

Mr. BLACK: I merely wish to ask a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will allow the hon. member to do so, but it must not be taken as a precedent.

Mr. BLACK: It has been brought under my notice that a certain advertisement canvasser complained that when he has made a proposal to individuals with a view of obtaining advertisements from them, in the interval which elapses between his first call and going to complete the bargain a member of the police force, sometimes a detective, has visited the individual and prejudiced his mind against him—telling him in one case, perhaps, that the canvasser is a Roman Catholic; in another case that he is an Orangeman, socialist, anarchist, or dynamitard. The man has made a complaint to the Department of Justice, and has received this reply:

With reference to your letter respecting your complaint that you are unnecessarily harassed by the police, I am directed by the Minister to inform you that, having made careful inquiry into the subject of your complaint, he finds himself unable to interfere in the matter.

Sir GEORGE DIBBS (The Murrumbidgee), Colonial Secretary [10.57]! In reply to the hon. member, I wish to state that the complaint has been made to the wrong department. If I receive a statement of the facts in black and white I will have a report obtained from the police. No man ought to be prevented in getting a living.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

## Legislative Council.

Thursday, 19 January, 1893.

Seat Vacated—Australian Federation—Imprisonment for Debt Abolition Bill (second reading)—Australasian Mining Exchange of Sydney Bill (second reading)—Bills of Sale Bill, No. 2 (second reading)—Eight Hours Bill (second reading)—Raymond Terrace Mechanics' School of Arts Sale Bill (second reading)—Additional Sitting Day.

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

### SEAT VACATED.

The PRESIDENT reported that Mr. Francis Lord, having for two successive sessions failed to give his attendance in the Legislative Council, his seat had become vacant.

### AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION.

The Hon. W. H. SUTTOR asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—When do the Government intend to discuss the federation proposals in this House?

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR answered,—It is intended to discuss the federation proposals as soon after the passing of the Electoral Bill in this House as the pressure of immediately urgent legislation connected with the financial policy of the Government will permit. Resolutions dealing with federation will be placed upon the business-paper at an early date.

### IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT ABOLITION BILL.

#### SECOND READING.

The Hon. A. RYRIE rose to move:

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said: As I am authorised by the hon. member who introduced this bill in another place to take charge of it here, I have much pleasure in proposing its second reading, believing as I do that it will bring about a considerable amount of good and give relief and protection to the poor unfortunate but honest debtor. The object of the bill is to make the law in regard to imprisonment for debt in accordance with the humane spirit of the age. As the law stands at present it is both cruel and absurd. There are many men in gaol who cannot pay certain legal costs. I ask whether those men are to be kept there for ever? It reminds me of the age of barbarism when men were thrown into dungeons, prisons, and bastiles, and allowed to perish and rot. The law has been amended in Great Britain with regard to imprisonment for debt as well as in the sister colony of Victoria and in Canada, and I cannot see why we should be behindhand in passing a measure to ameliorate the condition of our unfortunate fellow-men. I should like to quote from a leading article in regard to the bill which appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Hon. members will admit that the *Sydney Morning Herald* is a very conservative paper, but its columns are always open for the redress of any grievances or to assist in ameliorating the condition of the masses. Referring to this bill the *Herald* says:

It is true it proposes to leave no longer penal the fact that a man is helplessly poor. Under

