

" at 5*l.* per statute adult." That is a statement, one of those many statements from which we suffer, which is sufficiently correct in a general way not to be challengeable as wilful misrepresentation, but which, in its actual effect and purport, is a misrepresentation. First of all, the work of crushing cane has never yet been done by anybody but white labour ever since sugar was grown in Queensland, and the warning therefore given here that the work of crushing cane " is still more trying and is paid for at a higher rate," is, first of all, not correct, because it is not more trying, and secondly, it takes place in the mills, and is therefore, less trying. It has never been carried on from the commencement by anything but white labour; it is well paid, and well-sought for. Therefore, so far as the crushing of cane is concerned, that is an absolute misrepresentation. Take the other statement: " the work of harvesting is still more trying and is paid for at a higher rate." The work of harvesting is trying. You could not take a mass of labourers from this country and put them down into a cane harvest field, and expect the whole body of them to be able to engage in that work, well as it is remunerated, with satisfaction to themselves. There are a certain proportion of our people who cannot face the close atmosphere and moist heat of the cane fields. That proportion, of course, cannot be classified beforehand; it is a matter for individual experience. But this wholesale statement is made in face of the fact that the Commonwealth of Australia has deliberately adopted the policy of requiring that the whole of this work shall be done by white labour, and in face of the fact that we have been dealing during the last two years with the largest harvest of sugar cane we have ever had, and are dealing with it by a far larger proportion of white labour than ever was employed in it before, I think, I may say, to the satisfaction of the men who obtain the work and to the satisfaction, to a very large extent, of the employers themselves. Where there is dissatisfaction the testimony is that it arises from the want of self-control of those engaged in a remunerative employment, who are accustomed, as unfortunately people are in many parts of the world, to spend too great a proportion of their wages upon stimulants and to disqualify themselves by that means from efficiently continuing their work. There can be no doubt that the excessive use of stimulants is more injurious in a hot climate than it is in a cold climate. What the labourer in the cane field suffers from most, or at all events what is most complained about, is due to these excesses. But here we are deliberately, as a part of a national policy, providing for the carrying on of the whole of this industry by white labour. Of course, as Australia becomes older an increasingly large proportion of our labour will be Australian born. Yet, speaking broadly and accepting the opinion of competent critics, they are unable to detect in our first or even in our second generation any appreciable departure from the old stock. We have men freshly landed in the hotter regions of our country—and I am speaking now of the north of Australia—who go at once to such work. I have spoken to many men who have gone from England, Ireland, or Scotland direct to North Queensland, or some of the northern portions of Australia, and who have engaged at once in the most trying occupations in the most trying belt. A short distance from the sea coast one reaches the plateau. On that plateau we get cold fresh nights, and there white men enjoy what is said by them to be one of the best climates in the world. In the belt where the sugar grows, conditions are different, it is on the sea coast, and the heat is moist and oppressive. It is not everyone who can live there with comfort and satisfaction, though it is only a small proportion of those who settle there who ever think of leaving it. The great proportion remain, thrive and flourish by labour, much of which is as trying as this labour, and they are now doing this labour with excellent pecuniary results. No one would gather from reading this official statement that these are the facts of the case; that a deliberate attempt has

Sixth Day.
25 April 1907.

EMIGRATION.
(Mr. Deakin.)