

## WARRANTS OF DISTRESS BILL.

## Third Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a third time.

The Bill was read a third time and passed

The Council adjourned at 12.45 p.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Friday, 4th July, 1873.

Papers Tabled—Public Works Loan Bill: first reading—First Readings—Standing Orders—Prosecution of Mr. L. C. Burges—Immigration—Departmental Expenditure: select committee—Arrangement of the House—Printing Committee: appointment—Increase of Members in Legislative Council Bill: second reading—Duty on Transfer of Landed Property Bill: second reading: in committee.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 6 p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## PAPERS TABLED.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) laid upon the Table of the House drawings and papers relative to the proposed Geraldton and Northampton Railway line, viz.—

1. General plan and seconds of whole line.
2. Three sheets of detailed drawings.
3. Engineer's report and estimate of traffic.
4. Specification of work.
5. General conditions.
6. Letter from engineer to Surveyor General giving reasons why the detailed estimate should not be made public for the present.

## PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BILL.

## First Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee), in accordance with notice, moved that leave be given to bring in a Bill to raise the sum of £100,000 for the construction of certain public works. He said that the two undertakings contemplated in the Bill were the construction of a railway and telegraph from Geraldton to Northampton through the mineral portion of the Victoria district, for which £89,000 was set down, and also the construction of a telegraph line from Newcastle to Champion Bay, for which £11,000 was provided. With regard to the first item the hon.

gentleman thought it better not to enter into details relative to it at present; he would simply lay on the Table of the House for the information of hon. members a schedule of plans, drawings, and papers connected with the proposed railway, as also the engineer's report, specifications of the work to be performed, and an estimate of the cost and of the traffic. Being desirous that ample time should be afforded hon. members to peruse and consider the various papers connected with the undertaking, he would postpone the second reading of the Bill until such time as the House would be prepared to discuss it with some knowledge of its details. With reference to the construction of the telegraph line from Newcastle to Champion Bay, the House had already sanctioned the work, and His Excellency was in receipt of a despatch from the Secretary of State for the colonies affirming the resolution of the House and empowering His Excellency to approve of a Bill to raise the necessary sum for the construction of the line. As it was considered inadvisable for the colony to go into the market for the purpose of borrowing such a small sum as £15,000 or £16,000 it was proposed to incorporate in one loan the capital necessary for the construction of the two undertakings, thereby increasing it to £100,000—a sum which it was proposed to raise in this colony and in Victoria, where there would be no difficulty in obtaining the required amount at a rate of interest not exceeding 5 per cent. per annum. With these few observations he would move that the Bill be read a first time, and, if in accordance with the wish of the House, he would move that the second reading be made an order of the day for Friday, the 10th instant.

The Bill was read a first time.

## FIRST READINGS.

The following Bills were read a first time, in accordance with notice, on motions by the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. P. Barlee): Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Bill, Local Revenues in Northern District Bill, Provision for further Government of Northern District Bill, Survey of Land for Railway Purposes Bill, and Abolition of Forfeitures for Treason and Felony Bill.

## STANDING ORDERS.

Mr. LOGUE, in accordance with notice, moved the adoption of the following as a Standing Order:—

That it shall be incumbent on any member, except the Speaker, to serve as Chairman of Committees during the session, when chosen by a majority of votes.

Debate ensued.

Question put and negatived.

#### PROSECUTION OF MR. L. C. BURGESS.

Mr. LOGUE, in accordance with notice, moved that a return of all expenses incurred in the prosecution of Mr. L. C. Burgess be laid on the Table of the House, such return to show upon what account and to whom all payments have been made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee): The return shall be prepared.

Question put and passed.

#### IMMIGRATION.

Mr. LOGUE, in accordance with notice, called the attention of the Colonial Secretary to No. 4 of the Minutes of last session, and to a promise recorded there which still remains unfulfilled.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) replied that he was not aware of having ever made a promise to the House on behalf of the Government, in regard of any matter, which had not been carried out. He was prepared to show why the promise alluded to by the hon. member was as yet unfulfilled, and if the hon. gentleman had carefully studied the Governor's Speech he would have found a paragraph therein intimating that a series of papers illustrative of the line of policy which His Excellency had pursued in relation to native affairs were in a forward course of preparation, and would be presented to the House when complete. The correspondence alluded to by the hon. member was embodied in those papers, which were exceedingly voluminous. They had been in the hands of the printer for some time, and are in a forward state of preparation; when complete, a copy would be presented to each hon. member.

The matter then dropped.

#### DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE.

##### Select Committee.

Mr. LOGUE, in moving for a select committee to consider and report upon the necessity for reducing Government departmental expenditure, (such committee to consist of Messrs. Steere, Padbury, Carey, Dempster, and the Mover) said he did so in accordance with an intimation he had given to the House last session. He was by no means prepared to say that the labours of the committee would result in any reduction of public expenditure being made; but there was an idea prevalent that in many cases the public does not get a fair equivalent for the salaries

it pays. If such was not the case the committee he moved for would be able to satisfy the House and the country on the point.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) said he had no desire to evince an antagonistic spirit in connection with the motion before the House; on the contrary he would be very glad indeed that the whole question of departmental expenditure should be carefully and fully reviewed. The Government would be very happy if the inquiry resulted in showing that there was any undue expenditure, consistent with the efficiency of the Public Service, in connection with any department. He was intimately connected with the departmental management of this colony, and he was free to confess that in no single instance did he believe that there was any extravagant or needless expenditure. However, if the result of the select committee's investigations tended to show that any departmental expenditure could be cut down without at the same time impairing the efficiency of the service, the Government would offer no opposition to any reduction recommended by the committee. While, then, he offered no objection to the appointment of a select committee to consider and report upon the question, he must say that he thought the mode in which members proposed to constitute that committee had been selected was not fair, nor in accordance with parliamentary practice. In the constitution of select committees the usual custom was to appoint as members thereof gentlemen who were known to represent various shades of opinion; and if the object of the select committee was to inquire into matters connected with any particular department of Government, the Minister or official responsible for the working of that department was, as a rule, included on the committee, inasmuch as, by virtue of his position and experience, it was presumed that such official would be enabled to give more information on the subject of the inquiry than any other gentlemen who, however anxious to do that which was right, were unacquainted with the working of the departments or with official business. He would put it to the House whether the select committee nominated by the hon. member who had brought forward the motion had been fairly selected as representing the various shades of opinion entertained in the House on the subject of the inquiry. Without in any way casting the slightest reflection upon the integrity of the hon. members nominated, it was well known that the majority were gentlemen who had more or less pledged themselves to a reduction in public expenditure. He thought it was but fair and proper that the committee

should be chosen indiscriminately from either side of the House, and that it should be so constituted as to ensure the concurrence and confidence of the whole House.

Mr. LOGUE expressed his willingness to acquiesce in the proposal suggested by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. DEMPSTER repudiated the assertion that all the members of the select committee as nominated by the hon. member for Geraldton were wedded to one and the same opinion on the subject of retrenchment. For himself, he positively asserted that he had entered the House as an independent member, perfectly free to vote for any proposal or measure which in his opinion was calculated to promote the interest of his constituency and of the colony at large. Personally, however, he might add, he was an economist; he had studied economy throughout his life, and had found the benefit of it. His wishes had never been consulted with regard to serving on the committee moved for by the hon. member.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) explained that the hon. gentleman had evidently, though doubtless unintentionally, misstated what he had said, which was that the majority, and not all, of the select committee on the notice paper were known to be gentlemen who had more or less pledged themselves to retrenchment.

Mr. STEERE hoped the Hon. the Colonial Secretary did not imagine for a moment that there had been any combination in regard of nominating the committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) said he had never even suggested such a thing.

Mr. MARMION moved that the committee be appointed by ballot, and this being agreed to.

The CLERK declared the number to be as follows—The Hon. F. P. Barlee, 15; Mr. Steere, 15; Mr. Logue, 14; Mr. Marmion, 8; and Mr. Bickley, 8. These gentlemen were accordingly appointed to serve on the committee, which is empowered to call for persons and papers.

#### ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. MARMION, in accordance with notice, moved that in the opinion of the House it is desirable that certain alterations be made in the arrangement of the tables and seats, in accordance with a plan which the mover then laid upon the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

#### PRINTING COMMITTEE.

##### Appointment.

Mr. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved that a committee to be called the Printing Committee be selected, and that such a committee should consist of the Surveyor General (Hon. M. Fraser), Mr. Logue, and the Mover; and to substitute the name of the Colonial Secretary (Hon. F. P. Barlee) for that of the Surveyor General.

Question put and passed.

#### INCREASE OF MEMBERS IN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BILL.

##### Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) moved that the Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill was read a second time.

#### DUTY ON TRANSFER OF LANDED PROPERTY BILL.

##### Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. P. Barlee) in moving the second reading of a Bill to alter the Act to impose a duty on the transfer of landed property, said that the existing Act provided that all sums received for landed property should be applied to the introduction of labourers, mechanics, and artisans into the colony, in fact, from an immigration fund; but that provision had been a dead letter for many years, and, as the House had voted a special sum for immigration purposes, it was now proposed that the transfer duties should be paid over to the Colonial Treasurer for general revenue purposes.

The Bill was read a second time.

##### In Committee.

The Bill passed through Committee without discussion.

The Council adjourned at 7.50 p.m.