

garoos are shot the more plentiful they become. It would seem that the best way to destroy the emus would be to preserve them. I think some arrangement should be made to get rid of the emus; they should not be strictly preserved. Certainly something should be done to preserve our fishes and birds and flora and fauna of any State in any part of the Commonwealth, but it needs to be done judiciously and not all mixed up together. Any birds or animals becoming pests should be dealt with accordingly. I would not like to see the rabbit preserved. I do not know whether Mr. Kingsmill will include it among the indigenous animals. I hope, at all events, he will not allow the Governor to proclaim that it is an animal to be preserved. With these few remarks I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.0 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 22nd November, 1911.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY STRIKES AT GERALDTON.

Mr. DOOLEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he is aware that the Commissioner for Railways has let by contract a portion of the work on the new

station and marshalling yards at Geraldton for which he has refused to pay 10s. per day, viz., the unloading and stacking of rails; and that the contractor who has undertaken the work is paying 10s. per day of eight hours? 2, What efforts, if any, have been made to effect a settlement of the trouble in connection with this matter, and the procedure adopted *re* same?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. No such contract was made by the Commissioner of Railways. 2, Nothing further than that we are prepared to go on with the work, provided the men are willing to return at the reasonable rate, viz., 9s. 6d. per day, they were in receipt of when they went out.

### QUESTION—WATER SUPPLIES IN YUNA AREA.

Mr. NANSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is the Minister aware that, owing to the exceptionally dry season, the settlers on the Yuna area are in serious straits for want of water? 2, How and when does the Minister propose to meet the difficulty?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, Yes. 2, An officer is at present in the district investigating possible supplies of water, and on receipt of his report, a boring party will be at once despatched to prospect for water.

### QUESTION — CONDITIONAL PURCHASES, RESIDENCE AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Mr. MONGER asked the Minister for Lands: Whether the residential conditions on conditional purchase block No. 13454/55 were complied with by the lessee prior to transfer on 14th April, 1908?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: No inspection was made of this holding prior to December, 1907, when the inspector pointed out that the residence condition was not being complied with, but, prior to that, an application had been lodged to convert the block into a non-residence holding.

### QUESTION—LAND POLICY.

Mr. MONGER asked the Minister for Lands: Under what clause or section of the Land Act is power given to the Minister to issue such instructions as were contained in the *West Australian* of the 19th ult.?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: Sections 4, 10, 21 (Subsection 2), 59, and 153 of the Land Act, 1898, and Section 73 of the Land Act Amendment Act, 1906.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, TAMBELLUP-ONGERUP.

Mr. PRICE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is he aware that Messrs Vincent Brothers' schedule and tender in connection with the contract for the construction of the Tambellup-Ongerup railway line is not attached to the file as laid on the Table in accordance with the motion of the House? 2, On what date did Messrs. Vincent Brothers commence the construction of the Tambellup-Ongerup railway line? 3, Is he aware that on the 2nd of this month the contract papers were not fully signed? 4, Will he inform the House what reduction Vincent Brothers subsequently made in the price quoted on their original tender? 5, What concession, if any, was granted by the late Minister for Works to Vincent Brothers for such reduction?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1, The schedule as amended, together with the original tender and schedule, are attached to the contract documents and remain in the custody of the contract clerk. 2, 18th September, 1911. 3, Yes, the contract was signed, but the signature of one of the sureties was not obtained until subsequent to the 2nd instant. 4, £2,918 7s. 10d. 5, None.

### QUESTION—RAILWAY CONTRACTORS AND GOVERNMENT PROPERTY.

Mr. PRICE asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has any action been taken against the departmental officer respon-

sible for Messrs. Vincent Brothers abrogating to their own use  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles of rails and fastenings, *vide* the Premier's answer to my question on November 9th last. 2, If not, why not.

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Works) replied: 1 and 2, No, because the departmental officer was not responsible. The matter of taking action against Messrs. Vincent Brothers is now in the hands of the Crown Law Department.

### QUESTION—PERTH PUBLIC HOSPITAL, HOURS OF STAFF.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to place a sufficient sum on this year's Estimates to enable an eight hours day being introduced for the benefit of the staff of the Perth public hospital?

The PREMIER replied: The Perth public hospital is managed by a statutory board appointed under the Hospitals Act of 1894, who are responsible for the control and management of the staff. No recommendations have been received in regard to the introduction of an eight hours' day system for the staff, and no special provision has been made.

### BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): After looking over this Bill, I have come to the conclusion that the two matters with which it deals are of the very greatest importance, particularly that clause by which the Honorary Minister desires to amend the law dealing with the responsibilities of municipalities and other local bodies in regard to infectious diseases. At the same time, I see no reason why any member of the Chamber should get into a heat over this small amendment, because I believe we can discuss this measure in par-

ticular from the standpoint of what is right for the public generally. I am inclined to think that if members will look closely into the amending Bill they will come to the conclusion that it is of much more importance to the community in general than the length of the Bill would indicate. During the passage of the Health Bill last session an amendment was moved by the gentleman who is now Honorary Minister in charge of this measure relieving local bodies of certain duties, but owing to some mistake the amendment was not included in the Act when it was printed, and it is now desired in this Bill to relieve the municipalities and other local bodies of the responsibility of providing certain buildings. I am afraid that we are likely under this Bill to relieve local bodies of the consequences of what might be called lack of interest and lack of appreciation on their part of their duty in regard to public health generally. In the Health Act we have divided the control of health matters between a State department under a commissioner and the local bodies, and we find that we can now say to the local bodies—"You must act up to certain regulations; you must carry out these regulations in order to keep your town in a fair state of health and cleanliness." But if, on account of the fact that they have failed to recognise their duty and have neglected to keep their area in a fair state, epidemics break out, the Commissioner of Public Health after this amendment is passed will have no right to order the local bodies to do certain things in order to combat the various infectious diseases. I am inclined to think that this division of responsibility is not a good thing for the State. Either the State must go further, or we must place a greater responsibility upon the local bodies. I am convinced that in the past the local bodies have not appreciated to the extent desired their duties in connection with health matters generally, and in regard to infectious diseases it is a well-known fact that often in regard to notification in many municipalities, while the medical man attending an infectious case will in all probability report to the local body,

the latter very often fail to go any further because of the fact that if they go further it might mean a little more expense. It has been brought to my notice time and again where medical officers have reported infectious diseases in the town and the local body have taken no further action. As a result the patient is left in the home, is not placed under proper supervision, has not the benefit of the best hygienic surroundings and best nursing, and at the same time is a danger to the family and the community at large. According to those men who have made a study of public health and infectious diseases, it is necessary for the best treatment of infectious cases that they should be placed in special hospitals or wards. But we have now an amendment of this Act which will relieve the local bodies of the responsibilities of providing these infectious wards or hospitals.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That is already done under the present Act.

Mr. HEITMANN: But you have certain powers to order them to do certain things.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. HEITMANN: While I am not prepared to discuss where the responsibility should lie, I am prepared to say that neither the Health Department nor the local bodies sufficiently appreciate public health matters. It is not to be wondered at that we find so many epidemics in various parts of the State. One could quote many. Not very long ago we had an epidemic of diphtheria. We had one at Meekatharra, and there was also one at Wagin. Strange to say, instead of the department and the local bodies combining to stamp out these infectious diseases, we find in regard to Wagin there was what appeared to be a conspiracy of silence which resulted in the death of many patients. One cannot wonder at the low standard of public health. When we find those officers who are supposed to be specialists belonging to the various local bodies failing to do their duty, one cannot wonder at the public generally

failing to do their duty. One need not go to small towns, the outback country or the small farming towns; it is at our very door in Perth. I venture to say that anyone making a study of this question, or anyone who has travelled through the Eastern States, will come to the conclusion which I came to long ago that in the city of Perth—we are often led to call it the fair city of Perth—we have one of the dirtiest cities in the whole of Australia.

Mr. Allen: No.

Mr. HEITMANN: That is my opinion.

Mr. Taylor: It is a reflection on the city fathers.

Mr. HEITMANN: There is a regulation laid down by our city fathers in order to prevent the filthy habit of spitting, but to my knowledge there has been only one case brought up recently. I believe it was a Chinaman who was prosecuted for spitting. The idea of the magistrate in order to prevent this beastly habit was expressed, I believe, in the fine of one shilling. Perhaps if there were many cases of that description I would not altogether blame those in charge of local affairs, but I have failed to learn of any other cases.

Mr. Nanson: There was a case in Geraldton.

Mr. HEITMANN: Then we should post Geraldton up as one of the few towns in the State recognising the great danger of this beastly habit. It might be a matter for members to laugh at, but there is no greater medium for the carrying of disease, and particularly those more deadly infectious diseases, than through spitting. It is the duty, here in Perth particularly, where they have health officers supposed to be specialists, experienced men—it is just about up to the city of Perth to show the other parts of the State that they at all events appreciate the danger of this habit. Now I am going further into the city of Perth. I venture to say there is never a thorough inspection of the business places and the back yards of the business places of Perth.

Mr. Allen: Yes, there is.

Mr. HEITMANN. Then if there are inspections it is high time the City Council got rid of its inspectors or gave them some very precise instructions. There is not the slightest doubt it is a matter mentioned by many visitors to this part of the country that the city of Perth is lax indeed in regard to the cleaning of its back yards. As a matter of fact one can go into parts which are the property of the council itself.

Mr. Lander: And of the Government.

Mr. HEITMANN: Yes, and of the Government also, and he will find the same lack of appreciation. It appears to me that if we pass this amendment, which has been called for—I admit I have been asked by almost every municipality of the State to help to pass it, and I suppose every member of the House has been circularised in the matter—it appears to me there will be great danger of excusing this carelessness on the part of the municipality. I am not prepared to argue the question as to who should bear this cost, but I certainly say some proper system should be adopted for the control of infectious diseases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We are with you on that.

