tortures had been unavailingly applied to force continual work. Children were often worked sixteen hours a day, by day and by night. Even Sunday was used as a convenient time to clean the machinery. The author of the *History of the Factory Movement* writes—'That in stench, in heated rooms, amidst a constant whirring of a thousand wheels, little fingers and little feet were kept in ceaseless action, forced into unnatural activity by blows from the heavy hands and feet of the merciless overlooker and the infliction of bodily pain by instruments of punishment, invented by the sharpened ingenuity of insatiable selfishness.' These were fed upon the coarsest and cheapest food, often with the same as that served out to the pigs of their master."

This was in free-trade England.

Dr. Maloney.

"Some of these miserable beings tried to run away. To prevent their doing so those suspected of this tendency had irons riveted on their ankles with long links reaching to the hips, and were compelled to work and sleep in these dens, young women and girls as well as boys suffering this brutal treatment."

Further, Lord Shaftesbury, who has made his name famous by trying to tear away the stigma which was allowed to rest on England by permitting children to be employed in this way, said in the House of Lords, in 1873—

"Well I can recollect, in the earlier periods of the factory movement, waiting at the factory gates to see the children come out, and a set of sad dejected cadaverous creatures they were. In Bradford, especially, the proofs of long and cruel toil were most remarkable. The cripples and distorted forms might be numbered by hundreds, perhaps by thousands. A friend of mine collected a vast number together for me; the sight was most piteous, the deformities most incredible. They seemed to me, such were their crooked shapes, like a mass of crooked alphabets."

Where would you find such a state of things as that in a protectionist country? What is free-trade doing for England now? It is causing the destruction of her agricultural industry; because, if we turn to the statistics of *Mulhall* or any other statistician, we will find that England at the present time is becoming less and less able to provide food for her people. In 1821, there were only 600,000 people in Great Britain dependent on foreign wheat; while in 1871 there were 11,661,000 people who had to depend on receiving wheat from foreign countries. Free-trade England is wiping away the agriculturists—herding them into the towns, where life is shorter, more disagreeable, and more unhealthy than it is in the country. One honorable member quoted John Burns as speaking against protection; but John Burns has a higher platform than either free-trade or protection—he is a socialist. Why did the same honorable member not quote the statement of Keir Hardie, who said that "if any trades unionist is a free-trader he is a fool." For my part, I stand here as a protectionist up to the point of prohibition; but I am only a supporter of protection as a stepping-stone to that better state of things under which the State will become the great producer of everything. As the honorable member for Essendon said, the future of the world lies largely with the East. Japan is now entering into competition with European manufacturing countries, and it has an advantage in this respect which we

do not possess. We have not the right to manufacture patented machinery here; but patents do not hold in Japan, and already the spindles there have increased in five years by one million. With the cheap labour and long hours of Japan, how can even England compete with her in the future, when Japan possesses the finest machinery and the best teachers to direct her industries? The honorable member for Melbourne referred to the wages in the woollen manufactories at Ballarat; but when he made that reference was he aware that the English blue-books show that girls and women have been working in English factories sixteen hours a day for seven days in the week for the paltry wage of 4s. per week. As reference has been made to the misdeeds of so-called protectionist rings, I may state that I have here a list of polite free-trade robbers who have been defrauding the Customs. I call them polite because they are rich, and of course would rob politely. Is the name of L. Stevenson unknown as having evaded paying customs duties, and broken the laws of this country? Is the firm of Petsch, Doebling, and Company unknown for evasions of the Customs in connexion with pianos? Then there is the case of Kilpatrick and Company with regard to jewellery; and, in connexion with this case, I must compliment the Minister of Customs upon the manner in which he enforced the law. A poor wretch who introduced a few bars of soap without paying duty was fined £100, and therefore it is satisfactory to find that this firm were fined in an amount extending to four figures. For my own part I regret that the law did not permit the Minister to award the punishment that was deserved, and I am quite sure that if the Minister had had the power he would have sent that offender to prison. These men believe in free-trade, and they show it by defrauding the revenue of the country.

MR. MADDEN.—Kilpatrick is a protectionist. He contested Fitzroy in the protectionist interest.

MR. DEAKIN.—He is a Tariff reformer.

DR. MALONEY.—I think a Tariff swindler would be a better name. If we had proper legislation such men would not be allowed to continue in business, and to swindle the country. Then we have the names of Rowlands, and of McIlwraith and McEacharn in connexion with the evasion of the wharfage dues on the importation of coal. I believe that if

the archives of the Custom-house were thoroughly examined we would find that an enormous amount of smuggling has been carried on by free-trade firms. I challenge any honorable member to give a list of protectionists who have swindled the community out of the same amount of money as the men whose names I have given. The existence of rings has been referred to. We know that certainly there are rings in Flinders-lane, and I admit that there are rings among protectionists. There are no rings in this country, however, to be compared with those that exist in America, where the Oil Trust holds its grasp over nearly the whole world, raising its prices but not raising the wages of its employés. Then there is the Salt Syndicate, which exercises an equal power in another way. Now, protection, at all events, does secure a market to the producers of the colony, and I may say here that I am in full sympathy as a town member with the country members, and that I have always voted with the country members when they have asked for protection. My voice rang out for the stock tax both on the platform and in this House, and while I remain here the farmers may rest assured of my vote without asking for it. I know that their life is to a large extent a dog's life. I tried it for three years myself, and it was like being transported; but by protection we do secure to them the home market. Now, there is not one free-trader who does not speak of the mighty fleets of mercantile vessels that sweep the seas. Let me tell them that a single trunk line of railway in the United States carries more produce than the whole combined mercantile fleets of the world can carry; and that statement I make on the authority of Mr. Carnegie, which, I think, will be accepted. How are the workers rewarded in free-trade countries? We have all seen the famous picture of the Defence of Rorke's Drift. The heroes of Rorke's Drift received the magnificent reward of a pair of trousers, which were worth 8s. Many of the heroes of Balaclava have died in the workhouse uncared for. All that they received from the country that they had served was a miserable pittance. One of them I had to attend in the hospital, and it was simply by the kindness of the medical students that he was able to get a carriage on wheels, having lost both of his legs. The survival of the fittest is the doctrine of free-trade, and I would point out to the

free-traders that Jay Gould, the financier, made more money than Gladstone, Carlyle, Koch, Pasteur, Galileo, Columbus, Cromwell, Caxton, Washington, Raphael, Mozart, Shakspeare, Socrates, and even Jesus Christ, all combined. The time has come for even greater social reforms in this colony than we have yet accomplished. I wish sincerely that the honorable member for Essendon would step out and lead the battalions that are forming. We have already adopted a policy of socialism in regard to our railways, our post-office, our telephone system, our telegraph system, the printing of stamps, the Government Printing-office, the Education system, the public libraries, the mechanics' institutes, the metropolitan water supply, electric lighting, and the roads and bridges on which there are now no tolls. We have also our Building Act, our Factory Act, and our Truck Act; and we have provided for the inspection of boilers and factories. There is an asylum for the poor; but when there is no room in it we send them to gaol. We still want work for our unemployed. We want pensions for those whose only crime is their poverty; we want to kill sweating, and to put a stop to excessive hours of work. We want to save the female children of the poor who are being destroyed daily in our midst. It is a scandal that a medical man who sat on the bench in a certain case should have reduced the sentence passed on a man who was brought before him on a charge of this kind to three months. I do not wish his child any harm, but if an attempt at a crime of this nature were made upon his child, it might teach him a lesson. The Government would do well if they would bring in a Bill dealing with this subject. These beasts do not prefer the poor men's children to the rich men's children, but the rich man's children are guarded by servants, whereas the poor man's children have no such protection. In conclusion, I will only say that I trust we will not allow our present system of protection to be broken down. It educates our workers, and when the State is ready to take over the whole of the industries, it will find that there is available an army of workers who will not need to be trained.

