been held by the Supreme Court that the mere fact of regulations not having been laid on the table of the House did not invalidate them.

Mr. HENSON: I am satisfied with the hon. member's explanation.

Clause agreed to.

Motion (by Sir HENRY PARKES) agreed to:

That the following new clause stand clause 4 of the bill:—"Upon the sale or other disposition of any land being portion of the lands described in the schedules to this act no trust obligation estate interest contract charge security right-of-way or other easement from which such land pursuant to section two of this act is expressed to be freed and discharged upon the vesting of such land in the Chief Minister shall by reason of such sale or disposition be deemed to revive Provided that for all purposes of taxation and rating whether public or municipal all lands so sold or demised shall be liable in the same way as ordinary lands alienated by the Crown."

Motion (by Sir HENRY PARKES) agreed to:

That the following new clause stand clause 10 of the bill:—"All collections and articles purchased by given or bequeathed to the Chief Minister for the purposes of this act or being within or upon the premises or lands by this act vested in the Chief Minister may for the purposes of all legal proceedings be described as the property of the Chief Minister."

Bill reported with amendments; report adopted.

GALLAGHER'S CLAIM.

Report of select committee presented.

GRADY'S CLAIM.

Report of select committee presented.

ADJOURNMENT.

CROWN LANDS PURCHASES VALIDATION BILL.

Motion (by Sir HENRY PARKES) proposed:

That this House do now adjourn.

Mr. J. P. ABBOTT, before the House adjourned, wished to ask the Secretary for Lands when he proposed going on with the bill to legalise certain conditional and other purchases of Crown lands? He would point out to the hon. gentleman that, so far as he was concerned, he did not intend to allow a bill of this kind to go through at the last stage of the session. This bill proposed to validate no less than seventy-three conditional purchases, and the House had not a tittle of information concerning them. The bill was only introduced on the 30th June, and if stronger reasons than those which yet appeared were not given for validating these purchases, he would oppose the bill from beginning to end. He gave the hon. gentleman fair warning, and he should like to know when the hon. gentleman proposed to go on with the bill?

Mr. GARRETT: I purpose going on with this bill on the very first opportunity. With regard to the number of cases, I have to state that these cases have been accumulating for a period of three years. There are very few cases in the schedule that I myself have placed there. The vast majority of them—70 out of 73—were included in the schedule by previous ministers. Therefore, as far as my own action is concerned, I have very little to answer for in this matter. The very first chance I get of going on with the bill I intend to proceed with it, in the interests of all the parties concerned.

Mr. J. P. ABBOTT said there was one case in which a selection was sought to be validated because the purchaser had not resided upon it; and he was a member of the House.

Mr. GARRETT: This is the first I have heard of it. I have not looked into the particular reasons for any of these cases yet; but I shall endeavour, before I go on with the bill, to acquaint myself with all the particulars of each case.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 12·17 a.m. (Tuesday).

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 5 July, 1887.

Assent to Bills—Third Readings—Tobacco Increase Duty Bill (second reading)—Colonial Spirits Duties Bill (second reading)—Land Titles Commissioners Fees Bill (second reading)—Hay Court-house Bill (second reading)—Willoughby and Gordon Tramway Bill.

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Royal assent to the following bills reported:—

Consolidated Revenue Fund Bill (No. 4).

Crookwell Roman Catholic Church Land Sale Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

The following bills were read the third time :—

Patents Law Amendment Bill (No. 2).

West Wallsend and Monk-Wearmouth Act Amendment Bill.

