

RAILWAYS ACT, 1878, AMENDMENT BILL, 1879.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved the second reading of a Bill to amend "The Railways Act, 1878." That Act, when it came to be referred to for the purpose of framing certain regulations connected with the survey and maintenance of railways, was found to be singularly defective in some respects. The twenty-seventh section of the Act empowered the Commissioner of Railways to make certain by-laws for the regulation of traffic and for the preservation of order on a railway; but it did not empower him to make by-laws for such purposes as regulating the mode by which, and the speed at which, carriages using the railway were to be moved or propelled, or for regulating the times of the arrival and departure of trains. The Bill now before the House rendered it lawful for the Commissioner to frame such regulations, as well as others, which he was not empowered to do under the present Act. The thirtieth clause of that Act limited the liability of the Commissioner as a common carrier, and, in addition to the limitation there provided, it was now proposed to empower that official to regulate the description of animals, passengers, and goods which may from time to time be refused to be received for carriage on any railway. Under the present Act, the Commissioner had no power to refuse to carry anything. He thought when hon. members came to consider the Bill in Committee, it would be found to be a very necessary and useful measure.

MR. SHENTON believed there were several other respects in which the existing Act was singularly deficient, and which it would be necessary to provide for, when they came to consider the Bill in Committee. He had no intention to oppose the Bill, but he hoped its committal would be postponed for a day or two at any rate.

Bill read a second time, and ordered to be considered in Committee on Wednesday.

VENDOR AND PURCHASER ACT, AMENDMENT BILL.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved the

second reading of this Bill, the object of which is to repeal a section of the Imperial Act which the Bill passed last Session did not repeal.

Bill read a second time and passed through Committee without discussion.

FOREIGN PROBATE BILL.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) moved the second reading of a Bill to give to probates and letters of administration granted in any other part of Her Majesty's dominions, the like force and effect as if originally granted in this Colony, upon the same being re-sealed.

Bill read a second time, and passed through Committee *sub silentio*.

PRISON DISCIPLINE ACT, AMENDMENT BILL.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) moved the second reading of a Bill to make additional provisions for the punishment of persons convicted of surreptitiously conveying any article to a prisoner undergoing sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment, or of concealing any article for the purpose of being received by such prisoner.

Motion agreed to, and the Bill passed through Committee without discussion.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past nine o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 6th August, 1879.

Petition—Salaries of certain Public Officers: Report of Commission—Hansard, Votes and Proceedings, and Blue Book—Nominated Immigrants and Chinese Coolies—Public Park at Fremantle—Customs Ordinance, Amendment Bill: in committee—Third Readings—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7 p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION.

MR. MONGER presented a petition from the York Agricultural Society, praying that the Council take into consideration the necessity of placing on the *ad valorem* duty list flour, grain, hay, and other imported articles, and moved that the same be received.

Petition received and read.

SALARIES OF CERTAIN PUBLIC OFFICERS—REPORT OF COMMISSION.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy), in moving that the House should now consider the report of the commission appointed to report upon certain resolutions of the Legislative Council, passed last Session, suggesting alterations in the salaries of officers employed in certain departments of the public service, said he did not intend on the present occasion to conclude with a resolution, nor did he purpose at this stage to enter into any details. The report of the commission had been in the hands of hon. members for some days past, and it was sufficiently explanatory to afford hon. members every information with reference to the changes contemplated. His object at present was merely to elicit an expression of opinion on the part of the House as to the scheme of reorganisation proposed, and, having attained that object, he would move to report Progress, and bring forward some definite resolution of which he would give due notice on a future day.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES said it would be necessary for the hon. gentleman to move some formal resolution, as there was no question before the Committee.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) then moved, *pro forma*, that the report of the commission be adopted.