Mr. SALMON.—Mr. Chairman, although it has been said that this debate has dragged its tedious length along almost to infinity, I believe that it has had a very important educational influence not only on members

of the House, but on the people of the country generally. There was an undoubted demand made at the last general election for a reduction of the high duties. In common with many other honorable members, I was asked what I considered to be a real protective duty, and I stated emphatically that a maximum duty of 25 per cent. should be sufficient to establish any industry, and to enable it to maintain its hold upon the community. I added that if any industry required more protection the community would be better without it. But I did not say that I was prepared to make such a sudden return to a maximum of 25 per cent. as the honorable member for Hawthorn now proposes. The maximum of 25 per cent. should never have been exceeded; but it would not be fair and it would not be politic of us to make such a drastic reform as the honorable member suggests. At the same time, I think that the Government—to use the mildest term—have acted in a very disingenuous manner in treating the amendment as a motion of want of confidence. It is also somewhat strange that not a single Minister should have risen to speak against the amendment. Those honorable members who have spoken against it have been almost equally representative of both sides of the House. It is generally recognised that this is not an opportune time for such a proposal, and I hope that the honorable member for Hawthorn will see his way to withdraw it. It is not probable that he will do that. I know that he has fixed ideas on this subject, and although he proposes a maximum of 25 per cent. now, he would be very pleased indeed to reduce the duties to a cypher. I have said sufficient to indicate to the committee that it is not my intention to vote for the amendment. At the same time, I blame both the Government and the honorable member for Hawthorn for the position in which several honorable members find themselves placed. We were treated to-night to the unusual spectacle of a farming representative allying himself with the prohibitionists. I wish the prohibitionists much joy of their bargain. I have no doubt that they feel very much gratified at the success they have achieved in gaining the support of the honorable member for Polwarth, but he has simply allied himself with them in order to escape what he believes to be a greater danger. The honorable member for Hawthorn was hardly treated fairly by

the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) and the honorable member for Essendon in the manner in which they dealt with his amendment. The honorable member for Geelong likened it to the method of Procrustes, the robber of Attica, who used to lengthen the limbs of those of his victims who were too short for the bed he gave them to lie on, and to lop off the superfluous portion of the limbs of those that were too long. The honorable member does not go as far as that. He proposes a maximum of 25 per cent., but he says nothing about raising the minimum to 25 per cent. The honorable member for Essendon to-night—and I do not say that he did it intentionally—also conveyed the impression that the proposal of the honorable member for Hawthorn was not only to reduce the ad valorem duties to a maximum of 25 per cent., but to reduce all the duties. I do not think that the honorable member has any such intention. With regard to the Tariff Board, I, in conjunction with very many country members, strongly objected to its constitution. It was undoubtedly a protectionist board. The majority of the members were ultra-protectionists, and some of them were even prohibitionists. The Minister of Customs was good enough to tell us that any rapid change such as was desired by a majority of the electors at the last general election would cause a revolution. He seems to be oblivious to the fact that the revolution has already occurred, and that the people demand a substantial reduction of the present high duties which are now so burdensome to them. The miners have been for very many years consistent protectionists, and the chief reason for that was their desire to help their fellow workers in the city. Another reason was that they believed the statements of those who advocated the imposition of the duties on various articles that manufactories would be started, and that their children would not be compelled to follow the arduous and dangerous occupation that they themselves have to follow. But what do they find? They find now that protection, instead of increasing the amount of work of a light and congenial character that is obtainable, has opened up to them no new avenues of employment at all, and that their children, instead of having free access to such work as is available, are prevented from obtaining it by the very men who held out the promise to them. The miners have awakened

to the fact that in common with the other producers of the colony they are being taxed to maintain certain sections of the people in comparative ease and comfort. They have to work from day to day and from week to week in different temperatures with their bodies in some cases up to their middle in water, and in most dangerous positions. They have to handle explosives and to go down to great depths, often with insecure appliances, and their labours are of a most trying and arduous character. These men are determined—and I speak now as a representative of a mining community—that the burden under which they are labouring, owing to the high cost of the necessaries and comforts of life, shall be reduced, and I in common with every mining member intend to do my best to secure this measure of relief for them. We were told by the honorable member for Essendon that it was unwise to raise the cry of town *versus* country and country *versus* town, but in the next breath he raised that cry himself by referring to the stock tax. I would like to bring under the notice of the committee a fact which I venture to say very few honorable members have any knowledge of. A condition of things exists by which those who live in the country districts are subjected to taxes on the goods which they consume other than those which are imposed through the Customs. While the question of the amalgamation of departments is under consideration, I would suggest that if this state of things is allowed to continue the Premier and the Minister of Customs should take into their serious consideration the advisability of amalgamating the Railway and the Customs departments. In the Railway department we have a second Custom-house, which supplements the already more than adequate protection which many of our industries are enjoying. I will now quote certain figures which have come under my notice during the last few days. I do not think it is generally known that beer in bulk, if colonial, is carried over the Victorian railways at one rate, and if imported at another rate, and that for a distance of 100 miles there is a difference in favour of colonial beer of 32½ per cent. In regard to wine in bulk the difference is equal to 44 per cent., and to wine in jars and cases to 110 per cent., also for a distance of 100 miles. The latter item benefits the vignerons, but it applies chiefly to the wine that

is sent from Melbourne to the country, wine sent from the country to Melbourne being carried in bulk. The differential rate increases as the distance increases. No one will say that starch is a natural product, and yet in this case also there is a differential rate of 24 per cent. The raw material of starch—rice—is admitted to the colony duty free, and yet there is this difference of 24 per cent. in the charge made for the carriage of the imported and the colonially-manufactured starch. I do not think that it will be contended that these differential rates benefit the consumer. In the case of spirits there is a differential rate of 43½ per cent. in the 100 miles. I will give one or two examples to show how this system works out. The charge for the carriage of colonial spirits to Casterton would be 61s. 6d., and for the carriage of imported spirits 128s. 4d., or a difference in favour of the colonial article of 108·67 per cent. If sent to Daylesford the charge for colonial spirits would be 22s., and for imported spirits 41s. 10d., or a difference of 90·15 per cent.; if to Albury, for colonial spirits the charge would be 51s. 8d., and for imported spirits 103s., or a difference of 99·35 per cent.; if to Dimboola, the colonial spirits would be 57s. 8d., and for imported spirits 118s. 8d., or a difference of 106·37 per cent.; if to Geelong, for colonial spirits 5s., and for imported spirits 10s. 6d., or a difference of 110 per cent.; if to Lilydale, 7s. 9d. for colonial spirits, and 13s. 3d. for imported spirits, or a difference of 70·96 per cent.; and if to Serviceton, for colonial spirits 66s. 2d., and for imported spirits 145s. 6d., or a difference of 119·90 per cent. The honorable member for Daylesford, when Minister of Railways, did not look after the wants of his constituency as well as the present Minister of Railways looks after the wants of Eaglehawk. The last by-law issued by the Railway department says that sugar from Yarraville or Melbourne to Eaglehawk is to be charged 26s. 3d., whereas the ordinary rate is 39s. 1d. These are only a few of the items. Most people are aware that in this country certain articles are carried on the railways at special rates. We know, for example, that our wheat or coal and other similar articles are so carried, but they are natural products—they are not manufactured articles. Here we have a number of manufactured articles which have the advantage of an enormous differential rate as compared with the imported articles, and this gives the

manufacturers further protection than even Parliament gave to them. It is just as well that we should know that. Some time ago I pointed out (and I think I was the first member of the House to do so) the effect of the sugar duties; and when that question is under consideration again I intend to offer a few remarks upon the subject. I have here certain information relating to the arrangement that has been made between the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the Australian Sugar Refining Company for their amalgamation, by which the people of this country are to be subjected to a huge monopoly. It is proposed to reduce the differential rate on sugar by 10s., but I do not see why it should not be swept away altogether. We have here a company which pays a dividend of 10 per cent., and places to its reserve fund a sum equal to another 10 per cent. There is another matter that I desire to mention that came under my own personal knowledge. During the time that the goods of Messrs. Lawrence and Adam were being sold, I saw two five horse-teams being loaded with goods that were to be taken into the country. I inquired why the goods were not sent by rail, and the answer was—"Oh, these are imported spirits, and the differential rate is too heavy." Now, either the manufacturers are robbing this country, or we are losing a large amount of revenue by the high freights that are being charged on the railways. There is one other remark I desire to make, and it is in the nature of a personal explanation. I do not agree with the attitude that is taken up by certain honorable members of special pleading for industries in which they are interested. If I were fortunately, or unfortunately, a squatter, I should have nothing to say about the stock tax; and if I were the manager of a woollen mill I should leave the question of the woollen duties severely alone, and trust to the good sense of the committee to deal with it fairly. I should not use my position as a public man to serve my private ends. I have a deep interest in a certain industry, which will come under the review of the committee, and it is my intention to refrain from saying anything on the subject, believing that it will receive fair treatment at the hands of the committee. I do not wish to dictate to honorable members, but I think that it would be better if they adopted the same course of procedure. I do not do this

from any desire to appear peculiar or particular, or because I am hypersensitive, but simply because I believe that it is the only honest course to follow. We do not come into the House to serve our private ends, but to do the best we can for the country.

