

Mr. TOOHEY : It is not a temperance question. It is a question of attendance.

Sir HENRY PARKES : I move as an amendment :

That the name of Mr. Hassall be substituted for the name of Mr. McMillan, and that the name of Mr. Day be substituted for the name of Dr. Wilkinson.

Amendment agreed to ; and motion, as amended, agreed to.

PRINTING PETITIONS.

Motion (by Sir HENRY PARKES) agreed to :

That it be a sessional order of this House that the Clerk of the House shall cause to be printed, as a matter of course, all petitions received by this House (excepting petitions for the introduction of private bills), unless it be otherwise ordered by the House : Provided that when several petitions are presented substantially to the same effect he shall cause to be printed only the one first presented, to which he shall append a statement of the number of other petitions, the general designation of the party or parties to each, and the number of signatures attached.

EXCLUSION OF STRANGERS.

Motion (by Sir HENRY PARKES) agreed to :

That it be a sessional order of this House that when the Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, has been notified by any hon. member that strangers are present, then, unless four other hon. members rise in their places, in token of their support to the objection, no order shall be made for strangers to withdraw : Provided that the Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, may, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of strangers from any part of the House.

THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

Mr. MELVILLE wished to know when the financial statement was likely to be made ?

Sir HENRY PARKES : The Colonial Treasurer cannot tell the hon. member to-night.

House adjourned at 2.25 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 16 March, 1887.

Administration of Oath—Rabbit Nuisance Act—Sydney Hospital—Railway from Redfern to Circular Quay—Cremation Bill (second reading).

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH.

The PRESIDENT produced a commission from his Excellency the Governor enabling the Chairman of Committees to administer the oath to members.

RABBIT NUISANCE ACT.

Mr. NORTON (for Mr. KING) asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—(1.) From the date of the Rabbit Nuisance Act of 1883 becoming law to the 31st December, 1886, what has been the amount which has been paid for the extermination of rabbits, including amounts paid for salaries, subsidies, and other expenses under the act ? (2.) What is the number of rabbits recorded to have been destroyed during the period named ? (3.) Is the area of rabbit infested country increasing or decreasing ? (4.) Has the Government any intention of introducing a bill to amend the Rabbit Nuisance Act of 1883 during the present session ?

Mr. SALOMONS answered,—(1.) £361,492 10s. 10d. ; but as there are a number of claims for subsidy for rabbits destroyed during the last quarter of 1886 still undealt with this total will be increased. (2.) 7,853,787 ; but, in addition, vast numbers have been destroyed by natural enemies, poisons, and other means, and of these no estimate can be made. (3.) Increasing. (4.) The matter is under consideration, but it is not expected that it can be dealt with this session.

SYDNEY HOSPITAL.

Sir ALFRED STEPHEN rose to move :

(1.) That it be referred to a select committee to inquire and report to this House respecting the expediency of completing, as an hospital, the present unfinished structure in Macquarie-street.

(2.) That such committee consist of the following members, namely:—Mr. Creed, Mr. Norton, Mr. Barton, Mr. Lord, Mr. Dodds, Dr. Garran, Mr. Hill, Mr. Knox, and Sir Alfred Stephen.

He said : This is a very important question which I submit to this House, to the country, and to those who are interested in the unfinished structure. It happens that for years now this building, which is supposed to be intended for sick persons, has become an eyesore, and it is very uncertain whether it will be completed. For years no steps have been taken to complete it, and it is the opinion of a great number of persons, of whom I happen to

be one, and medical men especially, that it ought never to be completed. I do not think we should be embarrassed by the consideration that there is a private act which has established the Sydney Hospital, so-called. Originally it was the Sydney Infirmary and Hospital. There was a building there years and years ago, and the site was that which is now supposed to be a proper place for the erection of a structure such as that which now stands in its present proportions. But I believe it is notorious as a fact that the Government is supplying the funds for the erection of this building. I assume that a very large amount of private funds have been subscribed which are now represented in the building as it stands; but, if it be an improper place for the erection of an hospital, and such an hospital is really not wanted—if, on the contrary, it be a nuisance, and anything but an advantage to those whom it is designed to benefit, and if it turn out to be highly expedient instead of finishing that structure that there should be two other structures, neither of which should be in Macquarie-street, I think it is a question of considerable public importance. The hospital was established by law as an hospital infirmary, and dispensary in 1846, and I think it was somewhere about that time that the grant of the land was given, on what terms we do not know, but I assume now that it was for the purpose of an hospital. Of course it may be that there should be some act, public or private, passed for the purpose of devoting the land to another purpose. I frankly admit that I for one am of an opinion—shared by a great number of persons—that as it is a bad place for an hospital it would be a very admirable site, and the building a very admirable building, for certain other purposes; but whether for a supreme court, which is said to be very much required—or for the purpose of a parliament house—and I think this building in which we are now assembled is not a very creditable place for a colony of this magnitude, are questions with which I have now nothing to do, and with which the committee I propose will have nothing to do. Some valuable opinions will be expressed as to what will be best to do with the building, if it is not to be finished as an hospital. All I ask is that a committee shall inquire and