it no writ shall issue for taking the body of a man and lodging it in gaol in satisfaction for a claim for debt; and on its enactment every person then detained in prison for neglect or refusal to satisfy any judgment shall be forthwith discharged. In so far as this contemplates the case of those whose only fault is poverty, the proposed reform will meet with little opposition from any one actuated by modern feelings of humanity. For dishonest poverty in any of its various forms there is other provision. But to immure a man in prison and keep him for an indefinite period there, in circumstances in which he could never pay his debts, as a satisfaction to society for some supposed criminality involved in his having nothing to pay, is so irrational, not to say unjust and even cruel, that the continuance of the practice is not to the credit of any civilised people. Social history of two or three generations ago is full of illustrations of hardship in the debtors' prisons, where people were left to pine for years, and even for a lifetime, from mere inability to purge themselves of crime by paying the sums demanded by their creditors. And though the case of insolvent debtors has had many alleviations since then, our own gaols have furnished illustrations of the same kind if not to the same degree. To continue such a penal process in order to protect traders against their own negligence in giving credit is neither good policy nor accordant with modern principles of humanity, and reform to this extent is only following in steps that have been already taken in most parts of the British empire. But it is to be understood that this provision only means that a human being is not to be taken and kept in satisfaction for a debt, and intends no immunity whatever when satisfaction is sought for fraud or crime. If a man has obtained credit by false pretences, or by fraud or by breach of trust; if he has contracted a debt wilfully without having at the time a reasonable expectation of being able to pay; if he has made gift or transfer of his property with the intention of evading his creditor; if he has since judgment, obtained sufficient means to pay yet has refused to do so; or if he is about to leave the country to evade payment; then in every such case he brings himself in terms of this bill, within reach of the criminal law, and is liable to imprisonment. These exceptions to abolition of imprisonment cover so wide a field that the measure can hardly be said to be either unjust or to give immunity to a man who tries to trade on the confidence of his creditors. It does not enable the creditor to take satisfaction for his money lost by punishing the debtor with imprisonment, but it leaves every facility for holding the man amenable to the laws of the country for every vestige of fraud involved in his transactions with his creditors. It takes away the power from a vindictive man of wreaking his spite on one who may have been honestly unfortunate, and of making of him a scapegoat for his own sins of carelessness. But it brings the whole machinery of the criminal law to bear upon the man that has taken criminal means for possessing himself of the property of others. Added to this there is another clause which, if not modelled exactly on the same principle, is directed similarly against what may be

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regarded as criminal indebtedness, for it is provided that the act is to give no relief in cases in which the judgment includes damages in respect of defamation of character.

I hope that hon. members will allow the bill to get into Committee, and I shall be glad to consider any reasonable amendments that may be proposed. Considering that there are many persons confined in gaol for debt owing to circumstances over which they have had no control—hard-working, industrious men who have been brought into debt without any fault of their own—we ought not to be behind the age in affording some relief to them in their unfortunate circumstances. I hope, therefore, that the bill will become law.

Question proposed.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: I rise to move the adjournment of the debate, because this is one of those amendments of the law which, from some points of view, no doubt, may be very necessary; but it is an amendment which should be made with very great care, because on the one hand it involves the question of very important rights, and, on the other hand, it involves the exercise of powers which sometimes press very hardly in individual cases. I admit that some amendment may be judiciously made in the law; but I am not prepared to say that this bill is of such a character that it ought to pass in its present form, or that it should pass at all. I think it is well to give the House an opportunity of considering very carefully how far the bill goes, and the mode in which it proposes to deal with the question. I may point out, in support of an adjournment, that although the bill came up to the House in December, this is the first occasion hon. members have had a chance of reaching it. There is no particular hurry for it, and therefore I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to; debate adjourned.

#### AUSTRALASIAN MINING EXCHANGE OF SYDNEY BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. F. T. HUMPHERY: On behalf of the hon. member who is in charge of the bill, I move:

That the order of the day be discharged.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill withdrawn.

BILLS OF SALE BILL (No. 2).

SECOND READING.

The Hon. J. M. CREED: The Vice-President of the Executive Council having promised the House that he would obtain reports from Melbourne as to the working of a similar law in Victoria, and he not being present, and the reports not having been laid on the table, I move:

That the order of the day be postponed and stand an order of the day for this day fortnight.

Motion agreed to; order of day postponed.

EIGHT HOURS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: This bill was in charge of a gentleman who is no longer a member of the House. I think it is only due to the other House that an opportunity should be afforded to the mover of the bill in that House to place the bill in the hands of some other hon. member, therefore I move:

That the order of the day be postponed and stand an order of the day for this day three weeks.

Question proposed.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: This bill has been on the business-paper ever since the Council met this session. For a long while it was in charge of no hon. member, and after great pressure apparently Mr. D. O'Connor took charge of it, and kept postponing the second reading night after night. He has resigned, and has not asked any other hon. member to take charge of the bill. It was his duty to suggest to the hon. member in the other House who is interested in the bill, that he should ask another hon. member to take charge of the bill in this House. It is a bill which really ought to be thrown out at the first blush, as any one will see who looks at its contents. As an amendment I move:

That the question be amended by the omission of the words "three weeks" with a view to the insertion in their place of the words "six months."

