

of sexual impotence, or of any complaint or infirmity arising from or relating to sexual intercourse or of female or menstrual irregularities" be struck out.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I do not think it is necessary to strike out those words. The difficulty is that these alleged remedies are interwoven. The Bill has been drafted so that it will not miss anything. It may include something that does not apply to venereal disease, but I think it would be better to leave in the words. The Committee will agree that we are in favour of preventing the advertising of quack remedies for complaints other than venereal disease.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GEORGE: I move an amendment—

*That in Subsection 2 the following be added to stand as paragraph (g):—
"Sends to any persons through the post or by any delivery any printed or written matter referring to and recommending the use of alleged remedies for venereal disease."*

The Minister for Works: How will it be possible to deal with any person outside the State who may send over an advertisement?

Mr. GEORGE: We can deal with the people here. During the last few years I have had very objectionable things sent to me through the post.

The Minister for Works: You are not the only one.

Mr. GEORGE: No, but I object to it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You cannot stop Dr. Smith, of Melbourne, circularising the whole State.

Mr. GEORGE: But we can stop anyone in this State doing this sort of thing. If we leave any loophole somebody is bound to use it. This restriction must be tried sooner or later, and if we adopt it the other States will follow in due course.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I undertake to consider the proposed amendment, and consult the Crown Solicitor on it.

Mr. GEORGE: That will suffice. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Proposed new section put and passed.

Proposed new Section 242m—agreed to.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—NEWCASTLE-BOLGART RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 14th September, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—BRAN, POLLARD, AND MAIZE IMPORTED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the total cost of bran, pollard, and maize imported by or on behalf of the Government, the cost to include freight, duty, crushing

the maize, and all other charges? 2, The net proceeds of sale? 3, The value of stock on hand? 4, The cost of maize crushing plant? 5, The proceeds of sale of maize crushing plant. 6, What is the estimated loss on these transactions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, £134,017 6s. 10d. 2, This information cannot be supplied until deliveries at Fremantle and other centres are complete, as all sales are subject to railway weights, and until the invoice in regard to the final weights have been prepared, the result of the sales cannot be arrived at. Deliveries are in progress and will probably continue for three or four weeks. 3, There is on hand (approximately) at Geraldton, pollard, 23 tons; bran, 41 tons; maize, 18 tons. Northam, pollard 5 tons; bran, 5 tons; maize, 10 tons. The quantities at these centres may be further altered by additional deliveries or returns to and from settlers. The stocks on hand at Fremantle will be cleared when the deliveries to settlers, combined with the recent sales privately and by auction are complete. 4, £702 8s. 8d., including cost of erection, £176 10s. 5, £75. One imported crusher which cost £50 is still on hand. 6, See answer to question No. 2.

QUESTION—CHARITABLE RELIEF TO MEN.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, How many men are there in the Old Men's Home at Claremont and in the Exhibition building, Perth, maintained at the Government expense—(a) under 30 years of age, (b) under 45 years of age, (c) under 60 years of age, (d) over 60 years of age? 2, How many of these are medically unfit for work? 3, How long have they been in the institution? 4, How much longer are they likely to remain there? 5, Do they grow their own vegetable supply, and do their own cooking and washing free of expense to the State?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Old Men's Home: (a) 6;

(b) 17; (c) 232; (d) 426.—Total, 681. Exhibition Buildings: (a) 24; (b) 85; (c) 46; (d) 1.—Total, 156. 2, Old Men's Home, 600; Exhibition Buildings, none. 3, Old Men's Home, varying period from several years to a few days; Exhibition Buildings, 15 for 6 months; 17 for 5 months; 19 for 4 months; 24 for 3 months; 23 for 2 months; 15 for 1 month; 7 for 3 weeks; 19 for 2 weeks; 17 for 1 week. 4, Old Men's Home, the great bulk are likely to end their days there; Exhibition Buildings, a few weeks. 5, Old Men's Home, no; Exhibition Buildings, they do their own washing with soap and water supplied by the department.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK ADVANCES.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS asked the Colonial Secretary: What is the total amount advanced by the Agricultural Bank to 30th June, 1915?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: £3,361,157 13s. 10d.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: New regulations under the Workers' Homes Act, 1914.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, Adoption of Children Act Amendment.

2, Land and Income Tax.

3, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

SITTING HOUR—THURSDAY.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4-37]: I move—

That for the remainder of the Session, unless otherwise ordered, the House do meet on Thursdays at 3 p.m. instead of at 4-30 p.m., as provided in Standing Order No. 48.