TOBACCO INCREASE DUTY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. SALOMONS rose to move :

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said : I may perhaps be pardoned if I make a few remarks in explanation of this bill, as some misapprehension seems to exist both as to the reason for the bill and as to its operation. I must be forgiven for reminding hon. members that the excise duty on tobacco, which was imposed in 1884, was imposed at a time when the customs duty was, as it is now, 1s. per lb. The excise duty was fixed at 1s. per lb. under the belief that the imported leaf and the colonial-grown leaf were used in equal proportions. It will be seen that if that were the case, the duty which would be paid on every lb. of tobacco would be 1s. 6d. ; because, while the colonial leaf pays only an excise duty of 1s., the imported leaf pays, besides that duty, a customs duty of 1s. per lb. Speaking in round numbers, it was estimated that out of the 2,000,000 lb. of leaf that were manufactured in our factories, 1,000,000 lb. would be foreign leaf, which would have paid the excise duty of 1s., as well as the customs duty of 1s., and that 1,000,000 lb. would be colonial-grown leaf.

Mr. PIDDINGTON : Why is that supposed ?

Mr. SALOMONS : It was so supposed by the Government which first imposed the excise duty, and the estimated revenue was based on that assumption. It was calculated upon that assumption that the duty would bring in a revenue of 1s. 6d. per lb. ; but it is found, speaking also in round numbers, that, out of the 2,000,000 lb. of leaf which are annually used in the factories less than one-fourth is imported leaf, and the proportion is becoming less every month. The consequence is that the revenue has declined from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 2d. per lb., that is to say that, instead of a revenue of 1s. 6d., the Government derive from the customs duty and the excise duty on tobacco leaf a revenue of only 1s. 2d. per lb. The Government, in order to realise the amount which was anticipated, propose that the excise duty shall be 1s. 3d., which will have the effect of bringing it within a fraction of 1s. 6d. I have had placed in my hands in order to make clear the correct view—for persons who are personally interested in the matter have put forward opposite views—a table which, if I am favoured with the attention of hon. members, will show that most of the statements put forward are based either upon misconception or misrepresentation. I find that 2,044,240 lb. of tobacco were manufactured here last year ; that in the manufacture of it only 561,520 lb. of imported leaf were used ; and that the quantity of manufactured tobacco which was imported, on which the duty was 3s. per lb., was only 378,680 lb. Hon. members must see that as the importation of foreign leaf decreases, so the revenue decreases. While the only duty on the colonial leaf is the excise duty of 1s. per lb., there is a customs duty as well as an excise duty, of 1s. on foreign leaf, of which only 561,520 lb. were imported, whereas on more than 1,500,000 out of the 2,000,000 lb. a duty of only 1s. per lb. was paid. It is in order, therefore, to allow the country to derive a reasonable revenue from the tobacco that the excise duty is now increased to 1s. 3d. I may state there is no comparison, with respect to the growth of tobacco leaf, between this colony and the other colonies. I wish to anticipate an objection which may be taken from the letters which have appeared in the newspapers. I may state that we grow 2,570,064 lb. of tobacco leaf ; that is to say, that the difference between 2,044,240 lb. and 2,570,064 lb. is used for sheep-wash and other purposes. If we compare New South Wales with Victoria, where the duty is only 1s. per lb., it will be found that, whereas we imported only 378,680 lb. of manufactured tobacco, Victoria imported 611,437 lb. ; and, as against the 561,520 lb. of unmanufactured tobacco which we imported, Victoria imported only 338,129 lb. ; and, as against the 2,044,240 lb. of tobacco which we manufactured, Victoria manufactured only 1,368,022 lb. ; and, as against the 2,570,064 lb. of tobacco leaf which we grew, Victoria grew only 1,538,208 lb. In New Zealand there are only about 10 acres of land under tobacco crop.

