

look at the periods for which several of these clerks and draughtsmen were paid, he would see that the term of their engagement had already expired, as they were only charged for two months. As to not introducing these Estimates earlier in the session, the difficulty had been in preparing them so as to meet the requirements of the Audit Act. They had given his department infinite trouble to frame them in this way, and he doubted whether it would not be necessary to alter the provisions of the Audit Act in this respect. It was simply impossible to prepare these Estimates with absolute accuracy, and to say months beforehand how many weeks this officer might be wanted, and how many months another officer might be wanted, and split these officers up in the way they were here split up—one-sixth of a man for this work, one-fourth of another man for another work, and so on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said his hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways had been worrying him for weeks and months about these Estimates, so as to have them prepared in accordance with the Act. They thought at first it would be impossible to do it, but, after a great deal of trouble, they managed to get them into their present shape, which was the cause of the delay in bringing them forward.

Motion to report progress—put and passed.

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at a quarter past 4 o'clock, p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 16th March, 1892.

Appropriation Bill: third reading—Hawkers and Pedlars Bill: second reading: in committee: third reading—Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale: despatch from Secretary of State—Customs Bill: error in—Railways Act, 1878, Amendment Bill: second reading: in committee—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Sir T. Cockburn-Campbell, Bart.) took the chair at 8 o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL.

This bill was read a third time and passed.

#### HAWKERS AND PEDLARS BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): I have to move the second reading of an Act to repeal the present law relating to hawkers and pedlars. The reason why the Government introduced this bill into the Assembly in the first place was owing to representations made during the recess as to the great nuisance these hawkers and pedlars were in the country districts, and it was thought desirable that some step should be taken to put a stop to it. Also, during this session a resolution was passed in the Assembly requesting the Government to bring in a bill to repeal the old Act. Under the provisions of this bill no further licenses will be granted to hawkers and pedlars; but any license granted at the present time shall continue in force during its present term. This bill will not, therefore, interfere with licenses now in force. Clause 5 deals with penalties. Clause 6 exempts certain persons, such as commercial travellers and others, from the provisions of the previous clause. Clause 7 provides that nothing in the Act shall take away or diminish any of the powers now vested in any municipal council. I think most of the hawkers and pedlars are Asiatics, and hardly a single one can be called a native of the United Kingdom. Besides the Asiatics, there are probably a few Italians or other foreigners holding licenses. In the old times, when the means of communication was not so good as now,

there might have been some object to be gained in allowing this privilege to those men; but now, having railway communication over a great portion of the colony, I think it should be put a stop to, especially as most of the complaints are made by persons residing in the country districts. I move the second reading.

**THE HON. T. BURGESS:** I would like to ask the hon. the Colonial Secretary whether the figures "1892" are correct in the fourth clause.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The hon. member can ask that question when we are in committee.

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT:** I hardly think it is right that this bill should pass without drawing the attention of the House to its scope. I have no intention of offering any active opposition to it, although I believe the bill, since it has been further considered, does not receive the support which at one time was accorded to it in another place. I understand that the Government are not acting so much on their own desire or policy as to put themselves in accord with a resolution passed elsewhere. That resolution, hon. members will find, if they refer to it, was confined absolutely to the question of excluding these Asiatic and African aliens, or inhabitants of the African or Asiatic continents, and it was only in consequence of the difficulties of discriminating between the colored and white subjects of Her Majesty that the Government adopted the expedient of abolishing the *Hawkers and Pedlars Act in toto*. This business of hawking is one of the greatest antiquity. It is not only as old as civilisation itself, but it is as old as the history of the British Islands. My own opinion is that however much we may endeavor to put down hawking and peddling outside the cases mentioned in clause 6, it will be found perfectly impossible to do so. There are many ways in which the law can be evaded, and we shall have, to a large extent, a general feeling of the public in favor of this evasion. It is as well to recollect that peddling and hawking belong to the undeveloped condition of a country. It has been pointed out that the first time that an interchange of wares is made it is by means of hawkers. The next step is by means of large fairs, at which, being held at stated intervals, bodies of people collect together and