In submitting the motion to the House I may state that much legislation will be coming down within the next few days, and it will be necessary for members to sit at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, that is, if we are to have no sitting at night, and I am desirous of avoiding sitting in the evening on Thursday in order that country members may be able to go to their homes early in the afternoon. That is the sole object of the motion.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East): I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

BILL—GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th Sept.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) 4:40: I would have been surprised at the opposition shown to this Bill were it not that I had a friendly warning of the peril that awaited me. On the 18th of last month the Fremantle Municipal Council were generous enough to write to me and take me into their confidence. They went a step further; they put a severe strain on my sense of gratitude by respectfully desiring that I should use every effort to kill this Bill. Little information was vouchsafed to me to justify me in flinging to the winds my Ministerial responsibilities, trampling underfoot all constitutional precedent and committing the desperate act which they requested me to perpetrate. Much was left to the imagination by the Fremantle town council, but the impression conveyed in a subtle fashion was that the Government were out to rob the Fremantle ratepayers. A similar effect was sought to be produced by Mr. Lynn and Mr. Allen. Both those hon. members went deeply into the question, quoted figures, marshalled facts, and invented arguments, all designed and directed to prove that this Bill was loaded and was intended to destroy the vested interests of the Fremantle municipal council. A lot of extraneous matter has been imported

into the discussion. I did not propose treating with it, but I must do so, in order that I may defend the Government. It has no direct bearing on the point at issue, but the question for consideration in connection with this matter I assume, is as to whether the Government shall be permitted to supply themselves with electric power. That is the point the House will have to consider, and that is the only point which the House has to decide. The bone and marrow of Mr. Lynn's speech is that the vested interests of Fremantle are attacked, and attacked unjustly and in such a way as to call for legislative intervention. It is a poor plea to put forward to attempt to influence a majority of members of this House. Legislation intended to serve the interests of the State is frequently in conflict with individual interests. Let us take the Coolgardie railway as a case in point. Before the Coolgardie railway was constructed there were hundreds of teams on the track between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, and when the line was finished the occupation of the teamsters was gone. They had to sell their teams. They had to sell their teams and in some cases, I dare say, sacrifice them. Then again, when the Coolgardie Water Scheme was completed, it meant that every person who had embarked money in the erection of condensers saw the whole of his plant and machinery scrapped, so that in connection with every action of the Government in the way of legislation directed towards progress someone is bound to suffer more or less. The few suffer in order that the multitude may gain, and in the vast majority of instances there is no complaint, because it is recognised as useless; the victims bow to the inevitable. But it is not so with the hon. Mr. Lynn and the hon. Mr. Allen. They trot out their parochial grievance to the House, and astonishing to say, they have found a few supporters. The Government, we are told, are entering as a competitor against Fremantle in the supply of electric power. Nothing of the kind. I buy my firewood, but if I choose to go out into the bush and chop the wood, and

take it to my own home and use it, surely I am not competing with those in Perth who run woodyards. Under a Liberal Government the Commissioner of Railways constructed a sawmill in order to supply his own necessities in the direction of sleepers for the purpose of maintaining the railway lines under his charge. Was he entering into competition with the timber companies? Was there any public complaint from those companies? No. There was no appeal to Parliament, and if there had been, it would have been treated with contempt. In this Bill all the Government ask is the right to supply themselves and the Naval Base with electric current. The Naval Base is outside the Fremantle municipality. Fremantle has no claims upon it whatever, and I would point out that the Federal Government are not a foreign power. They are representative of the ratepayers of Western Australia, as they are representative of the ratepayers of the Commonwealth. If we can supply the current cheaper than Fremantle, the ratepayers of West Australia will benefit, and if Fremantle can supply it cheaper than we can, the same result will be obtained. What Fremantle wants is not an opportunity to compete with the Government but the right to claim a monopoly. The Government are erecting in Perth at great cost a power house. It is estimated that the expenditure will be £295,000. It is intended to serve the principal Government institutions in the metropolitan area. Why should not the Government be permitted to do so? Will this House say they shall not? I shall be very much surprised if any such decision is arrived at by the majority of the members of the Legislative Council. But what has been our experience up to date? In consequence of the amendment made, with the consent of the Government, by this House last session, we have been blocked in some directions—not in all directions, because some of the local authorities have given their consent—but we were blocked first at Claremont, blocked unreasonably, unjustifiably and wantonly, and we were

then blocked by Fremantle. It has been stated that Fremantle is pledged to a sum of £150,000 for the establishment of an electric light and tramway scheme. That has very little bearing on the subject, as the sum of £150,000 includes the tramways and rolling stock. The bulk of that money has been expended in connection with the installation of the tramway system and does not enter into the question at all.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Why do not you buy the scheme?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has been stated that the Fremantle Tramway Board could quote a lower rate to the Naval Base than the Government. If this is so, they ought to do it, and would no doubt get the contract, because I think there is not much sentiment among our Federal friends.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is said that arrangements have already been made.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am advised, and I believe that the Fremantle plant is not sufficiently modern to permit of the same economical production of current as will be possible at the power house in Perth. Moreover, the plant at Fremantle is now fully loaded and additional plant estimated to cost between £13,000 and £14,000, would be required. That was before the war: since then prices have advanced, and it would be a mild estimate indeed to say the added cost in consequence of the war would be not less than 25 per cent.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: On what authority do you make that statement?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In addition, the principal engineering works in England are now fully occupied exclusively in the production of war supplies. With regard to the changing of motors, to which Mr. Allen attached so much importance, the cost of changing over in connection with the periodicity is a very small matter, as I am informed by those who ought to know that very few motors are now used in Fremantle. But I know from my own investigation that if the Government were allowed to come in many of those who are now using other power would in future use