MR. BROWN said he had no intention of entering at any length into the subject dealt with in the report before the House. From that report he noticed that the members of the commission had made certain recommendations as to increasing the salaries of several public officers, and that the Governor-in-Council after considering these recommendations had appended to the report of the Committee a

minute embodying his own views, which were not altogether in accord with the recommendations of the Committee, though agreeing with them in the main. For himself, he must say that he accepted, as a whole, the recommendations of the Governor. It appeared to him they were reasonable in every way, and fundamentally in accord with the views expressed by the commission. Broadly speaking, the only difference between His Excellency's recommendations and those of the Committee was that His Excellency did not approve of the proposed increase of salary in the case of certain officers recommended by the commission for such increase, while, on the other hand, the Governor recommended an increase of salary to certain officers whose claims the commission did not appear to have recognised. With this exception, there appeared little or no difference between the conclusions arrived at by His Excellency and the recommendations of the Committee. As he had already said, he was prepared to accept the Governor's recommendations, on the whole. He quite concurred in the opinion expressed by the commission, and endorsed by His Excellency, that it was desirable to abolish the classification system, but that in doing so the claims and the vested rights of the present office holders should be recognised.

MR. MARMION said it was not his intention that evening to enter at any length into the question of the desirability or otherwise of making the departmental changes contemplated, and his object in rising to address the Committee at this stage was to submit an amendment upon the resolution before the House. He thought it was inadvisable at this early period of the Session, and until the House was placed in possession of fuller information as to the financial condition of the Colony, and the necessity or otherwise for increased taxation, to commit the House to any changes involving additional expenditure. He did not think they would be doing their duty as the representatives of the people if one of the very first things they did after hearing that the Colony was indebted in a very large sum—large, for a country like this—and there was a general impression that additional taxation would have to be resorted to in order to meet the deficit:

he did not think they would be doing their duty to their constituents or to the country if the very first thing they proposed to do, in the face of the deficit which they knew existed, was to recommend an increase, large or small, in the salaries of any public officers. It was not impossible that, instead of augmenting the pay of these officers, it would be found necessary to reduce it, and otherwise to curtail the public expenditure. At any rate, they could not very well deal with the subject at present, until they were placed in possession of more definite information as to the state of the public finances. He thought every hon. member on his side of the House at any rate, would agree with him in that: he would therefore move—"That the Committee considers it is inadvisable at this stage to discuss any question that may possibly involve an increase of expenditure on salaries, and that all such questions shall be postponed until the House is in possession of more definite information with regard to the state of the finances of the Colony, and the possible necessity of imposing extra taxation to meet current liabilities."

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) opposed the amendment. As he had already pointed out he did not ask the House to arrive at any decision that evening with regard to the recommendations of the commission, his sole object being to elicit an expression of opinion as to the general principle which those recommendations involved. He did not ask the Committee to pledge itself to any details, but merely to deal with the question on the broad principle—whether the suggestions offered by the commission and by His Excellency the Governor were such as met with the general concurrence of the House. If no question of finance were to be dealt with until the House were in possession of full information as to the financial condition of the Colony, and until certain returns asked for could be furnished, the business of the House would be considerably delayed, and the time of hon. members would be correspondingly wasted. As he had already said, it was not his intention to press any definite resolution upon the House that evening, but he did hope hon. members would see the expediency of discussing the report,

with a view to enable the Government to ascertain the feeling of the House on the subject; and, under these circumstances, he trusted the hon. member would concur in the advisability of withdrawing his amendment, which, if carried, would retard the business of the Session and tend to considerable loss of time.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) said he would vote for the original resolution, for this reason—that the matter proposed to be discussed was one rather of organisation, primarily, and of finance secondarily. He would call the attention of the House to the indispensable necessity of having the finances of the Colony placed on a sound and satisfactory basis. There was already a question under discussion by the House as to the accounts which had been furnished by the Government. Two most important departments had recently suddenly assumed great magnitude and importance—the Audit and the Railway Departments. There was also the Postal and Telegraph Department, the former branch of which was the subject of another financial return called for. How were such returns as these to be prepared in a satisfactory manner unless the clerks employed were adequately remunerated, and the departments were efficiently organised? In reality, in discussing the question before the Committee they would be discussing the re-organisation of some of the most important departments of the public service, and the sooner such discussion took place the better. In the first place they were asked to discuss the internal economy of these branches of the public service with a view to their being placed on a more satisfactory footing than at present; and at a later period of the Session they would be invited to discuss the financial aspect of the question. At present, the Committee was not asked to commit itself to the recommendations of the commission as regarded the several increases of salary proposed, but merely to express an opinion on the general principle—whether a re-organisation of the departments under review was desirable, on the basis recommended in the report before the Committee, and whether it was expedient to adopt the suggestions in favor of abolishing the existing classification system. The two

questions—that of the abstract principle and that of detailed finance—were totally distinct, and he hoped hon. members would see the expediency of getting rid of the former, or, at any rate, of giving the subject at least a patient investigation.

