

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 26 JULY 1881

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 26 July, 1881.

New Bills.—Questions.—Formal Motion.—New Bills.—Pearl-shell and Bêche-de-mer Fishery Bill—first reading.—Distillation Bill—first reading.—Criminals Expulsion Bill—first reading.—Marsupials Destruction Bill—first reading.—Intercolonial Warrants Bill—first reading.—New Bills.—Return.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

NEW BILLS.

The SPEAKER read Messages from His Excellency the Governor, forwarding the following new Bills for the consideration of the House:—

1. A Bill to provide for the Execution in Queensland of Warrants of Apprehension issued in other Colonies.

2. A Bill to provide for the Union of Municipalities for the better Maintenance and Management of Main Roads and other local works.

3. A Bill to provide for the Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Collieries.

4. A Bill to provide for the Construction, Maintenance, and Management of Works for the Storage and Distribution of Water.

5. A Bill to make Provision for the Sale of Food and Drugs in a pure state.

Ordered to be taken into consideration at a later hour.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. BAILEY asked the Minister for Lands—

1. Is he aware that a large quantity of land in the parish of Elliott, near Maryborough, is mineral land, and that Messrs. Miller and Leslie are now boring for coal?—Has the Crown Lands Ranger reported that there is, probably, a large and valuable coal-field in this locality?

2. Has the Crown Lands Ranger, as agent for a Mr. Thompson, applied for leave to select nearly six thousand acres of land adjoining the selection of Messrs. Miller and Leslie?

3. Will the ordinary regulations of the Mineral Lands Act be enforced as in similar cases?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) replied—

1. No report has been received from the Crown Lands Ranger on this subject.

2. There has been no application made by the Crown Lands Ranger, as agent for Mr. Thompson, for land in the locality indicated, but a selection has been applied for by another person.

3. If the land comes under the classification of mineral land, a title can only be acquired under the Mineral Lands Act of 1872. Inquiries are being made on this point.

Mr. BEATTIE asked the Colonial Treasurer—

Have the steam launches that were to be built in Warwick arrived in Brisbane?

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said this question was quite contrary to the Standing Orders, inasmuch as it assumed to be a fact what was not a fact. He was not aware that any steam launches were to be built in Warwick, though he knew what the hon. member referred to in what he, perhaps, supposed was a ludicrous way of putting it. The contract taken by a Warwick contractor for the construction of launches was being carried out now. If the hon. member wanted information, and indicated what he wanted, he (the Premier) would be willing to give that information.

FORMAL MOTION.

On the motion of Mr. NORTON, it was resolved—

That the House will, on Thursday, the 4th proximo, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to provide for the more effectual Destruction of Bathurst Burr and Thistles, and other noxious Plants.

NEW BILLS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House, in Committee, affirmed the desirableness of introducing the following new Bills:—

1. Pearl-shell and Bêche-de-mer Fishery Bill.
2. Distillation Bill.
3. Criminals Expulsion Bill.
4. Marsupials Destruction Bill.

PEARL-SHELL AND BÊCHE-DE-MER FISHERY BILL—FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Sir Arthur Palmer), in moving the first reading of this Bill, said it had in different shapes been before the House for two sessions to his recollection; but, owing to the pressure of other important business, they had never been able to make an Act of it. He begged to impress upon hon. members the importance of passing the Bill, as there were a great number of—he could hardly call them outrages—irregularities going on on the northern coast of the colony by those engaged in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery, and in the present state of affairs there was a great loss of revenue to the colony. The greater part of the capital employed on

those boats was capital that belonged to New South Wales, and this colony actually derived no revenue, or very little revenue, except that which was paid into the Customs at Thursday Island by the crews of those vessels, when a large revenue ought to be derived from the fisheries. It was with the view of stopping those irregularities, and of raising a revenue from a source which he believed the colony was justly entitled to, that he introduced this Bill and pressed it on the attention of hon. members. It was pretty much of the same shape as the one originally introduced, but various amendments had been introduced into the present Bill, gleaned from the experience of the officers of the Northern ports, and from his own experience. The preamble and interpretation spoke for themselves. A “ship” included every description of vessel used in navigation, or in the fishery referred to in the Act, and not being a boat as defined by the Act. A “boat” was any vessel not exceeding two tons in burden, which was usually hoisted to a ship’s davits, or carried on board of a ship, or attached to a ship. After defining a master or employer, a native labourer was referred to as any aboriginal native of Australia or New Guinea, or of any of the islands adjacent thereto. He might say, in passing, that with respect to the native labourer, with whom they were more intimately concerned—that was the aboriginal natives of Queensland—a great many irregularities had taken place. He knew of several instances in which the offenders had not been got or punished, although there was substantial proof that both male and female natives had been taken up to these fisheries without leave or license having been obtained. A Polynesian was described also; and a pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery was stated to be the business of diving for, collecting, preparing, storing, or carrying from any place within the colony to any other place within the colony, pearl oysters, or pearl oyster-shells, or the sea-slug commonly called bêche-de-mer, or any other fish or shell which the Governor in Council might hereafter include by proclamation published in the *Gazette*. The 1st clause described what ships or boats should be deemed to be engaged in fishery. It included every—

