

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Legislative Council was wholly occupied yesterday, in discussing the Court of Requests Bill in committee. Out of the seventy-two clauses of the bill, thirty-three were discussed, the whole of which were agreed to except five, which were postponed at the wish of both sides of the House for future consideration.

A message was received from His Excellency, containing copies of correspondence between the Lords of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, and the Commissioners of Customs, relative to the placing the Customs establishment, under the control of the Local Government. These important documents will be considered by the House to-day, in conjunction with the Customs Regulation Bill.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

It is necessary to guard those who read the reports of the proceedings of the Legislative Council against looking upon the decisions of that body as expressing the opinions of the Colonists of Victoria. While our Legislature is so constructed, that it is simply a mockery of representation, this fact should never be forgotten when estimating the value of its decisions. In an Assembly of thirty members, ten are nominees of the Crown; and the right of returning the twenty elected members is so artfully distributed through the Colony, as very materially to check the free expression of popular opinion. The majorities in the Council, therefore, not only do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Colonists, but are very frequently diametrically opposed to them. The members representing large and important constituencies are—Messrs Westgarth, Johnston, and O'Shanassy, for Melbourne; Mr Strachan and Dr Thomson, for Geelong; Messrs Smith and Dight, for North Bourke; Mr Miller, for South Bourke; Mr Mercer, for Grant; Mr Osborne, for Belfast and Warrnambool; Mr Wilkinson, for Portland; Mr Rutledge, for Villiers and Heytesbury; Mr Snodgrass, for the Kilmore Boroughs; Mr Fawcner, for the counties adjacent; and Mr Turnbull, for Gipps Land. Only where the names of these gentlemen occur, whether in a majority or minority, are the opinions of the great mass of the Colonists indicated.)

Wednesday, 11th August.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at a quarter past 3 o'clock. Present—the Colonial Secretary, the Chairman of Quarter Sessions, the Attorney-General, the Auditor-

THURSDAY, 12th AUGUST.

THE POLICE.

Soon after the commencement of the present Session of the Legislative Council, we felt bound to warn our readers not to place too much reliance upon the rage for Select Committees, which appeared to actuate that illustrious body. Events since then have strengthened our impression, that it would be a serious error to look upon the Select Committee mania as a panacea for all our social woes. We have heard a speech from the usually taciturn member for the Murray, moving for the appointment of a Select Committee upon Education; which speech, if accurately reported, would almost have reached from here to Wangaratta; and we heard, a day or two afterwards, that the honorable gentleman required very considerable coaxing to attend his own Committee, because the member for Talbot differed in his recollection as to something that was done last Session.

Our present business, however, is with a Committee now sitting upon the very important subject of Police; and it is with regret that we express an opinion that it is neither so constituted, nor are its proceedings reported to be so conducted, as to be likely to lead to any very beneficial result. It is something quite anomalous that a committee upon such a subject, should not contain *one member for the metropolis*. It is also most unfortunate that the important post of chairman should have fallen to the lot, or rather should have been taken possession of by Mr Snodgrass; a gentleman, whose career since entering the Council, has been to use a mild expression, so peculiar. The consequences are a very general impression that this subject is not likely to receive the treatment that it deserves; and very ugly rumours are afloat as to witnesses called up for examination, being carefully tutored as to what they are to say.

At a time when the most desperate bushranging pervades the whole Colony, when throats are being cut by the roadside, and men are knocked down, robbed, and half-strangled in the public streets at noon-day, the question of police will not bear to be trifled with, and the public should keep a very watchful eye upon the matter.

The police are not adequately paid, and they never can be an efficient force till they are so; but it is with regret that we add, that we also believe that they are not half officered; and all the money in the world, may be muddled away in lavish expenditure, without any good result to the force, till it is actively superintended, and properly looked after. The appointment of a good active man, with his heart in his work, would save thousands in money, to the Government, and tens of thousands in comfort and security to the people.

General, the Solicitor-General; Messrs O'Shanassy, Thomson, Murphy, Mercer, Fawkner, Goldsmith, Rutledge, Strachan, Miller, Smith, and Wilkinson.

COURT OF REQUESTS BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved the order of the day, and the House went into Committee on this Bill.

The first 39 clauses were discussed and agreed to, with the exception of clauses 1, 2, 3, 5 and 11, which were postponed for future consideration.

The House then resumed, and the Chairman having reported progress, obtained leave to sit again on Friday.

The SPEAKER announced a message from His Excellency No 17, containing copies of the correspondence between the Lords of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, and the Commissioners of Customs, relative to removing the establishment of the Customs from its present control to that of the Colonial Government. His Excellency also suggested to the Council that the 31st December next would be a convenient time for effecting the transfer.

On the motion of the Colonial Secretary, the message was ordered to be printed and taken into consideration to-morrow (this day) in connection with the Customs' Regulation Bill.

Dr MURPHY, on behalf of Mr Mercer, postponed the motion of the latter hon. member respecting the District Council of Grant, until to-morrow (this day).

The Order of the day for the second reading of the Costs in Criminal Cases Taxation Bill, was discharged, and made an Order of the day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at six o'clock.

Thursday, 12th August.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

1. Tariff Bill—Second reading.
2. Customs' Regulations Bill—Second reading.
3. Ports, Harbours, and Shipping Law Consolidation Bill—Second reading.
4. General and Quarter Sessions Courts Bill—Adoption of Report.
5. The Lieutenant-Governor's Message, No 17—Customs—To be taken into consideration on the second reading of the Custom Regulations Bill.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Mr FAWKNER, to move—

For leave to bring in a Bill to reduce the rate of occupancy which confers the elective franchise on the citizens of Melbourne for election of the Municipal body from 20*l* to 10*l* to all those who can read plainly and distinctly, and write plainly and legibly.

Mr MERCER, to move—

That an address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that he will be pleased to lay on the table of this House copies of all the correspondence between the late Warden of the District Council of Grant, W C Haines, Esq, and the Government, relative to that Council, from the date of that gentleman's appointment in the Gazette, to the date of the appointment in the Gazette of the present Warden.