exchange their goods and wares. The best example of this is to be found in Russia, a country with which my hon. friend, Mr. Wright, is acquainted. Then we go a step further, and when population increases, and the means of transit are improved, we find that not only do the pedlar and hawker sink their prominent positions into very subordinate ones, but they fast grow out of date; and the storekeeper takes their place. The hawker gives way to the fair, and the fair gives way to the storekeeper. But when we reach this stage the country has attained a considerable pitch of development; communication is easy and towns are within the reach of everyone. The hawkers really die out because their services are no longer required, and it is a question whether it would not be better to leave the death of peddling and hawking to this natural process of decay than to legislate as we are doing to put down a system of trade which, however humble and primitive in itself, fulfils many purposes, and supplies a distinct vacancy in the world of commerce. I would point out that, if we pass the bill in its present shape—if the House accepts it, we shall go very much further than was contemplated. Hawking and peddling will be stopped everywhere, subject to a penalty of £10 for the first offence and £20 for the second offence, or imprisonment for six months with or without hard labor. This is a heavy penalty to impose on persons who, after all, may be only dealing in places where commercial competition cannot follow them. For example, we have a very large number of settlements, both pastoral and agricultural, the dwellers in which find it impracticable to come to town to supply their wants. They are, therefore, at the mercy of the owner of these settlements, or have to supply themselves from the casual visits of these travelling tradespeople, for that is really what they are. The House will remember that it has been the policy of this colony—whether wise or not, I am not now going to inquire—to hand over vast tracts of land to the possession of certain companies or syndicates—I refer to our timber stations. There are several of these in the colony which support a population of 500 to 600 persons. Now if we stop these travelling tradesmen we

practically take away from the owners of these stations all competition, and thus we place the people employed on them, their wives and families, at their mercy to the extent that they may say and do say: "You shall deal only with us and at our store," the consequence being that such prices will be charged and such qualities of goods supplied as may suit the persons who sell. I have really no reason to offer any distinct opposition to the bill. I am not in favor of it myself taken as a whole, though I am entirely in accord with the attempt to reduce, if not to abolish, the system of colored pedlars. I see the difficulty the Government labor under; but it is a matter for consideration whether, in taking away the small travelling store-keeper, we are not putting large bodies of our citizens on our stations in the hands of gentlemen who will find themselves able to dictate terms to their employees, and compel them to buy everything they require of them and strictly prohibit them from going elsewhere. If they have the power of preventing travelling hawkers from dealing amongst their employees, they are absolutely masters of the situation, and therefore this bill seems to me likely, in doing away with one evil, to create two greater ones: Firstly, to prevent a system of trade which public opinion says should be allowed to prevail; and, secondly, to add enormously to the privileges which certain monopolists already possess in our midst.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: I must say that I am quite in accord with the bill before the House. I fail to see that the community will be affected in the way described by the hon. member Mr. Hackett. For the last 20 years I have had some experience of these travelling hawkers. In the early days, no doubt, it may have been advantageous to the far-away settlers to receive visits from these pedlars and obtain wares which they were unable to get by any other means. Now things are different. There is scarcely anybody in the colony who cannot obtain any wares he requires, not necessarily from the proprietor of a timber station, but they can write direct to head quarters and get them sent up. There are many opportunities of getting things in different parts of the

colony. There is certainly no difficulty in getting things at timber stations. What is to prevent these employees sending orders by mail to merchants or store-keepers in Perth and getting them sent up by return mail?

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Only dismissal.

THE HON. E. T. HOOLEY: The same thing would apply to hawkers. If they were not allowed to deal with merchants they would not be allowed to deal with hawkers. I know from personal experience that in most cases the English hawkers simply carry on the business of peddling as a blind for selling spirits. The consequence is that it is a frequent thing for a master to find the sheep straying, and when he goes to look for the shepherd he finds him drunk. I may say that I consider there will be no hardship to the country settlers by putting these English hawkers on the same footing as the Asiatic hawkers, and I am quite satisfied that the whole of the settlers throughout the colony will thank the Government for having brought in the bill. I know I have had many representations about this matter from different parts of the colony.