MR. SHENTON thought it would be far better to defer the consideration of all questions of finance until they knew something more about the actual state of the public revenue. It might transpire that, however ready and willing hon. members were to agree in the recommendations of the commission for increasing the salaries of public servants, the state of the exchequer would not admit of it; therefore it might be sheer waste of time to discuss the subject at present. He would therefore support the amendment.

MR. CAREY would do the same. He did not regard the question before the House as merely one of re-organisation. If hon. members would glance at the schedules they would see that as regarded one department, at any rate, an increase of salary was proposed in the case of nearly every officer employed in it.

MR. BROWN regretted to find a disposition evinced on the part of hon. members to refuse to respond to the desire expressed by the leader of the Government to discuss the report of the commission. He was aware that, having had an opportunity of perusing the report, nearly every hon. member in the House had made up his mind on the subject, and probably that was the cause of the indisposition manifested to enter into any discussion thereon. He quite understood the Colonial Secretary to have said that all he desired was an expression of opinion on the part of the House on the principle involved, so as to facilitate and expedite the business of the Council: there was no intention to move any definite resolution, committing the House to any increase of expenditure, the simple object of the Government being to have the question of re-organising certain branches of the public service ventilated. He went with the Colonial Secretary in that, and he also went with the hon. member for Fremantle in his amendment. The House was aware that last year very strong recommendations were made by—he

thought—more than one hon. member on that side of the House, to the effect that these very officers were underpaid. The Council was desirous of dealing with the matter during the Session referred to, but the Government asked the House, if he remembered right, to be careful in the matter and not hastily to decide upon increasing the salary of this and that officer, lest they might do injustice to others, and recommending that a commission be appointed to enquire into the whole subject with a view to report to the House. That commission was appointed, consisting not alone of Government officials but also of the hon. the Speaker, and now when the House was asked to consider the report of the commission, and to say how far it concurred in the recommendations made therein, or in the recommendations put forward by the Governor, based upon the suggestions made by the commission, hon. members seemed reluctant to enter into any discussion on the subject. After all, what was the question at issue? It was not a question of whether the Colony was rich or whether it was poor, but whether they should give to certain officers in the public service that which they were justly entitled to. Whether the Colony was in debt or not, if the Legislature did its duty, it would give what it conceived a fair remuneration for services performed. He did not think there was, in reality, any difference between the elected members on this subject. Each desired that the matter should be finally and definitely settled another day. The Government did not ask the House to pledge itself to any resolution that evening, but merely to discuss the subject. If no question of finance was to be discussed until the returns showing the exact financial condition of the Colony were prepared, the best thing the House could do was to adjourn altogether until such returns were furnished.

MR. CAREY failed to see how the hon. member who had just spoken could go with the original resolution and also with the amendment. If the Committee adopted the report of the commission, they virtually bound themselves to vote the various increases recommended therein, and how did they know whether they would have any money available to

do so, or not. He did not suppose there was a member in the House who would object to vote it for the object in view, if they found hereafter that they had it to vote. But they wanted to know whether they had it, or not, first. He hoped the hon. member for Fremantle would not withdraw his amendment.