electricity. The plant owned by the Fremantle Tramway Board was valued at £37,225, and we are told that would have to be scrapped. This was the original cost of the plant. It has been in use for 10 years and has depreciated in consequence to the extent of about £15,000, so that £22,000 is regarded as its present value. That will become obsolete in time and must be replaced with modern machinery, and that is the problem with which the Fremantle council are faced at the present time. Mr. Lynn said the object of the Government is to reduce the standing charges in connection with the power house, and Mr. Allen said the Government wished to show a profit on the scheme. Admittedly so. That is exactly what the Government want to do. They want to show a profit on the scheme and reduce the standing charges. Surely that is an object which should be encouraged. Is not that an object which ought to be applauded by members of this Chamber? We have received a good deal of criticism relative to our trading concerns and the whole of the criticism has been based on the alleged fact that those trading concerns are not being profitably run and that they should be made to pay a profit if their continuance can be justified. It is said that they are an incubus on the taxpayers. We are endeavouring in connection with this project to prevent it from becoming an incubus on the taxpayers, as it is alleged some of the present trading concerns are, although we are not prepared to admit it. Some of them may not be paying at the present time, but there is every reason to believe that in the very near future there will be a different tale to tell.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is what you said four years ago.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Lynn said this was the same Bill as was introduced last session, and amended. I interjected—"Is it exactly?" and the hon. member replied, "In its result it will be the same." I point out that neither is it exactly the same nor likely to be the same in its results. There is a distinction with a very big difference.

The Bill of last session gave the Government very wide power, power, not only to supply themselves but everyone else in the different municipalities. I will quote from a speech made by the hon. member himself when the Bill was introduced early this year. It will serve to show the object of the Bill of last session. According to *Hansard*, page 1074, Mr. Lynn stated—

The Bill has far-reaching effects respecting any municipality outside the five-mile limit. It provides that the Commissioner may establish by purchase or otherwise and generate electricity, and sell or supply electricity and electric motors, fittings or other apparatus for any lawful purpose to any person or local authority, or to any Government department or agency, State or Commonwealth.

Under that Bill the Government could supply not merely the Commonwealth Government but any person in the municipality. That was the tenor of the Bill introduced last session.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: The same result.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In regard to the Bill now under discussion, it is not necessary for me to quote from it, because members quite see that it enables the Government merely to supply themselves and the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: And kill Fremantle as well.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Allen's speech was a valuable contribution to the debate from one standpoint. It was a lucid disquisition on electro-dynamics, but the hon. gentleman cleverly obscured the issue. This was due, no doubt, to the weakness of his case. I am compelled to follow him. I must defend the Government, and I must defend also the men whom the Government have employed and who are not here to protect themselves.

Hon. F. Connor: You have a pretty hard job.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Allen made a very grave imputation against Messrs. Merz & McLellan. He astonished me, because he is generally very careful in regard to any statement

he makes. In speaking on this subject, he said—

It is open to question whether they were qualified to give the report which the Government paid them for. I have a certain amount of information which goes to show they were not. I give them the benefit of the doubt, and say they were not qualified to give the information. Otherwise, I should be compelled to the view that they had some ulterior motive in advising the Government in the way they did. I prefer to put it in the way of saying that they had not the necessary knowledge.

That is a very strong statement to make. It is damaging to Merz & McLellan whichever way one might look at it. According to the hon. member they are either ignorant or they are guided by ulterior motives; they are either fools or rogues—that is the sum total of it. Mr. Allen, however, gave them what is given to every criminal when there is a faulty link in the chain of evidence, he very charitably gave them the benefit of the doubt. Hon. members must now ask anxiously who are Merz & McLellan? I can tell them. They are consulting engineers; they are not contractors. They are acting in the capacity of consulting engineers not only for the Government of Western Australia but also for the Government of Victoria, who are engaged in the electrification of the suburban railways. Merz & McLellan are one of the foremost firms in the electrical world. They have carried out some of the largest undertakings in Great Britain and abroad. Facts are sometimes eloquent and I propose to place a few facts in this connection before members. Amongst the works which stand to the credit of the firm for the supervision which they exercise are the Newcastle Electricity Supply Co., in England; in Buenos Ayres, in Central Argentine; in connection with the London underground railways; the North-Eastern railways; the Victorian suburban railways; Madras; and many others, not forgetting the city of London, to which Mr. Allen himself has directed