THE HON. G. W. LEAKE: I shall oppose the bill, and I oppose it because it will let in a far greater evil than it proposes to redress. It proposes to redress an evil in one case because Asiatics are hawkers, in another case because Europeans are hawkers. In the case of the European it is said that he sells drink. Before the last bill was introduced licensed hawking was prohibited, and nothing was more rife at that time than the selling of spirits. In short I feel sure that if you absolutely prohibit an innocent occupation like hawking, the more you will find people anxious to evade the law and be successful in so doing. There is one particular class of person that is especially protected by this Act, that is the "book fiend," the man who comes to your house, produces a book, and pertinaciously thrusts it upon you. These are about as pernicious a set as possibly can be. One reason why I think this bill unnecessary is the fact that there has never been a single complaint made to the magistrates of misconduct on the part of these hawkers. There is a wish, no doubt, in some quarters, to prohibit them from selling their wares, but that they

are required is proved by the fact that they exist. It has not been asserted in debate that these Asiatics sell spirits, and I would be glad if any hon. member of this House would quote me a single instance of an Asiatic hawker against whom this bill is particularly directed, selling drink. Before hawkers were licensed hawking really existed to a vast extent, and it was carried on in open defiance of the law, and the greater risk in exercising the trade the greater profit attended the venture. These hawkers are thoroughly well known in England and Scotland. They sell petty wares; they even supply the wants of persons who have no means of sending to the stores. Really, I think it most harsh that people, because they are Asiatics, should be prevented from earning an honest living. Stop licensed hawking, and you have unlicensed hawking. Under the old system, the hawker was called a postman, and he was a "gentleman" who used to supply the vilest poisons in the shape of drink; and if he were found with it, he used to say it was ordered. I feel sure we shall have a far greater amount of evil let in by prohibiting hawking than by sanctioning it under restrictions. That it is needed is shown from the fact that so many get a living at it. As I said before, I do not remember a single instance of a hawker being brought up before a magistrate for misconduct. I have heard of people being frightened into buying things, but if they do buy they use them, and I think it will be agreed that this measure is directed, not so much against the white as against the black hawker; and I shall vote against it.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I shall support the bill because I think the time has gone past when hawkers are required. The facilities for communication we have now are quite sufficient to enable everyone to get what they require from town, and, therefore, I have come to the conclusion that hawkers are no great boon to a place—quite the reverse, in my opinion.

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I shall have much pleasure in supporting this bill, although it affects a class of men that I have no objection to—the English hawker. I do not hesitate to say that the sooner we do away with Asiatic hawkers, or stop them from travelling

about the country as they do at present, the better for everyone. I am very sorry that we cannot go straight to the mark and simply provide that no one shall hold a license who is an Asiatic. The Hon. Mr. Leake says that no complaints have been made about these Asiatic hawkers. It is not that none might not have been made, but simply this: It is invariably to the wives of laboring men living out of town, or to ladies living at the various homesteads, that trouble is given; and the reason they have not been prosecuted is because the women folk do not like to go into Court. I know several cases in which prosecutions ought to have taken place, but the difficulty is, especially in country districts, that women do not care about appearing against these hawkers, because there are others about, and they do not know what may be the consequences. The Hon. Mr. Leake says there are no complaints. I will tell him of one instance which I know took place. A hawker arrived at a house and threw down his bundle on the back of the verandah. The mistress saw him, and told him to go away, but he said he wanted to see the servants. As luck would have it, there were no servants there, and she told him so. He then said he wanted to go to bed, pointing to a certain room. She replied, "You will have to go away." Although that man did not know that there were men working about at the time, the fact of his hearing that there were no servants in induced him to say, "You must buy; you must do this"; and at last he told the mistress that she had better make him some tea. If this goes on near town, what becomes of shepherds' wives, living, perhaps, ten miles from a homestead? I know of some who have been simply frightened into purchasing; therefore I think it is quite time for us to take some such step as this. I have heard ladies in town say you get more politeness from hawkers than you get in any store. It may be so in town; but it is in the country that the trouble arises. I must say I have heard no complaints except as against these Asiatics, and therefore I fail to see why the English hawkers should be placed in the same category and punished for the vagaries of these Ishmaelites. Then there is another feature in this matter. These hawkers are