MR. KENNEDY.—Mr. Chairman, were it not for some of the extraordinary statements that have been made by honorable members I would not intrude my views on the committee at this late stage. I may say that I do not agree with the statement of the last speaker that honorable members should not lay their views before the House on subjects on which they have a thorough knowledge. I feel confident that there is no honorable member who would place self above the public interests. It appears to me that there is a tendency, both on the part of those who speak from the free-trade and on the part of those who speak from the protectionist point of view, to belittle Victoria; to decry it from the house-tops, as if we were going to the dogs, and as if we had all lost confidence in ourselves, and had come to the conclusion that there was no possibility of the colony holding its own in the race of progress. It is true that we have gone through a time of severe trial, but is it all to be attributed to the fiscal policy? Have not somewhat similar conditions prevailed throughout the civilized world, and can anybody who gets down to the bed-rock of facts say that protection has been the cause of the depression from which we are suffering? Has the volume of trade diminished in Victoria of late years? Has there not been one continual progress ever since the settlement of the lands of the colony? It is true that we had an era of depression when our wealth of gold diminished in a degree at the end of the "fifties" and in the early "sixties." But what has been the history of Victoria since we adopted the policy of moderate protection in 1869? One honorable member compared the condition of New South Wales under free-trade with that of Victoria, but the comparison was scarcely a fair one, as the conditions under which land was taken up in New South Wales were altogether different from the conditions under which it was taken up in Victoria. Agriculture made rapid strides in this colony from 1870 to 1888. I do not think that that fact can be denied. Since the boom burst the agriculturists of Victoria, like all other

sections of the community, have had to contend against almost insuperable difficulties, and the high duties have accentuated their troubles. I think that that will be admitted, as it has already been admitted by many protectionists. It has not been contended, and it cannot be contended that there would have been more rapid development in Victoria from 1869 to 1888 under free-trade than under protection. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that agriculture did not progress to the same extent in New South Wales from 1870 to 1888. And what is the reason of that? It was that the people of New South Wales, owing to the conditions under which they held their land, were able to make a more comfortable living by sheep-breeding than by agriculture whilst the Victorian farmer had only the 320 acres of land that he was allowed to select. In 1889 and 1892 we come to the parting of the ways in regard to the customs duties. A great deal has been said about the question of free-trade and protection, but that is not the question before us at the present time. What we have to deal with is the question of ameliorating the condition of the producers of the colony, and we have to consider to what extent a reduction of the duties will achieve that result without inflicting grave injustice and hardship on other sections of the community. An attempt has been made to set town against country. Speaking as a representative of a country constituency, I do not think that any such feeling really exists. For myself I can say that it does not exist, because I recognise that the town and country are interdependent. Some extraordinary statements were made by the honorable member for East Bourke Boroughs (Mr. Cook) last night. He said that £4,000,000 had been spent on irrigation works—and he was wrong in his figures entirely—for the benefit of the agriculturist. If the position of the agriculturist is improved, is not the position of every one in the cities and towns of the colony improved also? The honorable member also spoke of the money expended on the country lines as having been expended for the benefit solely of the agriculturists and pastoralists; but have not the cities and towns of the colony been built up by the development of the country, and is it not on the country that they depend now? What is it that is causing the depression in the cities and towns? Is it not the prices at which the agriculturists and pastoralists have to sell their

produce in the markets of the world? If the honorable member would look into the last edition of the *Year-Book*, published by Hayter, he would find laid down there very clearly the difficulties which the producers of Victoria have to contend against at the present time. Take, as an illustration, the exports from Australia. The exports of wool from the Australian colonies in 1888 amounted to 1,360,000 bales, and in 1893 to 1,800,000 bales, and although in that period we increased our output enormously, we actually got less for it, notwithstanding that it was much greater in quantity. That applies to every article we produce, with the one exception of gold, which alone maintains the standard value. Say what you will, this colony is dependent on the value of its exports, and is it not the ambition of the Government, and of every member of this House, to endeavour to bring about an increase of our natural products? Now, the value of our products since 1883 has diminished to the extent of something like 34 per cent., while the necessities of life have only been reduced by 11 per cent. Is it not reasonable, therefore, to assume that it is impossible for our country producers to go on under such conditions, making losses year after year? I think it is generally admitted, even by those who speak from the high Tariff stand-point, even by prohibitionists, that they have not shown that the increased duties imposed in 1892 have benefited even the protected industries of the colony. Outside the natural industries adaptable to our soil and climate, is there a single industry in the colony which has increased its output during the last five years, except the agricultural implement industry? On the other hand, the volume of the natural products of the soil has gone on gradually increasing, although, owing to the unprecedented fall in values, the monetary worth of that produce has diminished. We have to look to the same cause for the loss of our shipping trade. The other colonies have not been at a stand-still. At one time Melbourne was the centre of distribution for the Australian colonies, but we could not expect that the conditions which conduced to that result would continue for ever. As has been pointed out in the Melbourne newspapers, New Zealand has now got a line of steamers trading direct with the old country, Queensland the same, New South Wales the same, and

Mr. Kennedy.

South Australia will eventually follow suit. Was it to be expected that the other colonies would allow their trade to filter through Melbourne, enhancing the cost of their goods, when they could get them direct? Is it reasonable to expect that, after establishing local industries here, you will import the same amount of goods? Certainly not. But there is a cause lying deeper down than all these. Are you in a position to-day, seeing the decreased value of our exports, seeing that for every £1 worth of goods you import you have to pay by means of an equivalent value of exports, are you in a position to follow the honorable member for Hawthorn, and deprive the industries of the colony of the protection which brought them into existence and fosters them to-day? Has the honorable member thought out carefully what the result of adopting his amendment would be during the transition period when you are altering the whole conditions under which we live?

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Have you read the Tariff side by side with the amendment?

Mr. KENNEDY.—Yes, I have, and very carefully too. There are 24 articles which would be affected by the adoption of the honorable member's amendment. It has been the policy of this colony up to the present to establish industries here, if possible. Only the other day I visited a factory in a metropolitan constituency where an out-and-out free-trader has established a local industry, on the good faith of the statutes of this colony. Is it not reasonable to assume that that man would not have expended his money in establishing a protected industry if he had thought it possible that Parliament would reverse the protective policy of the country? And are such industries as that to be swept away by one stroke of the pen, as they would undoubtedly be if the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn was adopted? That is the position we have to face. It is not a question of free-trade and protection, but of the existing condition of things in this colony, and, pledged as I am to a reduction of customs duties in the interests of our producers, I am not prepared to follow the honorable member for Hawthorn in his radical change. We cannot afford to adopt such a drastic proposal. As the honorable member for Essendon pointed out, we will have to discriminate in revising the Tariff.

It would not be a wise or common-sense course of procedure to revolutionize the whole policy of Victoria in one act. If we have been going on the wrong track, let us retrace our steps gradually, and not bring about sudden changes which would accentuate the present distress. That we have distress in our midst is proved by the fact that 130,000 odd cases were relieved during last year. Is that condition of things creditable to the protective policy of the colony?

Mr. HANCOCK.—No; but that is the result of the land boom.