[*Sir Alfred Stephen.*

report as to the expediency of completing the structure as an hospital. I am not going into the question as to the large sums of money which many persons think, and which I am disposed to think, have been expended unnecessarily on that building. It is highly ornamented, it is of a huge size, and it may be that a building of one-fourth of the size would have been better; but in any event not there. In 1846, and indeed until the last eight or ten years, Macquarie-street was not what it is now—a very great thoroughfare, with the noise of carriages continually rattling there. One of the objections to the site is that there is no ground round about it. It is notorious that when patients are in the way of recovery that which conduces largely to their recovery is the sight of flowers and shrubs, and green fields; that there should be, at least, plenty of fresh pure air always surrounding them. Look at the building as it now stands. It is some 12 or 14 feet off the street, and, except at the back, there is no outlook of any kind. There is nothing at either end, and there are plenty of places in Sydney where you will find the proper requisites for an hospital. There should be fresh air pouring in from unpolluted quarters; but where another site could be found is not a question for me now to trouble the House with. It is one on which many persons may think fit to have different opinions; but I think there is a general agreement of opinion among medical men that we do not want a large hospital of that kind in Macquarie-street; that what is wanted is rather two smaller hospitals, not in that spot, but separate from each other, where, as emergency hospitals, patients can suddenly be taken. All these are questions to be considered by a committee, and I submit that the question I am about to be caused to be referred to a select committee is one of very great importance to the community at large; and that before some £30,000 or £40,000 more is spent on the building, which has cost an enormous sum, we should know whether it is really a proper place for an hospital, and whether such an hospital is required at all in any place.

Question proposed.

Mr. WEBB: I am rather at a loss to understand what good can arise from appointing a committee of this House to inquire into this matter. The ground

adjoining no doubt was dedicated some years ago for the purpose of an infirmary, and there is a large building there in the course of construction, and on which a considerable sum of money has been expended. Now the hon. and learned member is of opinion that this is not a suitable site for an hospital, and that the building should be used for some other purpose. No doubt there are many purposes for which it might be used, but the question arises, is it wise or prudent for this House to initiate the matter. It is completely initiating the expenditure of a large sum of money. We may appoint a committee to inquire; they may spend a great deal of time and trouble; but after they have brought up their report we are powerless to do anything beyond adopting it and sending a message to the Governor recommending a certain course. I notice that similar action in this respect has been taken in another place, where they have all the necessary power not only to initiate, but also to carry it out to a successful issue. I think it will be almost a waste of time for a committee of this House to inquire into this question when another body, far more powerful as to their rights to carry out what they recommend, is sitting and holding an inquiry into it. We might as well appoint a committee to inquire into the desirability of constructing a railway instead of a tramway to some given point; we might as well appoint a committee to take into consideration whether it would not be desirable to construct a railway in some given direction. I suppose we have every right to do so; but it is very questionable to me whether any good can arise from the report of a committee of this House. We can do all that is necessary without this committee at all. If the hon. and learned gentleman is very anxious to see this building completed and turned to account a more simple course for him to pursue would be to submit a resolution, stating that it is desirable that it be completed for some purpose or other. It is not for this House to say for what purpose it shall be finished. A resolution of the kind I have suggested might help the Government to arrive at some decision; but I very much doubt whether the motion which is now before the House will be of any real service. I should like to see the building

completed; I think it is quite time it was completed for some purpose or other, and I have no hesitation in saying that I quite agree with the hon. and learned member that it is no place for an hospital. I certainly think that something of a very different character should be erected on the site; in fact, I agree with my hon. and learned friend that perhaps it would be a very wise thing if a part of the building were so altered as to provide suitable houses for the accommodation of the Parliament of the country.