As against the 378,680 lb. of manufactured tobacco on which we receive customs duty of 3s. per lb., New Zealand imports nearly the whole of such tobacco. She imports 1,179,951 lb. of manufactured tobacco, only 7,561 lb. of unmanufactured tobacco, and the colonial tobacco amounts to only 10,927 lb. In Queensland the figures are still more startling. No unmanufactured tobacco is imported at all; she grows only 148,960 lb. of tobacco leaf, out of which she manufactures only 45,360 lb. of tobacco, and she imports 970,473 lb. of manufactured tobacco. In South Australia there is no record of any land being under tobacco crop. It appears that no tobacco is manufactured there at all, and that 529,746 lb. of unmanufactured tobacco and 201,323 lb. of manufactured tobacco are imported. Lastly, in Tasmania no unmanufactured tobacco is imported, no colonial tobacco is manufactured, no land is under tobacco crop, and 227,611 lb. of manufactured tobacco are imported. So that hon. members will see that, whereas the other colonies derive an enormous revenue from the importation of manufactured tobacco—manufacturing very little tobacco, or none at all—in this colony duty is paid upon the comparatively small quantity of 378,680 lb. If the excise duty were not increased as proposed, the colony would only receive the customs duty and excise duty on the 561,520 lb. of imported unmanufactured tobacco; and, with regard to the 1,500,000 lb. of colonial tobaccos we should receive no customs duty at all, but only the excise duty of 1s. per lb. I believe that the information I have given is absolutely reliable. The majority of the local manufacturers use 4 or 5 lbs. of colonial leaf to 1 lb. of foreign leaf. It is in order that the revenue may be reasonably adjusted on an article which no one will say is an absolute necessity of life—but which must be viewed as a luxury and an admittedly fair subject for taxation—that this bill is introduced. I submit that it has the approval of every one but a few of those who are interested in keeping the duty at 1s. Whatever tax you impose must press more strongly on a particular class than it does on the whole community, and it is only natural that that class should petition against it. It is the duty of this House to see whether it is a fair tax reasonably imposed. I have not only given a reason for it, but I have answered by anticipation arguments that may possibly be taken from letters in the newspapers, which are written from what I may call a trade point of view. The Government have not the slightest desire to do anything to hamper or harass this or any other trade, but they take the view that the revenue having seriously fallen off month by month, it is their duty to equalise it. I may add that the Colonial Treasurer who proposed the excise duty, stated that out of the 2,000,000 lb. which were taken to be the output of the factories, 1,000,000 lb. would represent foreign leaf, and the balance colonial leaf; and it was pointed out that, as the result of that, the duty on manufactured tobacco would yield an average revenue of 1s. 6d. per lb.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time.

In Committee:

Clause 1. In lieu of the duty now chargeable upon tobacco manufactured in any tobacco factory licensed under the Tobacco Act 1884 on entry for home consumption there shall be levied and collected for the use of her Majesty an excise duty upon tobacco manufactured or cut a duty of one shilling and three pence per pound.

Mr. JACOB wished to draw attention to an unfortunate defect which had apparently crept into the clause. The bill amended the principal act, by which the word "manufactured" was interpreted to mean not only cutting, but all the other processes of manufacturing and working up tobacco. Under this bill the excise duty was only to be chargeable on tobacco "manufactured or cut," and the question would arise, whether the additional duty would be charged on tobacco which was dealt with under other processes. He thought that the word "manufactured" would be sufficient and would include every process.

Mr. SALOMONS: The hon. member is generally right, but he has fallen into an error in this matter, I think. In the 2nd section of the principal act the word "manufactured" is construed.

Mr. JACOB: It is construed to mean "cutting," among other things. This clause speaks of manufacturing and cutting, which would exclude all other processes.

Mr. SALOMONS: If I may venture to give an opinion, I should say that the word "manufactured" in this bill will be construed exactly as it is under the principal act.

Mr. JACOB: Then the word "cut" is superfluous?

Mr. SALOMONS: That may be so.

Mr. WEBB said it would be interesting to know what drawback the Treasurer had been allowing to the exporter of colonial tobacco, which was partly made from imported leaf. It would be difficult, he thought, for the Government to ascertain what proportion of imported leaf was contained in a shipment of colonial tobacco.

Mr. SALOMONS: No drawback of any kind is allowed on tobacco. It is not allowed to be done either in practice or by law. If imported leaf is worked up with colonial leaf the tobacco can never be exported so as to obtain a drawback.