Mr. KENNEDY.—But would it be creditable to this committee to increase that distress? Certainly not. The honorable member for Carlton stated last night that it had been inferred that the labour members of New South Wales were free-traders, but that they were not, and that their reason for supporting the Reid Government was that they wanted to get the land tax, and that directly they had got that tax they would try to reinstate the protective policy of the colony. Well, I do not think that the honorable member fully realized the responsibility of his position in making a statement of that kind, or what his statement must lead to. Would an honorable member of this Chamber be allowed to make such a statement in reference to another honorable member without being challenged? Decidedly not. And I say that the statement in question is uncalled for and unwarranted, more particularly in the light of recent events, which go to prove that it is not true. The honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) quoted an extract from an address delivered by Mr. J. H. Howell, at Bristol, on the 14th of March last, which went to show that a most deplorable condition of things unfortunately prevails in England at the present time, and the honorable member left us to infer—for I am not alone in the inference I have drawn—that the lecturer had attributed that condition of things to free-trade, and urged that the remedy would be protection. Well, most extraordinary to state, if the honorable member, in quoting that extract, had completed the last sentence of his extract, he would have dispelled that illusion, which he conveyed to the committee. The honorable member's quotation was—

“If they talked to the average employer about the present deplorable condition, his idea generally was that wages must come down.”

The honorable member stopped there, but the same sentence goes on to state—

“And for his own part he (Mr. Howell) was sorry to say that if the remedy which he advocated, bi-metallism, was not adopted, there was no hope for England.”

Mr. HANCOCK.—Perfectly correct.

Mr. KENNEDY.—Well, I am sorry to say that I cannot place much more credence in the opinions of honorable members in the quarter from which the extract came than in the quotation of the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith). In conclusion, I desire to make my position clear with regard to this Tariff question. I am certainly not prepared to follow the honorable member for Hawthorn in his proposal, but although it was accepted by the Government as a no-confidence motion, I don't think the Government ever seriously considered it a motion of want of confidence. The feeling of the Assembly is entirely with Ministers in the difficult position in which they are placed, and honorable members generally are desirous that Parliament should not do anything calculated to deepen the present depression or cause hardship to any portion of the community. I am sure that the great majority of honorable members desire to put party questions aside and to do everything they possibly can to get the colony out of its difficulties. As the representative of a farming community, I am free to admit that protection has assisted the farming community, but we have gone protection mad. As a case in point, let me give one illustration. Notwithstanding the fact that New South Wales, during the last grain season, has grown some of the best malting barley ever grown in these colonies, as admitted by some of our best malt experts, not one single grain of that barley can be sold in Sydney for malting, and they are attempting to ship it to England for malting purposes, while we are sending malt from Victoria to New South Wales. What has helped us to do that? Not free-trade. Thirty years ago New South Wales grew more barley than we were growing; but at the present time we are supplying New South Wales and some of the other colonies with malt, although New South Wales is just as well able to grow grain and agricultural produce as Victoria. New South Wales has an area of 189 million acres, compared with 56 million acres in Victoria. No less than 22 per cent. of the total area

of Victoria is neither leased nor alienated at the present time, and only 10 per cent. of New South Wales, and yet we are exporting butter and malt to New South Wales, and our butter industry has been a positive relief and assistance during the last two or three years to our farming community. When honorable members talk about reverting to free-trade, I ask them to cast their minds over the possibilities of other industries which, if wisely developed, will bring to this colony a far greater amount of wealth than any industry we have yet established here. I have only to mention the wine industry as one which, had it received the same attention and the same fostering care as the butter industry, would have been a source of wealth far and away beyond anything we have now got in the agricultural line in Victoria. Instead of putting the unfortunate unemployed on swamp or forest lands, where snipe and wallaby abound, the Government should put them on good land, where they could make homes for themselves and their families in the near future, which it is doubtful if they can do under their present circumstances.

Mr. BRAKE.—Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, which, in my opinion, is exactly on the lines I have been sent to advocate in this Chamber. I believe my constituents are in accord with the views expressed by the honorable member for Hawthorn, and, therefore, I intend to vote for the amendment. One of the gratifying things to me is that the amendment contains a definite principle—a principle that defines the maximum amount of protection that we are prepared to give to local industries. That is a thing that this country has a right to come to a conclusion upon. I would even go further than the honorable member for Hawthorn, and not only determine the amount of the maximum duty it is advisable to impose, but also decide the length of time for which it should continue in operation. I believe that our neglect to do that in the past is at the root of our present troubles. We started to foster industries in this colony with the intention that they were to be helped in their infant stage, and that the assistance was to be gradually withdrawn. Instead of that being done, duty has been piled on duty until we now find ourselves burdened with duties as high as 50 and even 100 per cent., which is absolutely ridiculous.

It would pay us a great deal better to pay the wages of the people who are engaged in such protected industries and let them stand idle. Confirming my views, and the views of my constituents, I have this day received a resolution which was passed by a public meeting held in Horsham, and which thoroughly indorses the policy of the amendment, and also a resolution from the shire of Arapiles, which is in my electorate, so that I feel convinced I am doing my duty as a country representative in supporting the amendment. I am exceedingly sorry that the Government have accepted it as a motion of want of confidence. I will read a short extract or two to show that they are not justified in doing so. In submitting the Tariff proposals of the Government on the 4th inst., the Minister of Customs, as reported in *Hansard*, said—

“I want it to be distinctly understood that the Government do not intend to make the various items of the Tariff party or Government questions. The responsibility ultimately lies with the committee. It will be for the committee to exercise practically an unrestrained discretion in that connexion; and we sincerely hope that by these means we may be able to formulate a Tariff that will not only be beneficial and advantageous to the colony as a whole, but that will do justice to individuals as far as is possible.”

Then, further on, the honorable gentleman is reported to have said—

“I would submit that the great object of protection is, as far as possible, to enable readily adaptable and indigenous industries to compete against foreign importations.”

And, still further on again—

“Of course the great charge that is made against our industries by the other side is that they are artificial and too expensive. It is said that you can raise polar bears on the Equator if you spend money enough; but that is not, and never has been, the policy of protectionists. They say, as regards our natural indigenous industries, ‘It is the duty of the Government and the State to give us some aid and assistance to foster them in their infancy.’ I say, sir, that it is a very reasonable and fair thing to do.”

Now, what I want to do is to get this polar bear business defined—to ascertain what is a polar bear industry. To my mind an industry that requires more than 25 per cent. is certainly a polar bear industry, because the public have to pay a profit on the amount of duty imposed, as well as on the actual cost of the article produced.

Mr. HANCOCK.—That is where you are wrong.

Mr. BRAKE.—I know something about this matter. I import goods, and I know who pays the duty. You cannot teach me anything about that. When dutiable goods are imported we add the amount of the duty to the price of the goods, and charge a profit on the whole. There is a peculiar difference of opinion between the various sections of protectionists in this Chamber, which has struck me as being somewhat strange. The Minister of Customs goes in for assisting and fostering industries in their infancy, but the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), judging from his remarks upon the coal industry, seems to be altogether against that policy, and thinks it only necessary to protect an industry when it is established. I cannot understand it at all. The idea of the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) seems to me a very peculiar one. I admit that free-trade is not possible in this colony at the present time, but as one who believes in freedom of trade, and in removing restrictions, as far as possible, from the exchange of commodities, I would think it absurd to try to bring about free-trade at this juncture. The position of Parliament and the country is that they are going in for assisting infant industries. It is for us to consider the best way of doing that. To my mind a protective duty is not the best way of assisting infant industries. The best way, I think, is recommended by the Tariff Board. Writing about vegetable and mineral oils, the conclusion the board came to is this:—

“We think it wiser to assist an industry, the success of which is doubtful, by means of a bonus rather than by a protective duty, and would reduce the Tariff rate to the amount which is absolutely required for revenue.”

Now, if that were done, it would bring about this result: In the first place, it would do away with the chaos and confusion caused by our protective duties. Then, it would assimilate the duties of this colony nearer to the duties of the other colonies, and it would be a more likely means of bringing about federation than our present protective duties. The Chairman of the Tariff Board exhibited an exceedingly fair spirit in his admirable speech. There is one sentence which, as the representative of a farming constituency, I feel it is my duty to read to the committee. It is as follows:—

“The farming community of Victoria are a class that we should all be proud of, and we

must do everything we can to keep them on the land. We must not allow anything in the world to shift those men—who are the real backbone and sinew of the country—from the soil. Parliament must be liberal to them in all its dealings, because there is no doubt that they are a fine class of men; and although representing a city constituency, and therefore a manufacturing centre, I confess at once that the true interest of this country—its first and paramount interest—is agriculture.”