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR; I hope the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, will reconsider the matter. The hon. gentleman who was in charge of the bill was absent for a considerable time from the House before he resigned; his resignation took place on the last sitting day before the Christmas holidays, and this is the first private night we have had since that adjournment. I do

not propose to take any action which will perpetuate the bill on the business-paper. I do not express any opinion on the measure; but all I ask is that we should postpone the order of the day for a fortnight, so as to enable the hon. member who was in charge of the bill in the other House to arrange with an hon. member to take charge of it here. Suppose Mr. D. O'Connor before he resigned did forget, or omit, to make some arrangement for carrying on the bill, that is no reason why it should be wiped out without affording an opportunity for its consideration. However good or bad it may be, it seems to me that we should do everything we can to consider it. What possible injury can there be in leaving it on the business-paper for three weeks? If we adopt the hon. member's suggestion we shall absolutely dispose of the bill without discussing its merits or considering it in any way. I do not think it is fair to treat a bill in that way. I think the hon. member, when he reflects for a moment, will see that the proper course is to let the motion go, and on this day three weeks, if no arrangement has been made to take up the bill, he will have very good reason to take the course he has taken now.

The Hon. R. BURDETT SMITH: I hope the hon. member, Mr. Jacob, will accept the suggestion of the Minister of Justice. I am quite sure that the hon. member has no desire to act with discourtesy to the hon. member who was in charge of the bill in the Legislative Assembly; but that in the heat of the moment he has done what he otherwise would not do. Under these circumstances, I think his better judgment will lead him to withdraw the amendment.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: After the forcible appeal made to me by the hon. member who has just spoken, and after the remarks of the Minister of Justice, I feel inclined to give way; but I happen to know a little of the history of the bill. I know that the gentleman who was in charge of the bill in this House asked me time after time to move the postponement of this order of the day. I know that his heart was not in the bill, and he was not apparently inclined to go on with the second reading. I know that several hon. members who have been appealed to have declined to take charge of the bill. I do not know whether the hon. member who

got the bill passed through the other House will be able to obtain the services of an hon. member to take charge of it here. However, in deference to the strong appeal made to me by the hon. member, Mr. R. Burdett Smith, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion agreed to; order of the day postponed.

RAYMOND TERRACE MECHANICS'  
SCHOOL OF ARTS SALE BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. G. DAY: I was under the impression last night, when I was asked to take charge of this bill, that it would not come on for second reading to-day. I have not had an opportunity of looking through the bill or reading the evidence that was taken by the select committee. I cannot take upon myself the duty of moving the second reading without having satisfied myself in all particulars, therefore I move:

That the order of the day be postponed, and stand an order of the day for this day fortnight.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

\* ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR rose to move:

That, in addition to the present days of sitting, this House will, during the remainder of the session, unless otherwise ordered, meet for despatch of business on Tuesday in each week, and that Government business have precedence of general business on that day.

He said: I had hoped that the motion would have been allowed to pass as a formal one. I shall state in as few words as possible the reasons why the Government ask hon. members to put themselves to what is undoubtedly a certain amount of personal inconvenience in giving an extra day of their time to the business of the House. It will be remembered in the first place that the Electoral Bill consists of a large number of clauses, and contains a great amount of debatable matter. The clauses with which we have dealt have occupied two or three evenings, and the more debatable clauses remain to be considered—clauses debatable not only in regard to principle, but also in regard to many details, supposing the principles are affirmed. It will be evident that the discussion of this bill alone will take a

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considerable portion of our time, and while we have only one day a week for the consideration of Government business, we must make very slow progress with a large bill of this kind. It will be necessary, too, for the House to deal with the federation resolutions, with regard to which I answered a question this evening. These resolutions involve in the first place a discussion of the principle of federation, and in the second place a consideration in detail of the draft bill of the convention. This matter must also take considerable time, but in addition to those measures the financial proposals of the Government involve the passing of two important and very lengthy measures, which, no doubt, will involve considerable debate. The first and most immediately pressing will be a bill to provide for the imposition of an income-tax, and the second will be a bill to provide for local government. As hon. members are aware, from financial statements which have been made, it is absolutely necessary for the saving of a large amount of public expenditure to pass the Local Government Bill as soon as possible, to throw upon the local bodies a very large proportion of the cost which is defrayed by the state on roads, bridges, and minor public works throughout the country. The measure which, no doubt hon. members have seen, is very long and very important, and will require a great deal of discussion. I simply mention these three measures as being measures of the utmost importance which must be passed this session, to say nothing of a land bill and other bills. Under these circumstances it will be absolutely impossible that this House can get through its work unless it devotes an extra sitting day for the consideration of Government business. One day must be reserved for the consideration of private business, and considering the amount of business which has to be done before the close of the session, I think it is not too much to ask hon. members to attend on Tuesdays for the purpose of expediting the business of the country in regard to the particular matters I have mentioned, and other matters which will come before the House. It must not be supposed that I have stated all the measures which will come before the House, or stated them in the order in which they will come before the House.