Mr. HEITMANN: I believe the Honorary Minister is sincerely desirous of preventing these epidemics and of having a proper system laid down for the control of infectious cases; but I would point out that 12 months ago we passed what is looked upon as the most comprehensive and complete Health Bill in any part of the world; and it is recognised by the Commissioner, who has control of health matters in this State, it is recognised by all who have taken an interest in health matters that it is possible for our Health Department to do almost everything in regard to public health under the provisions laid down in that Act. For instance, we have provisions there for the notification and control of certain infectious diseases. Take only one, one I have mentioned for years past, to show the great danger that exists to the community owing to this lack of interest or lack of a thorough system on the part of the Health Department. It has been my busi-

ness during the last few years to send many men suffering from tuberculosis to the sanatorium at Coolgardie. Most of these men have come, I am sorry to say, from my own district. The usual procedure is for the secretary of the union, or somebody else interested in the unfortunate patient, to wire to me, or one of the Murchison members, in order that we might obtain for him a bed in the sanatorium, and also to make provision for his travelling there. Usually the unfortunate men are not in a position even to pay their fares. I have arranged the fares of many of them. As long as anyone taking interest in the matter is careful to make arrangements properly there will be a reserved compartment set aside for him on the railway, and after usage this compartment is supposed to be disinfected and thoroughly cleansed, but when the patient comes to the fair city of Perth he walks across the road to one of the coffee palaces, perhaps within a week of his death, in such a bad way is he. He goes into one of the coffee palaces, badly ventilated as some are, particularly in Perth, and with bad hygienic conditions generally; and not thinking of the danger he is to the community, he expectorates frequently, leaving behind millions of germs for those who come after. Then, perhaps, he is in the city a day or two acting in the same manner. He is not educated in these matters; he knows not the danger. Then we send him to Coolgardie, and, while I admit that if the department are watched closely one can get a reserved compartment for the unfortunate man, it often has happened that no such provision has been made. They do not view the matter seriously, and the head of the Health Department views it in the like manner. If we are to have any system in dealing with infectious diseases generally, in order to be effective it must be such a system that every tuberculous patient shall be known to the authorities of the State, and his whereabouts also known when the case has developed and when perhaps it is not very hard to discover.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): This Bill does not interfere with that.

Mr. HEITMANN: I am only showing the lack of appreciation on the part of the official who is chief of the department, and on the part of the public generally. This Bill deals with infectious diseases, and I think I should be allowed just by the way to draw attention to these facts. I sincerely hope that in the future some attempt will be made on the part of the Health Department to deal with these questions. I do not wish to get up here in season and out of season drawing attention to the want of action on the part of the Health Department; but it just simply means this, that I have come to the conclusion, much as I dislike to say it, and much as I admire the man as a man, that the head of the Health Department in this State has long since gone beyond his sphere of usefulness and should be retired. In a young country like this where the conditions lend themselves to a high standard in public health we want in charge of the Public Health Department a man up-to-date in his studies, a man who is a specialist in public health matters, a man who has strength, a man who has initiative, a man who is not afraid to break new ground. Up to the present about all we have had from the Health Department in this State—nearly all, at all events: I give them credit for doing something—the biggest work they have done is to send a report annually to Parliament; and in this report we find the Commissioner picking out small cuttings from here and there, looking at an up-to-date work and finding something that strikes him as being good and putting it into the report, and that is the end of it: getting astride of a hobby-horse for a few months, riding it to death, and then deserting it. We want something more than that; we want a man in charge of health affairs who appreciates what public health means. In my opinion, regarding infectious diseases—all those preventable diseases—we want a man who will educate the people in preventive medicines. No matter what legislation we place on the statute-book it will be impossible to raise to any appreciable extent the standard of public health unless we can educate the people to help themselves. It has been a matter for regret on the part of all those

men who have made a study of preventive medicines, who recognise there is a means of raising public health to a greater standard, that after 50 years of trial they are still looking about to find the reason why this great improvement has not been made. The reason must be noticeable to anyone who has made a study of the question. We are legislating, we are administering above the education of the people. Until we can educate the people as to the benefits of living under hygienic conditions we shall never have a very high standard of public health. The next question dealt with in this short amending Bill is firstly, an amendment to Sections 256 and 261 of the Act, those dealing with midwifery nurses. I would say at the outset that the Minister in charge of the Bill did me the kindness to ask me to look at the amendments before they were introduced to the House. I was in perfect agreement with the object of the amendments and I am still of the same opinion. During last year when the principal Bill was before the House, the question of registering nurses generally was discussed at great length, and it was recognised on the part of most of the members of the House that for the improvement of the community generally we should have an advancement in the standard of nursing. The reason why the existing provisions were then brought forward was because of the fact that those who were taking an interest in these matters recognised that the West Australian statistics dealing with mortality in infant life and in maternity cases were altogether too high. Although Western Australia to-day may boast of its wealth—the comparative wealth of the people individually and collectively—although it may boast of its fine climate and, as has been shown, the natural conditions which lend themselves to a high standard of public health—with all these favourable conditions, the State has an unenviable record with regard to infant mortality, the highest record in any part of Australasia. These deaths are mostly accountable by the fact that there is a great deal of ignorance displayed, both on the part of those who are treating the women during

the maternity period, and great ignorance on the part of the mothers themselves, and with the desire of improving this condition of affairs we said that we would register the nurses, fix the standard of their education, and thus have some control over them. The question was raised as to what should be the standard of education on the part of these people whom we desire to register. Some members of this House believed, and they did not stand alone, that in regard to maternity matters a nurse with three or four months' training in any old-fashioned way would be sufficiently competent. Even in some Parliaments there has been a difference of opinion as to the standard of education these nurses should be required to have. In England—and we are always prone to copy the legislation of England—we find that some of the nurses are qualified after having been trained for a period of four or five months. During the discussion which took place last session it was easily seen that the official head of the department was in favour of the English system. There are members who considered that Australia up to the present time is endeavouring to lift all classes of its people to the highest possible standard of education, no matter what the calling. It was urged as an excuse, and it is still being put forward, that it would be greatly to the advantage of the State if we could have these training homes where three or four months' work would be sufficient, where they might get just a smattering of education, so that the women might take part in the bush-nursing scheme. It was said also that it would be better to give these women half a training than none at all, and it was also said that we required nurses in this State having some training to afford some assistance to the poorer portion of the community. I was against such arguments because I believe that if the working people cannot afford to pay for the best, the condition of the workers is wrong and we should endeavour not to lower the standard of education but raise the condition of the workers in order that they might be able to pay for the best. When the measure was before the House

last session reference was made to the scheme which was being propounded by Lady Dudley, the wife of the then Governor-General of Australia, the 'bush-nursing scheme' it was called. If only a short period of training is regarded as being sufficient for the nurses in this State, one would have thought that Lady Dudley's scheme would have embodied a lower standard of education as a qualification for admission. We find, however, embodied in this scheme, the provision that all nurses should have a qualification of the same standard as that of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, a standard which has been adopted for some years past, and which is the highest standard for nursing existing in Australia. During the discussion last session I was instrumental in raising the period for the training of midwives from six to twelve months, but it was considered by all present, and I mentioned it several times myself, that in a case where a nurse had already a certificate for general nursing, and which carried with it a course of training extending over three years, the period of six months' training in midwifery should be sufficient. I believe the object of the first amendment is to make provision for that, which I have mentioned, that is in cases where nurses have served three years and have obtained a general certificate, six months' training in midwifery should be sufficient to enable them to register. But I find that whilst this amendment endeavours to accomplish that, there is a possibility of lowering the standard of nursing in another direction. Up to the present time in Western Australia there have been several hospitals which have been looked upon as homes for the training of these nurses. They are, I believe, the Perth public hospital, the Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie hospitals conjointly, and the Fremantle public hospital. These institutions have trained all the nurses in the State who have gained certificates which will enable them to enter the ranks of the highest standard of nurses in Australia. There has been no dearth of nurses, comparatively speaking, in this State, in spite of the very little encouragement they have received from

both the Government and other hospitals. This goes to show that there is no necessity for opening up new training homes, and that in the future with proper management, and with the extension of some sympathy towards the nurses, there would be no lack of them. The Minister in charge of the Bill appears to believe that the object of the amendment is that a person having three years' training in any hospital in the State, no matter whether in a training home or not, that six months here, or six months there, or perhaps a few months somewhere else would be sufficient to enable them to apply and obtain registration for midwifery cases.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): This clause does not say so; it says "approved institutions."

Mr. HEITMANN: I can quite understand the meaning of approved institutions, but I must admit a difficulty would arise in setting out what institutions should be recognised as training homes. It could be done in this State very easily but it must be remembered that we have to deal with nurses from other parts of the world, and it is impossible to set down the different institutions which we would recognise as training homes. The mistake the Minister is making is that he fails to understand the reason of the discussion of last session. He seems to think that a nurse having had a three years' hospital training, and then getting a midwifery certificate, should be allowed to practise midwifery, whereas my desire last session and the desire of most of those who spoke on the matter, was that after a nurse had obtained a general certificate covering a training of three years we would enable her then, after six months of further training, to pass an examination in midwifery and become registered. The next matter which the Minister pointed out was that at the present time it was impossible for the board to admit oversea nurses, although they might have certificates of a high standard.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Or from the Eastern States.

Mr. HEITMANN: It is not desirable that we should prevent any nurse who has had a high training, and is of good re-

pute, from registering in this State. It should be the reverse, but I do say that we want to provide that a nurse, before she is admitted, will satisfy the board that her standard of education is as high as that which we demand from our own trained nurses. After all, we must admit that this will prevent very few nurses who come here from England and other parts of the British Empire from being registered. It is the duty of the Assembly and the people to support the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, and to assist in maintaining the highest standard of nursing. I may add also that that should be applied to other callings as well. As I have maintained, I am prepared to admit these principles and to agree with the Minister that any nurse having a certificate of general nursing for three years should be admitted after six months' training in midwifery, and I am prepared to admit any nurses coming from any other part of the world whose standard of education is as high as that of the nurses in Australia. These people should, by all means, be able to register. When we are in Committee I shall endeavour to alter the clauses with the object of, if possible, maintaining the high standard which we have in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister, in reply): I am surprised at the opposition shown by some members to the Bill, and I am also surprised that one member in particular should think it more in ignorance than in courage that such a Bill has been introduced. It is that very same hon. member who is really responsible for the introduction of the measure. Last year Parliament agreed to certain provisions in the then Health Bill, agreed in the first instance that the Public Health Commissioner should not have power to call on local authorities to provide infectious diseases hospitals, and agreed also that the Commissioner should not have power to compel local authorities to enter into arrangements with any hospital. Unfortunately, although the third reading copy of the Bill of that time was presented to the Chamber signed and certified to by the then Chairman of Com-

mittees (Mr. Taylor) as being a true copy of the Bill as passed in Committee, that copy contained words which the Committee had struck out. Seeing, therefore, that an error had been made, the first opportunity has been taken to rectify it. I want to say definitely that the Assembly never agreed to the words appearing in Section 247 of the Act, "and when the Commissioner so requires shall." The Committee decided on the casting vote of the chairman—who accused me of ignorance—that these words should be excised from the Bill.