I think that statement is very creditable to the honorable member. The honorable member has a fair and liberal spirit, and no doubt he is to be congratulated on the Tariff report which he has brought up. I think it is important that we should so deal with the Tariff that it will not require to be touched again for some years. The honorable member for Fitzroy (Mr. Tucker) said in his address to this committee—

“Amongst other things of which the mercantile community especially complained were the frequent changes which have been made in the Tariff. They stated that, owing to those proposed alterations, people were kept in a state of turmoil for month after month and year after year, because they were always expecting some changes in the Tariff. It is calculated by those who ought to know, and do know, that every such change in the Tariff in this colony causes a loss of revenue of at least £100,000.”

I consider that we ought to deal with the Tariff on as scientific a basis as possible, and the extracts I have read show the basis on which protection should be given to our infant industries. The present is an opportune time at which to combine the bonus system with the imposition of duties. If that plan were followed it would be the means of doing a great amount of good to the colony. With regard to vested interests which have been built up in connexion with our industries, I think that a higher interest we have to consider is that of the welfare of the community. I say that the lives of people are more important to us than money or machinery. The first duty we owe to the community is to see that the people are put in a condition to earn sufficient money to keep body and soul together. I consider that the burden they have to bear is too great. The assistance given to these industries, instead of doing good to them, has had the very opposite effect. It has been the means of causing those who established them to drop into careless and unenterprising ways, marked by lack of managerial ability, as shown by the fact that manufacturers in the other colonies can make profits with only half our duties.

Why should 45 per cent. be necessary here if industries can be successfully carried on in the other colonies under 20 per cent. duties. It is altogether ridiculous to nurse people with the money of this country with the object of bolstering up industries. The proper thing is to encourage the manufacturers to use their brains in order to make their industries profitable. One great advantage of the bonus system is that it reduces the price of the goods which are assisted.

Mr. LONGMORE.—It is the middleman who generally gets the benefit.

Mr. BRAKE.—The middleman gets the profit out of the colonial goods just the same as he does out of the imported goods, and the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) says that he makes more out of the imported goods, as is shown by the example of hats. The honorable member stated that a hat which originally cost 3s., cost 7s. 6d. before the wearer got it. With reference to reapers and binders, their cost to the purchaser, when there was a duty on them, was £90, and when the duty was taken off the cost was reduced to £75. The real price is from £25 to £27; but there is a charge of £6 for carriage, and there are all sorts of other expenses to be allowed for. Experts are sent out with the reapers and binders to sell them, and that has to be added to the price of the article. I maintain that under the bonus system the consumer gets his goods cheaper. As soon as we induce the consuming public to double the amount of goods they consume, we stimulate trade and traffic, increase the railway carriage, and give more work to the people in every direction. In the case of a bonus there is no friction between one industry and another, while under protective duties you have friction of all sorts. The Tariff Board has found it very difficult to discover which is a protective and which is a revenue-producing duty. They find that the raw material of one trade is interfered with by the endeavour made to protect another trade, but no such thing can occur under the bonus system. Under that system, a certain amount of money is given in connexion with an article which is produced, and if it cannot be produced the manufacturer must put up with that knowing the position of affairs. The butter bonus has been an abundant success. Here is an industry which, having been assisted by a bonus, is in a few years placed on a firm foundation. That industry does not now

receive any assistance; it does not look for it, and it is in a solid condition. The same thing can be done with other natural industries, and it is only natural and indigenous industries we intend to foster. I understand that the Protectionist Association have passed a resolution in favour of the minimum rate of wage and eight hours a day labour. It can be easily arranged, when bonuses are given, that they shall be paid on the amount of money which is paid to employés who receive the minimum wage. If any class in the community is entitled to a minimum rate of wage, it is the employés of the people who receive State assistance. I commend this view to the attention of the honorable member for Melbourne North. I say it is our duty to raise the condition of those who are receiving the lowest wages. We ought always to do everything to help people who have poor wages and insufficient food and clothing. Another advantage in connexion with the bonus system is that it can be dealt with very easily. To my mind the strongest argument of all in its favour is that under it the man who uses the benefited article does not pay. As the honorable member for Sandhurst (Mr. Lazarus) pointed out, the miners of his district pay £1,000 per annum on account of the duty on fuse. If the people of this country think that it is advisable to establish a fuse factory they have a right to pay for it, but I do not see why the man who uses the fuse should be taxed for using it; on the contrary, he should be encouraged for using it. It is the duty of the community to assist the industry, and not the particular person who buys the article. There is an instance of this in connexion with the article twine. It is recommended that a duty of 10 per cent. be placed on twine, and that means that the farmer will have to pay an additional price for his twine. If we want to assist this industry, which seems to be a natural one, it is not the farmer who should be specially taxed for it, but the community.

Mr. LONGMORE.—The price of twine has been reduced since it was made in the colony.

Mr. BRAKE.—It is not the man who uses the twine who asks for the duty. There is another objection to protective duties. If we pay duties to the amount of £2,000,000 per annum, the consuming public cause the importers to finance the

money for them, and pay £1,000,000 to them to do it. When there is a difference of 50 per cent. between wholesale and retail prices it is the public who have to pay the increase. In effect £1,000,000 per annum is paid to finance £2,000,000, and that is to my mind ridiculous. One important point disclosed by the report of the Tariff Board is that the country manufacturers are in favour of a very great reduction of duties. It is principally the metropolitan manufacturers who seem to desire to keep the duties up. The managers of the woollen mills say that they cannot exist with a duty of less than 40 per cent. They could save 15 per cent. right off by selling their goods straight away to the retail dealer instead of the wholesale dealer. These mill managers should be put upon their metal, and be induced to find the way to work their businesses properly, but if we go on giving them money they will never try to do that. The proper course to pursue is to withdraw support from them until they have found out methods of working their businesses more profitably. As one who sells goods, I have no hesitation in saying that if the public want a particular article, they have a right to get that article. If they ask for union tweed they are entitled to get union tweed. The only point to be considered is whether it is not very unwise of the manufacturers not to stimulate the demand for a better class of goods. The people who succeed in manufacturing or in selling are the people who try to encourage the use of a better class of articles, because they give more satisfaction; and whenever the sale of an improved class of goods can be brought about it is the duty and the advantage of the manufacturers to do it. At the same time they are perfectly justified in making whatever the public want. I would recommend our woollen manufacturers to try and stimulate the making of a better class of goods, and to encourage the public to buy that class of articles, because by doing so the manufacturers will find that their manufactures will succeed a great deal better. The system of paying bonuses would enable those goods to be sold at a lower price, as the manufacturers would receive their bonus straight from the Government, and this would enable them to sell considerably cheaper. There is a very important piece of evidence which was given by Mr. J. B. Downie to the Tariff Board. It is too long to read at this hour, but it is to the

effect that in Leith, Scotland, they were making arrangements to start monthly sailing vessels to this colony to send out commodities here, and get our commodities in return to be distributed in Scotland. But immediately the last heavy duties were put on the whole scheme was abandoned. I think it is a great pity that a project of this sort was stopped. We ought to encourage that class of trade, because at the present time we have too much filtration, too much of the middleman, too many people handling goods. First of all our butter goes to London, and then it has to be sent to three or four places before the consuming public can get it. It would be to our advantage to exchange our commodities as directly as possible with those who want them, and to get their commodities direct in return. The woollen industry has been held up in this debate as one of the best industries in this colony. Now, I think I know of a better industry, and one which is more natural to the colony. That industry is the meat-preserving industry. At the present time we have over 1,000 men engaged in three meat-preserving factories, and those factories do not get one penny of duty. They are preserving rabbits, sheep's tongues, and other sorts of meat, and sending them away for export on the markets of the world; and they do this without the assistance of any duty whatever. Yet they are taxed on almost everything they use. The machinery, boxes, nails, the lacquer for their tins, their labels, and almost everything they employ in their industry is taxed. The meat-preserving company which I have particularly in my mind is that at Hamilton, which is further taxed, inasmuch as it has to send its goods all round to Melbourne, in order to have them shipped. I certainly think that something ought to be done to open the western ports, so as to enable the products from the western district to be sent straight to the old world. There is no reason why Portland should not have the small amount of money which is asked for to improve that port. I believe the amount is only about £9,000, the interest on which would come to about £400 per annum, and this outlay would give as good a return as any money that could be spent in the colony. I hope that the Government will see their way to assist this small project, and thus enable the western district to ship its goods without sending them to Melbourne.