attention. When the Chicago Edison Co. decided to build a 25,000 kilowatt turbo-generator, the largest in the world, who were called in to advise on the design and construction in connection with the erection of that large plant? Merz & McLellan—these gentlemen who have been charged with being ulterior-motive-ridden men. Who reported on the London supply, and the Indian State railways electrification? The same firm, Merz & McLellan, in 1904, designed the first power station to be built in England purely for power supply purposes, and that station generates more current than any other single station, either in England or on the Continent, I am stating these facts in order to show who these gentlemen are. Moreover, they were the first to commence transmitting at 20,000 volts by overhead lines in England. These men should be above suspicion, either from the standpoint of competency or business morality. If they are not, public records and the confidence of the great business men of the world go for nothing. If they are not, I would like to know what standard Mr. Allen would expect the Government to adopt before it reposes trust in any human creature. Mr. Allen wants to know why Merz & McLellan recommended a 40-cycle system for Perth and a 50-cycle system for the city of London. I shall tell him why. When the Government took office and shortly after the purchase of the trams, it was decided in connection with the power house to provide for the electrification of the railway over the Darling Ranges. For that purpose a 3-phase current would be used and a frequency not higher than 40 cycles would be possible if the true economical advantages of the system were to be obtained. Also, rotary converters would be required for tramway use. It is an unassailable fact among experts that all converting machinery gives better results the lower the frequency adopted. Fremantle has only one small plant, and it is wrong to condemn an up to date and modern system because of the supply by an almost obsolete system, such as that in vogue in Fremantle.

Hon. J. F. Allen: You are wrong, quite wrong.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In view of the future requirements of the State, the engineers were wise in adopting a frequency most suitable for a general system of supply. To put the whole thing in a nutshell: if we required power merely for the trams and lighting, a 50-cycle would be all right; but for a triple objective, for the purpose of supplying light, power for tramways and electrification of our railways over the Darling Ranges it would be impossible to do it successfully with a 50-cycle system, and a 40-cycle was the best system for the purpose. That is the reason why Merz & McLellan recommended the adoption of the 40-cycle system for the city of Perth. Now, why was the 50-cycle adopted in London? That question can be answered in a few words. Because that system served the necessities of the people. The electricity was required only for lighting and cooking. The railways and tramways had their own power stations operating and £26,000,000 was invested in existing converting plants. It would have been madness for the City of London to change over and sacrifice such a huge sum of money without any useful purpose to serve. There were no reasons for the change in London. There are reasons, and cogent reasons, for it here, and that makes all the difference. It has been stated by Mr. Allen that the generating costs are very low at Fremantle, and that a considerable sum has been derived from the sale of current. I would point out, however, that the profits accruing are not through the sale of cheap current, but through a small output at a very high price. There are large works at North Fremantle. Those works, I am assured, have a demand equal to that of the Fremantle Council's tramways, but the price required by Fremantle is such that the owners of the works can generate cheaper. This firm would, I am told, readily take current from the council if it were supplied at a fair figure. The only conclusion we can come to is that they

cannot generate current at the price they state. Mr. Allen tells us that Fremantle would have nothing to gain by taking current from the Government. That is not correct. And, in order to show that it is not correct, I will quote figures agreed to by the Board's own engineer. The figures appear in a report prepared by the engineer of the Fremantle Tramways and our own electrical superintendent. I will read those figures to the House. They show that the cost to purchase current from the Government would be 1.06d. per unit as against 1.17d. by the council's own plant. What does this represent? The difference between these two amounts represents a saving of £1,375 per annum, which would increase yearly as the business progressed and the development of the town extended. The saving in capital expenditure would be from £5,000 to £6,000. One objection by Mr. Allen to the connection of Fremantle with the Perth electric power station was that Fremantle would be depending on a copper strand the severance of which would mean the paralysis of Fremantle's lighting, power and trams until the line could be repaired. Hon. gentlemen need have no anxiety on that score. If what Mr. Allen states were a serious impediment the transmission of electricity over long distances would cease. In England and America electricity is carried by wire from 10 up to 200 miles. It is carried from Newcastle to Middlesborough in England, about 30 miles, to supply the shipyards and half a million people. The Newcastle Company's lines extend over 1,000 square miles, and they supply power by this means to the Rhonda Valley collieries in Wales. And, I may add, not by underground, but by overhead lines. To come closer home. Does not Fremantle supply Cottesloe over a single wire? I am informed it is of primitive construction, not like the line the Government would construct. I am informed, too, there has never been an interruption. The danger, therefore, of Fremantle being left in outer darkness under the Government scheme need not cause Mr. Allen and his friends

any apprehension whatever. In reply to the statement made by Mr. Lynn, that we cannot profitably supply Perth at 75d., I would point out that in Melbourne current is sold for domestic use at one-halfpenny per unit. This is due to the production of current by a modern power plant of large capacity.