Mr. Taylor: On a point of order. The hon. member has absolutely mistaken the position. *Hansard* will not bear him out. The whole thing was suggested, moved, and carried without any division and without any voices. It was not carried on the casting vote of the Chairman.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I am not going to enter into a discussion with the hon. member. When this question was fought out on the floor of the Chamber, this question in regard to the liability of local authorities to deal with infectious cases, the voting was Ayes 16 Noes 16, and the Chairman gave his casting vote with the ayes.

Mr. Taylor: That was not dealing with this question at all.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): But we find that the decision of the last Parliament has not been carried into effect, and though it was clearly understood that any matter in the Bill consequential on the amendment should be struck out, it was not done, and to-day we have the Commissioner of Public Health using sections of the Act which empower him to do certain things never intended by Parliament. Thus we find him in defiance of the wishes of Parliament compelling local authorities to erect hospitals. The member for Mount Margaret said that such a request had never been made; but I here have a copy of an order sent to the municipal council of Perth, calling on them to erect an infectious disease hospital in the City, where a hospital is already in existence. It has also been stated that in the first place the medical officer of the local authority



orders infectious cases to the hospital. That shows there are others ignorant as well as I, as in 99 out of 100 cases the officer of the local board never uses those cases. They are reported to him by the medical men practising in the district, and it is his duty to see that the premises from which the infectious case is removed are in a thoroughly clean condition, so as not to be a menace to public health. Also in a large number of cases the liability has been attached to the local authority after the patient has left the district. In other words, while the hospital authorities or the Government have every chance of collecting the fees due for treatment in a hospital, they have not done so, preferring to believe that the liability was on the local board, and that the local board should collect the fees for itself; consequently the local boards have frequently had to pay fees for those who could well afford themselves to pay. If the amendment is carried it will be necessary for the hospital to collect the fees from such patients as are able to pay. Yesterday the member for Mt. Margaret stated that the Perth hospital would lose a certain amount of money under the Bill. Nothing of the kind. The Perth hospital will take the responsibility on its own shoulders of collecting, from such patients as are able to pay, those fees for which the local authorities are at present held to be responsible, while the Government will look after indigent cases. There has been some discussion in connection with the lowering of the standard of general nursing. Some members appear to think that a nurse cannot get her training in Western Australia at other than three specific institutions; that if a young lady should serve three years in some of our country hospitals as a general nurse she would not be competent, even after six months' additional and special training, to practise in midwifery. To-day any person with 12 months training as a midwifery nurse can, if qualified, obtain a certificate and be registered as a midwife. That is the Act of to-day. The proposed amendment merely gives power to the registration board to register any person having three years' training in general nursing

and six months' training in midwifery. I am afraid hon. members are mixing up general nursing with midwifery cases. We are not bringing in a Bill dealing with general nursing, leastways not just now. The late Government included the two questions in one Bill, but hon. members decided that they should be dealt with in separate Bills, and to-day we are dealing with midwifery nursing alone. It has been stated that we are lowering the standard of nursing. Under the present law the registration board may accept any certificate granted in any part of the world, and they can continue to do that until 1st January, 1912. There is no limitation. Any certificate, no matter whence it comes, may be accepted by the board without examination, but after 1st January the board will not be able to accept any such certificate without examination of the candidate. At the women's hospital in Sydney it is necessary that there should be six months' training. In Adelaide six months' training is required, in addition to three years training as a general nurse, and in Melbourne the same period obtains. Here in Western Australia it is necessary that there should be 12 months' training; still we are told that the standard of nursing in Western Australia is so much lower than the standard in the Eastern States that doubt is cast on the value of certificates granted in Western Australia. Yet, so far as I can gather, there are numbers of nurses in this State who are afraid that the nurses who have obtained certificates in the Eastern States will come over here and practise, where the standard is so much lower.

Mr. Heitmann: What makes you think that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Because I have heard it repeatedly during the last three or four days.

Mr. Heitmann: Most of our nurses are from the Eastern States.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Well, they want to block others from coming in. It has been stated that the Bill should have specified those training schools whose certificates the board would accept. I have here four

or five sheets of foolscap, constituting a list of the training schools in various parts of the British Dominions whose certificates are accepted in the Eastern States, and I maintain that if persons trained in these institutions are so well qualified as to be accepted in the Eastern States without further examination, we can safely trust the registration board of Western Australia to say that persons holding those certificates are qualified for practising in Western Australia. A question has been asked as to who constitute the board. It will be remembered that last year I made an attempt to have certain members of the board elected by certain institutions and the other members nominated by the Government. I suggested that the Australian Trained Nurses' Association should nominate one member of the board, and I also moved that the West Australian Trained Nurses' Association should also nominate one member. Hon. members are aware that I was successful in getting an amendment carried to that effect, but the Bill was recommitted, and I am sure hon. members will excuse me in saying, for many of them were not here then and do not know what happened, that the influence of the fair sex was so strong on some members that they wiped out the amendment that had been carried, and the board became a wholly nominative one.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you know that your board refused to register the West Australian Trained Nurses' Association, and yet you would give them a seat on the board?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The registration board consists of three medical men, namely, the Commissioner of Public Health, and Drs. White and Hicks, and two matrons who hold certificates as members of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association. Seeing that is so, I think we can safely come to the conclusion that these medical men and these two matrons who are members of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association will see that in any regulations they make sufficient protection is given to the nursing profession. The hon. member for Cue went into the general provisions

of the Health Act. I have no intention whatever of dealing with those questions, because this amending Bill does not interfere in any way with the matters he has touched on; but I do want to say that it is true the present registration board have decided that they will not accept the certificates of the West Australian Trained Nurses' Association, otherwise the certificates issued by the late Dr. Haynes from the Topsham Hospital. It seems strange even in that case to a person who has not had medical training that a certificate which has been signed by three medical men, one of whom is at present a member of the board and another the present medical officer for Perth (Dr. Blanchard), should be refused, but no doubt the board have reasons for refusing those certificates. However, there is not one of those nurses who has been refused registration, for this reason: they can come under what were called service certificates, and by showing that they have been present at 20 maternity cases under the supervision of a medical man, they can become registered as nurses under that clause. Before sitting down I want to disabuse the minds of hon. members of the remarks made by the member for Mount Margaret. He stated that we are altering entirely the principles of the Health Act and taking away the powers of the Commissioner—

Mr. Taylor: Who is responsible to the Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The hon. member stated that we are taking away every power that the Commissioner possesses under the Act. I say that we are taking away not one power, except such as Parliament has already agreed should be taken away. I maintain that the Commissioner of Public Health will have as full power to deal with infectious cases if these amendments are carried as he has to-day. The only difference is this, that while we allow the Commissioner of Public Health to do everything possible in behalf of the Government of the day to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, we refuse to allow him to, contrary to the wishes of Parliament, cast that responsibility on the

shoulders of the local body. We take away no power, but we give him every power that the Health Act gives him except in connection with the two clauses where Parliament decided that he should not use oppression on the local boards. Seeing that is so, I can with confidence ask members to pass the second reading of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *Committee Stage.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN moved—

*That the House do now resolve into Committee to consider the Bill.*

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I believe that some amendments are to be placed on the Notice Paper. I understood the member for Cue to say that he had some amendments to bring forward, and I also have some. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will not take the Bill into Committee this afternoon. There is no urgent necessity for rushing the Bill through, and if the Committee stage is postponed, members will have an opportunity of seeing the amendments in print.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill has been before the House since the 1st of November.

Question put and passed.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 256 (2):

Mr. HEITMANN: Section 256 provided for the examination of women desirous of becoming midwifery nurses, and the Bill provided that three years' training in general nursing and six months' training in a midwifery hospital should be sufficient. It was his desire to have the clause struck out and a somewhat different provision inserted. It was generally agreed that nurses could not get proper training in private institutions, and that there was no incentive on the part of the proprietors of private hospitals to thor-

oughly train nurses. He believed also that there were few private hospitals in Western Australia which took upon themselves the training of probationers. Therefore, it was necessary that they should limit the number of training homes, but at the same time he felt that it would be difficult to fix the hospitals which should be training homes, in order that nurses might have the three years' training which was mentioned in the Bill, because of the fact that, as mentioned by the Honorary Minister, there were nurses coming in from all parts of the world. In the circumstances, it would be necessary to leave some discretion to the board to say which hospitals should be training homes. At the same time, he wished to impress upon the Minister that in connection with the general training it would be necessary for him or his chief officer to set out the number and names of those hospitals which he would look upon as training homes. He moved an amendment—

*That all the words after "follows," in line 2, be struck out, and that the following be inserted in lieu:—"Provided also that if a candidate is the holder of a general nursing certificate, covering at least three years' training in an approved institution or institutions, six months' training in midwifery nursing in an approved training institution will be sufficient. No private hospital or institution shall be deemed to be a training institution for the purposes of this section."*

Mr. TAYLOR: The latter portion of the proposal of the member for Cue would safeguard the standard set up for midwifery nurses.

The Premier: It would be all right from the City standpoint; but get out in the country and see.

Mr. TAYLOR: The amendment would safeguard the people in the back country, because with a high standard people would know they would have competent nurses attending their wives.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They will not get anyone.

Mr. TAYLOR: They would be better off in the circumstances than having one with a very low standard. It was argued

that if a person did not think she knew something she would be careful how she acted. On the other hand if a lady came along with a full certificate as a nurse she would be accepted as an authority, yet she might be incompetent, the only authority being the certificate. It would be better for the back country people to depend on the ordinary skill of mothers to assist other women than to depend on certificated nurses with a low standard of competency.