Sir ALFRED STEPHEN, in reply: It seems to have been forgotten by the gentleman who has just resumed his seat that the motion does not ask the Government to do anything whatever. It does not ask the Government to expend a single farthing. It simply proposes to ascertain by due inquiry, and I suppose the principal witnesses will be medical men, whether that is a desirable site, and whether the building should be completed—I do not say necessarily by the Government. But we know that the Government has been furnishing the means, and because it is not now doing so, the building is left unfinished. I do not ask the Government to do anything. I merely ask the House to express an opinion on the question, the importance of which will not be denied by any one, whether the building should be finished or not. If the Government are asked to expend money, they will have an expression of opinion from this House by which they will be strengthened. I do not think the opinion of the House will be thought so little of that it will not go a great way in determining whether the buildings should be finished by public money. Even if it is thought that the work should be done by private means, we ought to express an opinion; but whether or not public money should be spent upon it is a subordinate question, by which the motion is only indirectly affected. The motion asks nothing, but simply indirectly expresses an opinion upon a question which has been raised, and which must be determined either by the Government or by some such body as this before any further public money is spent. The House is only asked, after due inquiry, to cause an opinion to be expressed on a subject of very great importance.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

RAILWAY FROM REDFERN TO
CIRCULAR QUAY.

Sir ALFRED STEPHEN, in postponing his motion for a select committee to consider and report upon the plans, sections, and books of reference of the proposed railway to Circular Quay, said it was his intention to give fresh notice of motion for this day week. He postponed the motion simply in compliance with a request from the Representative of the Government. At the same time he must say that if the Government had any intention of carrying out the proposed underground railway, the question should be decided at no distant date.

CREMATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. CREED rose to move :

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said : I would call the attention of hon. members to the fact that this is really the same bill that was before the House last session, the second reading of which was carried by a very large majority, almost three to one. This bill contains all the amendments which were made by the House in the bill of a former session ; it is, in fact, that bill in the form in which it left this House and went to the Legislative Assembly. Unhappily the pressure of business in the Legislative Assembly prevented the measure from being dealt with in that House. There is a change in the title of the bill, and that is the sole change in connection with it. I thought it would be more in accordance with fact that the measure should be called a bill to regulate the process of cremation. Cremation is not illegal at the present time, but if it is carried out, as it might be, in a perfectly legal manner, there are no regulations under which it could be performed, and it might be done in a way that would be very offensive. This bill, therefore, is really a measure not to render cremation legal, but to establish regulations under which cremation may be carried out. Cremation has of late made very great progress throughout the world. Even since the subject was before the late Parliament a great many additional apparatus have been erected in various places. They have been erected at New York, San Francisco, Buffalo, Geneva, and Zurich, in addition to those which have been erected for

some years at Gotha, Dresden, Berlin, Florence, Milan, Vienna, Washington, Copenhagen, London, and Paris. Cremation is becoming much more frequent in England than it was formerly. In January last two cremations took place. The Corporation of Leicester have appointed a committee to take steps for the establishment of a crematorium. That was done in response to a requisition on the subject from many of the leading inhabitants. In March last year the Chamber of Deputies in Paris passed a bill for the regulation of cremation. The numbers in the division on that measure were 371 in favour of it and 174 against it, giving a majority of nearly 200 in favour of the bill. In Italy cremation is very common, and is becoming still more frequent every day. There are sixty cremation societies in Italy, each of which has its apparatus for carrying out the process. There are a large number of people in the colony who are in favour of cremation, and who desire to have means afforded for the disposal in this way of their own bodies and those of their friends, and it is but just that they should have facilities for carrying out their wishes equal to the facilities possessed by those who do not believe in cremation, but prefer the burial of the bodies of their deceased relations. But, in affording facilities for cremation, we should not allow the carrying out of the process to give any offence to the sensibilities of those who disapprove of cremation. The bill provides for the erection of apparatus by which cremation may be carried out in such a way as to give no offence to the living. The sanitary advantages of cremation are undoubted. Any animal matter which has ceased to live soon passes into a state of putrescence, and then becomes a source of danger to the community. If a body is placed in the earth, the evil is modified to a certain extent, but is not destroyed entirely. If the body is destroyed by fire in a properly constructed apparatus, it is rendered innocuous, because nothing remains but the mineral constituents of the body and certain gases. The sanitary advantages of cremation may be best shown by quoting examples of the evils of burial. Of course, greater evils from the burial of bodies have occurred in the older and more thickly populated countries of the world ; but we have not been without

examples in this country. Hon. members will recollect the case of the Camperdown cemetery, which was closed some years ago, and also that of the Leichhardt cemetery. Dr. Thompson's report shows that an outbreak of typhoid arose from the Leichhardt cemetery, and it is notorious that a large amount of sickness arose from water being used which drained from the cemetery at Newcastle. An hon. member informs me that at Ashfield the water-holes near his residence became very offensive in consequence of the proximity of the cemetery. I am also informed by a gentleman who had the training of an athlete at a certain place that he found it impossible to train the man there, because the well which supplied them with water received the drainage from a neighbouring grave-yard. I think I could not do better than quote some of the evidence from foreign countries which I gave on a former occasion in favour of cremation. I will begin by quoting some remarks of Dr. Ashburton Thompson, in speaking of the outbreak of typhoid fever at Leichhardt. He says :

