

he was going to protect his own pocket. Notwithstanding this, it has been rushed through this House, and we are asked to swallow it and get rid of it. For my part I must oppose it, although I know that my opposition cannot amount to much.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): The Order of the Day for the second reading has been on the Notice Paper for some time, and the rule is that Bills relating to taxation are dealt with by the House at once.

Question—That the Bill be now read a third time—put and passed.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES LANDS IMPROVEMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): Last year an Act was passed which gave power to certain institutions to borrow moneys to improve their lands, and this Bill is brought in to amend it, so as to give institutions or associations having for their object the encouragement of cricket and athletic sports the same privileges. The main object of this Bill is to enable the trustees of the Cricket Association, who have a lease for 999 years from the Crown, to borrow money to improve the property. The association has already spent some £1,500, and they wish to make further improvements. When the ground in question was handed over to the Cricket Association, it was nothing more than a swamp, and no one ever thought of going there; but now it is a pleasant place to go to, and the Association wish to further improve it. Until we have a suitable ground, it is hardly likely that we shall have the cricket teams from the neighbouring colonies visiting us; but if the Association obtains the power contained in this Bill, that time will be brought nearer at hand. I have great pleasure in moving the second reading of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2.—“Amended definition of institution”:

THE HON. G. RANDELL: Is there any risk of the Association losing the ground?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): They will be in the same position as other institutions.

THE HON. G. RANDELL: Is their position good enough?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker): I do not think there is any probability that they will lose it. They have spent £1,500 on it now.

THE HON. J. G. H. AMHERST: The land cannot be mortgaged without the approval of the Governor-in-Council. I think the Association is perfectly safe.

Clause agreed to.

The remaining clause was agreed to, and the Bill reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 9.45 o'clock p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 2, at 8 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 28th September, 1893.

Existence of Coal in the Jandakot Area—Murder of Police Constable Collins by East Kimberley Natives—Public Health Act Further Amendment Bill: first reading—Imperial Pensioners and the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

EXISTENCE OF COAL IN THE JANDAKOT AREA.

MR. CANNING, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether the attention of the Government had been called to the supposed existence of beds of coal in the Jandakot

Area, and, if so, whether the Government proposed taking steps to test the correctness of the supposition?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied: The attention of the Government has not been called to the supposed existence of beds of coal in the Jandakot Area. I shall be pleased to receive any information on the subject, and on receipt of such information it will be decided what steps are necessary or advisable to take to test the correctness of the supposition.

MURDER OF POLICE CONSTABLE COLLINS BY EAST KIMBERLEY NATIVES.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier what action the Government intend taking with reference to the murder of a policeman in East Kimberley by a large number of armed natives.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied, as follows: Instructions have been issued to the Sub-Inspector of Police in the Kimberley District to despatch a strong body of police to arrest the murderers. In the affray in which Constable Collins was killed, it is reported that 23 natives were shot.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

MR. TRAYLEN, in moving for leave to introduce this Bill, said it was the same Bill as had been carried through this House last session, but such portions of it were now cut out as had been found not acceptable to the Upper House last session. The reason for again introducing it now was that the Perth Municipal Council had just come to a determination to adopt the double-pan system of removing night-soil, and that Council had not sufficient powers for enforcing the regulations necessary for working the system. He had reason to think that one or two other Municipal Councils would be glad to adopt the system, shortly, and, in order to remove doubts as to the powers of Municipalities or Boards of Health for making the necessary regulations, this Bill was again introduced.

Motion put and passed.

Bill introduced, read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

IMPERIAL PENSIONERS AND THE MOUNT ELIZA INVALID DEPOT.

MR. MOLLOY, in accordance with notice, moved, "That it is desirable that the pensioner inmates of the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot should be housed in the Pensioner Barracks, that their pensions should not be made to contribute to the extent that they do at present, and that greater freedom should be allowed them; also that greater attention should be paid in inquiring into the causes of sudden deaths at the Mount Eliza Establishment." He said: It is known to most hon. members that the persons in whose interest I am moving are deserving colonists; that after rendering considerable service in the country's cause they have, in many instances, after 21 years' service, received a small pension in recognition of their bravery; and that after toiling for a number of years in this country, it has become a misfortune, in their old age, when unable longer to earn their living by labour, to be placed in the asylum provided for such persons, and known as the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot. These men, after years of service in the cause of their country, performed under considerable privation, and after distinguishing themselves in many of the battles of our country, are placed in this unfortunate position; and I think that the least the country which they have served so well should do is to treat them on equitable terms, the same as other colonists are treated when placed in the same institution. These men have fought their country's battles, and have received a recognition in the form of a small pension amounting to 8d. or, in some cases, 1s. a day. But when they avail themselves of the shelter of the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot, this pension is stopped to a considerable extent, as I am informed. They are also subjected to the same rules as the ordinary invalids, some of whom are of that class which were originally sent to this colony from the old country in the charge of these pensioners; and it is known that it is objectionable to these old pensioners to be mixed with inmates of that class in this asylum, because there is somewhat of the old animosity engendered by the difference in the former circumstances of these classes of men, and the old pensioners naturally do not like