Mr. WEBB was under the impression that the manufacturer did not take foreign leaf out of bond, and that it could not go out of the factory, which was a bond, until it had been worked up with colonial leaf. He thought it would be difficult, therefore, for the Government to determine how much imported leaf had been used in the manufacture of any tobacco which was exported.

Mr. SALOMONS: There is a customs duty on imported leaf, and when it is put into a factory to be worked up there is an excise duty on it. It cannot be exported in the sense of obtaining a drawback. There is no drawback on tobacco.

Mr. WEBB believed that inasmuch as every factory was a bond there was no necessity for a manufacturer to pay the customs duty on imported leaf until he had worked it up with colonial leaf.

Mr. SALOMONS: The hon. member is mistaken. The duty is levied when the leaf is entered for home consumption. The difficulty which the hon. member suggests cannot arise, for there is no drawback on tobacco.

Mr. WEBB understood that tobacco could be reshipped in bond, and that if the factories were bonded stores it could be reshipped from the factories, and consequently there was no check as to the quantity of imported leaf used.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and report adopted.

COLONIAL SPIRITS DUTIES BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. SALOMONS rose to move:

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said: I have only a few words to say in reference to this bill. I shall shortly have the pleasure of moving the second reading of the Customs Duties Bill, by which the duty on imported spirits is raised to 14s. a gallon. It is, therefore, necessary to raise the excise duty to the same amount, and that is merely the object of this bill.

Question proposed.

Mr. PIDDINGTON: These bills for the increase of duties, especially the duty on spirits, are to some extent objectionable. It appears to me that the imposition of no less a duty than 14s. the proof gallon is going to the very extreme limit of safety. The higher you raise the duty beyond a certain point the greater reward you offer for illicit distillation, and I very much fear that the increase in the duty on spirits here will have a tendency in that direction. It will certainly have a demoralising tendency. Notwithstanding the apparent anxiety of the Government to increase taxation of every description, they appear to me to be embarking upon a career of extravagance. There seems to be a desire to cast aside considerations of economy, and to launch again into a career of extravagance, and I do not believe for a moment that the present Treasurer's expectations of a surplus of £900,000 at the end of this year will be in any way realised. Therefore I hope this House will set itself resolutely against any extravagant expenditure of the public money that can possibly be avoided, and I believe that we are threatened with something of the kind at the present moment.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time, and reported without amendment.

LAND TITLES COMMISSIONERS FEES BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. SALOMONS rose to move:

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said: I should like to shortly explain to the House how the necessity for this bill has arisen. Under the 6th section of the Real Property Act three commissioners are appointed—two of whom are unofficial members. These two members are remu-

nerated by fees, specified in the schedule marked P. It was not expected that these commissioners would receive anything like the sum they received last year, namely, about £1,100 or £1,200 for duties which are certainly not onerous. The attention of the Government has been drawn to this. It will be noticed that under schedule P there are substantial fees payable, the whole of which go to the commissioners. This bill provides that all the fees shall go to the consolidated revenue excepting a fee of £3 3s. to the commissioners for each sitting, which will only be once a week, and therefore the fees for the two commissioners will not amount to more than £6 6s. a week. Fees are also paid on applications in respect of grants from the Crown, and also on transmission by death or insolvency. By this bill these fees are abolished. The 3rd clause provides :

> No fee shall be payable under the said schedule as a commissioners' fee in respect of any application made after the passing of this act to bring land under the provisions of the Real Property Act where the applicant is the original grantee thereof and the land has never been sold mortgaged encumbered or made the subject of settlement nor shall any such fee be payable on any such application for the registration of any person as a proprietor of land under part v of the said act.

That refers to the cases I have mentioned —transmission by death or in insolvency, or in similar cases to that. As I have already stated, this bill will limit the fees of the commissioners to £3 3s. each per week, and all the other fees will pass into the consolidated revenue.

Question proposed.