The Premier: Where are you going to train the nurses?

Mr TAYLOR: The Premier had promised to establish a maternity hospital. Of course it could not be done for some little time, but the time for the compulsory holding of certificates could be extended another 12 months and no hardship would be worked.

The Premier: Will you agree to doing that?

Mr. TAYLOR had already said so. By 1913 the maternity hospital could be in full-going order, and we could expect to have trained nurses with the competency desired by the member for Cue. At present there was no place for training nurses except at the maternity ward at Fremantle. It would be well if the Honorary Minister would tell members how the nurses in the maternity ward at Fremantle were educated in maternity cases. The maternity ward was at the old women's home, and an old women's home did not as a rule indicate any maternity cases. If the Honorary Minister would not tell members how the nurses were trained in this institution it would be incumbent on him (Mr. Taylor) to give the amount of knowledge he possessed before the Bill went through. At least we should safeguard the standard by adding the words suggested by the member for Cue.

Mr. THOMAS: It would produce a very peculiar state of things if words were introduced preventing the recognition of other than public institutions, seeing there was no public institution in which nurses could be trained. It was all very well to say some institution would be created for the purpose in the dim and distant future, but what was the use of legislating to-day

and adding provisions to hold up that legislation until something else was done in the future? Why not let this pass, and when the institution was created move a fresh amendment to attain the object the hon member sought?

Mr. Taylor: What about the certificated incompetents?

Mr. THOMAS: One heard a lot about certificated incompetents and six months' training. It was absolutely absurd to talk about a nurse acquiring a knowledge of her profession in six months. We should fix a qualification the nurses would be proud of, and we should uphold the standard. By reducing the standard to a low level the certificates would be of little value to the nurses, though a considerable danger to the community. The whole Bill deserved a great deal more consideration before being passed into law.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It must be borne in mind that the sections under consideration would not make certificates compulsory until 1912. The member for Mount Margaret might have himself given the Committee the information he asked for from the source from which the hon. member had evidently got it. The Fremantle maternity ward was the only establishment in Western Australia for training nurses. The late Government found it necessary to make provision for training nurses in view of the Health Bill they had introduced, and there was no other place but the maternity ward in connection with the old women's home. The source from which the hon. member gained his information made out there were 46 cases in the ward in 12 months. He (Hon. W. C. Angwin) would not say that was the number. Two medical men delivered lectures to the nurses in training and two other medical men were examiners to see whether the nurses undergoing training were qualified to act in maternity cases. The standard set up was six months' tuition. Under the present law it would need to be 12 months in future. The standard also required attendance on not less than 20 maternity cases under the supervision of medical practitioners, including not less than five cases in the home and under the direct supervision

and instruction of the lecturers. The member for Mount Margaret could have told the Committee that at the home they could attend 20 cases, but the standard required only five. If the amendment of the member for Cue was carried with the latter portion there would be no private training hospital in the State.

Mr. Heitmann: You said just now there was no private training.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There were private hospitals in Perth. If the latter portion of the amendment was adopted, until there was brought into existence a properly equipped maternity hospital all training would cease. That would not be advisable. There would be no objection to the former part of the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With regard to the proposal of the member for Cue, the Minister in charge of the Bill had expressed his intention of accepting the first portion of it, therefore, it would be advisable to divide it into two parts. Speaking personally, whilst it was essential that we should have adequate supervision by the authorities with regard to the certificates of registration for nurses, we might be doing an injustice by absolutely prohibiting the granting of certificates to those trained in private institutions. It might be argued at the present time that there was no private institution which was giving the necessary training, but that was not to say that such an institution might not be created in the future. Elsewhere there were private institutions which had been endowed for the specific purpose of giving this training, and it was not beyond the bounds of probability or possibility that such an institution might be established in Western Australia. If, therefore, we were to say that those trained at a private institution were not to receive registration, it would preclude the registration of nurses who might have had their training at a private institution where adequate instruction might have been given. There were safeguards in the measure to provide against a private institution being registered where any training was given, and where that training was insufficient, and

he failed to see the necessity for the latter portion of the amendment.

Mr. HEITMANN: It had been his intention to separate the amendment. The difficulty of training in Western Australia was appreciated, but up to the present time he had not been able to understand the attitude of the principal medical officer on this question. That gentleman had in the past shown a desire to lower the standard of nursing. Dr. Hope had granted certificates for general nursing which would not enable the holders to enter the ranks of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association. Dr. Hope had also shown by his remarks to the Minister in charge of the Bill last session that it was his desire to lower the standard with regard to maternity nursing. If the Honorary Minister, and the Minister for Lands, promised that the Government would safeguard the interests of the community in seeing that no homes were registered unless they were genuine training homes, he would be prepared to delete the latter portion of the amendment. At the same time he would express the hope that the Government would open a maternity institution wherein nurses could be trained. By permission of the Committee he asked leave to delete the second portion of the amendment. The amendment would then read—

*Provided also that if a candidate is the holder of a general nursing certificate covering at least three years' training in an approved institution, six months' training in midwifery nursing in an approved training institution will be sufficient.*

Amendment as altered passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 261:

Mr. HEITMANN: The amendment dealt with Section 261 of the principal Act and provided that nurses from other parts of the Empire might be admitted. There was no objection to that; but it was desired that the nurses who were admitted should possess the same qualifications as those who had to undergo training in this country. He could make the position clearer by amending the clause and substituting fewer words for those which

appeared in the Bill. He moved an amendment—

*That all the words after "follows" in line 3 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"The board may after or without examination register a person who is the holder of a certificate of the standard required under Section 256, granted in any part of the British Dominions."*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member's amendment proposed to give the board power to say what certificates they should accept. If hon. members would read the clause carefully they would find that it was safeguarded so far as nurses were concerned. The board would have to specify what institutions they would accept, and publish the names in the *Government Gazette*. Even if an institution found its way in, which was thought to fall short of the standard required in Western Australia, opportunity would be afforded for appealing against the inclusion of such institution.

Mr. HEITMANN: Do you take the Australian Trained Nurses' Association as a standard?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. Given his own way he would ask the board to accept the Topsham hospital certificates. Surely we could trust the board to say what certificates they would accept without further examination. The clause could be passed with every confidence, because the board would take good care that only the holders of approved certificates would escape examination. At the Women's Hospital, Sydney, six months' training was required for midwifery; that was without any other training.

Mr. Heitmann: That is not so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The information had been supplied to him by the secretary of the department. With perfect safety it could be left to the registration board to say what institutions they would accept.

Mr. HEITMANN: The proposed amendment, while fixing the standard, would allow a great amount of discretion to the board.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: None whatever.

Mr. HEITMANN: Last year we had decided that a midwifery nurse must have 12 months' training before she could obtain her certificate, while in the case of a general nurse who had already served three years' training, six months' training in midwifery would suffice to admit of her registration. Each succeeding speaker, including the Minister, had expressed a desire that we should keep up the standard in regard to nurses.

Mr. McDowall: Who is to pay the Bill?

Mr. HEITMANN: For his own part he would rather pay five guineas for a fully qualified nurse than pay one guinea to one who would be a menace to the patient. It was the duty of the State to raise the condition of the workers until they could afford the best of nursing for their wives. The clause allowed too much power to a gentleman not in sympathy with a high standard of nursing, a gentleman who had expressed the opinion that he could train a midwifery nurse in three months. Having no desire that public institutions should be represented on the board, that gentleman had appointed both nurses from private institutions, overlooking the claims of the matrons of the public hospitals. Certainly, the matron of the Home of Mercy had been appointed to the board, a lady having great experience in maternity matters.

The Premier: The board deals with midwifery nurses only.

Mr. HEITMANN: That was scarcely correct, because we had also provided for three years' general training. It was provided that nurses applying for midwifery certificates should have three years' general training.

The Premier: The board is not responsible; it is the Act.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was desirable to make the Act responsible. The chairman of the board was not to be trusted too far in these matters; he had shown antagonism towards the nurses' association. The Committee should be consistent. In one part certain conditions were laid down preliminary to nurses obtaining their certificates, and it was his desire to have it provided that nurses coming from another

part of the world should have the same training. It was left to the board to say whether the certificate, which they brought from other parts, was equivalent to our own. The small amendment stated that clearly, and gave the board every latitude, just the same as the board dealing with the certificates of engine-drivers. The board were simply given power to grant certificates to people, coming from other parts of the world, who had certificates equivalent to our own.

Mr. GEORGE: There was a point in the clause which was not quite clear. It was desirable that whatever midwives operated in the State should be on the same plane, whether they had been trained in Western Australia or overseas. According to Clause 256 of the Act the board could prescribe a qualifying examination and provide for the appointment of examiners; but it was not clear in the amendment before the Committee that the board would require the certificate or diploma gained elsewhere to comply with the same regulations as they prescribed for the persons who might apply for a certificate in this State. As a matter of fairness there should be no loophole for visitors to slip in and practise without having the same qualifications as nurses locally certificated required before being allowed to practise. In his opinion, any woman passing through the greatest trial of her life should have the best attention that could be given, and if the husband was unable to provide it the State should, and there should be no stigma attached to receiving such assistance. He had known numbers of children absolutely ruined through lack of proper nursing and medical attention at the time of birth.

Mr. Heitmann: A little knowledge is very dangerous.

Mr. GEORGE: That was so, and if the husband could not afford to provide the expert assistance that was required he should not be ashamed to ask the State to do so, and the State should not look upon this aid as charity.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause gave power to the registration board to specify what certificates they would accept, and there was no reason to doubt

that the board would take due care to specify institutions of a standard similar to what we had in Western Australia. The board had already refused to accept certificates from one or two institutions, one of them a Western Australian one, because they considered that the standard of training was not sufficiently high. There was nothing to say what standard of certificate the board should accept, but the Act required a certain standard of training, and was it to be anticipated for one moment that the board were going to accept the certificates of institutions below the standard set out in the Act.