injurious to those who have established businesses—men who have very heavy rents to pay—whereas the hawker has only his license to pay for and occasionally the repair of his bundle. Still white hawkers have given very little trouble of late years, and therefore, if it is possible to apply this Bill only to Asiatic or African hawkers, I should be very glad. I must say that I am in favor of the bill, and if we cannot exclude white hawkers from its provisions, I say pass the bill.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): I would point out there is a difficulty in dealing with this question of hawkers. At first it was intended to deal only with colored hawkers. We found, however, that the greater number of them were British subjects, and therefore it was impossible to deal with them as aliens. The only way to meet the matter is by passing a bill which will be of general application. If it is found at a future day to work badly, further legislation can take place; but I think hon. members will agree that we should do something at the present time.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3:

Put and passed.

Clause 4 (repeal of 46 Vic. No. 10, after 31st December, 1892):

**THE HON. T. BURGESS**: I would ask the hon. the Colonial Secretary why "1892" is inserted in this clause.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): Clause 2 states no licenses shall be granted after the passing of this Act. Clause 3 provides that any license granted under the old Act shall continue in force until the expiry of the term of the license, which would be the 31st December, 1892.

Clause—put and passed.

Clause 5:

Put and passed.

Clause 6—Exemptions:

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT**: I would move to insert the word "newspapers" in sub-section 2 of this clause between the words "fruit" and "broom."

Amendment agreed to, and clause, as amended, passed.

The remaining clauses were agreed to and the bill reported.

#### THIRD READING.

The Standing Orders were suspended, and the bill read a third time and passed.

#### DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

**THE PRESIDENT** announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Administrator covering a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, acknowledging the receipt of the joint address of both Houses relative to the death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale. (*Vide Council Minutes, 1892, pp. 121 and 122.*)

#### CUSTOMS BILL: ERROR IN.

**THE PRESIDENT** announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—"The Legislative Assembly acquaints the Legislative Council that it has received a report from the Clerk of Parliaments that a clerical error had occurred in clause 92, 'line 11, of the 'Bill to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to Customs,' whereby the word 'may' had been inserted by mistake. The Legislative Assembly has agreed that the said word 'shall be struck out, and desires the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the proposed amendment.'" He said: I may state it is simply a verbal error. There is the word "may" introduced unnecessarily in one line. It does not affect the principle of the clause in the least.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): I move that the amendment be agreed to.

Question—put and passed.

#### RAILWAYS ACT, 1878, AMENDMENT BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): I now rise to move the second reading of a bill to amend the Railways Act of 1878. The reason this bill has been brought in is to confer powers upon the Commissioner of Railways as to the taking of lands for railway purposes after railways have been constructed. It has been found, in a recent

case, that after a railway has been constructed, further lands are required for stations, sidings, &c., and therefore it was thought advisable to bring in this bill giving power to the Commissioner of Railways to take any land so required. Sub-section 2 of the first clause affords full protection to the owners of any land required. The second section of the Act provides that the 13th section of the principal Act shall read as if the word "proposed," in the 9th line, were omitted therefrom. Under the Act of 1878 the railway in question has already been constructed and therefore the word "proposed" is not now required. The 3rd section is a confirmation of past acts of the Commissioner in resuming lands for railway purposes after a railway has been constructed. Section 4 deals with anybody attempting to cross any line within a distance of a quarter of a mile of an approaching train. Clause 6 is a necessary clause. Hon. members will remember that the Government are taking over the jetties at the principal port of the colony and working them in connection with the railways, and this clause places these jetties under the sole control of the Commissioner of Railways. The 7th clause deals with railways to be constructed, and empowers the Commissioner to occupy land required for the construction of such railways. The 8th clause refers to sidings. Frequent applications have been made to the Government for placing sidings at various points on the railway, and hitherto there have been no proper regulations as to the working of them, and this clause will place the matter upon a proper basis. The Commissioner will have power to close any siding if the person to whom it is granted does not comply with the regulations laid down. The 10th clause is also an important one. The 11th clause gives power to make regulations for fixing the rental for sidings, the regulating the use of sidings, and for organising, classifying, and paying the staff in connection with Government railways. These are the provisions of the bill. The Hon. Mr. Wright has given notice of a new clause, to which I can now state the Government offer no objection. I formally move the second reading of this bill.