Mr. MARMION said that, after the expressions of opinion that had fallen from hon. members in the course of the debate, he had no doubt whatever that if he wished to press the amendment he could carry it; but it was not his desire to interpose any obstacles in the way of the business of the House being carried on. At the same time he did conceive it to be the duty of hon. members to set their face against passing any money resolutions until they were in a better position than at present to know the exact financial condition of the Colony, and whether any fresh taxation would be required or not. He could quite understand that the Colonial Secretary was desirous of ascertaining the feeling of the House with respect to these recommendations for increased salaries, in order to enable him to prepare the Estimates for the ensuing year; at the same time—although the course he suggested might entail a little delay—he considered it absolutely necessary the House should see its way clear as to ways and means before it voted any increase of expenditure in the shape of salaries. As to the House having, in a manner, asked for these increases last year, he was quite prepared to acknowledge that it had asked for them, and that the commission had recommended them; but neither the House nor the commission were aware at the time of the financial condition of the Colony, as recently disclosed. A man possessed of plenty of funds might be inclined to act in a very liberal spirit, but when he found that instead of having a balance at his banker's he was actually in debt, he would be inclined, if an honorable man, to act more cautiously and with less liberality. After all, no pledge had been given by the House last Session to any of these officers; it was a mere spontaneous act on the part of the Council to recommend the proposed increases; so that, in the event of the suggestions of the commission not being

adopted, it could not be said that any pledge had been violated, or any promise broken. Having said so much, he would merely add that he was quite willing, provided the Colonial Secretary agreed to report Progress, to withdraw his amendment; if not, he would press for a division.

Mr. BROWN moved that Progress be reported, and leave given to sit again another day.

Motion agreed to and amendment withdrawn.

HANSARD, VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS, AND BLUE BOOK.

Mr. MARMION, in accordance with notice, moved—"That in the opinion of this Council it is desirable that a copy of *Hansard*, the Votes and Proceedings of the Council, and the Blue Book, should be gratuitously supplied by the Government to each and every Mechanic's or Literary Institute or Public Reading Room in the Colony." He thought that if the public were afforded an opportunity of perusing the arguments brought forward in the House in the course of the debates, by reference to *Hansard*, it would tend to awaken a more lively interest in the public mind with reference to political matters. The Blue Book, also, would prove a very useful work for reference at these public institutions, affording as it did a vast amount of official statistics relating to the Colony, which could not fail to be of interest to the members of these associations.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) drew the attention of the hon. member to what he himself had just stated as to the inexpediency of the House committing itself to any increased expenditure until it was in possession of fuller information as to the state of the finances. How could he consistently ask the House to vote any money for one purpose more than another? The hon. member must be aware that to supply copies of *Hansard* and the other books referred to, to every public institution in the Colony would involve increased expenditure, and, if the hon. member looked at the matter in this light, he did not think he would be inclined to press his resolution. If he

did so, he would be acting very inconsistently. *Hansard* had not heretofore been supplied to these institutions, and he doubted very much whether there was a sufficient number of the back volumes on hand to do so. Moreover, he would remind the hon. member that these associations already received an annual grant of money from the public funds towards their support, which grant it was now sought, by a side-wind, to increase. He was not prepared, therefore, to go with the hon. member.

MR. CAREY said he was sorry he could not congratulate the leader of the Government upon the feeling he had shown in opposing this resolution. The total cost of supplying *Hansard* to the various institutions referred to would not exceed about £10, and this amount, in point of fact, represented the increased expenditure which the resolution, if adopted, would involve, for he believed these associations were already supplied with the Blue Book and the Votes and Proceedings. He therefore regretted to see such a feeling of opposition displayed on the part of the hon. gentleman, the leader of the Government party in the House, simply because the hon. member who had brought forward the resolution had opposed the motion submitted by the Colonial Secretary with reference to the salaries of public officers. He hoped the House would adopt the resolution before it, and if the Government did not choose to carry out the wish of the House, as to supplying these publications to the various institutions referred to, on their shoulders be the blame.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) believed there was not a sufficient number of the back volumes of *Hansard* on hand to supply every literary institute in the Colony with a copy.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL was afraid that the tone of the hon. member for Vasse's remarks was calculated to damage his cause rather than otherwise, and in consequence of that tone he (the hon. baronet) felt inclined to oppose the resolution. But he thought as a matter of general policy it would be well to supply *Hansard* to these institutions, for he believed it would tend to stimulate public interest in political matters, by affording the people an opportunity of

informing themselves upon such subjects as occupied the attention of the Legislature. He thought, on these grounds, and as a matter of general policy, it would be but right and proper that the various public associations referred to should be supplied with these official records. He did not suppose the Government were thoroughly wedded to the opinion expressed by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, if they found it was the desire of the House that the resolution should be adopted.