Mr. George: Would it not be wise to insert words to that effect?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It might be wise to do that, but it would first be necessary to see that such words were going to be effective. He had confidence in the board and he was sorry the member for Cue had attacked the Chairman. There were five members of the board, and he had never yet known any chairman who could rule four other members.

Mr. Heitmann: The chairman nominates the other members.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This board dealt entirely with maternity nursing and had no bearing on general nursing.

Mr. Heitmann: One of the qualifications for a midwife's certificate is a period of general nursing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The board made no examination in general nursing. It was the intention of the Government to introduce next year a Bill for the express purpose of regulating general nursing. No doubt there was some soreness in connection with the board, because general nurses had been passed over and maternity nurses had been placed on the board, but, in his opinion, the proper step had been taken by the Government in putting maternity nurses on a board whose duty it was to deal with maternity matters. The only question to be considered was whether members could trust the board to choose suitable institutions, and he saw no danger in agreeing to the clause as it stood.

Mr. TAYLOR: The board should be competent to deal with the certificates as an examining body, but the whole fault of

the Act lay in allowing the board to set up a standard. In all other matters the standard was set up in the Act, and the function of the board was to examine in order to ensure that the candidates conformed to the standard specified in the Act.

The Premier: So does this Act.

Mr. TAYLOR: The clause provided that the board should have power to notify in the *Government Gazette* what certificates should be accepted, but the Act and not the board should set up the standard, as in all other cases, and the board should only see that the certificates complied with the requirements of the Act. Would the Premier, as a member of the Engine-drivers' Association, agree to the examining board specifying the standard required before one could receive a certificate as an engine-driver?

The Premier: That is exactly what the board do; they set up the standard.

Mr. TAYLOR: The present Act made it obligatory on the part of the applicant to certify certain things; the amending Bill exempted them, and the amendment of the member for Cue left it optional. What was the standard? It had to be decided by a resolution of the board. If the diploma was equal to the standard we had set up in Australia there would be no objection to the person being admitted, but what proof had we that that standard was going to be reached? Why should a person who could get a diploma after three or four months' training in London, Glasgow or Dublin be able to come out here and be admitted, while we asked our own midwifery nurses to undergo three years' training in medicine and surgery, and then under the principal Act 12 months and under the amending Act six months' training in midwifery, before becoming qualified. We could not alter the midwifery standard in England but we could maintain ours. We had the power to say to the people coming here, "If you desire to get a certificate you must reach the standard set up by us." That was what the Government should do.

The Minister for Lands: The clause provides that.

Mr. TAYLOR: The clause did not do so, and that was his reason for objecting to it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member's argument could be understood if it was proposed to make it obligatory on the board to accept every training institution in any part of the British Dominions. If that were done then the argument of the hon. member would be to some effect, but there was nothing in the clause which compelled the board to accept a certificate from an institution after only three months' training. The proposed section 256 would give the power to the board to make regulations prescribing the qualified examination. The board had the power to set out what the examination to be passed by a nurse should be, and while the board was given the power to set that out, was it likely that the board would accept a certificate of lower value? It had been repeatedly stated that the board would have the power to specify the institutions and they could exclude any they liked. The board were not the examiners; the board would appoint the examiners and make the regulations; they would only set out the examination and not conduct it. We could trust the board to say what qualifications a person should have, and whether they would accept a certificate of equal value to those which they had set out themselves.

Mr. George: The clause does not make that provision.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If every detail had to be set out in the Act, of what use would the board be? Every precaution had been taken in the clause, and members could rest assured that the position had been safeguarded.

Mr. GEORGE: The point, so far as it appeared to the members for Cue and Mount Margaret, and himself, was not one of raising doubt as to the fairness or the qualifications of the medical board. It was not desired that by any possible chance a person could come out from the British Dominions, having obtained a diploma to enable her to practise, when she had not undergone an examination which was equivalent to that set up in our own State. Paragraph (a) of the



proposed new section read, "Any specified certificate or diploma issued under statutory authority in any specified part of the British Dominions." The board could accept these certificates and they should accept them if they were obtained by the holders under conditions similar to those which the people in this State had to undergo. The amendment which he had drafted would, in his opinion, meet the case. It read, "Provided always that the standard of the requirements under which such certificate or diploma has been granted shall not be less stringent than prescribed by the regulations of the board under the powers conferred by Section 256 of the principal Act." That would not be the slightest insult to the members of the board. It would indicate that the House desired that there should be perfect equality with regard to examinations.

The Premier: This is not a question of examinations; it is a question of training.

Mr. GEORGE: A local instance might be quoted. Take the *West Australian*, which was the only respectable newspaper left now that the *Vanguard* had ceased publication, and among the advertisements in that it would be found that somebody undertook to teach anyone to write 140 or 150 words a minute in shorthand in about a month. It was possible to give a person some sort of knowledge of shorthand in that time, but that knowledge would not enable the person who had acquired it to sit where *Hansard* were sitting or in the more exalted position in the Chamber occupied by the newspaper representatives. It was simply bunkum, and no one knew it better than the members of the reporting staffs. We might as well say a lady aspiring to the profession of midwifery, because she was born in England could cram sufficient knowledge or experience in three months, but that anyone born in Western Australia must undergo training for a period of six months.

Mr. TAYLOR: While we had heard from the Minister that the board should be trusted, there must be some reason for this clause being put in the Bill making it possible for nurses other than those

trained in the Commonwealth being admitted. Why should this clause be in the Bill unless there was some idea on the part of somebody—whether the Commissioner of Public Health or the Minister he did not know—who desired that someone from overseas should be admitted who had not the necessary qualifications?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Personal again.

Mr. TAYLOR: Members opposing this amendment did so on sound grounds. It was unwise to pass it. The member for Murray-Wellington had not in any way indicated that, and when amendments had been suggested which would surmount this difficulty and place the overseas people on exactly the same footing as our own people, why object to them? There must be something behind it; a fear that someone who was not entitled to get in would not get in. When every fair means had been unsuccessfully tried to convert a man to a reasonable attitude, when one watched the trend of the debate and the replies of the Minister, and failed to find anything but a vague suggestion that there was something behind it all, this burning anxiety to accept diplomas from institutions which granted certificates on four months' training in midwifery did not tend to inspire confidence. Why should the people of the State be subjected to incapable nurses at one of the most critical periods of their lives? The Minister in charge of the measure should be called the wet nurse of the Bill. He was confident that there was something behind it all, and he ventured to say we would find what that something was when the Bill passed. Fair and reasonable amendments had been offered, and even those who did not support them were not desirous of opposing them. The Minister was depending on brute force to carry the Bill through, but all would recognise that there was a justification for the proposed amendment.

Mr. THOMAS: Having listened to the sublime rhapsody of the hon. member, possibly other hon. members would appreciate a little common sense. If in the near future we were to establish a university in Western Australia, Parliament would not lay down the exact lines

on which the qualifications would be given to students; that would be left to the senate of the university. When the Parliament of Western Australia established a pharmacy board they gave that board the power to prescribe the examination which should be necessary. So, too, in regard to any other section of the community, when appointing a board of control it was customary to give that board power to lay down the standard of qualification. To follow the course urged by the member for Mount Margaret would be to depart from a universal practice.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): If there is one measure which would typify a circumlocution office it is that which the Minister for Works has proposed for the acceptance of the Chamber. A Bill that will establish a Parliamentary Public Works Committee somewhat on the lines of that of New South Wales, and which I think the history of that State has conclusively proved to have been a measure to stop public works and delay them rather than to accelerate them—

Mr. Swan: It is a pity it was not in existence when the Bullfinch railway was put through.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I do not think so; hon. members opposite did not think so, because nearly everyone of them supported the Bullfinch railway. Even the Bullfinch railway, I am satisfied, is going to be continued by the present Government, and carried further north; that is if we are to give credence to the reports received as to the auriferous country to the north of Bullfinch. At any rate, I hope it will be so. What we have to consider in connection with the Bill is as to

how a Parliamentary Standing Committee are going to give us any better advice than the Advisory Board we have been accustomed to refer works, at all events railways, to in the past; whether it is going to enable this House to come to a better decision with regard to these proposals, and, further, whether it will not have the effect, which I believe it will have, of retarding the works rather than enabling us to carry them out expeditiously. It may be argued, and with some force, that in an old country which is properly settled from one end to the other, and which, comparatively speaking, has a large population, a committee of this description might be of advantage, inasmuch as there you have only to decide as to districts which should be served with public works, districts which are already populated and have settled communities. This apparently is the case in regard to New South Wales, to some extent at any rate. I have been turning up some of the records of the reports of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on public works in that State, and I find that they merely took the place of a select committee or a Royal Commission; that they collected voluminous evidence from different witnesses, covering many pages of the report; that in effect they took up the position which the Attorney General by interjection when I was speaking on the Address-in-reply the other night said they might take up—the position of cross-examining the heads of departments and the expert officers of the Government as to the probabilities, in the case of a railway, of its paying, the number of people to be served, and the acreage to be opened up and served by the line, etc. I maintain that we are just as capable as a Legislative Assembly of considering the reports of the expert officers direct as we would be if we submitted the consideration of that evidence—for it is no more than evidence and opinions—in the first place to a committee such as it is proposed to form under this Bill. Indeed, when we have a new country, comparatively speaking, such as we have in Western Australia, a country to be opened up by railway communication

and with large areas still unpeopled, we are much better off in appointing the expert officers of our different departments to advise us, as we have done during the past two years. When there is a new country to be developed time is the essence of the contract, and if we are going to submit measures of this description to a Parliamentary Committee and wait till they take evidence and travel throughout the length and breadth of the country, we are going to bring the State to a standstill for some considerable time.

The Premier: They spent considerably more in New South Wales when they had a committee than we have spent here.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and what time did they take? I have here one of their reports referring to a railway which has been before the Public Works Department for the last 20 years, and the committee state that on three previous occasions the question of constructing a railway to serve this country had been under consideration of this committee, and this was the fourth occasion on which they had reported on the project.

The Minister for Lands: If they approved of it, it is not the fault of the committee.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It shows at once that it is a means of delaying the works, and if honourable members will read further evidence they will find that is so.