“Ship or boat if she is used as a dépôt or place or lodging or refuge for persons employed in such fishery, or for storing provisions for the use of persons employed in such fishery, or if she is used by persons to dive from, collect, or store pearl oysters, pearl oyster-shells, or bêche-de-mer, or any other fish or shell which may hereafter be included by proclamation as aforesaid, or for carrying or conveying otherwise than as a sea-going vessel under a transire, pearl oysters, pearl oyster-shells, or bêche-de-mer.”

The 3rd clause stated that it should be illegal—

“To use or employ any ship or boat in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery within the Colony of Queensland, or within one league to seaward from any part thereof, unless such ship or boat is duly licensed as hereinafter provided.”

The 4th clause gave power to the principal officer of Customs to—

“Grant a license according to the form in the first schedule to the Act, to any ship or boat to be employed in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery, and there shall be payable for every such license or renewal of such license, a fee in accordance with the following scale, that is to say: for every boat the sum of one pound, for every ship of ten tons burden or under the sum of three pounds, for every ship above ten tons burden the sum of ten shillings for every ton or part of a ton of the tonnage of said ship up to thirty tons, and for every ship above thirty tons burden the sum of twenty pounds.”

This was rather less than originally was the case, perhaps; but, in deference to the suggestions received from Thursday Island, the fees had been reduced to the present scale. The mode of

estimating the tonnage was laid down, and the 5th clause stated that—

"All licenses issued under this Act shall be numbered, and shall be of force from the first day of January to the thirty-first day of December in the same year, and may be renewed by the principal officer of Customs at any port in the colony by endorsement on the original license."

The 6th clause prescribed the penalty for using an unlicensed ship or boat :—

"If any ship or boat is employed in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery without a license under this Act having been first obtained, the owner or master of any such ship or boat shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding three times the amount of the license fee payable in respect of such ship or boat, and which may be recovered in a summary way before any police magistrate or two justices of the peace.

"In default of immediate payment of such penalty, the ship or boat, and all things found on board thereof, shall be seized and kept for a period of sixty days, and if at the expiration of that period the penalty is still unpaid, then the ship or boat, together with all her tackle, apparel, furniture, and cargo, may be forfeited to Her Majesty."

The 7th clause provided—

"It shall be lawful for any officer of Customs to seize and take any ship or boat which is found employed in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery without being licensed under this Act, and may detain such ship or boat until a prosecution for breach of this Act is heard and determined."

The 9th clause laid down the penalty for a master refusing to produce his license :—

"If the master of any licensed ship or boat refuses to produce the license of such ship or boat when required so to do by any officer of Customs or police, or by any other member of the police force, he shall for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds."

The 10th clause stated that—

"Before any person engaged in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fishery occupies any Crown lands for the purposes of such fishery, or for any other purpose in connection therewith, he shall obtain from the nearest Commissioner of Crown Lands a license so to do."

The 11th defined the condition of Polynesians under written agreement :—

"It shall not be lawful for any master or other person to employ any Polynesian or native labourer in the pearl-shell or bêche-de-mer fishery unless under a written agreement made in the presence of an officer of Customs or shipping master at a Queensland port.

"All engagements of Polynesians or native labourers made out of Queensland shall be strictly in accordance with the shipping laws of the colony or country where made."