Hon. R. J. Lynn : It is not capitalised at £300,000.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Mr. Allen asserts that the cost of 40-cycle motors will be heavier than that of 50-cycle motors, and that this will penalise the users of the current. I am assured by the electrical superintendent of tramways that there is no difference in the cost of 40 and 50-cycle motors. The 40-cycle motor is a standard article largely used in the north of England, in Swansea, Cardiff and parts of Wales. Mr. Allen will pardon me for saying he is inconsistent, and also possesses a very bad memory. In one portion of his speech he said, "The Government, by extending their operations, wanted to show a profit on the scheme." Ten minutes later he said, "The Government will have to sell current at a loss to the Naval Base," and that "the Government should not sell current at a loss to one section of the community and make the whole community bear the loss."

Hon. J. F. Allen : I said, "show a loss."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not know which of these two diverse contentions is expected to operate on the minds of members. If the scheme can be made to show a profit by its extension, how can it become a burden on the general community? No wonder Mr. Sanderson asked for some light to be thrown on the Bill. The smoke and fog generated by Mr. Lynn and Mr. Allen make it a matter of no surprise whatever that members are groping in intellectual darkness. Allow me, Mr. President, in a sentence to correct the statement of Mr. Allen that the Fremantle agreement with the North Fremantle council has $4\frac{1}{2}$ years to run. That agreement can be terminated at any time on six months' notice. Mr.

Allen told us he had never heard of tenders being called for the plant. This was quite enough to embolden other hon. members. Mr. Kingsmill said, "This secret contract has turned out the same as others. It is government, either by foolish persons or wrongdoers."—wrongdoers, of course, being substituted for knaves. It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that Mr. Colebatch should rush in and fill up gaps left by Mr. Allen and Mr. Kingsmill. Mr. Colebatch stated—

So far as I understand the case, it seems that without calling for public tenders the Premier or the Government let a contract for a sum which may be £200,000 or £400,000, I do not know the figures, but I understand that it is something between £200,000 and £300,000.

Then in the course of his remarks he added—

There seems to be a good deal of resemblance between the Wyndham contract and this particular contract. In each case an expert was called in to advise. Mr. Nevanas was called in to advise on the Wyndham freezing works, and his advice seems to have amounted to this "I am just the man you are looking for; I am the man to do the job." In the case of the electric power house, another firm, Merz & McLellan, were called in to advise and they were just the people to do the job. To use a colloquialism, it looks as if these people had sold the Government a pup.

This is scandalous, Mr. President. I can use no softer term. No Ministry is safe from calumny while such conduct is permitted to go on. The assertions of Mr. Kingsmill and Mr. Colebatch have no foundation on fact. Public tenders were called, were advertised in London for all material in connection with the complete scheme, and the most advantageous tenders were accepted in every instance. The further statement that Merz & McLellan, after advising the Government, got the contract is equally baseless and equally reprehensible. Merz & McLellan are not the

contractors. They never have been contractors. They do not take on contracting. They are acting only in the capacity of consulting engineers to the Government, just as they are acting as consulting engineers to the Victorian Government. To imply that those gentlemen have "sold the Government a pup," to imply that they are swindlers, is cruel and base to the last degree. But not satisfied with these groundless allegations Mr. Colebatch goes further and says—

As I understand it without calling tenders the Government let a contract for anything between £200,000 and £300,000 and that the material contracted to be supplied was of German manufacture.

Then, in the course of a long dissertation on the ethics of dealing in German goods, Mr. Colebatch said—

So far as material being of German manufacture is concerned, I do not want to suggest that the Government are to blame for not perceiving the war. I say that before the war broke out no Australian Government was entitled to let a contract involving the purchase of a large quantity of German goods without giving the British manufacturers an opportunity of competing. I have shown already that the British manufacturer had an opportunity of tendering. I will now show that the British manufacturer got nearly the whole of the work. The facts are: contracts to the value of £227,445 were let to British firms, whilst the value of contracts let to German firms was £24,971. In other words, British manufacturers were to get 89 per cent. of the work, and German manufacturers 11 per cent. Only the German tender for switch gear and transformers was accepted; and it was accepted because—it is painful to have to admit it—but I must admit it—the article was better and cheaper. In this particular part of electrical work Germany was ahead of the world at that particular time. But the war broke out and the material was never supplied, for the contract was cancelled through the war and given to

British manufacturers. So much for the secret contract. So much for "the pup" which Merz & McLellan sold the Government, and so much for the allegation made at a time like this when the very name of Germany stinks in the nostrils of the civilised world, that a contract for between £200,000 and £300,000 worth of material was let without tender to German firms. We may expect Mr. Colebatch to retort—"This is all very well but why were members not told so before? Why did you keep everything dark?" My reply to that is that members were not kept dark. This House was fully informed in regard to the truth. The Commissioner for Railways, in his report for the year ended 30th June, 1913 and 1914, laid the whole situation bare. I have extracts from those reports here, and I will prove what I say. A large amount of space is devoted to the power house, I am not going to read it, but members may if they so desire. In his report for 1913 the Commissioner tells of the arrangement with Messrs. Merz & McLellan. He also says that the firm reported that a power station of broader design would be required and further that for securing the most favourable results in economy of output the plant should be of sufficient capacity to deal with all requirements within a certain radius. He states that the plans and specifications had been prepared and contracts let in accordance with the advice of Messrs. Merz & McLellan, and further he alluded to the electrification of the suburban railway system and of the existing main line and the proposed 4ft. 8½in. railway from Perth to Northam and says, "the new power station has been so designed that any additions involved in carrying out this project either wholly or in part may readily and conveniently be made." Then again, in the annual report for the year ended the 30th June, 1914, he deals with the metropolitan electric power scheme. He informs Parliament as to the contracts let and who secured them. With regard to the power house and plant he says, "a contract had been let in June, 1913, to Messrs. Babcock &