The Minister for Works: The Esperance Railway has been delayed for the last 16 years.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: And I hope it will be delayed for another 16 years, but that is a matter of policy. If the Government have the courage of their convictions, and if they know what they want in regard to public works and the development of the agricultural and mineral areas, then I hold they do not need to shelter themselves behind a committee of this description. It simply means that Ministers intend to shift, to a committee of this House and another place, the responsibility which they should carry on their own shoulders and then, of course,

they can say that the committee did not recommend the work or that they did recommend it.

The Attorney General: The same as you did with the Advisory Board.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The same as we did not do, because we pressed forward with all works that the Advisory Board recommended; but I wonder what sort of progress we would have made during the last few years if we had had a committee of this nature. I remember on one occasion, at any rate, during the last three years when the Attorney General rose in his righteous indignation and demanded the Government to take the responsibility of governing the State, when he stated that he did not believe in the Government hiding behind the Advisory Board's reports, and that the Government should take their responsibilities boldly and carry out the works necessary for the development of this country. We did it, and I wonder where those works would be to-day if we had not done so. Could Western Australia have been developed as it has been developed during the last few years had we had a system such as is now proposed? Could these works have been carried out in a time of depression, when no one had sufficient faith, except the members of the then Government, to pledge the credit of the State in order to carry out the works which have proved so beneficial to this country? The railway system has almost doubled in that time, harbours have been extended, grain sheds and facilities for shipping the products of the land have been provided, and water supplies, notwithstanding the Minister for Works and the Premier to the contrary, have been provided throughout the length and breadth of the country; but most of these works would have been held up indefinitely if we had had to submit them to a committee of this sort. I wonder if the grain handling facilities at Fremantle would have been provided, when it was found two years ago that we could not get the product of the harvest away without immediately providing additional facilities. I think the Government spent something like £50,000 in that year on

their own initiative, but under this Bill we should have had to wait for Parliament to be called together. Parliament would have had to refer the works to the committee, and the committee would then have had to report, and that report would have had to be adopted by resolution of the House before we could have expended this money. In a young country the Government of the day, whether they be a Government from that side of the House or from this side, must have extensive powers if the country is to be properly developed and facilities are to be provided. We have had a project for establishing freezing works for some little time.

Mr. Bolton: Some little time?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: One contract has been let for freezing works at the southern port of Albany. Others ought to have been let, and I wonder what our successors are going to do in the matter. The Minister for Lands the other day characterised my interjection as nonsense when I referred to the freezing works at Wyndham. Do the Premier and his colleagues propose that there shall be no freezing works at Wyndham until a Parliamentary committee have taken evidence, probably travelled to Wyndham and spent three or four months there in examining the ground and inquiring into the whole matter personally, and then coming back with a report to this House, after which there would have to be a resolution of Parliament authorising the work? I hope not. I hope that the Government will have the courage of their convictions, and that they will carry out this work. If they have come to the conclusion that they are going to hang up this work let us know it, but if not, let us proceed with the work at once, and not have any of this Public Works Committee. When the Minister for Works was moving the second reading of this Bill the advisory boards were very severely condemned.

The Minister for Works: The Government were condemned for using the advisory boards.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The advisory boards were condemned by the Minister, firstly because they were composed of

Government servants, and secondly, because in his opinion they were only asked to report on and bring in evidence in support of railways that were projected. I want to point out that this is not so. In the first place, however, let me deal with the public servants composing this advisory board. I want to know what better advisers the House and Government could have than the men appointed from time to time from the Government service. Let us take a man like Mr. Paterson, who is at the head of the Agricultural Bank, a man like Mr. Johnston, the Surveyor General, who has been practically at the head of the Survey Department all his life, and let us also take the Chief Inspector of Engineers and Surveys, Mr. Muir; at one time we had Professor Lowrie reporting on one or two of these works, and quite lately, whenever it has been deemed necessary, for instance, in regard to gold-fields lines, we have included officers of the Railway Department in order that an opinion might be formed of the probable traffic which would result from the construction of these projected railways. Could we have any men better qualified to travel throughout the country and advise the Government as to the works to be carried out? I say not, at any rate, and to appoint a Parliamentary committee who are then going to sit on the work of these officers, will undoubtedly mean retarding the carrying out of these propositions, and to that extent retarding the progress of the country. Then we have the Minister calmly alleging that the members of the advisory board were only there to bring evidence in support of the railways which the Government desired to carry out. If he had taken the trouble to read the reports of the advisory board in connection with some of the railway projects during the last recess, reports which I believe have been laid on the Table, he would have found that the very wording of those reports does not endorse his contention. I have some of them here, and I will draw attention to the wording. The first one reads—

After an inspection of the country lying between Goomalling and Mullewa—

That is the railway the hon. member specially referred to.

and careful consideration of reports, plans, and available data, we recommend that the best route for a railway between the terminus of the Goomalling-Wongan Hills line and the Murchison railway is the one shown approximately by a red line on the attached plan; the actual line to be, of course, subject to an engineering survey.

Does that not convey the impression that the instructions given to the board were to collect data and information to support the construction of the railway? Why the very wording, to anyone who reads intelligently, conveys that they have enquired and examined the country between the Murchison and Wongan Hills, and having examined it recommend a certain route.

The Premier: Is that all they say in the report.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The honourable member knows it is not.

The Premier: Then read the rest of it.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am only convicting the Minister for works out of the language in these reports of endeavouring to put a construction on the instructions given by the Government to this advisory board, which the reports will not bear out. Here is another one—

The delay in sending forward this report was unavoidable as it was most important that as much as possible of the agricultural land within the 10 inch rainfall belt East of the Wongan Hills to the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence should be inspected and classified before submitting any proposal. This has now been done, and the board have given very careful consideration to all reports, plans, and available data and now recommend that a railway line—

and so on, and so forth. This shows that they had a free hand to examine the whole of the country east of Wongan Hills. There was no instruction as to whether the line should run north from the Dowerin-Merredin line or east from the Goomalling-Wongan Hills

line. The simple instruction was to examine the country, and if they thought it advisable that a railway should be constructed they should recommend the best possible route to be obtained. And so it is right through these reports. Here is another one—

As a result of a promise given by the late Acting Premier to a deputation from the Dongolocking settlers we have made a further examination of the country between the Wickepin and Dumbleyung railways.

Country between two railways—showing clearly it is not a question of saying, "We are going to build a railway from Dumbleyung to Wickepin, and get evidence in support of that proposition." As a matter of fact they did not recommend it in this instance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You shelved the report they recommended.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: There was no shelving of any report.

The Premier: Yes. What about the Yilliminning-Kulin loop?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: There was no shelving at all. Here is another—

After an inspection and consideration of all available data respecting the country to be served by an extension of the Bolgart railway, we beg to report that any extension of this line should, subject to engineering surveys, follow the Bolgart Brook in a general northerly direction.

Instead of going due north as some thought it would and in towards the Midland railway, they recommended another direction altogether. There, again, the instructions were to examine the country and recommend what was best to be done in the circumstances. Then we have a similar report. They were to examine the country south of Southern Cross to serve the mineral country down towards Parker's Range and beyond. This was a special board appointed, including some of the officers of the Railway Department, in order to see whether it was desirable that that auriferous country should be opened up by railway construction, and a report was sent in advising the construction of that line. The Minister for Works

declared there was not a railway condemned. I interjected that the Wagin-Darkan had not been recommended though provided for so far as the Estimates were concerned. Here is another. The Advisory Board report says—

Having gone over the route of the proposed railway from Leonora to Lawlers, and Sandstone in accordance with instructions, and given great consideration to all the official and other information on the matter, which we have been able to obtain, we have the honour hereunder to submit our report upon the project. From the official files on the matter it is seen that this proposition has come up for consideration in three forms—1, a railway from Leonora or Malcolm *via* Lawlers to Sandstone to connect the Eastern Goldfields railway system with that of the Central Goldfields; 2, a railway from Leonora or Malcolm to Lawlers without connecting Sandstone; and 3, a railway from Sandstone to Lawlers without connecting Leonora.

They reported on that proposition and decided against it as a railway which did not have sufficient evidence to warrant its being constructed.

Mr. Green: What about the majority report of the Advisory Board on the Esperance railway; what did you do with that?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: We did not carry it out, and we did not carry out the Lawlers proposition.

Mr. Green: No, and you restricted it to agriculture only, a thing that has never been done in any other railway project in the State.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Simply because for no other reason would a railway be warranted in that portion of Western Australia.

Mr. Green: Would not any other reason be a contributory cause?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: No. There was no other reason; there was no justification whatever for that railway.

Mr. Green: Would not—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow this discussion. The hon. member must not interject so frequently.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I will point out to the hon. member for his information that the whole grounds for the construction of that railway were that there was a large area of agricultural country to be opened up. There was no other proposition put forward as far as traffic was concerned; and certainly, if the hon. member thinks any Government would be justified in building a railway out of pure sentiment, I do not think he will get even his friends now on the Government benches to construct it.

The Premier: You built a railway from sentiment.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I did not.

The Premier: Yes, you built the Bullfinch railway.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: And the hon. member supported it.

The Premier: You were responsible for giving the reports to the House, for misleading the House.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Members would not divide on the Bill. I like these hon. members who go back on their actions. They have not the courage to stand up for the works they voted for. Let hon. members turn up *Hansard* and refresh their memories, and they will find there were as many members on the then Opposition side voted in favour of the line as there were on the then Government side.

The Premier: They voted on your figures. You were absolutely misleading.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Nonsense. The figures were not misleading, and the hon. member knows it.

The Premier: They were, and they were given by Dorrie Doolette.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: It appears to me these courageous Ministers certainly have not the courage of their own opinions. They will support a thing one day, but if it goes wrong in the slightest degree they will turn round and say, "You did it; you led us into it." I like these brave men, these men who will not stand up to their actions but hedge as soon as they start. They make a declaration and begin to hedge like the Premier did the other day at Fremantle with re-

gard to his land policy. Here is another report—

We have the honour to report for your information the result of our inquiry in connection with the proposed Wanneroo railway. We have inspected the country between Subiaco and Yanchep caves, also the country lying between Bayswater and the Wanneroo road. The country through which we travelled, with the exception of the swamps and strips around the lakes, is of a poor sandy nature.