"Disgusting as such a water is, however, sewage is not the only organic matter it contains. On both ridges are cemeteries, that to the west being the Balmain cemetery, which has been established about sixteen years, and which now holds about 9,000 bodies ; that on the east being the Balmain Roman Catholic cemetery, established about twelve years, and holding about 1,000 bodies. The soil was supposed to be impermeable until about November last, when the corporation cut Norton-street down 3 feet ; a shallow section of the lowest part of the cemetery was thus made, and I am told by many people that so fetid a soakage flowed from the face to the street as rendered the latter almost impassable for nearly six weeks. * * *

A clay soil delays putrefaction, but it happens in time, and, as is thus proved, when the coffins begin to leak the putrilage is no longer confined to the grave, but enters the sub-soil water, with this it flows under Norton-street, and down the slope to Helsarmel Creek, 240 yards away ; there it meets a similar drainage from the Roman Catholic cemetery on the opposite ridge, and both together come to light again at last in that unconsecrated cauldron, the dairy well." The position of these cemeteries was chosen by the authorities, the one only sixteen, the other but twelve years since, in the full belief that they were well away from the population for ages to come ; yet, in this short period they are so surrounded by inhabitants, that every acre of land is cut up into small building allotments, and already 1,500 people are living in

houses built in the immediate neighbourhood of these cemeteries. * * * In New York and its neighbourhood they are reaping the ills which arise from the cemeteries established in what were supposed to be far-away places. Brooklyn furnishes an illustration of the evil, being surrounded by a network of cemeteries. In one of these alone, called Greenwood, since its establishment forty years ago, though it has had numerous other cemeteries to compete with, there were up to 1882 211,000 bodies interred. When it was opened, it was well outside Brooklyn, which then contained but 30,000 inhabitants ; it is now completely intramural, and the city contains over 600,000 people. The offensive exhalations from this cemetery are continually complained of. The *Lancet* of January 11, 1879, when speaking of the necessity of special measures for the disposal of the dead, said :

The expedient of burial in suburban cemeteries is only temporary. It may last our time, but the next generation will be called upon to solve the sanitary problem in a more permanent way.

It has been asked by thinking men in the medical profession, "By what authority can we affirm that life departs from disease germs by inhumation ? How dare we preserve as we do vast depots of the germs of yellow fever, of Asiatic cholera, and every year accumulate and treasure up the seeds of small-pox, scarlet fever, whooping-cough, diphtheria, and measles ?" It is true that as yet we possess a happy immunity from the two first-mentioned scourges ; but if once introduced, how are we to be sure without the bodies of those who die from them are cremated, that we are not depositing in the ground seed-beds of these terrible diseases to be brought into activity at some future time by the ignorant or unthinking use of the pick and shovel. That this is no mere imaginary possibility, I will show by examples I will give, in which after the lapse of many years disease has broken out as a consequence of infective germs spread by the opening up of earth in which the victims of epidemics had been buried a long time since. In 1828, Professor Bianchi demonstrated how the fearful reappearance of the plague at Modena was caused by excavations in ground where 300 years previously the victims of the pestilence had been buried. It was remarked by Mr. Cooper that the opening of the plague burial-grounds at Eyam, in Derbyshire, occasioned an immediate outbreak of disease. He also describes how the malignity of the cholera which scourged London in 1854 was enhanced by the excavations made for sewers in the soil where, in 1665, those dying from the plague were buried. Mr. Simon, C.B., the medical officer to the Privy Council, had predicted this result, and warned the authorities of the danger of disturbing the spot. Mr. Eassie, in his work on "The Cremation of the Dead," tells us that, in 1843, when the parish church of Minchinhampton was rebuilding, the soil of the burial-ground, which was superfluous, was disposed of for manure, and deposited in many of the neigh-