The resolution was then put and carried.

NOMINATED IMMIGRANTS AND CHINESE COOLIES.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser), in accordance with notice, moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Council, to take into consideration a Despatch from the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency the Governor, regarding introduction of nominated immigrants and Chinese coolies." The hon. gentleman said he did not intend to conclude with a resolution, the object in view being merely to elicit an expression of opinion on the part of the House with respect to the question of immigration, generally.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL said the question was one in which his constituents were greatly interested, and he should like to know if it was competent for him to say what he had to say on the subject now, upon the motion for going into Committee, as he would afterwards be debarred from taking part in the debate.

THE SPEAKER said it would be irregular for the hon. member to address the House at the present stage, unless some one moved that he be now heard.

MR. BROWN moved that the hon. baronet should now be heard.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL: I have not very much to say on the subject, but it is one as I said before that affects the interests of the constituents whom I represent, very closely, and I was asked to support the resolution which I hope will hereafter be brought forward, affirming the desirability of the continued

introduction of Coolie labor. If I recollect rightly, the hon. member for Perth the other day, in the course of his speech upon the address in reply, stated that he thought what His Excellency the Governor had said with regard to not receiving any further application for Coolies, in itself condemned that part of the immigration policy which the House agreed to last year. But I can scarcely see that such is the case, because there appears to have been no difficulty in obtaining employment for those introduced, and I have no doubt if four times as many had been introduced no difficulty would have been experienced in finding employment for them. Not only so—it is scarcely correct to say there has been no demand for this class of labor, for at the very time that speech was made I had several applications from persons residing within a radius of a dozen miles from where I live. A considerable number of these Coolies have been introduced into our district during the last few years, and they have given great satisfaction to the persons employing them. I believe that it is in contemplation by the P. & O. Co. to employ this class of labor at their depôt in Albany, and I have no doubt if Coolie immigration were resumed the men would be readily absorbed. I do not think the residents in towns can appreciate the position in which country settlers are placed in consequence of the existing scarcity of labor, owing to which the main industries of the Colony are almost paralysed. The railway works in course of construction have already drawn and will continue to draw a considerable number of men from the country districts, and the present scarcity of labor will be still more severely felt. We hear a great deal said about affording protection to the farming interest. I regard the introduction of cheap labor, of a fairly good class, a far more legitimate form of protection than that contemplated by the present advocates of a protective policy. Of course, I am fully aware that Coolies are not likely to become valuable and permanent settlers: I do not advocate their introduction on that ground, but merely as a temporary expedient to meet, as far as possible, the urgent need for labor under which we now suffer.

The motion for going into Committee was then agreed to.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said the consideration of the despatch before the Committee opened up the whole question of immigration,—the question of whether the Colony should encourage the resumption of assisted, nominated, or Coolie immigration. It might perhaps be of advantage if he were to state briefly to the House what had been done by the Government with regard to the introduction of the first batch of Coolies. In pursuance of the resolution adopted by the Legislature last year, His Excellency lost no time in communicating with the authorities at Hong-kong with a view to obtain from that part a good selection of Coolies suitable for the requirements of the Colony, but, owing to some inadvertent delay in the transmission of the despatch, the vessel which had been commissioned to embark the men at Hong-kong would have been considerably delayed, and, in order to avoid that, it was arranged that an effort should be made at Singapore to obtain the most suitable class of labour there procurable. These men, as hon. members were aware, arrived in the Colony some months ago, and within a short time after their arrival all of them were engaged, and although in some few instances individual Coolies had been exchanged by their employers, yet the Government had every reason to believe that the first batch of these men introduced into the Colony at public expense had proved themselves a useful acquisition to the employers of labour and supplied a local industrial want. His Excellency the Governor, in the Speech with which he had opened the present Session, briefly alluded to this subject, stating that in the absence of applications for a further number of Coolies he had not felt justified in continuing their introduction, on his own responsibility. It now appeared from the statement just made by the hon. member for Albany that there was still in the district which he represented a demand at any rate for a limited number of these men; and he (the Commissioner of Crown Lands) would be glad to hear from other hon. members what their opinions were as to the demand for this class of labour in their respective dis-