I only instance these particular measures as measures which will appeal to hon. members at once. Their consideration will occupy a great deal of time, and necessarily cause the devotion of another day to public business. Under these circumstances, I appeal to that public spirit which has always aided the Government in carrying on the business of the House, to approve of the motion.

Question proposed.

The Hon. J. DAVIES: I objected to the Minister taking this motion as a formal one, and I have no cause to regret that step after the statement which he has just made. I think it was too much to ask the House to assent to a motion which will involve an additional sitting day at this time of the year. We are in no way responsible for the confused state of public business. Hon. members should have been relieved from their duties at this time of the year. It is unreasonable to ask us to attend now to public business which ought to have been disposed of last year. Judging from the number of measures foreshadowed by the Minister, we shall be sitting here the whole of the year without any prospect of being relieved from our duties. If we sit every day of the week the bills which have been referred to will occupy twelve months of our time before they are finally dealt with. The Minister wound up by telling us that there were other bills still to be submitted. The Land Bill, the Local Government Bill, the Electoral Bill, and the Income-tax Bill are measures of a very debatable character, and will occupy a great deal of time. Hon. members in this Chamber do not pass the measures without giving them the fullest consideration. Every measure is thought out fairly, and is honestly debated. That being the case, and this being the worst portion of the year, it is scarcely fair to ask us to give an additional day to the Government in order to enable them to get through their programme. I do not see what service we shall render, even if we do assent to sacrifice ourselves and attend an additional day in the week. It would be far better to allow private business to be taken up to a certain hour on Thursday night, say, until tea-time, and the balance of the day could be occupied by the Government. That we should be asked, however, to attend to public business three

days in the week at this time of the year is unfair and unjust, more particularly as the Government failed to meet the House at the proper time last year. Parliament has been in session some time, and I do not think the Government can point to any measure which has been passed. That is not the fault of this Chamber. I hope, if we are to have an additional sitting day, that we shall not be asked to remain here the whole year round. The Electoral Bill will occupy a large portion of time. The Local Government Bill of itself is sufficient to occupy a whole session. The principles involved in the measure are important in their application, and they will not be allowed to pass without thorough discussion. The other measures which have been spoken of, as well as the financial policy of the Government, will have to be discussed. It may be said that this is an argument in favour of an additional sitting day. I have no personal objection to an additional sitting day; but I think we ought to be informed as to what the Government intend to do with it. I may state that it is not my intention to call for a division; but I thought it unwise to allow the motion to pass without discussion.

The Hon. J. LUCAS: I think the hon. member, Mr. Davies, has given the best possible reason why the motion should be agreed to. The hon. member has pointed out that the Government have large and important measures to be dealt with. He has stated that the Local Government Bill of itself is sufficient to occupy a whole session. If so, we shall have no other measure before the House. We know that the public have been looking forward to the Electoral Bill and the Local Government Bill, and under the circumstances, it is not too much for us to sit three days in the week, particularly as the other House is going to give the Government an additional day for Government business.

The Hon. H. C. DANGAR: I do not suppose there will be any serious objection to the proposal, but I confess I exceedingly regret the necessity which the Representative of the Government is under in submitting the motion at the commencement of the session. The proposal is one usually made at the fag-end of the session, not almost at the commencement. I am afraid I must say, notwithstanding the time we