The 12th clause stated that the port of discharge for Polynesians was to be proclaimed by the Governor, and the 13th held the master liable for expenses incurred in the maintenance of Polynesians and native labourers. The 14th clause laid down the penalty on removing native labourers out of the colony without permission, and provided for their due return to their homes. The 16th prescribed that native labourers were to be paid in the presence of a Customs officer or shipping master. The 16th clause stated that no reduction was to be made in the wages of a native labourer in respect of moneys paid during his term of service, unless such moneys had been paid in the presence of a Customs officer or shipping master. The 17th clause was pretty much the same, providing that no deduction was to be made from wages on account of stores paid. The 18th clause stated that the shipping master might demand payment of the wages due to a native labourer. The 19th provided that all deaths and desertions were to be reported. The 20th clause included a provision which was also in the Labourers Act, and which imposed a penalty on any person who supplied fermented or spirituous liquors to a native labourer. He could assure the House that this provision was

absolutely necessary. It was very much the custom of the captains of vessels engaged in that trade, particularly at Christmas time, to supply their labourers with very large quantities of ardent spirits, and crimes of the very worst description had occurred at those times. In one instance, a murderer—the crime being committed under the influence, no doubt, of stimulants—was prosecuted and hanged, but a great many other offenders had escaped. In respect to this matter the offenders were generally well known, but the law was very lax, and the jurisdiction of the justices was set almost at defiance. A good deal of good, he was sure, had been done by the action of the Government schooner "Pearl," in putting a stop to those gross irregularities and to crime; and more, he believed, would be done if this Bill became law. Its 21st clause referred to the jurisdiction of justices in offences committed under the Act, and the 22nd gave power to any person aggrieved by the adjudication of any justices to appeal to the Supreme Court or nearest district court, but—

"No such appeal shall be entertained unless made within two months next after the making of such extermination or adjudication, and unless notice in writing of such appeal, stating the nature and grounds thereof, be given to the party against whom the appeal is brought."

The 23rd clause empowered the Supreme Court to make such orders as was thought reasonable, and the 24th clause provided that—

"The averment in any information under this Act that any person named therein is a Polynesian, Asiatic, or native labourer, shall be sufficient proof thereof until the contrary be shown."

They had this already on the statute-book. The 25th clause gave the Governor power to make certain regulations in certain cases not contrary to the provisions of the Act, and the 26th clause contained the "commencement" and "short title" of the Act. Although this was one of the minor Bills it was of very considerable importance, and he hoped the House would take it into serious consideration. It would not only tend to secure the life and property of those already in the territory, but would also bring in considerable revenue to the Government. He begged to move that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DISTILLATION BILL—FIRST READING.

The PREMIER presented a Bill to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the distillation of spirits and brewing of beer, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The Bill was read a first time, and its second reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CRIMINALS EXPULSION BILL—FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that, in presenting this Bill for the prevention of the influx of foreign and other criminals into Queensland, he thought it was hardly necessary for him to dilate upon the absolute necessity for passing a Bill of that sort. He need hardly bring to the recollection of hon. members the very great inconvenience and enormous expense in dealing with those people coming from New Caledonia—not only the expense, but the danger to life and property resulting from the introduction of those criminals. Some of the very worst of them that ever went to New Caledonia had found their way to these shores, and the Government had been enabled, by keeping as near the law as possible, to get rid of as many of those

criminals as possible. But, with all the anxiety on the part of the Government of New Caledonia and the Republican Government of France, the difficulty of getting rid of these felons was very great. He might instance the case of the last men who arrived here. There were three or four of them; he could not remember exactly who landed here. No doubt whatever was entertained as to their being escapés from New Caledonia, although the legal proof was deficient. Certainly, the Government of New Caledonia went to the trouble and expense, when these men were apprehended in this colony under his instructions, and committed to gaol as vagrants—he might say they were claimed by the French Consul—of sending warders to this colony to identify them. What was the result? Out of these four men one was identified by the warders, who, however, failed to identify the other three; but there was not the slightest shadow of a doubt in his mind, being behind the scenes and knowing all the circumstances, that the remaining three were all about as bad samples of New Caledonian escapés as could be found. The third, he believed, was a fisherman who assisted them to escape. The warders sent to this colony were only able to identify one, and the others had to be set free. These afterwards confessed that they were escapés, and two of them confessed that they knew the warders perfectly well, although they were not identified. It therefore became necessary, in order to escape an inundation of these men—because if three or four could come in a boat to the colony there was nothing to prevent three or four hundred seizing a sailing vessel and making their appearance here—that power should be obtained without consulting treaties between France and the United Kingdom to get rid of these desperate characters. As he said before, the Governments of both France and New Caledonia had felt considerable anxiety on that matter, but so far this colony was still liable at any moment to these vagabonds landing on its shores. He need hardly refer to the state of anxiety and watchfulness—leading in one case absolutely to the loss of valuable life—when the whole town and suburbs of Brisbane were troubled by the presence, about eighteen months ago, of some of these scoundrels, who were the cause of a great deal of trouble. It was very convincing proof that they were the offenders in almost every instance of burglary and robbery that occurred, that since they were disposed of the crime had almost entirely ceased; in fact, he might say entirely, as nothing of the kind of any importance had taken place since these criminals had been got rid of. The 1st clause of the Bill defined offenders illegally at large, and he might say that in drafting any Bill of this sort it became necessary to make it somewhat Algerine, to take more power than they were likely to use. The police had now, under the Riots Act, a great deal more power than they had ever exercised; in fact, if the laws were to be strictly enforced, they would hardly be able to walk about the streets, but no inconvenience was suffered in consequence of the different Acts. So long as people kept within the law and behaved themselves they were not interfered with by the police, nor were they likely to be. In this case, although some of the clauses of the Bill might appear to be hard, and were hard, still they would not be put in force without necessity. The definition of persons illegally at large was as follows:—