tracts. He did not propose at the present time to ask the Committee to enter into the financial aspect of the question, his sole object being to elicit an expression of opinion as to the general policy of resuming immigration, and as to what future provision should be made by the Colony with respect to the matter. He would therefore formally move—That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that a sum be placed on next year's Estimates, for the purpose of introducing into this Colony persons of the laboring class.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) seconded the motion. He felt that no person could be more sensible than himself of the necessity for introducing immigrants of the labouring class and artisans into the Colony. During the past few days they had become aware of the absorption on the railway works in process of construction of a large number of what he might call the surplus labour of our towns—the sweepings of our streets, and one of the first steps adopted by these worthies was to try and see how little work they could do for their money, and to endeavor, by combining together in a strike, to embarrass, if possible, their employers. That catastrophe had been averted by the contractor; at the same time the fact should not be lost sight of that they had been brought face to face with a real difficulty, consequent upon the scarcity of what he might call honest skilled labour. This Colony did not enjoy the advantages of the other Australian Colonies in having at its disposal the services of paid agents in England to select a suitable body of immigrants for its labor market,—agents with ample means at their disposal for carrying out the object which the Colonies they represented had in view; and the result of the disadvantage under which this Colony laboured in this respect was, that every immigrant ship that came out here brought to our shores, in more or less quantities, the sweepings of the London streets, to become shortly after their arrival here the sweepings of our own streets. If the resolution before the Committee were adopted, His Excellency would be in a position to take the necessary initiatory steps to introduce to our shores a suitable class of Coolie labor,

carefully selected with an eye to our local requirements. Of the first batch of Coolies introduced, some had gone to the North and others to other parts of the Colony, but he had not heard one single complaint against these men on the ground of idle or otherwise objectionable habits, or that they were doing other than endeavouring to earn an honest living. So that the experiment, so far, might be said to have proved a success, and such as should encourage the Legislature to further efforts in the same direction.

MR. BURGESS said he happened to have been one of those who had advised His Excellency to make the experiment, and it was very gratifying to him to find that the result had been so satisfactory, and that the expectations he had entertained of the adaptability of these Coolies for certain classes of labour had been realised. He had some of the men recently introduced, in his service at Champion Bay, and the only drawback with regard to them was that they did not understand our language. Of course they could not be compared to Europeans for down-right hard work, but for domestic service, and also as shepherds and hut-keepers they were very useful. He hoped to see their introduction continued, and trusted that, other things being equal, the authorities would give the preference to those who could speak and understand a little of our own language, if they could be obtained.

MR. MONGER was sorry he could not agree with what had been said about the good qualities of the Coolies lately introduced. To his own knowledge three of them had been sent to the district where he resided, and one of them proved perfectly useless and had to be returned to Perth at the public expense; another turned out little or no better, and had to be brought in—at the expense of the Government, he believed—from a distance of sixty miles beyond York, and the third one was almost useless.

MR. HARPER quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Albany, as to the expediency of continuing the introduction of Coolies, more particularly in view of the enormous extent of territory now being opened up in the Northern district, where it would be impossible for Europeans to perform

the labor required. The work to be done there was not the heavy work of an agricultural district, but the sort of labour for which these people were peculiarly fitted. In course of time, as this country became opened up, no doubt a large number of coolies would be introduced, for the development of its resources. By hastening the introduction of the class of labour suitable for that purpose, they would be hastening the development of the country. Townspeople, he was afraid, did not realise the wants of the country settlers with regard to labor, otherwise there would be no opposition to a proposal having for its object the supplying of the immediate requirements of out-lying districts. He could speak from experience, as to the difficulty of getting men to go out of town to perform heavy laboring work in the country; they preferred a town life, with its attractions. If there were any probability of there being any great influx of Chinese into the Colony, it might be necessary to interpose some restriction upon their introduction, but in the absence of any probability of our having any gold-fields discovered—and nothing else attracted these people to a country in any great numbers—there was no likelihood of the Colony ever suffering from any large influx of Chinese. Gold-seeking was a mania with them, and until we had the good fortune to discover a gold field there was not the slightest fear of Western Australia being over-run by the Mongolian.

