

creditors would be beyond the pale of this law. A country creditor, on the contrary, could claim the benefit of the provisions of the Bill, just as if the amendment were carried. The debt need not be contracted at or near a seaport, in order to bring it within the purview of the Bill, but in any part of the Colony. All that was proposed to do was to give the power to detain an absconding debtor to Justices residing at or near a seaport. He failed to see how a Magistrate living in the country could exercise such a power. A country creditor could appoint an agent at a seaport to act for him, and thus obviate any inconvenience.

MR. RANDÉLL would certainly support the amendment, because he thought they ought to act in this, as in every other matter, in accordance with the title of the Bill. He thought an opportunity should be afforded to residents in country towns as well as the residents of seaports, to protect themselves against dishonest debtors; and he believed the amendment here proposed would, to a very great extent, remedy the existing evil. Although the Bill was brought forward merely to prevent immigrants leaving the Colony while indebted to the Government, still, he thought they should avail themselves of the opportunity now afforded them of legislating in the direction contemplated in the amendment. He confessed he did not like the idea of three months' imprisonment in default of payment of the debt; but, probably, it would only be enforced in exceptional cases. Most people would manage, somehow or other, to find the means to pay.

MR. SHENTON said that, representing as he did an important country constituency, the amendment should certainly have his support. He thought, if adopted, it would make the Bill more applicable to the requirements of the Colony than it would be if passed into law in its present shape.

MR. BROWN pointed out that three months was the maximum period of imprisonment provided, and that, in the proposed new clause, all necessary proceedings for the final determination of any claim shall be taken and completed with all reasonable diligence.

MR. HAMERSLEY would be inclined even to go further than the Attorney General, and would not only have the

name of the vessel to be given, but also a description thereof. He had heard of people in debt leaving the Colony in casks.

MR. PARKER said he would certainly support the amendment, with a view to securing creditors living in country districts from being imposed upon.

Question—"That the words proposed to be struck out (all the words after the word "satisfy") stand part of the clause."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Before that question is put, I shall move to report progress. The House must see that the Government brought in this Bill for a comparatively small object, but its whole scope would be altered were the proposed amendments introduced into it; and, before the Government decide to carry on the Bill under any circumstances I think it is right they should have an opportunity to consider their position with reference to it.

Progress was then reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 16th August, 1876.

The Imported Stock Bill, 1876: second reading.—
Report of Tariff Commission.

THE IMPORTED STOCK BILL, 1876.

SECOND READING.

MR. STEERE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that when Mr. Barlee attended the Intercolonial Conference held at Sydney some years ago, an understanding was arrived at among the various delegates present that the Governments which they, respectively, represented should introduce a Bill to prohibit the importation of cattle and sheep, under certain conditions, which Bill was to remain in operation for two years. Cattle disease was then very prevalent in Sydney, and it was deemed wise to make this provision. In pursuance of

the resolution adopted at the Conference, a Bill was duly introduced into this Council for that purpose, and, on the assurance of Mr. Barlee that it should only remain in operation for a period of two years, it was agreed to. Four years had now elapsed since the passing of that Act, but it still remained on our statute book. The other colonies had limited the application of their respective Acts to two years; but no such provision had been made in our local enactment. He thought the House would agree with him that this Act had affected this Colony very injuriously, and that the time had arrived for its repeal, and for making other provisions in lieu thereof. This was the object of the Bill before the House, which he trusted would meet with support. He must say he had been rather surprised, as he had given notice of his intention to introduce the present Bill, to see a proclamation in the *Government Gazette*, issued by His Excellency, prohibiting the importation of cattle and sheep. The other colonies had found the Act a very irksome one, and had relaxed its provisions, and the United States had adopted the same course. [The hon. member then read extracts from the *London Times* in support of his position.] He said, the object of the Bill before the House was to divest the Governor of the power now vested in him, under the 37th Vict., No. 6, and to make other provisions to prevent the introduction of contagious or infectious disease. In the first place, it was proposed that all stock imported to the Colony, from any other place than the Australasian colonies, should be accompanied by a certificate from a veterinary surgeon that the stock, when placed on board the vessel conveying them, were in a sound and healthy condition. In the next place, it was provided that the master of the ship should make a declaration on his arrival in the Colony, setting forth whether there was, or had been, any disease during the voyage out; if there had, the Customs officer (to which the declaration was to be made) should forward the same to the nearest inspector, who should at once visit the ship. No stock, nor fodder, nor fittings, were to be landed without the inspector's permit. Provision was also made for the Governor to set apart such ground as might be required for quarantine purposes, and the Bill,

altogether, was he thought stringent enough to prevent the introduction of any infection or contagion among sheep or cattle. He hoped he should have the assistance of the House in carrying it into law, and he would now move that it be read a second time.