They examined the whole country and then decided against it—another railway, for the information of the Minister for Works, which was decided against by an advisory board.

The Premier: You did not make those reports public until after the elections were held.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Why should not I?

The Premier: You were not game to.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I always made them public as soon as I got them.

The Minister for Mines: Reports were in 12 months before they were made public.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Most of those I quoted have been public for 12 months past. Here is another—

We have examined the country between Busselton and Augusta and given the subject of railway facilities for this district the fullest consideration. We are unanimously of opinion that a railway to open up the district should follow generally the coast line. . . . We recommend the construction of a line.

The Attorney General: At Busselton? One could understand it. Look at its representative.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Why not Busselton, I should like to know? And from Busselton to Denmark, one of the finest districts the State possesses, one of the richest countries to be opened up? Yet the hon. member, showing his narrow prejudice, would condemn it because I represent portion of it.

The Premier: When we open it up they will have a new representative.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I am just pointing out to hon. members that the advisory boards were not instructed to bring evidence in support of certain railways, and I am proving it. If hon. members do not like to believe it, at any rate the outside public will.

The Minister for Works: Give us some proof; we have not had any so far.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Here is another—

Acting under instructions we made an inspection of the country between the South-Western Railway and the Great Southern Railway lying north of Pinjarra and Narrogin and beg to state that the objects the board kept in view were to shorten the journey between the Great Southern Railway and Fremantle, to serve as far as possible existing and probable future settlement within the area under review.

Showing here, again, the board with a free hand go into an immense tract of country hundreds of square miles in extent to examine and to report as to what were the best means for opening it up. And we have the same thing right through because here is another railway project; they report on the country lying between Boyup, Bridgetown, and Wilgarup on the west and Tambellup and Mount Barker on the Great Southern Railway. That is a vast area. They go out "in accordance with instructions received," and make a "very comprehensive inspection of the country lying between" these points, and they say—

Many proposals have been brought forward by the settlers interested, the various routes advocated being—(a), Dinninup to Tambellup; (b), Boyup to Cranbrook; (c), Bridgetown to Cranbrook; (d), Bridgetown to Mount Barker; to all of which there are many and obvious objections.

Then they go on to summarise these objections and recommend what they think is the best means of opening up that vast territory. And we have the same thing with the large area lying south of Bridgetown from Manjimup to Denmark and a railway junctioning with another which they hope will be carried around

the south-west coast. There is a very exhaustive report on this project, and I recommend hon. members to peruse it.

Mr. Price: And that railway was included in the first public work's policy announced in this State, yet only to-day we have a report on it.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: How many years ago was that?

Mr. Price: It was 20 odd years ago.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I was not in Parliament then and I do not think the hon. member was in the State. My object in drawing attention to these reports is obvious. It is to show that the Minister for Works in trying to discredit the work of the advisory boards or the Government for having appointed these boards is on the wrong track entirely.

The Minister for Works: It was the Government I was discrediting.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member cannot discredit the previous Government. He only discredits himself by trying to throw an interpretation on these reports which they will not bear. My object is carried out when I draw the attention of hon. members to these reports and show that the advisory boards in nearly every instance have had an absolutely free hand to examine large areas of country and recommend as to the best means of opening them up. Had we a country settled throughout as New South Wales comparatively is, then, perhaps, there might be some argument in favour of a Public Works Committee; but when we are opening up new tracts of country—and I maintain we should send our railways out ahead of settlement in every case where we possibly can—then we do not want a Parliamentary committee to sit on the proposition at all. The Government want to get the best advice of their responsible officers as to how best to tap a given area of country and then submit their measures. That was the policy the late Government carried out, and I ask members now to point out any work carried out under that system they would have undone at the present time.

Mr. Holman: The Phillips River railway.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member would not take up that line to-morrow. At any rate it is a mining railway, let me remind the hon. member. Is there any agricultural railway in the State he would have taken up at the present time? No, not one. Now, if the system has proved to work badly we would surely have some of our lines at any rate closed down for want of settlement and want of traffic. But such is not the case. Again, let me point out this aspect of the question. With the immigration and land settlement policy as carried out in the last five years we, controlling the destinies of the State, are bound to give railway facilities to the people who are settling on the land, and I do not think it is a question for a Parliamentary committee to look into and ascertain whether a railway project is to be payable so much as it is for an expert committee, such as we have had in vogue for so many years past, to ascertain how best we can give the facilities which this Parliament I maintain is bound to give to the settlers. We cannot settle our lands, throw them open for selection, get hundreds of settlers to go on to those far distant lands, and then refuse to give them railway facilities. Why, the very essence, the fundamental principle of the whole development of this great State is to get people on the land and, if we cannot provide railways beforehand, follow them up with the railway facilities after we have put them there. I want to take exception to the hon. member's reference in raking up that question of one member of an advisory board being at variance with his colleagues in connection with the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. It is a well known fact that a certain statement was made in the House during the debate in connection with that railway. Certain questions were asked by the Honorary Minister, and the replies could not be obtained from the members of the advisory board until after Parliament had prorogued but, in consequence of the promise I gave to the hon. member, I think he saw the correspondence in connection with the statement which was made by the then member for Swan, and there is nothing



in that correspondence to warrant one in accepting the belief that Professor Lowrie was at any time opposed to the construction of the line. We all know he was a very cautious man and perhaps he had some doubt because of the rainfall as to the advisableness of going out so far east; I do not think, however, there was one scintilla of evidence to show that that gentleman was opposed to the report which his colleagues ultimately signed. As a matter of fact, my attention is now drawn to the report which bears Professor Lowrie's signature.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He said he signed his own recommendation.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The then member for Swan made that remark; Professor Lowrie did not say so. There is nothing to warrant the matter being brought up as an argument that the work of the advisory board was badly done. Even if one member had disagreed, it was quite competent for the Government of the day to pass a Bill on the recommendation of the other members.

The Minister for Works: Why should not Parliament have the view of the minority?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Parliament had it.

The Minister for Works: Not in that case. He had a different opinion; you admit that yourself.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I do not admit that; if I used the remark as an illustration, the hon. member cannot call it the admission of an argument. I said he may have had some doubt but the papers are in the office and the hon. member can see them for himself, and there is nothing in them to show that Professor Lowrie disagreed with his colleagues. I am sure he is not a man to sign a report without stating his opinions in plain language, if he had any points of disagreement. The point I now wish to make is that the Government ought to have the right to recommend to this House even a work which an advisory board, or a committee, objects to, and they ought to take the responsibility for that work. I do not think, even if Professor Lowrie dis-

agreed with the finding of his three colleagues, that I for one would have held back the recommendation for the construction of this particular work, because I believed in it thoroughly.

The Premier: You did so from a totally different standpoint; you were not concerned about the agricultural possibilities.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I was doing it from an agricultural standpoint.

Mr. Bolton: Your public declaration was that you were giving the Midland Company a squeeze.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I never used such words; the hon. member can turn up *Hansard* and he will find no record of them. I did point out that goldfields' traffic would accrue and that was an additional inducement, but the primary object was to serve the vast territory of agricultural land, over two million acres in extent, and open it up for settlement. Surely a Minister would not refrain from using the other as an additional argument for the expenditure of the money, the argument that they would get traffic from the Northern Goldfields which they were entitled to. I would have been wanting in my duty if I had not pointed that out at the time. With regard to the New South Wales reports, if hon. members will peruse them—I have not had much time except to look casually at one or two—it will be seen they are based on the evidence brought forward by the very expert officers who in this State have been appointed to draw up the reports. Why should we go through this cumbersome method? It must mean delay in the construction of public works, and the development of the country is going to be retarded, and that evidently has been the experience in New South Wales, so far as I can see. There is another aspect which should not be overlooked, and that is we are piling up costs. More especially should that aspect not be overlooked because of the many assertions which have been made by the Treasurer and his colleagues that, so far as the finances are concerned, they are hard up. Why, therefore, should we saddle the country with an unknown and an unnecessary expenditure? In 1910 the cost of the New South Wales board

reached nearly £6,000, and we have the Minister for Works saying that he is going to protect the State from this extravagance by reducing the fees of the members of the board. I ask any sensible person whether any reduction of a fee from three guineas to two guineas per day for the chairman, and from two guineas to one guinea per day for the members, will bring about any appreciable saving?

The Minister for Works: Is five not cheaper than seven?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Yes, and three would be cheaper than five, and the Advisory Board composed of the officers of the department, would be cheaper still.

Mr. Monger: And much better.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Decidedly. I would also like to emphasise that in a large State like Western Australia, the expenses, apart from the fees, would be heavier than the expenses in New South Wales, where they can get to any portion of the State, and where they can make short journeys quickly.

The Premier: You do not know New South Wales.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: I have been to New South Wales a few times.

The Attorney General: You have only been to Sydney.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Western Australia, it must be remembered, is a third of Australia and is about three times the size of New South Wales, and when this board has to travel over the whole of the country, examine the North-West and see what works are to be carried on at the different ports there, and the facilities which must undoubtedly be conceded, the cost of any work to be undertaken will exceed the amount of the limit in the Bill, and then we shall run into a great bill of costs indeed. In addition to that we will have to pay witnesses and their expenses. I apprehend that if this committee be appointed, notwithstanding the penny wise and pound foolish policy of cutting down the fees of the members of the board, it will be found that the bill of costs will equal, if it will not exceed, that of the New South Wales board. There is another point, and that is I do not be-

lieve we can get good work from a board of this description. I do not think political appointments will give us the best men to go into works of every description, such as suggested under the Bill. It may not only be a question of railway construction and routes, but every public work.

The Premier: Opening up the dairying industry.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: And a very proper thing too.

The Premier: Who advised on it?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has a report in his office.

The Premier: I have seen your speech on it when you promised it.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. member is fair he will call for the report and read it.

Mr. Price: We have a fine port at Albany and we can make use of that yet.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Albany is 90 miles to the east. Why does not the hon. member propose to close down Busselton because it is 30 miles from Bunbury? It is my intention to move shortly that the Government take such action to see that the timber in the back country of Busselton is shipped from the port of Busselton.