After a considerable pause,

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said, if no other hon. member felt disposed to address the House on the subject, he would move that Progress be reported.

MR. CAREY said he had a few observations to make, but he was endeavoring to select choice words and polished language to express himself in, and to adopt a proper tone, so as not to offend the susceptibilities of the hon. baronet, the member for Plantagenet. He would at all times endeavor to do so, but he did not enter the House with bated breath, or to mince his words in any way. As to the question before the Committee, no doubt Chinese coolies would prove very useful in the semi-tropical districts of the North, and in some parts of Cham-

pion Bay; but where good white labour was available he failed to see the necessity or the expediency of introducing coolies, at the public expense at any rate. No doubt there existed a very strong public feeling against their introduction in the districts where they were not required, and he, for one, would oppose any further importation of them. He had heard a good deal said in their favor that evening by some hon. members, but he would ask the Government if they had heard nothing quite the reverse from the district which he represented. The manager of the W. A. Timber Company by whom some of these men had been employed did not speak very highly of them.

MR. S. H. PARKER had always been under the impression that the object in voting public money for immigration purposes was in order to encourage the settlement of the country, and that those persons who were introduced at public expense should make the Colony their home, and thus contribute to the development of its resources. But he now understood it was proposed to depart from that axiom of political economy, and to vote away the public funds for the purpose of importing labour for our merchants and wealthy stockowners. If it could be proved beyond doubt that it was sound political economy to pay for the introduction of labour for these classes of the community out of public funds,—on the same principle it would be politic to import labour to suit every other class. On this principle, if he found any difficulty in obtaining the services of a clerk for his own office, he had a perfect right to ask the Government to introduce one for him at the public expense. It appeared to him that in voting money for the introduction of coolie labour, for the convenience of graziers, stock-owners, and that class of people, we were virtually appropriating the public funds for the benefit of private individuals who were in a position to import their own labour. He did not for a moment imagine that any hon. member conceived that these coolies would ever settle down, or become of any use for the purposes of colonisation; and, that being the case, it did appear to him that to devote the public money for the introduction of men of that stamp was a

departure from the plainest principles of political economy. He had heard it said that evening that there was a great difficulty in obtaining labour in the Colony at the present time. So far as Perth was concerned he was not aware of the existence of any difficulty on that score: the City Council, at any rate, had encountered no trouble in obtaining an adequate supply of labour. For some time past, the corporation had been employing thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen laborers a week, at rates of wages varying from 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. a day, and he believed he could honestly say that the labour now employed by the Council was equal to any it had employed for years past. Not one of these men had left the service of the corporation for the railway works. During the whole course of the winter no difficulty whatever had been experienced in obtaining the services of laborers—good men, too—in the city, at any rate. No doubt there was a greater scarcity of labour in the country districts, but he believed that the farmers and the graziers themselves were in a great measure to blame for this state of affairs, simply because they expected to obtain labour cheaper in the country than it could be had in town. Were it not for this, they might get plenty of labour. After all, these coolies were only fitted for light employments, and were little or no use where down-right hard work had to be performed; therefore they could not be of much use to the agricultural farmer in a Colony like this, and the result would be that the House would be voting away public money for the purpose, as he had already said, of finding shepherds and hut-keepers for our graziers and stockowners, men well able to pay for the importation of labour themselves,—more so than the Colony was in the present state of the public finances. Under these circumstances, and in the face of the large deficiency in the Revenue, he certainly would oppose the resolution before the Committee, which had for its object the continued introduction of Chinese coolies. No doubt a certain amount of discretion as to the class of immigrants to be introduced was left in the hands of the Government, but that discretionary power would doubtless be exercised in favor of coolies, on the ground of the difficulty of