MR. PADBURY had much pleasure in seconding the motion, and in supporting the Bill. He would have been glad if its provisions had also extended to pigs. He did not think it was too stringent at all. The foot-and-mouth disease was, no doubt, a very serious matter; at the same time, we wanted to import fresh blood for the improvement of our breed.

MR. SHENTON said the Bill would have his support. He had understood that no more proclamations prohibiting the importation of stock would be issued, and, on that understanding, had recently sent to England for a number of sheep. He thought that every encouragement should be held out by the Government to those desirous of importing stock; without the introduction of fresh blood we could not hope to keep up the breed of our sheep and cattle. At the same time, he thought that every care and precaution should be taken that contagious disease should not be introduced into the Colony, and he thought the provisions of the Bill before the House were stringent enough to answer that purpose.

Motion for second reading agreed to.

REPORT OF TARIFF COMMISSION.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the House resolve itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the report of the Tariff Commission. The hon. gentleman explained that the object of the commission had been not so much to augment the revenue as to adjust the incidence of taxation, and to remove some of the glaring anomalies of the existing tariff with a view to its simplification, and at the same time to afford encouragement to certain industries intimately connected with the progress of the Colony. A reference to the report of the commission would show hon. members that the committee recommended the placing of several articles now subject to duty on the free list, and to make up for the loss of revenue caused thereby by

increasing the duty on imported spirits from 14s. to 15s. per gallon. On the part of the Government he was authorised to say that, on the whole, they were inclined to adopt the various recommendations of the commission, but with reference to this proposed increase of a shilling per gallon His Excellency was of opinion that it would be better to make good the deficiency in the revenue caused by the placing of certain articles on the free list by increasing the duty on beer rather than on spirits. His Excellency believed that to further increase the duty on spirits would be productive of a strong temptation to smuggling, whereas an augmentation of the duty on beer would not, on account of the great difference in bulk, be such an inducement to violate the Customs regulations. The Government would support a proposal for an increase of 3d. per gallon on beer, an increase which, it was believed, would not be felt by the consumer. This proposal, if assented to, would produce a larger amount of revenue than would the imposition of an additional duty upon spirits; in the former case the revenue would benefit to the extent of about £2,400, as against £2,200 from the proposed increase upon spirits. Another recommendation embodied in the report of the commission which the Government were opposed to, was the proposal to remove the exemption at present enjoyed by military officers serving in the Colony in respect of wine, beer, and spirits imported for their own use. This was a privilege of long standing, and to refuse to concede it now would be a breach of faith towards those officers now serving in the Colony, who had come here on the understanding that they should enjoy this exemption. There were very few military officers in the Colony at present, and he regretted to think that, ere long, their number would be still reduced. The loss to the revenue which the exemption they enjoyed in respect of imported liquors was very trifling, and he hardly thought, regard being had to the fact that these gentlemen were Imperial officers and the large proportion of our ways and means derived from Imperial contributions, it would scarcely be politic or judicious, or indeed fair towards the officers themselves, that this recommendation of the commission should be adopted.

He would now move that the House go into committee to consider the report.

IN COMMITTEE :

MR. RANDELL confessed to a feeling of disappointment on reading the report. The result which seemed to have accrued from the deliberations of the commission seemed to be very small indeed, and scarcely worthy the time expended upon them. He was inclined to dispute some of the allegations embodied in the report—but he should be sorry to “defy the allegators.” He did not concur with the commission in their estimation of the importance of the subject of ship-chandlery; he called it, rather, an unimportant subject. It could not be denied, however, that the commission had devoted a great deal of time to that interest, which they evidently viewed with a very favorable eye. He denied that it was in consequence of our shipbuilders laboring under disadvantages in having to pay *ad valorem* duties on articles requisite for the equipment of vessels, that—as alleged in the report—“but little activity had been shown in ship-building, and that our ships were sent to foreign ports for repairs or equipment.” That was not the reason why vessels were sent out of the Colony to be equipped—as shipowners here must be well aware. He considered the ship-building interest one of the most flourishing in the Colony, and one well capable of bearing its full share of the burden of taxation—more so than most other industries. There was one interest in the Colony which appeared to have received no attention at the hands of the commission; he alluded to the manufacturing interest. He thought he might claim the honor of representing that interest to a greater extent than any other hon. member present. When alluding to the manufacturing interest, he did not mean to say that we had, as yet, any very important or extensive manufactures to protect; still there were a great number of industries in Perth, as well as in other parts of the Colony, which might be legitimately classed under the head of manufactures. So far from encouraging these industries, he found that the commission actually recommended the imposition of increased duties upon the articles required for carrying on the manufacture. Another interest which had suffered at the hands of