Wileox, Limited, for the construction of all steel and iron frame-work for the building with cement plastered walls, also for six water tube boilers, economisers, coal breaking plant, ash and soot handling plant, forty-ton electric travelling crane and details connected therewith." He points out that Williams & Robinson, Limited, were the successful tenderers for three 3,000 k.w. three-phase turbo alternators and he gives a complete list of the other material. He says the British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, Limited, were under contract for the supply of four 750 k.w. rotary converter sets, and he sets forth a lot of other information for the information of the House. In view of the information contained in those reports, there is not a shadow of justification for the damaging attacks which have been made on the Government, which were fully reported in the Press, and no doubt wired and cabled abroad. It is deplorable that members, in the face of the information supplied to them by the Commissioner of Railways, should have given wings to those defamatory statements, and that this House should be made the dumping ground for the garbage of the slanderer, who infests the street corners, who is found in the clubs, and who poisons the very atmosphere of even the lowest tap-rooms of the city with his foul gossip. I cannot allow myself to conceive that we have reached such a stage that members do this sort of thing maliciously or wantonly. But, with the facts before me, I am forced to the conclusion that they have been guilty of an unpardonable neglect of duty in not perusing the official records of this House before launching their accusations. Mr. Kingsmill, the other day, after I had explained the true position, clutched at a straw with a considerable amount of desperation. "Why," he asked, "were tenders not called in Western Australia?" That question should need no answer at all. What firms here could manufacture the highly technical machinery required for a power house? Not one! They could supply machinery on the commission

basis. They are agents only. The proper place to call for tenders was in the country where the machinery was being manufactured and that was done. They could, of course, tender as agents for oversea firms, and they would have to make their commission at the cost of the State. It would have been a silly and useless observance of form to call for tenders here. But I can fully realise Mr. Kingsmill's perplexity, and his anxiety to get out of an awkward situation. The attitude taken by Mr. Sommers and Sir Edward Wittenoom is incomprehensible. They are opposing the Bill on the ground that "it is an extension of a trading concern." Does it not strike those gentlemen that their action may be interpreted as an attempt to prevent the success of a trading concern? Have they realised that position, or do they care. This House agreed to the purchase of the trans. It so agreed without a division and after the Bill had been before a select committee. It agreed to the creation of the power house almost without debate; and now, when the Government starts out to utilise the power house to supply itself and the Commonwealth with current, Mr. Sommers and Sir Edward Wittenoom block the way. I regret having introduced so much matter which has so little bearing on the Bill, but the fault is not mine. If I had kept strictly to the point, many harmful misrepresentations would have passed unchallenged. The irrelevancy of members has cost me many hours collecting, arranging, and digesting data in order to be in a position to state the case for the Government. Yet it has afforded me an opportunity of dealing with suspicions which have been lurking in the background for a long time, but which until last Thursday had not dared to come out into the open. The question before the House is not whether we shall extend trading concerns, it is, as I have so often said, whether we will or not hinder the Government from using its own plant to supply its own necessities wherever those necessities exist—here in Perth, or at Fremantle. Let me illustrate my point. Many

hon. members own farms and cultivate them. What would be thought if, say, a farmer on the Wongan Hills line had a business in Perth and wished to supply that business with fodder? What would be thought if he were debarred from using his product in Perth, that if he wished to buy chaff he must buy it from grain merchants established in business here? But I will not pursue the argument further. Mr. Hamersley, Mr. Cullen, and Mr. McLarty put the case well. The power house is here, and it is up to us to make the best use of it for our own purposes. If we do not, it is the general taxpayer who must suffer. It is not the members of the Government who will be penalised. The undertaking has been established, and in the interests of the community everything legitimate must be done and assistance rendered by all parties to ensure the success of the venture. I trust that members will not be led astray by the side issues which have been imported into the debate, that they will not be swayed by the promptings of narrow parochial prejudices, that they will take a broad and common sense view of the real question. That question can be compressed into a few words, and they are these, Shall the Government be compelled to buy electric power when it has electric power for sale?

Question put and division taken with the following result:—

| | | | |
|------|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | 19 |
| Noes | .. | .. | 5 |

Majority for 14

AYES.