Question—put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Extension of power to take lands:

THE HON. J. MORRISON: In regard to sub-section 2 the hon. the Colonial Secretary has explained this sub-section 2 in a most satisfactory way indeed for the Government. At the same time I think it can be read in an entirely different light. My idea is that this is really bringing forward what they call the betterment system of America, and it means that in making an award for compensation for lands taken the balance of the land left is considered to be so much increased by the opening of the railway that it is supposed to go against the amount payable for the land taken.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Shenton): It is giving the owner of the land what he never had before. By this provision the Government are meeting the owners fairly.

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: Quite fairly. I think it a perfectly proper clause. When land is taken for a railway which is proposed to be constructed it is perfectly right and proper that it should be valued without reference to any increased value the railway proposed may give. But now this land has been improved, and could be sold to anyone else as being improved, and it is only right for the Government to pay the improvement value. I think, therefore, the Government has been perfectly fair in paying the increased value for the land.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4—Penalty for crossing, &c., line before approaching train:

THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT: This seems a fearfully severe clause. It says that anyone attempting to drive any vehicle or animal across or attempting to cross a railway line within a distance of a quarter of a mile, shall be fined £20, or be imprisoned for six months with or without hard labor. It appears to me that the Government, in order not to be too hard on the public, should put up distance posts, so that people should not be enticed into a trap such as this. I do not think this is right, although I, as a railway manager, perfectly agree that it is a wrong thing for people to cross the line when danger is about it; but to put it at a quarter of a mile, at the speed which is

run on this railway, appears to me to be going too far. North Perth station is not a quarter of a mile from Central Perth station.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): It is over a quarter of a mile. We must have strict regulations. The gates have been removed, and I think it is necessary to let people know that if they do not take proper precautions they are liable to be fined. The magistrate is given discretionary power. A quarter of a mile is not very much. It is only a matter of about one minute.

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT**: There is a difficulty about this clause. My friend the Engineer-in-Chief is known to be rather an enemy to level crossings, and if he and the Commissioner of Railways are disposed to enforce this clause they would be able to close the William-street crossing altogether. If an engine is within a quarter of a mile of an approaching train the penalty runs. Trains coming from the Eastward steaming into Perth station will be within a quarter of a mile, and as these are frequently running it would simply mean that this crossing would be practically suspended. If this clause is strictly enforced, certainly a matter which, at one time promised to develop into a fight—the closing of the William-street crossing—is practically settled.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): I may inform the hon. member that the question he has brought forward was raised in the other House, but since it is necessary to have strict regulations, I think hon. members would do well to agree to the clause as it stands. In the case of trains coming from Guildford towards the central station, they would have to stop at Perth, and I do not think a magistrate would construe the crossing of William-street, under these conditions, as an offence. That would be taking an extreme view of the case.

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT**: There is no doubt that a train coming under the bridge is in full view of the William-street crossing, and every man who then crosses the line, even if allowed to do so by the gatekeeper, is liable to this severe penalty. It is made absolute; and I think most magistrates would inflict every penny of the fine. I really think the Government should postpone this

clause and consider the objection which has been raised.

**THE PRESIDENT**: There is no necessity to reserve the clause. The bill can be recommitted in order to make any alteration if necessary.

**THE HON. T. BURGESS**: There is some difficulty, to my mind, with regard to this clause. It seems a very severe penalty, and rather more than is necessary, and therefore I think some alteration might be made in regard to the distance, if it can be arrived at before the third reading. I have no objection to proceed with the other parts of the bill.