“Any person in Queensland, who, having been found guilty of felony by a court of competent jurisdiction in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or in any British possession other than Queensland, has escaped from custody within three years of the date of his arrival in Queensland; or

“Any person in Queensland who, having been transported or imprisoned under the authority of any foreign State for any crime, has escaped from custody within three years of the date of his arrival in Queensland; or

“Any person who, having served a sentence of transportation or imprisonment under the authority of any foreign State, comes into Queensland within three years after the expiration of his sentence; or

“Any person who, having served a sentence of imprisonment under conviction of a felony in any British possession, other than Queensland, comes into Queensland within three years after the expiration of his sentence.”

He had no doubt some people would think these clauses were too stringent. He had heard it said, “Why should not a man who has committed a crime, and who has been punished for that crime, and is now a free man, be allowed to come here?” Well, the answer was that we did not choose that he should come here; we did not wish to add to our criminal population. This was nothing new. A statute had been in force for many years in Victoria, under which he doubted whether the Chief Secretary of Western Australia could enter Victoria without a pass from the Government, so stringent was the Act. That applied quite as well to other British colonies. It was nothing new for a criminal, after he had served his sentence in the adjoining Colony of New South Wales, to come on here at once; in fact, he knew of one instance in which the authorities there paid the passage of such a man to this colony, and he (the Colonial Secretary) remonstrated strongly with Sir Henry Parkes, who said it should not be allowed. Criminals constantly came here. The Bill would also prevent the influx of men who had been pardoned after serving their time in New Caledonia. He had no desire to let these people come here, and he thought they ought to take stringent measures to keep them out. The 2nd clause gave power to

“Any justice of the peace, or any constable, at any time after the passing of this Act, having reasonable cause to suspect that any person is an offender illegally at large within the meaning of this Act, forthwith, and without any warrant for such purpose, to arrest, or cause such suspected person to be apprehended and taken before any two justices of the peace, to be dealt with as hereinafter provided.”

This was one of the clauses he spoke of as Algerine. There was no doubt that if this were strictly carried out a great deal of injury to innocent persons might be done; but, as he said before, they had clauses quite as stringent in many other Acts which were never carried into effect. The 3rd clause defined the punishment of offenders illegally at large:—

“It shall be lawful for any two justices of the peace before whom any person is brought, charged with being an offender illegally at large within the meaning of this Act, to convict him thereof, and at their discretion, either

“(1.) To take bail that such person leaves the colony within seven days after his conviction; or

“(2.) To cause such person to be delivered up to any person duly authorised by the Government of the country or possession from whence he came, so as to be conveyed in custody to such country; or

“(3.) To cause him to be put on board any ship of war belonging to such country, and in the meantime to detain him until he can be so conveyed, delivered up, or put on board a ship of war as aforesaid; or

“(4.) To sentence such person, if a male, to be kept to hard labour on the roads or other public works of the colony for any period not exceeding three years, or if a female, to be imprisoned with or without hard labour in any gaol for any period not exceeding one year.”