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Hon. R. C. Ardagh | Hon. R. D. McKenzie |
| Hon. C. F. Baxter | Hon. E. McLarty |
| Hon. H. Carson | Hon. H. Millington |
| Hon. J. Cornell | Hon. W. Patrick |
| Hon. J. F. Cullen | Hon. A. Sanderson |
| Hon. J. M. Drew | Hon. A. J. H. Saw |
| Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett | Hon. G. M. Sewell |
| Hon. A. G. Jenkins | Hon. C. Sommers |
| Hon. J. W. Kirwan | Hon. J. Duffell |
| Hon. C. McKenzie | (Teller). |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Hon. E. M. Clarke | Hon. R. J. Lynn |
| Hon. F. Connor | Hon. J. F. Allen |
| Hon. W. Kingsmill | (Teller). |

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

As to Select Committee.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [5.33]: I move an amendment:

That the Bill be referred to a select committee consisting of Mr. Cornell, Mr. Colebatch, and the mover, and that the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, and report on Tuesday, 5th October.

My main reasons for this are to be found in the address of the Colonial Secretary this afternoon. If the House were kept in full possession of the facts in connection with contracts entered into by the Government, there would be no necessity for the continual agitation by members for information, and no necessity for the number of select committees from time to time appointed, or the enormous amount of work those committees have to undertake. If Mr. Colebatch had been in possession of the information which has been asked for on other occasions in connection with this power house, some of his remarks might not have been uttered. Over 12 months ago in another place, the papers in connection with this contract were asked for, and were refused by the representatives of the Government, while the right of members of that House to see those papers was denied by a majority consisting of Government supporters. Having regard to what occurred on that occasion and on the occasion on which the papers were asked for in this House, when we were again opposed by the Colonial Secretary, it seems to me there is an attempt on the part of the Government to keep the House in the dark in respect to this question. The statements made by the Colonial Secretary this afternoon are capable of refutation in many directions if one had time to peruse them and reply. It is all very well to make certain statements, as the Colonial Secretary did, in regard to my remarks; it is easy to get up and advance other arguments in opposition and so cloud the issues more than they were clouded before the

Colonial Secretary rose to his feet this afternoon. It is for this reason among others that I am moving for the select committee. There are many things in connection with the power house which should be in the knowledge of hon. members before they permanently deal with the measure before us. Even the necessity for this measure is open to question. The Government have received the advice of the Attorney General that under existing legislation they have not certain rights, as, for instance, to take electric lines across certain streets for certain purposes. That is open to question. I have seen legal opinions, from a high quarter indeed, which are quite opposed to the Attorney General's. It is necessary that the House should thoroughly understand the position. Another question which I mentioned, but to which the Colonial Secretary did not reply, is the inherent rights of local governing bodies. These rights are vested in local governing bodies under their constitution, and an attempt is being made in this measure to take from them the rights they possess at present. The House should be thoroughly seized of these facts before it deals permanently with the Bill. It is not only Fremantle which is affected. It is not a matter of parochialism; it is a matter, as I said in the previous debate, of principle, as to whether local governing bodies should have those rights or whether those rights should be taken from them. These insidious attacks on local bodies by means of innocent little measures of this kind, introduced so speciously by representatives of the Government and supported by followers of that party in both Houses, are interfering with rights which the House is in existence for the purpose of conserving, and if the House fails in its duty on this occasion I shall in future view with considerable diffidence the utterances of hon. members on other questions. We may consider these local authorities much as we consider the State authority. The Minister himself and his Government would be the first to resent the Commonwealth coming over our borders and carrying lines across State territory

for the purpose of supplying Commonwealth requirements without the sanction of the State Government. If it is right for the State Government to oppose the Federal Government in such circumstances, I say it is the right of the local governing bodies, who are also vested with sovereign privileges, to object to the Government coming into their territory in this manner without the consent of those local governing bodies or of the people who for the time being, compose them. It is for this reason, the necessity for throwing light on these questions that I move that the Bill be referred to a select committee, in order that members shall be thoroughly seized with the responsibility placed on their shoulders before casting their votes on this measure in Committee. In regard to Messrs. Merz & McLellan's report, this has a bearing on the question of whether the current to be generated in the power house at East Perth is the proper current to be supplied for this purpose; and we have the Colonial Secretary's own statement to the effect that this is a kind of hybrid periodicity, not properly applicable to the purpose of lighting nor to the purpose of power, but something coming in between the two, which can be used advantageously in both directions but not efficiently in either. And the Colonial Secretary might have heard from his advisers, had he asked for the information, that the periodicity for power should be 25-cycles instead of 40-cycles, and that the minimum for lighting should be 50-cycles. It seems this scheme has been entered into by the Government for the purpose of generating current for the running of trams and trains.

Hon. W. Patrick: What is the difference?