bouring gardens. As a result, the town was nearly decimated. As high scientific authority is seldom called on to discover the origin of local diseases, unless they assume a malignant or epidemic type, it is safe to believe that thousands of cases of illness and death are occasioned by the disinterment of human remains, without the true cause of the maladies being suspected. Independent even of disinterment, the infected corpse, while hidden in the grave, may be a means of spreading the disease by which it died. The belief has been expressed that Trinity church-yard was an active cause of the yellow fever in New York in 1822, aggravating the malignity of the epidemic in its vicinity. During the epidemic of this disease in New Orleans in 1853, Dr. E. H. Burton reported that in the Fourth District the mortality from it was 452 per 1,000, more than double that of any other. In this district were three large cemeteries, in which during the previous year more than 3,000 bodies had been buried. In other districts the proximity of cemeteries seemed to aggravate the disease.

Dr. Rauch, who is now the learned and much respected secretary of the Illinois Board of Health, personally observed during the epidemic of cholera in Burlington, Iowa, in 1850, that the neighbourhood of the city cemetery was free from the disease until about twenty interments had been made there, and then deaths began to occur, always in the direction from the cemetery in which the wind blew. In a report presented to both houses of Parliament in England in 1850, Dr. Sutherland testified that he had witnessed several outbreaks of cholera in the vicinity of graveyards, which left no doubt on his mind as to the connection between the disease and such local influences.

The investigations of the Massachusetts Board of Health showed that diphtheria and typhoid fever were disseminated not only by infectious emanations and excreta from sick-rooms, but also from the graves of persons who had died of these complaints.

Dr. Julius Le Moyné, the first to erect a crematorium in America, wrote :

The inhumation of human bodies dead from infectious diseases results in constantly loading the atmosphere and polluting the waters with not only the germs that arise from simple putrefaction, but also with the specific germs of the diseases from which death resulted.

Professor Salmi, of Mantua, has discovered in the stratum of air which has remained during a time of calm for a certain period over a cemetery, organisms which considerably vitiate the air, and are dangerous to life. This was proved after several examinations. When the matter in question was injected under the skin of a pigeon a typhus-like ailment was induced, and death ensued on the third day.

Sir Spencer Wells, in his speech at the conference on sanitary subjects, held in London between June 9th and 14th, 1884, said that he knew of an instance of a clergyman who had taken into his garden a piece of old disused burial-ground, and upon this ground being dug up, scarlet fever of a malignant type broke out in

[*Mr. Creed.*

the clergyman's family, and spread all over the parish. It was afterwards ascertained that in this portion of the ground the bodies of persons who had died of scarlet fever had been buried thirty years before.

The General Board of Health in England, in 1849, held special inquiry into the burial-grounds of London and large towns, appointing for the purpose Southwood Smith, Chadwick, and others. The report is signed by Lord Carlisle, Lord Ashley—better known as the philanthropic Earl of Shaftesbury—Edwin Chadwick, and T. Southwood Smith, and goes to show that the placing of a dead body in the grave does not prevent the gases generated by decomposition, together with the putrescent matters which they hold in suspension, from permeating the surrounding soil, and escaping into the air above and the water beneath.

The accurate researches of Pasteur show that burial is not destructive of disease-germs, but that though bodies may be buried many feet below the surface, yet the germs may be brought to the surface and infect animals which are about the spot, and even human beings. He shows that

an animal, dying of a specific disease may be buried at a depth of 6 feet below the surface of the earth and yet infect other animals kept in the field in which the interments have taken place. In his experiments as to the "Etiology of Splenic Fever," he demonstrates after the burial of animals dying from that disease, that soil taken from the surface of the ground over the graves reproduced splenic fever in all its virulence, after intervals of ten, fourteen, and twenty-four months, and he subsequently found that the specific germs still existed in these places after the operations of ploughing, sowing, and reaping. He also demonstrated that the manner in which these germs were brought to the surface from the depth at which the diseased animals had been buried, was by the instrumentality of earth-worms, which, swallowing earth at the contaminated depth, bring it to the surface in their intestines, where they leave it in the worm-casts which they so frequently deposit on the ground. In remarking on this at the Academy of Medicine, in Paris, Pasteur said :

In these results what outlooks are opened to the mind in regard to the possible influence of earths in the etiology of diseases, and the possible danger of the earth of cemeteries.

I think these facts are enough to convince hon. members that burial is highly dangerous in a thickly populated country, and that the destruction of the body by fire removes one chance which —

Notice taken that there was not a quorum present.

The PRESIDENT adjourned the House at 5:33 p.m.