The 4th clause gave authority for the forfeiture of property. The 5th clause defined the punishment for offenders remaining after the expiration of their sentence. The 6th clause was on harbouring. If men of this description found their way

to our shores the police would very soon be able to find them unless they were harboured, and therefore any person harbouring them made himself liable to a penalty for so doing. The 7th clause imposed a penalty on masters of ships for introducing such offenders, for which they rendered themselves liable to a penalty of £20 or imprisonment for three months, at the discretion of the justices—

"Unless it is proved to the satisfaction of such justices that such master mariner, *et cætera*, did not know that such person was any of the persons mentioned in the said first section of this Act."

The 8th clause gave power to justices to issue search-warrants. The 9th gave power to any justice of the peace or constable to go on board any vessel. The 10th clause provided for summary jurisdiction. The 11th provided that evidence inadmissible in other cases might be received under this Act. He would read this clause, as it was rather important:—

"The justices hearing any complaint or information under this Act, may receive such evidence as may be laid before them, although the same may not be such as in other cases would be legally admissible; and if it is satisfactorily proved before them that any person is an offender illegally at large within the meaning of the first section of this Act, the evidence so given shall, for the purposes of this Act, be taken to be *prima facie* evidence of the guilt of such person, any Act to the contrary notwithstanding."

The 12th clause authorised magistrates to receive any evidence. The 13th gave power of appeal. The 14th provided that any person desiring to appeal should enter into a recognisance with surety to prosecute the appeal. The 15th clause provided—

"Nothing in this Act shall be taken or construed to take away or curtail any powers vested in the Governor under any Extradition Act or Extradition Treaty."

He thought he had said enough to show the necessity of a Bill of this sort, and he now simply hoped that it would be passed into law. He moved that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

MARSUPIALS DESTRUCTION BILL— FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the first reading of a Bill to encourage the Destruction of Marsupials, said it was a reprint of the Bill which passed this House last session, but was unfortunately thrown out in another place. He said unfortunately, as a great deal of harm had been done by the Bill having been thrown out. He hoped the House would be of the same opinion as it was last year, and pass the Bill. It was a very important one, and was absolutely necessary for the preservation of stock, for the marsupials were doing an enormous deal of damage in a great many portions of this colony. He moved that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN hoped hon. members would have an opportunity of seeing the Bill before it came on again.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that it did not follow because the Bill was put on the paper that it would come on to-morrow. He put it on the paper for to-morrow, but if hon. members were not ready, of course it would not be proceeded with.

Question put and passed.

INTERCOLONIAL WARRANTS BILL— FIRST READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in introducing a Bill to provide for the Execution in Queensland of Warrants of Apprehension issued in other Colonies, said this was one of the Bills adopted at the Conference held in Sydney at the beginning of this year. The principle of backing warrants was one which had long been known in England and Ireland and the Channel Islands; but there the principle only applied to indictable offences. This Bill made it apply to any offence for which a warrant might be issued in any colony. He believed it was a very useful Bill indeed. It was agreed to without a dissentient voice by the representatives of the various colonies at the Sydney Conference, and it had been amended so as to meet the case as an Act of the Parliament of Queensland. The interpretation clause said:—

"This Act shall be called and may be cited as the Intercolonial Warrants Act of 1881.

"In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

"'Colony' means and includes the colonies of New South Wales, New Zealand, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia, or any of them.

"'Justice' means justice of the peace.

"'Constable' or 'constables' means and includes any person or persons charged with or acting in the execution of any warrant or process indorsed as herein mentioned, or with the custody of the person apprehended or to be apprehended under such warrant or process, and the assistants of such constable or constables.

"And 'accused' means the person apprehended or to be apprehended, by virtue of any warrant or process indorsed under the provisions of this Act."

The 3rd clause provided that warrants issued in other colonies might be indorsed in Queensland.

"If any person for whose apprehension a warrant has been issued in any colony, by any justice or other person having authority to issue it, for any offence against, or purporting to be against the laws of that colony, escapes therefrom, or goes into, resides, or is, or is supposed or suspected to be in Queensland, any justice having jurisdiction in Queensland may indorse such warrant, to the effect of the form of the first schedule hereto.

"The warrant so indorsed shall be a sufficient authority to the constable and all others to whom it was originally addressed, or by whom it may lawfully be executed or acted on, and their and every of their assistants, to execute the said warrant in any part of Queensland by apprehending the accused, or receiving him into custody, and (if so directed by such justice, or any other justice having like jurisdiction) by removing him in custody to the colony in which the said warrant was issued, and conveying him before the justice or justices who granted it, or before some other justices in and for the same colony, to be there dealt with as if he had been apprehended in such colony."

