

The Hon. J. PEARCE hoped the Minister of Justice would reconsider his determination to include the inmates of the Destitute Asylum as subjects for the study of anatomy. The inmates were mostly old and infirm, and had few friends to look after them or consult their wishes.

The Bill was then read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 22 were passed without amendment.

New clause to follow clause 22.

The MINISTER of JUSTICE and EDUCATION (Hon. R. C. Baker) moved to insert the following new clause to follow clause 9:—"The Chief Secretary may by a licence under his hand authorise the medical officer of any public institution, supported wholly or in part by funds from the general revenue, to permit the body of any person who may die in such public institution, unless such institution shall be a public hospital, to undergo anatomical examination in any school of anatomy or in any public institution unless to the knowledge of such licensee such person shall have expressed his desire, either in writing at any time during his life or verbally, during the illness whereof he died that his body after death might not undergo such examination, or unless the surviving husband or wife or the nearest known relative of the deceased person shall require the body to be interred without such examination."

The Hon. J. PEARCE would not object to the new clause, but he would repeat that in his opinion it would be very objectionable if persons who ought to go into the Destitute Asylum were prevented from going there by dread of becoming the subjects of anatomical operations.

The new clause, together with the preamble and title, was passed.

The Council resumed, the Committee reported, the report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill fixed for Tuesday next.

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THE Anatomy Bill, which was read a second time in the Council yesterday, is, as the Minister of Justice and Education stated, necessary if a medical school is to be established, It has already been determined that the liberality of Sir T. Elder in contributing £10,000 for the foundation of a medical school at the University shall be accepted; and a school of anatomy is an essential part of the provision. Sensitive persons generally have a somewhat undefined shrinking from the practice of anatomy as it must be carried out in the dissecting-room, and when the subject is forced upon their attention

they generally dismiss it from their minds as soon as possible; while many ignorant and superstitious people have an almost unconquerable dread of the very idea of a human body being cut up for scientific purposes. Hence it is not surprising if the discussion of the Anatomy Bill now under consideration occasions a passing cold shiver to a good number of persons who take the trouble to acquaint themselves with its provisions. They may be reassured, however, by the knowledge that the Bill is substantially a copy of the English Act; that it is in force in Victoria; and that in neither case is any public scandal caused, and indeed, except that now and then a sensational writer makes a demand on the dissecting room to supply material for his peculiar purpose, the whole business is quickly transacted as a matter of course without producing any offence. The Bill provides for the establishment of Schools of Anatomy, the issue of licences to medical men, professors and students to practice anatomy, the appointment of inspectors to see that the provisions of the Bill are properly carried out, and the issue of rules and regulations for the practice. The one difficulty in these schools of anatomy is to obtain bodies for dissection, and the Bill

provides that executors and other persons, not being undertakers, in possession of dead bodies, may allow such bodies to be subjected to anatomical treatment, provided the deceased had not during life objected to being so treated. Persons may also during life direct that their bodies shall be handed over to the persons licensed as above to be dissected. The Minister of Justice and Education laid his finger upon the only provision in the Bill which is likely to create popular hostility when the Act comes into force, and he had evidently had no little difficulty in coming to a decision as to what was exactly the right course to adopt. It was provided in the original draft of the Bill drawn up by the Chief Justice and Dr. Stirling that all persons who died in public institutions—a number of which were defined in clause 2—should be handed over to the students of practical anatomy unless those persons previously signified their disinclination to be dissected, or unless their relatives objected on their behalf. But it had been pointed out that this would tend to lessen public confidence in such institutions, especially the hospitals, and the clause had been omitted. Mr. Baker, however, yesterday moved for and carried in committee the insertion of the clause in a form so altered as to except from its operation "public hospitals." Mr. Pearce pleaded that the Destitute Asylum should also be excepted, and no doubt the objection which many destitute persons have to go to the asylum would be increased if they were aware that their bodies might after death be subject to dissection. However the Council appeared to think that it would be sufficient to exclude the hospitals, and so the Bill passed its second reading. An important provision is that occupants of the public institutions included in the Bill may before decease forbid the use of their bodies for dissection, and whatever sentimental objection may be made to the Bill we do not anticipate that any serious difficulty will occur in its provisions being carried out in practice.

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ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF FRENCH.

An interesting lecture—the first of a series—on "The Origin and History of French" was given by Professor Boulger to his French class at the University on Monday afternoon. The lecturer observed that French, like Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, was Latin in a developed form. To suppose that these languages were merely corrupted Latin—as was stated by no less an authority than Hallam in his "History of European Literature"—was to misconceive entirely the laws of philology. A living language was always changing, because its environment was always changing, and till it took a literary form the language of any people was rather a confederation of independent and equipollent dialects than a single and absolute organization. In course of time the need of literary expression made itself felt, and accident for the most part determined which should be the favoured dialect. This, as soon as it had been made the medium for literary compositions of any importance, dwarfed all the other dialects for the time, and was recognised as the language of the people. Such had been the history of Sans-