have been sitting here, that we are, so far as work is concerned, still at the commencement of the session. I do not blame the Government for that. I think it is far more due to the inordinate capacity for talk of hon. members in another place than to any obstruction of public business which the Government have to encounter. It seems to me that if we are to grapple with the whole of the programme which the Minister has submitted, hon. members will not be comforted with the idea that by giving up an extra day each week we shall be nearer the accomplishment of that work, even if we made up our minds to go on for a much longer time than any of us contemplate. The Minister has shadowed forth two or three measures which he seems to think are necessary to be dealt with. I do not agree with the hon. and learned member in that regard. The hon. and learned member has referred to a land bill. I hoped and believed that when we passed the last Land Bill we had done with land legislation for some time to come. With the exception of one matter which must necessarily engage the attention of the Government in the near future—that is the renewal of leases in the central division—I do not think there is anything so far as land legislation is concerned which the Government are urgently obliged to undertake. There is no doubt the Local Government Bill has been urgently required for several years; but it has been so often postponed that I do not think any great public calamity will result if it is again postponed until the succeeding session of Parliament. It seems to me that do what we may, we are year after year asked to sit here when we ought not to sit, and when, owing to climatic reasons, we are too exhausted to grapple with the business which confronts us. For my part I would rather see a prorogation for three or four months in order to enable the Government to devote themselves to what is really the serious business of the country, namely, the policy of retrenchment. No more serious question can affect this Government or any other government than the question of retrenchment. I do not intend to oppose the motion, but I am certain that it will be many more years than the House contemplates before the work which has been foreshadowed will be dealt with.

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The Hon. J. MACINTOSH: I do not think there can be any great objection to the motion. The Government may have created the necessity for certain bills to be passed, but if they are passed I do not think they will put the country into any better position. We have been told that we shall have to discuss an income-tax bill. Last session we gave the Government a tariff bill, and increased the revenue by £1,000,000. The Government, however, have seemed to be in greater difficulties ever since. I have no doubt that if an income-tax bill is passed the same thing will result. I would suggest to the Minister that the extra sitting day should not commence until after next week.

The Hon. J. HOSKINS: I think the Minister will admit that the motion is unreasonable from the fact of its being moved at an early part of the session. I think the Government are to blame for the small amount of work which has been done. In the early part of the session they adjourned the House at very early hours of the evening when they might have gone on with business. The paper has been crowded to-day with private members' business, and the whole of it has been postponed. Three weeks hence we shall have an abnormal pressure of business. I think the House ought to be placed in its proper position before the country. Let us contrast this House with the other branch of the legislature. The Representative of the Government has asked for an extra day's sitting. Only last night the Premier asked the other branch of the legislature to consent to dispense with the order providing that no new business shall be taken after 11 o'clock, and the Government were beaten, and yet this House is asked to give its assent to the proposal of the Government to sit an extra day, even whilst the other branch of the legislature will not inconvenience themselves by proceeding with business after 11 o'clock at night. The members of the other House are paid £300 a year, and they are not to be assessed under the Income-tax Bill, while we give our services gratuitously. The Ministry has set before us a programme which, if attempted to be carried out, cannot be completed under two years. The other branch of the legislature seems also to have been deluded with the same programme. I do not speak with any hos-

tility to the Government, but I do not think that so much legislation as that which is proposed ought to be attempted to be crowded into one session. If any mistakes are made in legislation of the character proposed by the Government, the result will be most prejudicial to the interests of the country. When members are exhausted by a protracted session in hot weather, some matters of importance may escape their attention, with the result that the bills passed will be very imperfect, and may in their operation act very injuriously. Under such circumstances, I do not think that so much business ought to be crowded into one session. Some of these bills are urgently required; but what is more required than anything is retrenchment in the public expenditure. In the extravagant colony of Victoria they carry on the Government of the country with an expenditure of about £8,500,000 per annum, and surely we can carry on the business of this colony on an expenditure of £9,000,000 a year. But our expenditure is nearly £11,000,000 per annum. £1,000,000 a year ought to be knocked off our expenditure. I am not going to oppose the proposal of the Government. On the contrary, I will do all that I can to facilitate the transaction of public business. I hope, however, that the Minister of Justice will not move the adjournment as soon as this resolution is carried. There is the Electoral Bill on the paper, and why should the House adjourn at 5 or 6 o'clock instead of proceeding with it? I hope we shall make some progress with that measure to-night, and I hope the public will see that the members of the unpaid branch of the legislature are willing to sacrifice their time with an earnest desire to promote public business.