**THE HON. G. W. LEAKE**: Not more than twelve months ago two valuable lives were lost in South Australia by gentlemen who were crossing the line at a considerable distance from an approaching train. The horse jibbed on the rails; the train came up and the men were killed. I think, therefore, we should be as careful as possible.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 8:

Put and passed.

Clause 9—Commissioner may close existing sidings:

**THE HON. J. W. HACKETT**: This clause has reference only to existing sidings, and no power is given to close future sidings. The intention of the draftsman, no doubt, is that the power should be provided by the agreement; but I think it would be better to put it in the clause. I move, therefore, to add after the word "existing" the words "or hereafter to be made."

Amendment agreed to, and clause passed.

Clauses 9 to 12:

Put and passed.

*New clause:*

**THE HON. J. A. WRIGHT**: I now move the insertion of the following new clause, to which, I understand, the Government have no objection:—"The powers conferred upon the Commissioner of Railways by this Act shall be limited to railways owned by or worked by the Government." The reason I ask for the insertion of this clause is that it appears by clause 6 of this bill any jetty, pier, wharf, &c., shall be under the sole direction of the Commissioner of Railways, and the jetty belonging to the W. A. Land Co. at Albany would thus be

brought under his control. The same clause would also render the working of railways belonging to companies, such as the Great Southern and the Midland, under the entire control of the Commissioner of Railways.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** (Hon. G. Shenton): I may state that the Government think it necessary for this clause to be added to the bill for the reasons pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Wright.

Clause agreed to, and the bill reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 9-20 p.m. adjourned until Thursday, 17th March, at 8 o'clock, p.m.

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## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 16th March, 1892.

Rickets in Cattle—The Agent-Generalship—Pollution of Perth water supply—Customs Bill: clerical error—Death of the Duke of Clarence: Despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies—Further assistance to the Midland Railway: adjourned debate—Hawkers and Pedlars Bill: Legislative Council's amendment—Adjournment.

**THE SPEAKER** took the chair at 7-30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RICKETS IN CATTLE.

**MR. RICHARDSON:** I rise, without notice, to ask a somewhat informal question. It will be remembered there was a commission appointed some time ago to inquire into the cause and general character of the disease called rickets, prevailing among cattle in parts of this colony, and more especially in the Southern districts. Some attention has recently been called to this disease in Victoria, and there is an interesting letter on the subject in the last *Australasian*, from Mr. Kendall, a well-known veterinary surgeon

in that colony. All I want to know is whether the Premier will discuss the matter in Cabinet and set aside a small sum in order to obtain the services of a competent veterinary surgeon to report on the disease here, and to give us a satisfactory diagnosis of it. Perhaps the hon. gentleman will make a note of it.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. H. W. Venn): As the hon. member is aware, I have taken much interest in this question, and I may say, on behalf of the Government, that the matter is under our consideration, and I hope that before the close of the year we may be able to take some steps in the direction indicated by him.

#### THE AGENT-GENERALSHIP AND SIR WILLIAM ROBINSON.

**MR. HARPER:** I wish to ask the Premier with leave, without notice, whether Sir William Robinson has accepted the position of Agent-General for this colony?

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir William Robinson has not formally accepted the office. Just when I expected to receive a definite reply from him on the subject he was taken ill, and he has been ill in bed since, and not able to attend to business. I have had no communication from him since, nor have I telegraphed to him on the subject, knowing from the medical reports that His Excellency is not in a fit state to attend to business. I am very sorry, indeed, I cannot give the hon. member a more definite reply, but that is the exact position of the matter at the present moment.

#### POLLUTION OF THE PERTH WATER SUPPLY AT THE CANNING.

**MR. TRAYLEN:** Before I resume my seat I purpose moving the adjournment of the House. I am taking advantage of this formal motion for the purpose of calling the attention of the Government to a matter of urgent and grave importance, which has escaped our attention hitherto. I refer to the necessity for making some legal provision for preserving from contamination or pollution the waters that flow into the reservoir at the Canning from which the Perth Water Supply Company obtain their supply of water for the use of the citizens of Perth. It was only last evening—and this will be