Mr. NORTON : I do not rise to oppose the bill, because under the circumstances I think it is a very proper bill. I have no doubt that hon. members will remember that about nine years ago commissioners were appointed to inquire into the working of the Real Property Act, which was then considered to be in a very bad state. These commissioners brought up a report, and one of their recommendations was that the board of commissioners be abolished. Another recommendation was that a master of titles be appointed to do their duties and certain other duties. The evidence taken at that time very clearly showed that the duties performed by the commissioners were merely of a nominal character, and I have been told that they have received at the rate of some £15 an hour for their sittings. This, for men having no special knowledge, is an enormous charge. This bill will remedy that; but the question is whether the bill is in a right form, because the public are not now to be exempt from paying these fees, the only difference being that the Government and not the commissioners will receive them.

Mr. SALOMONS : I made a mistake in saying that the fees will go into the consolidated revenue ; the fees will go to the insurance fund !

Mr. NORTON : I do not see why, if these fees are not required by the commissioners, they should be exacted at all. Now, with regard to the insurance fund, we pay ½d. in the £ on lands brought under the act to cover defects which may have to be compensated for. In point of fact, that ½d. in the £ is more than sufficient. To my knowledge no claim has ever been made on the fund. Nine years ago, when the commission was sitting, it was shown that, although the act had been working for sixteen years, the fund had amounted to upwards of £27,000 without any claim having ever been made upon it. That fund has increased immensely since then, and I believe that no claim has yet been made against it. I, therefore, see no object in increasing the fund. However, the Government have taken a step in the right direction in abolishing the enormous sums paid to the commissioners.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time, and reported without amendments.

HAY COURT-HOUSE BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. SALOMONS rose to move :

> That the bill be now read the second time.

He said : This bill is only carrying out an agreement entered into by the previous Government, by which a piece of land intended to be used as the site for a court-house was to be given over for the purposes of an Atheneum. In the words of the act, we

> have agreed to surrender to her Majesty the said portions of land with the buildings thereon in order that the same may be used as the site for the new court-house and buildings connected therewith on condition that a portion of land in the said town now used as the site of a court-house and described in the second schedule

hereto should be granted by her Majesty for the purposes of an Athenæum for the said town and be vested in persons hereinafter named as trustees for carrying out such purposes.

The schedules defines the two pieces of land. I wish it to be understood that the present Government does not bind itself to put a court-house on the particular piece of land specified, because it may be found expedient to put the court-house where the gaol stands. I may also inform the House that the court-house will not be required for some time, and the Government have the right of using the court-house as long as they think fit. Under the circumstances, however, it was deemed right to carry out in good faith the agreement entered into by the previous Government, and this bill is the result.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time, and reported without amendment.

WILLOUGHBY AND GORDON TRAMWAY BILL.

In Committee (consideration resumed from 30th June, page 2437):

Clause 1 (Authority to construct tramway).