The 4th clause provided that if there were any witnesses in this colony they might be examined here. The 5th gave power to summon witnesses. The 6th clause enabled the attendance of witnesses to be enforced by warrant. The 7th provided that if on the appearance of a person so summoned he refused to take the oath or affirmation, or to answer questions, he might be sent to gaol for seven days. The 8th provided for the examination of witnesses; the 9th for the statement of the accused; the 10th for the recognisance of witnesses; the 11th for the commitment of witnesses not entering into recognisances; and the 12th for the issue of warrants here and their execution elsewhere. The 13th clause gave power for two justices or a police magistrate to compel a witness who could give material evidence to attend the trial in another colony. The 14th clause provided that depositions taken in the colonies might be read on the death or the absence of a witness. The 15th provided for the arrest of a person and

detention for twenty-one days on a telegram only. The 16th clause was a most important one, as it provided for wife-desertion :—

“ This Act shall be deemed to extend and apply to all warrants issued in any colony, for the apprehension of any person on the ground that he has deserted or is about to desert his wife, child, or children (whether legitimate or not) or any of them, or leave her or them, or any of them, without adequate means of support, or on the ground that he has not complied with any order of any court, justice, or justices, to maintain or contribute to the maintenance of any such wife, child, or children, or on any ground which, in the opinion of the justice indorsing any such warrant in Queensland, is considered to be of a like kind.”

There was an absolute necessity for this clause, for he knew that a great deal of wife-desertion went on in this colony. As Secretary for Public Instruction, it came under his notice that fellows deserted their wives and families without the slightest cause, leaving them dependent on the country, the husbands going to a neighbouring colony, where they were perfectly safe. He hoped the present Bill would pass. He moved that the Bill be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the second reading of the Bill be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. DICKSON said he considered that it was exceedingly inconvenient that supplementary Bills, received by message from His Excellency, should on such short notice be placed on the paper for to-morrow. Although he was not prepared to dissent from anything the hon. the Colonial Secretary had said, he thought notice ought to have been given of the intention of the Government to introduce the Bill. It involved some important principles, which he had no doubt the legal members of the House would bestow their attention upon. Possibly the Colonial Secretary would answer that it was not necessary to proceed with the Bill when it was set down, but he thought it was only fair that more time should be afforded before they were called upon to deal with the Bill.

The PREMIER said that more information had been given on these Bills at this early stage than had been done for years before. It was usual to formally read the Bill a first time, and wait for the second reading to give the information, as had been done this evening with the Distillation Bill; but his hon. colleague had made his prefatory remarks on the first reading, and had given members more information than had been done for at least the last seven years.

Mr. McLEAN said the old was better. He had heard the explanation of the measures from the Colonial Secretary, but under the belief that they were getting the second reading of the Bills. He preferred the system adopted by the hon. the Premier in introducing the Distillation Bill, moving that the Bill be read a first time and printed, and then giving the explanation when hon. members had the Bill in their hands.

Question put and passed.

NEW BILLS.

The House, in Committee of the Whole, affirmed the desirability of introducing the following new Bills :—

A Bill to make provision for the Sale of Food and Drugs in a pure state.

A Bill to provide for the union of Municipalities for the better Maintenance and Management of Main Roads and other local works.

A Bill to provide for the Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Collieries.

A Bill to provide for the Construction, Maintenance, and Management of Works for the Storage and Distribution of Water.

The Bills were introduced, read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. DICKSON said that as some of the Bills introduced were of considerable importance, it would be interesting to hon. members generally to be informed which Bills it was intended to take the second reading of to-morrow.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that he intended to take some of the smaller Bills to-morrow—such as the Bêche-de-mer Bill, which had already been before the House, and the Expulsion of Criminals Bill.

RETURN.

Mr. H. WYNDHAM PALMER moved—

That there be laid on the table of the House—

1. A Return showing the amount of Land selected on the Johnstone, Mossman, and Daintree Rivers, to date.
2. The name of each Selector.
3. The Area of Land selected under each name.
4. The amount paid into the Treasury on each Selection.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. McLEAN asked what business the Government intended taking first to-morrow?

Mr. DICKSON asked the Premier when he would be able to deliver his Financial Statement?

The PREMIER replied that he did not wish to make any definite promise on the matter, but he would make the Statement as soon as the state of public business warranted his doing so. He hoped to have the Estimates on the table shortly, and the Statement would be delivered soon afterwards.

The House adjourned at eighteen minutes to 5 o'clock.