The Hon. A. H. JACOB: The hon. member who has just sat down said he did not think any one would oppose the motion. In that case, I do not know what the trend of his remarks would lead to. Almost every hon. member who taken part in the debate has spoken deprecatingly of the motion submitted. Had they not, I do not know what occasion there was to occupy the time of the House in the way in which the speakers have done. If I were doubtful with regard to the motion, I should be inclined to vote against it after the speeches of hon. members, especially that

of the hon. member who has just sat down. The Representative of the Government has a right, under the circumstances which he has pointed out, to ask for an additional sitting day. The Government know what business is likely to come from the other Chamber and what business is now before this House; and I think it would be very ungracious on the part of the House to refuse their request for an additional sitting day. Therefore, if there is a division on the motion, I shall support it. I agree that there are several measures of importance in the other Chamber which are likely to come before us, notably the Local Government Bill, which I do not think will reach us within the next six months. That is a very desirable measure, and one which, if passed, would give great relief to the country, but it is a measure which will require great consideration and careful working out in detail. In the other Chamber it will receive a great deal of discussion and alteration, and it must be a long time before it is disposed of. The Electoral Bill, judging from the time that it occupied last night, and from the amendments of which notice has been given, is likely to occupy several nights. For these reasons I am very happy to support the motion submitted by the Representative of the Government.

The Hon. R. BURDETT SMITH: I think the Minister of Justice has given substantial reasons why this additional day should be given, and I intend to vote for the motion. It has been suggested that when the motion is disposed of we should proceed with the Electoral Bill, but I hope, considering the concession which is about to be made to the Government, and having regard to the heat of the Chamber, the Representative of the Government will not proceed with that measure to-night, especially as there are hon. members absent who take a deep interest in it.

The Hon. A. RYRIE: I quite agree with some of the remarks of the hon. member, Mr. Hoskins. It seems extraordinary that the Minister of Justice should ask for an extra sitting day whilst with the same breath he is postponing measures which could be gone on with. If this system is carried on it will be of very little use getting an extra sitting day.

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: The remarks which have been made by several

hon. members in conceding the extra sitting day have, I think, been to a certain extent justified. That is to say, the request now made is very unusual; but I think I shall be able to explain that it is very much better that we should have this extra sitting day now than that we should be placed in the position in which this House has very often been placed towards the end of the session. It will be in the recollection of every hon. member that it has been an invariable custom for a very long time to send important measures up at the last moment and to expect this House in a very few days to deal with measures which we ought to take weeks to consider, and the House is put in the position of either blocking all the business of the country or passing bills without sufficient consideration. It seems to me very much better that this House, which has gradually grown to take up the most important part of any body under the Constitution in the real business of law making, should have abundant time for the consideration of all these important measures which are to become the law of the country. I feel every confidence that the important bills of which I have made mention—the Local Government Bill, the Land Bill, and the other bills which the House will have to deal with, will very considerably benefit by the discussion and amendment of them which will probably take place in this House. That is one of the chief reasons why we should prepare in time for the reception of these measures in order to give them the careful and intelligent consideration which they deserve. We have upon our own business-paper at present, or we shall have, two measures which alone will take a considerable time without the business which is to come from the Legislative Assembly: I refer to the Local Government Bill and the federation resolutions which will be submitted shortly. If these are added to the other measures which must come before us it will be evident that we cannot do all our work with only one Government day per week. I should like to say a word about the Local Government Bill, which was mentioned by the hon. member, Mr. Dangar. One of the principal reasons why this long-delayed reform has not been carried out is that successive governments and successive parliaments

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have been afraid of the magnitude of it. But it must be tackled sooner or later. If we do not face it now I do not know when there will be a better opportunity, because it will not only mean the extension of the principle of local self-government throughout the colony with all the advantages it will bring to the country, with all the advantages which it will bring in purifying the atmosphere of politics, with all the advantages it will bring in removing small local details which now occupy the time of the legislature, but it is also absolutely necessary in the interests of economy and retrenchment. This necessity for retrenchment has already been recognised by the Government, and recognised, I think hon. members will admit, to a very substantial degree, when they remember that the estimates for this year show a reduction over the actual expenditure of last year of £795,198. That is a very considerable reduction to begin with.

The HON. J. MACINTOSH: Proposed!