obtaining good useful labour from England. That this difficulty was a real one he had every reason to believe. Mr. Padbury who had written to him on the subject said he had frequently attended public meetings of the working classes at home, and had held himself up as an example of what a man might accomplish in this Colony by the exercise of industry and perseverance, but he found it was utterly useless to attempt persuading them to come out here. The first place the intending immigrant looked to was America, then New Zealand, then the other Australian Colonies, but the last place in the world was Swan River. The conclusion had long ago been forced upon him that this Colony must look to the surplus population of the adjacent Colonies for the class of immigrants we require, and in the face of this conclusion it did appear somewhat strange, knowing as the Government must have known, that it was useless expecting to obtain suitable immigrants from England, they should have withdrawn the bonus heretofore offered to persons introducing labour into this country from the neighboring Colonies. When that concession was in operation, we could obtain labour from the other side at the rate of £6 per head, and it certainly seemed very singular that, in the face of that fact, the Government should prefer to encourage, at a much greater expense, the introduction of an inferior class of immigrants from England, or, failing this, to fall back upon Chinese coolies. He begged to move that Progress be reported and that the Committee should obtain leave to sit again another day.

Motion agreed to, and Progress reported.

PUBLIC PARK AT FREMANTLE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser), in Committee, moved "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that the sum of £400 be placed on the Estimates for improvements to Public Park at Fremantle." Hon. members who had read the correspondence, laid on the Table, that had passed between the Governor and the Municipal Council with reference to vesting certain land granted by the

Government to the Council for recreation purposes, would be aware why this sum was asked to be placed on the Estimates. The land referred to, as was known to hon. members, was granted to the Town Council in lieu of a piece of land known as the "Green," which had been resumed for railway purposes. The Council, it would be observed from the correspondence, had earnestly requested that a sum of £500 should be made as a grant-in-aid for immediate improvements, and for bringing the ground in question into the condition intended as a park and recreation ground. The Government, with the concurrence of the House, were prepared to place £400 at the disposal of the Municipal Council for the purpose referred to.

Mr. MARMION while supporting the motion, which he regarded as a mere act of justice, was surprised and somewhat disappointed to find that the sum proposed to be placed on the Estimates was £400 and not £500, as promised by His Excellency in the letter addressed by the Colonial Secretary to the Chairman of the Municipal Council, on the 8th July, 1879. In that letter it was said that His Excellency would submit for the consideration of the Legislative Council the application made by the Municipality for a sum of £500 in addition to an annual grant of £100. He (Mr. Marmion) could not undertake to accept the responsibility of asking the House and the Government to increase the amount now proposed to be placed on the Estimates from £400 to £500: the responsibility rested with the official members to carry out His Excellency's pledge to the Municipality which, after all, would only go a very small way to carry out the work required to render this new piece of ground anything approaching in usefulness that taken away.

Progress was then reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read a third time and passed: Fisheries (Dynamite) Bill; Vendor and Purchaser Act Amendment Bill; Foreign Probate Bill; and Prison Discipline Act Amendment Bill, 1879.

CUSTOMS ORDINANCE, 1860, AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—"Goods may be unshipped "from mail steamer on Sundays or "holidays:"

Agreed to, *sub silentio*.

Clause 2—"Repeal of 124th section "of Customs Ordinance:"

Mr. SHENTON thought this would be a favorable opportunity for introducing other desirable amendments in the existing Customs Ordinance. For instance, the 31st section of the 24th Vict., No. 5, enacted "That no cargo "shall be discharged during the winter "months after four o'clock." This restriction occasionally operated very inconveniently, and he thought the hour might be extended until sundown. Again, the 3rd section of the 33rd Vic., No. 10, was another clause that might be amended. Under that clause no entries could be passed at the Customs until three days after a vessel's arrival in port. This provision might have been all very well when there was no means of telegraphic communication in the Colony, but since the inland telegraph had been introduced there was no necessity to allow three days to elapse before passing entries: twenty-four hours would be amply long enough.

THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. G. W. Leake) said he would give the matter his consideration, with a view to amend the sections referred to.

Progress was then reported, and leave given to sit again on Friday.

The House adjourned at half-past nine o'clock, p.m., until Friday, 8th August.