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: There is a big difference. The 40-cycle periodicity is not the most suitable current for lighting purposes. Anything below 40-cycles results in a continual flicker most distressing to the eyes, and in lesser degree this flicker appears at the 40-cycle periodicity.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is in an alternating current.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN : It is alternating current we are dealing with. The point the Colonial Secretary has mentioned in regard to periodicity in connection with power is quite correct, but the periodicity for that purpose should be as near 25-cycle as possible. These questions the Chamber should be thoroughly seized of before dealing permanently with the measure in Committee. There would be no reflections cast on the engineers who advise the Government if we knew what the Government know in connection with the questions raised. It is the paucity of the knowledge given to members which from time to time induces us to make those stringent statements which the Minister considers such a serious reflection on those the Government have consulted. I do not think I need labour this question any further. I consider the House, before it deals with the measure in Committee, should be fully seized of these facts, and of the responsibility it will be undertaking in interfering with the inherent rights of local governing bodies without consulting those bodies. When hon. members shall have been advised on these points and know that the electricity to be generated by the Government is most efficient for the purpose, the House can then decide the question ; but I ask that, before it decides, it shall take all these facts into consideration and give a select committee an opportunity of collecting information for the Chamber, so that hon. members will have in their hands the necessary data to enable them to cast an intelligent vote upon the Bill.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [5.42] : I hope the House will agree to the appointment of a select committee. During the few years I have had the honour and privilege of being a member, the one great cry of members has been protection of all rights, the protection of the individual, nothing in the shape of confiscation ; in all directions we must protect all concerned. Yet I am very much afraid, in view of the vote given on the second reading, that the democracy of another place is tainting this House to such an extent that we have been giving away something which

the most democratic have never asked for. When Perth had no money invested at all in tramways, there arose a storm in this House in which the right was demanded to municipalise the tramway service ; and, with not one penny of capital invested, what did hon. members do then ? They rose in their seats and demanded that protection should be afforded to the Perth City Council, that we must do nothing in any direction that would interfere with their rights. My colleague, the Hon. J. F. Allen, asks for the appointment of a select committee in order that this House may see that no injustice is done to Fremantle. It might easily be argued, in opposition to what the Colonial Secretary has stated to-day, that practically all his statements can, and will be, refuted if this House will agree to the appointment of a select committee.

The Colonial Secretary : That is a very grave statement to make.

Hon. R. J. LYNN : It is a grave statement to make, especially in view of the figures which have been quoted by the leader of the House. When I asked him for his authority, would he have liked me to have suggested to him where he got his information ? When I interjected I asked him—

The PRESIDENT : It is very improper to interject.

Hon. R. J. LYNN : I bow to your ruling, Sir.

The PRESIDENT : It is against the Standing Orders.

Hon. R. J. LYNN : It is very seldom I do such a thing. In supporting my colleague for the appointment of this select committee, need I just refer to one particular subject relating to it ? That is the telegram which I read in this House referring to the Government having entered into a contract with the Naval Base. If the Government have entered into that contract with the Naval Base, to which no reference has been made, and if tenders have been called for the amount which the Colonial Secretary stated to-day, namely £250,000—and I do not know whether that includes the landing of machinery in the city of Perth, but I know that on

top of that must be added a considerable amount for installation and for the erection of a power house—and if evidence can be clearly shown here by the appointment of a select committee that the current cannot be generated and sold for .75d. ; that Fremantle, as a municipality, has its inherent rights which this House or this Government have no right to take away, then perhaps the select committee will be able to solve this problem. We, in Fremantle, are entitled to the same consideration as the Perth City Council in connection with the nationalisation of trams. If we are not entitled to the same consideration as the Perth City Council, and if this House proposes in future to hand out favours in one direction to the detriment of another section of the community, it is just as well that we should know it, and the quicker we know it the better. In asking the support of members for the appointment of a select committee, I ask it as no favour, and if hon. members refuse to grant us our request in order that we might protect that interest, that section we represent, I can only hope that in days to come they will remember this, when asking for support in another direction. It will be no use any member—

Hon. J. Cornell: Do not be too hard on us.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: To-day refusing the appointment of this select committee in order to investigate what we consider is a great wrong and hardship to Fremantle, and in days to come advocating the protection of interests in another direction. I do hope that the fairness of this will appeal to them, that before they consider this Bill any further they will give the select committee every opportunity of placing before this House the full facts relating to the matter. I am convinced in my own mind that the statements made to this House should have some more light thrown on them, that the committee should have power, in every direction, to peruse the papers, files and estimates relating to the matter. They should have an opportunity of judging whether we in Fremantle should

have an injustice meted out to us or not. If, however, the select committee brings in its report on the evidence, and states that it is a correct procedure for the Government of the day to take away the rights of the municipality and enter into competition, because they have a surplus, in order to wipe out anything which might stand in their road, I am quite prepared to stand side by side with them and wipe out everything. If the municipality, which for the past 30 or 40 years has had these inherent rights, is not entitled to the protection of this House, then according to me no section of the community has any rights at all, and the quicker we realise it the better. I do hope, in view of everything that has been said relating to the calling for tenders, the cost of generating, the contracts already entered into (to which the leader of the House made no reference), the injustice, if any, to existing plants, compensation, if any, in municipalities which have those rights, I do hope, I say, that this House will appoint that committee in order to investigate the entire question.

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £650,000.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.