to be mixed in common with the men who were formerly under their charge. This old antagonism is somewhat accentuated, when brought into contact at the asylum, and the pensioners are made to feel very uncomfortable. I think it is unjust to these old pensioners, who have had an honourable career, that when reduced to this unfortunate condition of dependence in a public asylum, they are not allowed to have the full use of their pension money, because a portion of it is stopped as payment for their sustenance. I do not know that there are many pensioners in the Invalid Dépôt, but the principle of deducting a portion of their pensions is objectionable. I think these pensioners are deserving of whatever little assistance we can bestow; that there should be no deductions made from their small pensions; that they should not be treated as if they were prisoners under control, in the dépôt; but that they should be allowed proper freedom, the same as is enjoyed by military and naval pensioners who are taken care of in their old age by the State, in other parts of the world. For these reasons I have brought the matter under the notice of this House. It is objectionable for these pensioners to be living in common with other men, some of them being of the class I have mentioned; and as there is plenty of accommodation in the Pensioner Barracks, at present, it might be well to place these few old men there, where they would be together, and where they might be visited and receive assistance from persons who are in a better position. If this be not practicable, the least that can be done for them is to relieve them from the present system of having deductions made from their pensions as payment for their food. They have had to render long service to the country in order to entitle them to a pension, and to tax them in this manner, because they have these small incomes, is inequitable. I trust the House will take a reasonable view of the matter, and that this motion will be carried.

MR. CANNING: There is no motion that I rise to second more cordially than the one just made. The reasons given by the hon. member in favour of it are so strong, that it is unnecessary to comment on the matter at any length. Two things are proposed in it: one, that these old military pensioners should be removed to

the Barracks, though there may be some difficulty in doing that; and the other a question of money, therefore one entirely for the Government to decide. As to the deductions from these small pensions, if this were a matter of magnitude, or likely to be a continuing charge upon the colony, it might be objected that an undue burden would be placed on the revenue of the colony; but that can hardly be the case, for when these few pensioners pass away the whole system will disappear. There being so few of them, and the burden being so light, it would be only just to accede to that portion of the motion. As to doing anything we can to alleviate the misery and suffering of these indigent pensioners—men who have fought for their country, and who would, in any civilised country, be recognised as entitled to the greatest consideration—there should be no hesitation in doing all we possibly can to make their lot as cheerful as possible. Most of us know something of the great institutions at Greenwich and Chelsea, in which naval and military pensioners are maintained by the Imperial authorities, and where their lot is made as comfortable and cheerful as possible in their old age; and if that is so in England, I think we, as far as lies in our power, should do the same in regard to the few military pensioners in this country, especially as we shall not be taking on ourselves an increasing or permanent burden, but one which must in a short time come to an end by constitutional decay.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): When inquiring into this matter, I omitted to ascertain the number of the military pensioners now in the Dépôt. I believe there are a few, and I find, upon inquiry, that instructions were given some time ago, by the present Colonial Secretary, that the military pensioners should be kept separate from the other inmates, as far as possible, and be allowed some indulgence in the way of a double allowance of tobacco, and other comforts. The Colonial Secretary, who is the Minister in charge, has taken some interest in the matter, but has found that there is some difficulty in keeping the pensioners separate, owing to the want of room. However, the hon. member having brought this matter under the notice of the Government and the House, I will take

some steps myself by inquiring into the whole matter. I believe they are allowed considerable freedom, except that they have to observe regular hours; I do not think they are required to do any work in the Depôt; and I believe they are allowed as much freedom and are treated with as much kindness and consideration as possible. I know many persons in Perth who take some interest in the Depôt, and visit all the old men who are maintained there. With reference to the last part of the motion, the Colonial Secretary has inquired into that matter also, some time ago, and has given instructions that the medical officer should visit the place more frequently than had been the practice; the Depôt has also been connected by telephone, so that communication with the Colonial Hospital can be had at any moment. As to the pensions, though not in possession of the exact facts at present, I am informed that very little deduction is made from the amount of the pension in any case; that the men generally go out of the Depôt shortly before pension-day, draw out the money, and usually spend it before going back to the Depôt. I was informed yesterday, by the Colonial Secretary, that this is the usual practice. I quite sympathise with these old men, and the hon. member who moved the motion has spoken in a most feeling way in reference to them. But, if we were to harden our hearts, we might say their services were not rendered particularly to this colony, but to the mother country; and the Imperial authorities who pay the pensions might have something to say on the subject, as well as we in this colony. If the hon. member will withdraw his motion, he may rest assured I will personally investigate the matter, and see how far we can improve the condition of these old pensioners. There are some difficulties in the way. These men are probably addicted to drink, to some extent, and it is not so easy to deal with them; but I will see if we can do anything to remove any disabilities they may labour under, and to improve their condition.

MR. MOLLOY: After the assurance given by the Premier, I am sure there is no necessity to press my motion. I take the assurance in all good faith, feeling that the intention I had in placing this motion on the paper will have the desired effect, and that the condition of

these men will be made better by the investigation which the hon. gentleman has promised to make. Under the circumstances, therefore, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 5 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 2nd October, 1893.

Public Institutions and Friendly Societies Lands Improvement Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Homesteads Bill: second reading, adjourned debate—Elementary Education Act Amendment Bill: second reading—Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sale Act Amendment Bill: Legislative Assembly's Amendments—Imported Labour Registry Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Chinese Immigration Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 8 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES LANDS IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, and passed.

HOMESTEADS BILL.

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: In supporting the motion that this Bill be read a second time, I have to congratulate the Government on falling into the course which is so familiar in the history of the other colonies. Of all questions, the land question has occupied the attention of Australian Governments more than any other. More Bills have been passed on