In conclusion, I would say that while I believe in freedom of trade I can see that it is not possible in this colony at the present time, and I am liberal enough to compromise and to try and do what I can to assist those industries which have been established out of the unfortunate position which they have been placed in. They have been put into an unnatural position, and we must assist them until we can get them into a natural position. When we get them into that position the country will be stronger, the manufactories will be stronger, and the public will be a great deal better served. No reference is made to the fixed duties in the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn, but of course they can be dealt with as the various items come to be considered in detail; and no doubt a number of them will be reduced. For my part I am very glad to have an opportunity of voting for the amendment. I consider that the Government should not have taken up the position in relation to it that they have done. I have no desire to oppose the Government, because I recognise that they have done a great deal of good work for the country and for the district I represent. I acknowledge that freely, and I admit that they deserve credit for what they have done. Therefore, I am sorry to have to vote against them; but I am compelled to vote for this amendment on account of the views of my constituency, and on account of my own convictions.

Mr. GROSE.—Sir, the question before the committee has been very exhaustively discussed, and it will be quite unnecessary for me to make a speech on the subject. I have made arrangements for addressing my constituents on the question, and this will save honorable members the trouble of listening to a speech from me. At the same time I wish to indicate very briefly the position that I intend to take up on this question. I think we are all indebted to the honorable member for Essendon for the excellent and very brilliant speech to which he has treated us to-night, and I think that he rightly interprets the feeling of the people in the country, and also the feeling and the state of parties in this Chamber. Another speech to which I wish to refer was the excellent deliverance from the honorable member for Benalla, with whose sentiments I am thoroughly in accord. Many points have been raised in the debate which might well be discussed if there

were time. One suggestion to which I take particular exception was made by the honorable member for Brighton, when referring to the honorable member for Castle-maine (Mr. Williams), who had been speaking with reference to the woollen duties. Now, I would like to ask where would the lawyers be if honorable members in this Chamber are prevented from dealing with matters in which they are personally interested? I certainly think that the suggestion made by the honorable member for Brighton came in a very curious way from such a quarter. The question now before us is not one of free-trade and protection; but whether the advocates of a very high Tariff have sufficient consideration for the mining and agricultural industries, which are of such immense importance to this country. The Tariff, despite what we have heard in some directions, must be dealt with in a discriminating way; and I shall endeavour to show my discrimination in the matter by the votes which I intend to give, and the speeches I intend to make, when we come to deal with the items in detail.

Mr. CRAVEN.—Mr. Chairman, I am the 64th speaker who has risen in this debate, and I find that in the House of Commons, where there are 670 members, it is only in an extremely important debate indeed that more than 65 members address themselves to the subject. If the same proportion of members spoke in the House of Commons as have addressed themselves to this question there would be very little business done in that Chamber. As the hour is getting very late I will limit my remarks to two or three minutes. I just wish to make myself clear with regard to the vote I intend to give, reserving what I have to say further until we are dealing with the items of the Tariff separately. I have always advocated protection to a certain extent, and I feel proud of some of the industries which we have raised in this country through our protective policy. At the same time, I have always felt that when an industry requires more than 25 per cent. protection it is a question whether that industry should not be allowed to die a natural death. I gave a pledge at the last election in favour of that view—that an industry that could not live with a 25 per cent. protection should be allowed to die. For these reasons I feel that I am bound to vote for the amendment of the honorable member for Hawthorn.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Sir, I should not have spoken at all on this question but for the number of charges which have been brought against honorable members in this (the Ministerial) corner. We are pachydermatous, and it is necessary that we should be, but, at the same time, if we allow those statements to go uncontradicted it is highly probable that it will be construed into an admission of guilt. The speech of the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith) the other evening was referred to by the press of the country, and particularly by one portion of the press, as being a magnificent effort. And, as honorable members were aware, there were general expressions of approval given from every part of the House. Now, we have not, up to the present time, been favoured with an answer to any one of the arguments which the honorable member for Richmond used in that speech. We had the spectacle for the next three or four days of the legal luminaries in the Chamber talking an immense amount of nothing, but not attempting to touch the points made by the honorable member for Richmond. We found them dancing round those points, or trying to bring up old speeches which had been made by the honorable member, but we never found any attempt to deal with his arguments. I regret very much that the honorable member should have had to make that speech, and I also regret very much that the honorable member for Hawthorn should have had to make his well-known and much-respected speech. The age of that speech entitles it to respect. Any one who has the slightest doubt of what the honorable member said three weeks ago has only to look back at the records of this House about twenty years since and he will find identically the same speech.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Not quite.

Mr. HANCOCK.—Well, the honorable member has brought it a little up to date. It was what the French would call a *re-chauffée*. I am bound to express my admiration for the honorable member for Hawthorn, because he has the courage of his opinions. He is a consistent free-trader. He comes into this chamber, declares that he is a free-trader, and comes forward with a deliberate motion which other men who are equally free-traders have not the courage to support. Now, I say those gentlemen have placed this Chamber in a false position, and they have

placed the honorable member for Hawthorn in a false position. It was unfair, and more especially at the last moment, to bring up charges such as were brought forward by the honorable member for Benalla, when that honorable member, speaking about the labour party in New South Wales, said he knew it was absolutely untrue that the labour party in that colony had consented to sink their ideas on the fiscal policy so that they might secure the land tax. Now, I say that that is absolutely true. The first labour party that was formed in New South Wales quarrelled over the fiscal policy, with the result that next to nothing was done. The next time they met they agreed that whatever was to be considered the main plank of their policy they would sink all other questions and fight for that. They have agreed to fight for the land tax, and under the present circumstances they will let the question of free-trade and protection go. It is simply a matter of expediency. We know that even in this chamber expediency is sometimes practised. The honorable member for Hawthorn and the honorable member for Lowan are fighting together now, but we know that when it comes to the question of the land tax their opinions are as wide apart as the poles. The honorable member for Hawthorn was at one time the president of an association the vice-president of which, whilst he was a free-trader, also advocated a policy which meant the confiscation of the lands of this colony. No fault can be found with the labour party either here or in New South Wales for sinking for a time some of their convictions—if they are earnest in their intentions—to gain some other end. The honorable member for Benalla quoted to-night the remainder of the speech that was delivered by Mr. Howell, and that was referred to by the honorable member for Richmond (Mr. Trenwith), and he said that it was unfair of the honorable member for Richmond not to have given the committee the whole of that speech.

Mr. KENNEDY.—The whole of the sentence.

Mr. HANCOCK.—The honorable member finished the sentence, but he did not read the whole of the paragraph. The honorable member was speaking, at the time, in reply to the honorable member for Hawthorn, who had held up the old country as a model to us. He spoke of

our deserted ports and the sweating that takes place here, and he compared the volume of the trade of the old country to the trade of this country. If we could find an authority who was able to show that England was not in that flourishing condition it was right that he should be quoted. It is not an answer to the statements of Mr. Howell to say that his remedy for the condition of things he pointed out is bi-metallism. The fact remains that the honorable member for Richmond correctly represented the condition of affairs in England at the present time. Then the representatives of the labour party have been charged with bolstering up the monopolists and manufacturers of the colony. I would point out that in regard to every item of duty that we wish to retain we have been influenced by the representations made by the employés, and not by the manufacturers. They feel that the industries which give them their means of livelihood are threatened. A good deal has been said about the farmers and the miners; but with the exception of the honorable members who sit in this (the Ministerial) corner no honorable member has said anything about the men who are likely to be thrown out of work if the recommendations of the Tariff Board and the proposals of the Government are carried, and many of those proposals are against the evidence that was taken by the Tariff Board. I believe that the Government will carry their point by the assistance of the Opposition, but to rely upon such support is a dangerous experiment. A Government is weakened when it wins its battles with the assistance of its enemies. Certain honorable members have referred to the village settlements, and have spoken about the terrible condition of the men on them. I happen to know the terrible condition these people were in before they went to the village settlements, and I have always been prepared to give my meed of praise to the men who originated the village settlements. They were not a success. Great movements of that character very rarely are a success in their inception, but the idea is a grand one, and at the present time there are hundreds of men with comfortable little homes on the village settlements who, had it not been for them, would have been starving in the streets of Melbourne. I say, therefore, that it is unfair to speak of the village settlements as swampy graves. In some instances bad