Mr. JACOB said that it was not his intention to oppose the bill, but he had felt it his duty on the motion for the second reading to draw attention to the fact that in a bill of the same character which he introduced last session, namely, the Balmain Tramway Bill, a clause was inserted at the instance of the present Chief Justice, making the borough of Balmain liable for damages if the company or contractor to whom the right of constructing the tramway was given by the borough had not sufficient means to meet any claims which might be made. He knew it would be argued that the two cases were not parallel, but he could see no difference. In this case the legislature was asked to empower two persons named in the bill to construct a tramway which passed through two municipalities, and in the other case the legislature simply empowered the municipality of Balmain to give to some one else the power to construct the tramway. If the borough of Balmain was held responsible, he did not see why the two municipalities which had given their consent to the construction of the present tramway, should not also be held responsible in the interests of the public. Hon. members who had read the evidence taken before the select committee in the present session, and also in the previous session, would see that really the bill was to a certain extent a blind. It was ostensibly asked for by the promoters, Messrs. Brown and Armstrong, but the evidence showed that arrangements had already been made for transferring the tramway to a company. That would be very dangerous. The argument advanced by the learned Chief Justice was that we did not know who were the parties who might be empowered by the borough of Balmain to construct the tramway, and that therefore somebody ought to be made responsible, and this House made the borough of Balmain responsible. When this bill was before the Assembly, it contained a clause giving the two persons named in it power to assign the tramway to a company, but that clause was struck out, and he apprehended that as the bill was now worded they still had power to assign, because clause 2 spoke of their assigns. Since he spoke upon the second reading, he had read the report of the debate which took place in the other Chamber, and he found that some very hard things were said about one of the promoters. On that account, we ought to be very careful about giving the power asked for to the two persons named, who might be impecunious, and who were about to transfer the tramway to a company of which we knew nothing. The proposed tramway was simply to be a continuation of the Government tramway at North Shore, but it did not appear from the evidence given before the select committee that the Commissioner for Railways was examined in order to see whether he had any objection to that being done. Allusion had been made to two tramways constructed under acts of Parliament, one an act passed to enable Mr. Jeanneret to construct a tramway in Parramatta, and another to enable Mr. Saywell to construct a tramway from Rockdale to Lady Robinson's Beach; but there was nothing in these acts which disclosed that the promoters were acting simply as agents of a company. But, in the present case, who would be responsible? If the company were not men of means, who would pay any damages which might be incurred? He would like also to draw the attention of the Committee,

and the Representative of the Government, to the fact that it was disclosed in evidence that the two persons named in the bill wished only to construct an electric tramway, whereas the bill would empower them to use steam power on the tramway.

Mr. SALOMONS: I would suggest to the hon. member in charge of the bill not to proceed further with it this evening. I know that the two promoters of the bill admit that they have made a declaration of trust, and the 9th clause of the bill limits the liability of Messrs. Armstrong and Brown to the liability of common carriers, so that if any person were injured on the tramway he would in effect have no remedy, except a personal one against Messrs. Armstrong and Brown. As to the position of these persons I can say nothing, but we are bound to assume the possibility of their not having anything, and the bill, therefore, ought to contain a clearly-worded provision making the assignees and the whole property liable for damages; because, otherwise, if an action were brought and a verdict obtained the property could not be touched, because it is under a declaration of trust. It must be seen to be inequitable that persons should have the benefits arising from a property and not the liabilities. The two must go together, and if these persons run a tramway for their own benefit they must be liable and their property must be liable.

Mr. CREED quite agreed with the hon. and learned gentleman who had just spoken that the property should be made liable for accidents, and if the bill allowed the owners to transfer the benefits of the tramway without the liabilities it was distinctly wrong, and he should not only be glad, but he should consider it his duty not to proceed with the bill beyond the stage at which an amendment might be introduced rendering the assignees and the property liable for damages. That question would not arise until the 9th clause was reached, and he thought the preceding clauses might be disposed of at once. With reference to the remarks of the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, he would point out that the municipality of Balmain proposed to construct the tramway, and under any circumstances they would have to give somebody the contract to carry it out; they asked not only power to make the contract to construct, but also to manage the tramway; and judging by the experience we had had of Government tramways it was, perhaps, not an unwise arrangement. Under those circumstances the municipality was the party particularly interested. It would have the benefit of the tramway, and it might fairly be called upon to bear the liabilities. He did not think, however, that the provision inserted in the Balmain Tramway Bill was a necessary one, and the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, who spoke as if he considered it necessary now, spoke very strongly against it when it was proposed. If this tramway were constructed, it would be the means of affording useful information and practical knowledge to the colony, because it was the intention of the promoters to try electricity as a motive power. Electricity had never been tried yet in Australia, and if it proved to be a success in this instance, it would be a great advantage to the colony to know it. It might be the means of enabling the Government tramways to be worked economically, and with greater safety to the travelling public. If a clause were inserted in the bill making the municipalities of Gordon and North Willoughby liable when they had done nothing more than give their consent to the construction of the tramway within their boundaries, the object of the bill would be defeated; the tramway would not be constructed; the public would be deprived of a great convenience, and the present tramway at North Shore, which did not pay, would lose a large amount of traffic which would otherwise be brought to it.