the commission was the agricultural interest. It was, for instance, proposed to levy a duty upon corn sacks, which had hitherto been on the free list. It did seem anomalous to him that the importer, in introducing his ton of flour, got his sacks in free, while the farmer who wanted to import empty corn sacks had to pay a duty. [The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Nothing of the sort: he pays for his sacks, empty or full.] Reverting to the subject of ship-chandlery, he found that the number of persons in the Colony engaged in that trade was 340: whereas the number of persons employed in agricultural pursuits was no less than 3,000. These, again, found employment for mechanics and for various other trades, so that it would not be too much to say that the number of persons more or less dependent upon the agricultural interest was not less than 6,000 adults, which multiplied by three—to allow for women and children—gave about 18,000 individuals dependent on grazing and agriculture. This showed how much more important were these interests than ship-chandlery which seemed to have been taken under the special protection of the commission. The very first item on the free list attached to the report was “anchors,” which up to 2 cwts. or 3 cwts., could be manufactured in the Colony. “Boats” again—he saw no reason why these should be placed on the free list. The commission represented themselves as eager to foster the industry of ship-building, but it seemed to him that, in this case, they were doing quite the reverse. Corn might be admitted duty free; but he thought that barley, hay, and wheat should be subject to duty. He objected to hurdles and gates (iron) being placed on the free list, for they could be manufactured in the Colony. He also objected to salt beef and salt pork being admitted duty free, on the same principle as he had already advocated, namely, that local industries should be protected, fostered, and encouraged. He saw no reason why our markets should be flooded with these articles from abroad, to the detriment of what ought to be among the most important industries of the Colony. As to the proposed reduction in the charge for warehousing goods, he did not think the present charges were at all excessive, considering the extent of the buildings

required for that purpose, and the amount of labor employed. As to the proposed imposition of an extra shilling a gallon on spirits, he was afraid the result would be to encourage smuggling as well as illicit distilling. There were other means of increasing the revenue than resorting to a system of taxation which would defeat itself. Let capital be taxed; let us have stamp duties; let us have a duty on bank note issues. These would yield a good revenue, and it appeared to him that this was the proper direction for taxation to take, and not by taxing the necessities of life.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS thought the hon. member who had just sat down stood alone in the enjoyment of being disappointed with the report of the commission. The principal object of the commission was to equalise the incidence of taxation, and not to augment the revenue, or to introduce any fancy scheme for providing ways and means to meet the expenses of Government. He thought the commission had acted very judiciously in the modifications which they proposed in the existing tariff.

SIR L. S. LEAKE had no intention of opposing the adoption of the report, and in the few remarks he was about to make he would take for his guide the return furnished by the Collector of Customs showing the probable increase and decrease to the revenue by the suggested tariff as revised by the commission, as compared with the existing tariff. He found that the total amount of decrease which would accrue from the adoption of the recommendations embodied in the report before the committee was £2,168; on the other hand, the estimated increase was calculated at £3,659, so that the actual increase of revenue which would be derived by the adoption of the suggested tariff amounted to £1,491. Now, regard being had to the fact that the existing tariff brought in a revenue considerably in excess of the public requirements, it seemed to him altogether unnecessary to provide any further surplus revenue at the present time. He came before the House—as far as possible in this Colony—as a free trader. Of course, the Government must be provided with ways and means to carry on the public service, and the liabilities of the Colony must be met; but, so far as practicable,

he had always been opposed, and still was opposed, to the imposition of any heavier duties upon the necessaries of life than were absolutely required. For this reason, he was very glad to find that it was proposed to remove the present duty off salt beef and salt pork, and also butter. He was further pleased to observe that it was recommended that wheat should be removed from the list of dutiable articles, for he felt perfectly sure it never should have been placed there. On the other hand, he regretted to find that it was proposed to retain a duty upon rice, an article which entered so largely into the daily consumption of Malays employed in the pearl-fisheries on the Nor'-West coast. Regard being had to the very depressed condition of that industry at the present time, he thought that this duty on rice was a vexatious and unnecessary impost. He should be sorry to see effect given to the recommendation of the commission in respect to an additional duty of 1s. per gallon on spirits; he considered the present duty (14s.) quite high enough. Nor, at present, did he see any necessity for increasing the duty on beer; 9d. a gallon was a very high impost, and he failed to see any grounds for augmenting it. The time might come when it would be found necessary to provide an increased revenue by means of additional Customs duties, and then such a tax as that here suggested might be regarded as a fair one; but at present it was uncalled for. The object of the commission in proposing an additional duty upon spirits was to make good the deficiency which would arise from the reduction of a penny per pound on tea, among other articles. Now he did not think this was a reduction which could be fairly considered as being called for; he did not think the present duty upon tea pressed too heavily upon the public, and the proposed reduction would benefit the importer rather than the consumer, for he did not believe that if the House reduced the duty, as proposed by the commission, the price of tea to the consumer would be reduced at all.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL thought we ought not to impose taxes with any such view as to favor this or that industry, but to adopt two main principles in dealing with this question:—in the first place, to avoid, as far as possible, taxing