The Hon. R. E. O'CONNOR: And I undertake to say that it will be carried out, if not a larger reduction. The Government have now made a beginning, and it is a necessary part of their policy of retrenchment, not only that £795,000 be knocked off the expenditure, but also that the reductions should be supplemented by the passing of the Local Government Bill which will throw upon the country itself a large amount of expenditure which has to be made out of the consolidated revenue. I say that is one of the chief reasons why we should press on the Local Government Bill, not being afraid of the magnitude of it, and make it as perfect a measure as possible during the present session. I see no reason why this programme should take anything like the time which the hon. member, Mr. Dangar, supposes it will take. It is true that we discuss measures fully here, but I do not think this House can be accused of wasting time. We discuss principles; but when we have agreed to a principle there is very little difficulty in this House in passing the clauses of a bill which are mere matters of machinery. With regard to the Local Government Bill it will be found that although there are a good many clauses in it, yet when the important questions of principle involved are discussed a very large portion of the bill, which has been

very carefully drawn, will be passed without discussion. I regret having to ask the House to come here on an additional day; but occupying the position we do in law-making we are bound to do our work as carefully as possible, and with as full consideration as possible, and that renders an additional sitting day necessary. With regard to the suggestion that we should proceed with the Electoral Bill to-night it was not anticipated that the Government business would be reached at this hour of the evening. The Government are not in a position to go on; in fact, I told a number of hon. members, not only members holding the same view as the Government with regard to the bill, but also members who, according to their expressions, are opposed to the Government view, that the measure would not be taken this evening. Under the circumstances, therefore, I should not feel justified in proceeding with it.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 5 42 p.m.

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## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 19 January, 1893.*

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**Pilots:** Port Jackson and Newcastle—Asiatics in New South Wales—Vessels taking Refuge in Trial Bay—Inspector of Vine Diseases—Excise Duty on Tobacco—Estates administered by Official Assignees—Government Officials: Civil and Military Pay—Land: Terriba and Dora Creek—Floating Baths: Farm Cove—Divorce Amendment and Extension Act—Newcastle Wharfage Dues—Enngonia: Post-office—Enngonia: Town Commem—Enngonia: Artesian Bore—Moongilla Artesian Bore—Messrs. Irwin and Laing—Messrs. Brown and O'Connor—Fees paid to Barristers, 1892—Estimates for 1893—First Readings—Hay Athenæum Trustees Enabling Bill—New Angledool: Public School—Newcastle Friendly Societies and Trades Hall Bill—Inspector of Piles and Timber—Financial Statement (Third Night's Debate).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

### PILOTS: PORT JACKSON AND NEWCASTLE.

Mr. JOSEPH ABBOTT asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) The number of pilots employed at Port Jackson and the port of Newcastle respectively? (2.) The number of vessels that were brought into port by each of such pilots during the year 1892?

Mr. SEE answered,—(1.) There are five sea pilots employed at Port Jackson, and six at the port of Newcastle. (2.) The number of vessels that were brought into port by each of such pilots during the year 1892 is as follows:—Sydney—Pilot Jack, 82; pilot Firth, 81; pilot Chudleigh, 76; pilot Tyler, 72; pilot Morris, 85. Newcastle—Pilot Hacking, 71; pilot Romney, 65; pilot Cumming, 68; pilot Wood, 71; pilot Sweet, 77; pilot Warner, 42.

### ASIATICS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

Mr. O. O. DANGAR asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—(1.) What number of Asiatics, other than Chinese or Japanese, are there (approximately) in this colony? (2.) What are the respective nationalities and sexes of these people? (3.) In what numbers have they arrived in the colony during the respective months of 1892? (4.) What are their respective employments?

Sir GEORGE DIBBS answered,—A return will be prepared and laid upon the table giving the required information.

Mr. NICOLL asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—(1.) Is he aware of the great influx of Indians and Syrians which is now taking place in this colony? (2.) What steps do the Government intend to take to check this influx?

Sir GEORGE DIBBS answered,—The matter is one of grave importance, and I am not at present prepared to say what should be done. It is now engaging the attention of the Government.

### VESSELS TAKING REFUGE IN TRIAL BAY.

Mr. O. O. DANGAR asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) Is any report made to the Government of the number and names of vessels taking shelter in Trial Bay? (2.) Can he state how many and what vessels or steamers took refuge there during 1892? (3.) How many and what steamers and vessels have taken refuge there during this month? (4.) If no account has been kept in the past by the signalman, will he cause instructions to be given to the signalman stationed at Arakoon to report all such vessels and steamers monthly?

Mr. SEE answered,—(1.) No report other than that which is generally published in the daily papers, is made. (2.)