Mr. Hancock.

land was selected, and the village settlements were failures; but in other instances where good land was selected they were a success. The labour representatives do not desire that the farmers or the miners should pay more for their tools of trade or for any of their daily requirements than is absolutely necessary. We deny the charge that protection raises prices, and we call attention to the number of instances quoted by the honorable member for Richmond that have not been answered by any speaker—in which protection has been the means of reducing prices. We know that at the last general election there was a wild cry started against the supposed high duties. That cry was raised by individuals who tried to induce the people to send them to Parliament to reduce the payment of members; and, in fact, to reduce everything. But it was a false cry. The farmers never called for a remission of the high duties. Certain persons went about among the farmers and told them that they were getting a very poor price for their produce, and that they were paying a very high price for everything they used, and the same individuals sought to blame the Trades Hall, and the maritime strike, and the high duties for all the depression that the country has experienced. There is hardly a country member who has had the courage to blame the land boom, and the financial institutions, and the swindles perpetrated in Melbourne, which did more to drag the country through the mud than any protectionist or any striker. The Government had to bring in most drastic measures to punish those people, and to prevent a repetition of the same evils. I say, again, that it is grossly unfair for honorable members to go before their constituents and to blame one section of the people for all the troubles that have befallen the colony. Protection is charged with everything.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—No.

Mr. HANCOCK.—I have heard it stated that our piers are deserted; our factories are empty; and that our trade is going to Sydney owing to protection. And that is the charge that has been made from the beginning to the end of this debate. I hope that honorable members will take all the items of the Tariff into their most serious consideration, and that they will not be carried away by any pledge they may have made to reduce the high duties. They should exercise a certain amount of

discrimination. What is a high duty in one case is a low duty in another. Speeches never win a vote. I am told that the honorable member for Essendon made an important speech to-night, but I am sure that he has not won a vote by it. I have heard it stated in the old country that the best speech ever made in the House of Commons did not win a vote. Honorable members state that they gave a pledge at the last general election that they would vote for a reduction of the high duties, and it does not matter what arguments you use those pledges, they say, must be carried out. I trust, however, that the committee will be careful not to inflict any serious injury upon our industries.

Mr. MADDEN.—Sir, I had intended speaking at some length, but as the hour is late, and the committee are desirous of coming to a vote, I will confine my remarks to a few points. I will first say one or two words to the honorable member for Footscray. No matter what comes, all the troubles of the colony and of the world he puts down to the boom. He is not allowed to bring the watchword of his party—"Boo-hoo"—into the House, but he comes as near to it as he can, and cries "Boom," which was the salutation of King Cetewayo's Zulus and others of that class. There is one point that has been forgotten. I do not intend to go over the ground that has been trodden hard with regard to the causes of the depression. It has been amply shown by the speeches of honorable members that the farming community realize that they cannot go on bearing their present burdens, and to put their position into their own words—"While they did not feel the gentle dew of moderate protection, they are now driven by the pitiless rain of prohibition to get in out of the wet." Whilst the Government were busily engaged in picking out what were happily described as "the broken crusts and candle ends of finance," they forgot a matter that is of vital importance to Melbourne and the suburbs. I refer to the house connexions of the sewage system. When a duty is imposed by the State, every facility should be given to the person upon whom it is imposed to enable him to carry it out without let or hindrance. We know that every house has to be connected with the sewage system, and it is estimated that in the case of the poorest cottage that connexion will cost, if the present duties be imposed, from £16 to £20. No proposal is made that the duties upon earthenware

or upon iron pipes should be reduced. The duty on earthenware is 8d. per cubic yard, and that, as experts will tell you, is equal to 35 per cent. upon the furniture of the closets, which will be rendered necessary immediately. The duty on iron pipes is 75 per cent. This, as I have said, is a matter of vital importance, and for this reason. We know from experience that typhoid fever is intimately bound up with the modern system of water-closets. If you confine, as you must confine, the gases in the pipes, and do not take any adequate measures to prevent the gases from getting into the houses, typhoid fever is certain. I say, therefore, that the Ministry will be playing with the lives of the people of the city and suburbs if they do not give immediate attention to this subject, and allow the people who have to get these appliances to get the very best, at the lowest possible rate. Tenders are being called for, and I understand that for the first year 35,000 of these appliances will have to be supplied to Melbourne and the suburbs. There is no factory in the colony at the present time for the manufacture of them, and I say that there should be no factory. That is a bold statement to make, but I make it for a good reason. If we attempt to coddle up a factory here by imposing high duties, we shall simply be inducing people to make experiments. They have not the experience that is required. The want is immediate, and we desire to get the best appliances. If we allow any local manufacturer to try experiments and to supply this necessary furniture, we shall do infinite harm. Scientific men will tell you that when Edinburgh was sewered the old town—where there were enormous houses without water-closets—escaped typhoid for years, when the disease was rampant in the new town, which was sewered. The doctors said that that was entirely owing to the imperfect furniture supplied. There is nobody here that we can benefit by leaving the duties on these articles. If we were determined to start the industry here we should have to import skilled labour from Europe, and I say that the proper course to take is to remove the duty from earthenware altogether, or from this particular kind of earthenware at any rate. Of course the same remark does not apply to iron pipes, because they are required for many other purposes. The raw material for iron pipes is pig iron, which costs £2 a ton in England. There is no freight upon it, because

it is always gladly accepted as ballast. There is no duty on it, and the manufacture of it into iron pipes costs from 15s. to 20s. per ton. The cost of these pipes here is from £6 to £8 per ton, whereas the best iron pipes cost in England £3 per ton. The freight is 12s. 6d. per ton, other charges 7s. 6d.; so that landed here in bond they are worth £4 per ton. The protective duty raises the colonial pipe to from £6 to £8 per ton, so that the local manufacturer gets the full benefit of the protection. I have no objection to that, as long as protection is the policy of the country, but as people are obliged to use these pipes, no matter what they cost, the duty in question imposes a heavy burden upon them. This is a most important matter, and I desire that it should be treated from a national point of view. It seems to have been overlooked, and therefore I bring it under the notice of the Government.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Mr. Chairman, I cannot tax the patience of the committee so far as to exercise my right to reply at length. I should have liked to have said a good deal in closing this debate. I should have liked to have had the satisfaction of answering the speech of the honorable member for Essendon, and pointing out to him that the revolutionary proposals I have made, stimulated by venomous hatred of colonial institutions—

Mr. DEAKIN.—But I did not say that.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—I think the honorable member's remarks contained an insinuation to that effect. I should have liked to have pointed out to the honorable member that my revolutionary proposal only embraces 24 articles in the Tariff, some of which are such important articles as cosies, cushions, footstools, and marble tomb-stones, and many of them additions to the Tariff of 1892. I do not think, on the whole, that I either feel or look like a revolutionist. But I am deterred from replying at any length by two considerations: first, I have not time; and, secondly, the honorable member did not hear my speech, and I am sure, in spite of his kind protestations to the contrary, that he would not waste his time so far as to read it.

Mr. DEAKIN.—But I did read it.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—Because it would have been a worse task to the honorable member than the task of the honorable member for Dunolly, who had to

read out, in cold blood, by the fireside, to his father the protectionist speeches of the Honorable the Speaker. I trust the Ministry now appreciate the absurdity and the untenable nature of their contention that the amendment may possibly be regarded as a motion of want of confidence. In the first place, I pointed out that I did not submit it as a motion of want of confidence. Secondly, they have given us a free hand on every item of the Tariff, and surely the whole is no more than the sum total of all the parts. If we are to be allowed to deal with all the parts in detail, surely we may be allowed to deal with them as a whole.