the necessaries of life; and, also, to eschew taxes which had an indirect effect of crippling local industries. It had been said that, comparatively speaking, there were but few persons engaged in the ship chandlery business, whereas there were a great number employed, or dependent on, agricultural pursuits, and that therefore we should favor the agricultural interest. Why, it was the very fact of the existence of duties upon the various articles requisite for the equipment of ships which was the cause of so few persons being engaged in the trade, and of vessels actually belonging to the Colony being sent, in preference, to foreign ports for repair and equipment. With regard to the proposed removal of duty off corn and grain, it appeared that the amount of revenue derived from this source last year, at the rate of 6d. per bushel, was only £200. Everyone must admit that this was an item of very little importance to the Colony, yet, the fact of this duty being in force was that it very much increased the price of the necessaries of life. In other words, the revenue derived from this source, was altogether incommensurate with the burden thereby indirectly imposed on the general consumer.

MR. CROWTHER said he was a thorough free-trader in principle, but inasmuch as a revenue must be raised from some source, taxes were a necessary evil. He really did not think that for the sake of a paltry sum of about £1,400 it was worth their while to upset the existing tariff.

MR. MARMION pointed out that the object of the commission was to simplify the tariff rather than to increase the revenue.

MR. BROWN, although not satisfied with the report of the commission, acknowledged that the members had worked well; but it did not appear to him that they had in any way simplified the tariff. If he had his own way, he would simplify it by striking out almost every item off the free list and have resort to *ad valorem* duties: he would yet call himself a free-trader.

MR. BURT could not help looking back at the initiation of this question of revising the tariff. He thought it came about in this way: the hon. member for Pinjarrah directed the attention of the House to the anomaly of having "nails"

on the free-list and "screws" subject to a duty, or *vice versa*, and forthwith a resolution was adopted, praying for the appointment of a commission to revise the tariff, without any consideration whatever. It was admitted on all sides there was no necessity for a revision for the purpose of increasing the revenue, nor had he ever heard one good reason given for the necessity of simplifying the present tariff. He considered that the House had given unnecessary work to the commission, and that hon. members were now giving unnecessary work to themselves. Every hon. member had his own opinion on the subject, and was likely to stick to it, and he was really afraid the House had involved itself in a purposeless discussion.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY GENERAL, the various items specified in the report were then moved *seriatim*. [*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings," pp. 32, 33, 34, and 35.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 17th August, 1876.

Dangerous Matches Bill: second reading; in committee—Incorporation of W. A. Bank Shareholders' Bill: second reading—Marginal Notes of Bills—Imported Stock Bill: in committee.

DANGEROUS MATCHES BILL.

MR. BROWN moved the second reading of a Bill to prohibit the importation of certain dangerous matches. The motion was agreed to, and the House went into committee to consider the Bill in detail.

Clause 1—"From and after the first day of July, 1877, it shall not be lawful to import to, or use within the Colony, any matches other than such as will only readily ignite upon a chemical substance specially prepared to assist such ignition; and any person or persons who shall contrary to the foregoing provision import to or use within the Colony

"any match or matches so unlawfully imported or used, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50, and the matches so unlawfully imported or used shall be forfeited."

MR. BURT asked if wax vestas came under the denomination of a match within the meaning of the Bill?

MR. BROWN said they did. He regarded them as a very useless match, and if left about on a hot summer's day would ignite almost as readily as the ordinary tändstickors, which had led to the destruction of thousands upon thousands' worth of property in this Colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS asked if it was not a fact that the manufacture of the so-called safety matches was in the hands of one firm, and, if so, was it not a somewhat dangerous monopoly to legislate that no other matches should be imported into the Colony but those manufactured by this one firm. Wax vestas were permitted to be imported into the other colonies, and he did not see why they should be prohibited here. He thought the provisions of the Bill should be confined to towns.

MR. BROWN hoped the hon. gentleman would not be content to consider the safety of the towns alone. The main object of the Bill was to protect property throughout the Colony, and he saw no reason why it should be limited in its operation. Until lately, he believed, the safety matches were solely manufactured by one firm—Messrs. Bryant & May—and he thought that the inventors of so useful a patent should be encouraged. He was, however, informed that they were not now the sole manufacturers of safety matches. The object of the Bill was not to prohibit the importation and use of matches other than those manufactured by Messrs. Bryant & May, but to prohibit the introduction of all such matches as will only readily ignite upon a chemical substance specially prepared to assist such ignition.

MR. SHENTON was glad to find that it was proposed to include wax vestas under the denomination of dangerous matches, for he believed that they had been the means of destroying a great deal of property.

MR. BURGESS considered the Bill a very necessary and useful measure. No doubt the public would sustain some inconvenience from its operation—and