Mr. FLOOD hoped that the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, would press the amendment he had suggested. He would go a great deal further than other speakers had yet gone. He thought it the duty of the Government to oppose all bills of this kind, and if they thought it necessary to have branch railways or tramways they should introduce a general measure to authorise their construction, so that there should be no private interests at stake. The bill before the Committee bristled with objections and ought not to be tolerated for a moment. He hoped the Representative of the Government would further consider the bill with the view of seeing whether it was not a measure of which he ought to advise the rejection.

Mr. JACOB, in answer to the hon. member, Mr. Creed, said that he could not see any difference between the present case and the case of the Balmain tramway. If the municipalities interested in the proposed tramway were not liable, the Balmain Municipality might have got over the difficulty raised with regard to its liability by putting forward, as had been done in the present case, one or two persons as the promoters of their bill. The difference, if there was any, was in favour of the Balmain Municipality, because they would be to a certain extent responsible. If they had to contract with a company they would take care that it was with persons who were responsible, so that if any leniency were shown at all it ought to have been shown to the borough of Balmain rather than to the two promoters of this bill. However, he had done his duty in drawing attention to the matter, and he should not pursue the point any further.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 5·55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 5 July, 1887.

Prohibition on Importation of Cattle and Sheep—Balmain Wharves Bill—Rabbit-proof Fencing—Imperial Conference—Railway from Nyngan to Cobar—Bulli Colliery Commission—Accident at the Red Hill Mine—Acting Police Magistrate at Corowa—Personal Explanation—The Unemployed—Centenary Celebration Bill (third reading)—Country Towns Water and Sewerage Act Amendment Bill—Parliamentary Representatives Allowance Bill—Adjournment (Parliamentary Representatives Allowance Bill—Government Asylums Board).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

PROHIBITION ON IMPORTATION OF CATTLE AND SHEEP.

Mr. McCOURT asked the SECRETARY FOR MINES,—(1.) Have the Government taken any steps to give effect to the report of the Australasian Stock Conference, recommending the removal of the prohibition on the importation of cattle and sheep from the United Kingdom? (2.) Can he fix a date when such prohibition will be removed?

Mr. ABIGAIL answered,—(1.) Yes; there is an understanding with the other Australasian colonies that the action with regard to the admission of stock from places outside these colonies shall only be taken with the consent of the majority. Repeated communications have, since the Intercolonial Stock Conference, been addressed by this Government to the other colonies, asking their views with respect to the withdrawal of the prohibition on the importation of foreign stock; but, up to the present, definite answers have only been received from three colonies, two being in favour of its withdrawal and one against. (2.) It is expected that a definite reply will be received from another colony in the course of a few days, which will in all probability decide the question.

BALMAIN WHARVES BILL.

Report of select committee presented.

RABBIT-PROOF FENCING.

Mr. DAY asked the SECRETARY FOR MINES *(without notice)*,—Has he had brought under his notice the desirableness of erecting rabbit-proof fencing between Narramine and the river Murray for the purpose of stopping the inroads of rabbits into the eastern district? If so, is it his intention to carry out the work?

Mr. ABIGAIL answered,—Yes. A large deputation of pastoralists waited upon me and brought this matter under my notice, and I then gave them some reasons why the importance of the question demanded more time for consideration before I arrived at a decision. I said that during the recess the question would be fully inquired into, and a decision arrived at which I thought would be satisfactory to the pastoral lessees of the country.

IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

Mr. CAMERON asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY *(without notice)*,—Is it likely that he will be in a position before this session closes to submit to the House any report of the proceedings of the Imperial Conference recently held in London? He noticed that the delegates of the other colonies had returned, and had submitted reports.

Sir HENRY PARKES answered,—I do not think that the Government are in possession of any report of the proceedings of the conference. I am not quite sure whether they have it or not. We