Mr. G. TURNER.—We will deal with each item on its merits.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH.—That is all my proposal means, and the Ministry had no right to regard it as a motion of want of confidence. But I am glad that they have not done so, because no one ever heard of a motion of want of confidence being dealt with in this way. Whoever heard of a motion of want of confidence being dealt with without a single Minister rising to take part in the debate? Whoever heard of a debate on a motion of want of confidence, during which, regardless of their possible doom, the little victims play with all sorts of things—answer questions, receive deputations, carry on business, introduce Bills, and all this while their fate is trembling in the balance, and at any moment they may be hurled into “the cool shades of opposition”? Why, sir, if I thought that the Premier really regarded this amendment as a motion of want of confidence, I should feel quite distressed at his mental attitude. But I am glad the Government have shown that the amendment is not regarded by them as a motion of want of confidence, and therefore I ask all honorable members who agree with me to register their votes in favour of this not very revolutionary proposal. I must be gratified to find that a good number of those who are going to vote against me nevertheless agree with my views on this question, and I hope that even at this, the eleventh, hour they will think better of it and take their seats with me in the division. I should have liked, had time permitted, to have explained to the honorable member for Geelong (Mr. Higgins) and the honorable member for Dunolly that a maximum is not a minimum, but I will not waste any more time on that. I trust,

however, that in the calm repose of his private study the honorable and learned member for Geelong, at all events, may master that not very difficult problem. I commend my amendment to the kind consideration of the committee.

The committee divided on Mr. Murray Smith's amendment—

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	70

Majority against the amendment 57

AYES.

Mr. Austin,	Mr. Reid,
" Brake,	" Russell,
" Duffus,	" Murray Smith,
" Grattan,	" A. W. H. White.
" Irvine,	<i>Tellers.</i>
" McLeod,	Mr. Craven,
" Moule,	" Madden.

NOES.

Mr. J. Anderson,	Dr. Maloney,
" W. Anderson,	Mr. McColl,
" Baker,	" McGregor,
" Bennett,	Sir John McIntyre,
Sir Graham Berry,	Mr. McKenzie,
Mr. Best,	" McLean,
" Bowser,	" McLellan,
" Bromley,	" Murray,
" Burton,	" O'Neill,
" Cameron,	Sir James Patterson,
" Carter,	Mr. Prendergast,
" Chirnside,	" Rawson,
" Cook,	" Rogers,
" Deakin,	" Salmon,
" Downward,	" Sangster,
" Duffy,	Dr. Scott,
" Duggan,	Mr. T. Smith,
" Dyer,	" Staughton,
" Fink,	" Sterry,
" Foster,	" Thomson,
" Graham,	" Trenwith,
" Graves,	" Tucker,
" Gray,	" G. Turner,
" Grose,	" Vale,
" Gurr,	" Webb,
" Hamilton,	" Wheeler,
" Harris,	" J. S. White,
" Higgins,	" Wilkins,
" I. A. Isaacs,	" E. D. Williams,
" J. A. Isaacs,	" H. R. Williams,
" Kennedy,	" Winter,
" Kerr,	" Zox.
" Kirton,	<i>Tellers.</i>
" Lazarus,	Mr. Beazley,
" Levien,	" G. J. Turner.
" Longmore,	

PAIRS.

Mr. A. Anderson,	Mr. Taverner,
" Langdon.	" Peacock.

Mr. BEST stated that, in order that honorable members might be prepared for the business on Tuesday next, he wished to point out that it was the intention of

the Government, after the first four items of their Tariff proposals had been dealt with, down to "lager beer," when they came to the item of "apparel," to ask the committee to postpone all the other items down to "woollens." It was desirable, following the precedent practically established in that Chamber, that the duty on woollens should be fixed before they approached the duty on apparel, as no doubt the duty on apparel would be regulated by the amount fixed on woollens. The Government understood that a number of amendments were going to be submitted by honorable members, and, as far as amendments on the items of the Government proposals were concerned, he would ask honorable members to take steps to circulate them without delay, because no experienced member of the Assembly would disagree with him when he said that it would be impossible for the Government to attempt to deal with amendments on items that were sprung upon them at the table. He would like honorable members to have their amendments printed and circulated at once, so that the Government might have an opportunity of inquiring at the departments as to the nature of their effect, if adopted, because some of them no doubt would be far-reaching. As regarded amendments for the alteration of items of the Tariff not within the Government proposals, the Government would take an opportunity of dealing with them after their own proposals had been dealt with, if honorable members would circulate those amendments. The Government did not wish to tie the hands of the committee, and the fullest opportunity would be given to honorable members who desired to make any alterations outside of the Government proposals, when the Government proposals had been disposed of.

Mr. MURRAY SMITH said he desired to say respectfully that he could not enter into any compact. He might find it necessary to move an amendment at a moment's notice.

Mr. G. TURNER remarked that all the Government wanted was to get as many of the amendments printed as they could. They did not wish to tie the hands of honorable members.

Dr. SCOTT observed that honorable members were receiving information every day in regard to the effects of the Tariff, and it would be very unfair to bind them down to certain items. (Mr. Best—"We

only want you to send in the amendments as far as you can.") Honorable members desired to consult the convenience of the Government as much as possible, but they did not wish to be tied down.

Mr. BEST remarked that it would be sufficient if honorable members helped the Government as far as they could.

The CHAIRMAN.—As there is a very large proportion of honorable members present, I may as well state the course I intend to adopt in regard to the matters which have to be dealt with by the committee next week. As honorable members may complain that they did not understand the procedure, I desire to make a statement in their own interest. I will take, for example, the item "Apparel," &c., 45 per cent. ad valorem duty, which is the fifth on the list. If an honorable member proposes the omission of, say, "45 per cent.," with the view of inserting certain other figures, I shall put the question—"That the figures proposed to be omitted stand part of the item." Those who desire to omit those figures will vote with the "Noes," and those who desire to retain them will vote with the "Ayes." Then, assuming that there is a blank made, if an honorable member wishes to propose that the duty shall be 15, 25, 30, or 40 per cent., it will be my duty to receive the lesser amount first to test the feeling of the committee on it. Assuming that there is a blank, I shall put the question as follows:—"That the figure so and so proposed to be inserted stand part of the proposed amendment." Assuming that the committee determine this in the negative the amendment will be negatived, and we shall then go to the next figure until we get a majority of the committee, which will determine the matter.

Mr. G. TURNER said he desired to thank honorable members for remaining so late to assist the Government to dispose of the want of confidence motion. He was somewhat reluctant to ask them to remain, but he felt that if he did not take that course the probabilities were that the debate would drag on through next week. However, he would promise honorable members that there must be some circumstances similar to the present before he would again be induced to ask them to remain late on a Thursday evening.

Progress was then reported.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes after midnight, until Tuesday, July 2.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, July 2, 1895.

Shooting Season—Width of Tires Bill—Gaols Bill—Dairies Supervision Bill—Married Women's Property Bill.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at twenty-four minutes to five o'clock p.m., and read the prayer.

SHOOTING SEASON.

The Hon. F. S. GRIMWADE asked the Solicitor-General whether the Minister of Customs had brought under his notice the fact that two well-known Melbourne gentlemen who, according to a paragraph in the *Argus* of 19th March, were found shooting quail before the quail season opened had been proceeded against; and, if not, did the Solicitor-General propose taking any further steps in the matter? The paragraph, which was sent to him, read as follows:—

"Ballarat, Monday evening.

"The day before the quail season opened two well-known Melbourne gentlemen were found shooting at Learmonth. When remonstrated with on their unsportsmanlike conduct, they alleged that they had received a special permit from the Commissioner of Customs. The matter has aroused considerable indignation amongst the local sportsmen, and Mr. Best, who has been appealed to, states that he gave no such permission."

Under the Game Act there was a close season for quail from the first day of August to the last day of February, and the gentlemen in question were liable to a penalty of £2 each, and £1 for every quail they killed on that day. Proceedings were constantly being taken against persons of no position who were found shooting with guns or fishing with nets that they ought not to use, and in such cases as the one to which he had drawn attention steps ought to be taken to compel observance of the law.

The Hon. H. CUTHBERT said he had heard the names of the two gentlemen in question, who were Melbourne gentlemen occupying high official positions. (Mr. Sachse—"We would like to know who they are.") It appeared that those two gentlemen went out for a day's shooting on the 28th February. The matter was brought under the notice of the Customs department, with a view to determine whether they ought not to be prosecuted. If they had committed a breach of the law, there was no doubt they ought to be prosecuted; but if Mr Grimwade would look at the Game Act 1890, he would