The Premier: You made some agreement about that.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Why not enforce it? As I was pointing out, it will be possible to get better advice from expert officers than from members of Parliament, and I think if one moment's consideration is given to this aspect of the case it will be found that members of Parliament will have to take up the position almost of a select committee, or a royal commission. They will have to sit and, not of their own practical knowledge, decide these matters, but take evidence, sift and gather the evidence from all sides, and then draw up their conclusions and recommendations. I much prefer to have the Government take the responsibility, but the Government should have the courage of its own policy, consult the expert officers of the State, and bring down to the House its works programme. Why they should attempt to hide this, and shirk the responsibility behind a

board of this description, I was going to say I do not know; but I do know, it will be to make life easy for them, and to enable them to say to the unfortunate members on their own side, "We will refer it to a Parliamentary Works Committee," and say to the Opposition, if they do not want to give them any works they might be advocating, "We will refer it to the Parliamentary Works Committee" and so have the matter shelved indefinitely, "It is not the fault of ourselves, we cannot spend more than £20,000 on any public work, we have done the best we can, we have referred it to the board." If we are going to develop this great State of Western Australia we are not going to develop it expeditiously on those lines; we cannot brook delay of this sort, the country is large enough, it is grand enough, and Ministers may rest well assured that if they bring down any Bills for works such as I have referred to, recommended by the Advisory Boards, the expert officers, they will not get any serious opposition.

The Minister for Mines: The Esperance railway for instance.

Mr. Nanson: You have not made up your minds on that.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Ministers are all divided on that question. Why do not the Government make up their mind on it, why does not the Premier, who is supposed to set the lead, say something about it? As far as I am concerned I am honest in my opposition to it.

The Premier: What have I said?

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Nothing, but what did the Minister for Works say in Kalgoorlie? The Premier says one thing and his Minister says the opposite another time. The Ministers do not know where they are; let them take the responsibility of their policy.

The Premier: That is part of our policy.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: The Esperance railway is part of the policy of the Government, then let the Government bring the Bill along. I challenge him to bring the Bill down but I know he has no intention of doing that.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): I was much struck with the remark of the leader of the Opposition when he said that members on this side, and particularly Ministers, made one statement to-day and then to-morrow ran away from it. I remember that the leader of the Opposition, together with other members on that side of the House, in the course of the Address-in-reply stated that during the election two policies had been submitted to the people, that the people had given an emphatic verdict in favour of the policy we had submitted, and that consequently those members were not going to offer any opposition to the carrying out of that policy. I think the proposal to bring about the formation of a Public Works Committee received the endorsement of the people from one end of the State to the other, and therefore opposition to the Bill is opposition to the wishes of the people in that regard. There is no doubt that in every part of the State in which I spoke I met people, some of whom were opposed to the Labour party generally, who told me they were awaiting the arrival of this Parliamentary Public Works Committee. And for good reasons, too. In the past we have been told that once the Advisory Board reported no further inquiries were necessary. Yet the fact remains that many railways built in agricultural districts are not giving satisfaction to-day.

Mr. Nanson: Name one.

The PREMIER: The hon. member himself knows that deputation after deputation comes along urging that a deviation should be made in the route proposed by the Advisory Board, and at such times we have had complaints against the late Government on the score of their having declined to accept the advice of the Advisory Board, and having gone in some other direction to serve their political friends. This is the reason why the Government and the people of the State desire a Public Works Committee. In the first place it is not fair to put a public servant in a position in which, perhaps, he has to go against the expressed wishes of his Minister. Many reports have been submitted on railways to which Ministers

have pledged themselves. To ask a servant of the Crown to make a report against one of these railways is to fly in the face of human nature. On the second count people are beginning to believe that in connection with the construction of any of these railways the political friends of the Government get the first and only consideration. I was told to-day that the Wongan Hills railway is going to serve country held extensively by ex-Ministers of the Crown, and not only ex-Ministers, but men in the public service, in one department particularly. I want to know why they get information against the outside public. It is because the people think that this sort of thing has been going on that they are so anxious for the appointment of a Public Works Committee.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Would you not have ex-Ministers of the Crown served by railways?

The PREMIER: It is a remarkable thing that while the Advisory Board recommended the construction of the line from Yilliminning to Kulin the late Government did not bring down a Bill for its construction, while that for the Wongan Hills was put through.

Mr. Frank Wilson: A more urgent work.

The PREMIER: When we talk of advisory boards it is mere claptrap. Governments of the past have tried to cover up their tracks by getting the Advisory Board, consisting of public servants, to bring down a report.

Mr. Frank Wilson: The fact is you do not want to have the work to do.

The PREMIER: We will do as much work as any other Ministry, and when we do carry out a work it will serve the country, and not our friends. To compare the Advisory Board with the proposed committee, the members of the board are put in an unfair position, as they are expected to be loyal, indeed they are pledged to be loyal, to their Ministers. For instance, those very officers who had sworn loyalty to the late Ministers have in turn pledged loyalty to me and my party in carrying out our policy, and our policy, as I have already stated, will not

be to give consideration to our political supporters.

Mr. Frank Wilson: We have never given consideration to our political friends, never once.

Mr. Bolton: Yes, and to your contractor friends, too.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Is the hon. member in order?

Mr. SPEAKER: Neither the hon. member for South Fremantle nor the Premier is in order in insinuating that the late Government gave consideration to their political friends.

The Premier: I withdraw.

Mr. Bolton: I withdraw.

The PREMIER: Being public servants, the members of the Advisory Board would naturally concede some consideration to the wishes of their Ministers.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Not at all; you have but a poor opinion of them.

The PREMIER: I have no intention of reflecting upon them personally. I merely say it is human nature that they should bear in mind the expressed wishes of their Ministers. Let me say that the Public Works Committee, representing this House, and having a representative from another place, would be able to give consideration to these works from the standpoint of the interest of the country, and not of the interest of the Government for the time being. But the Government do not give up responsibility to the committee, for before a work can be considered by the committee Cabinet have to decide that in the event of its being approved by the committee they can find the wherewithal to carry on the work. We have to consider the possibility of the Public Works Committee asking Parliament to authorise the construction of a particular work; and once the recommendation of the committee is adopted and authorised by Parliament we are pledged to complete the work. So we take the responsibility in the first instance of deciding that we can invite the committee to, if necessary, recommend the construction of a particular work, and that subsequently we can find the money for the construction of that work.

And the committee will be quite free from any influence by Ministers. The members of the Advisory Board, as expert officers attached to our various departments, will be just as much at the disposal of that Committee as they are to-day at the disposal of the Government. And we can go farther; we can get the advice of others outside the departments, uncontrolled by Ministers at all, and so secure the fullest possible evidence, while the method of arriving at the ultimate decision will be made public, and so Parliament will be responsible for the works passed. In previous Parliaments works have been submitted by a Government prepared to stand or fall by those works, and who consequently have pledged every member of their side of the House to assist them, whether those individual members believed in the works or not. Supporters of the late Government have complained of that very thing. Indeed, the leader of the Opposition at one time complained of being required to support the Quairading railway starting from York when, in his opinion, it should have started from Beverley.

Mr. Frank Wilson: No.

The PREMIER: Here was a member of the Government complaining of the necessity for supporting a work of which he was not fully in favour.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I do not think I was in the House when the railway was built from York. The hon. member, I think, must be wrong.

The PREMIER: I will read what the leader of the Opposition said on the 27th January, 1911. It is as follows:—

It is just what the hon. member is advocating. The very error committed in commencing the Quairading line from York instead of from near Beverley he would have us repeat in regard to starting this line from Mount Kokeby.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I did not say there that I had been forced for party reasons to support the line. The line was already built. Anyhow, the Premier has put a wrong construction on the words I used. I said an error had been made in the

commencing point of that line; not that I had been forced to support it for party or any other reasons.

The PREMIER: Apparently the late Premier is so little removed from his old policy of dressing his window with agricultural railways that he thinks the only work the Government can undertake is the construction of agricultural railways. The work in this country is not merely that of constructing railways. We have to provide other facilities, and to open up ports; and when spending millions in opening up ports we want to know that the money is being wisely expended, and nobody can better advise us than the experts of our own departments when called upon by a committee such as that proposed. They will give their advice free and untrammelled by the shadow of Ministers. To-day we have the position that a Minister may—and they have in the past—for political purposes send an advance agent into the various electorates to discover the local wants in order to pledge the Government to certain works with a view to assisting the candidature of a member.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Never. Does the Premier accuse me of having sent political agents into a district in order that I might promise a work and so gain votes? If so, I ask that he withdraw the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: If that is what the Premier said it is out of order.

The PREMIER: I will withdraw if the cap fits.

Mr. Frank Wilson: No, no. I think the Premier ought to apologise for that last remark.

The PREMIER: I will apologise. I said Ministers have done so. I did not refer to any particular Ministry. Ministers have sent advance agents to find out the requirements of particular districts in order that they might pledge themselves to the construction of certain works.

Mr. Frank Wilson: When?

The PREMIER: Never mind when.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Apparently you are talking by the man in the street.

The PREMIER : Anyhow, it seems to hurt. Here is an instance of the head of the Government, on little or no advice, pledging the country to the opening up of a new harbour down our South coast, only 70 miles from an existing harbour which is not used to anything like the extent of which it is capable.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Will the hon. member show where I pledged the country to any such thing ?

The PREMIER : In your speech.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Read it. Read the words from beginning to end.

The PREMIER : These were the words—

In connection with the development of this territory by the construction of railways outlined, the suggested opening up of a new harbour at Nornalup Inlet will have to be dealt with.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Read on.

The PREMIER : The whole speech is made up of similar vague promises. He makes a statement and leaves it for the candidate in the district to tell the electors that the Premier has given a promise to do certain work. He never really pledges himself, it is true, to anything as you find when you come to read his speech.

Mr. Frank Wilson : You said I did.

The PREMIER : It was the inference the Premier used to leave in the minds of the audience, and after he had gone the local candidate standing in his interests pointed to this inference as a distinct pledge.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Why not withdraw your wrong statement ?

The PREMIER : I will not admit that it is wrong.

Mr. Frank Wilson : You misquoted me. Why not put yourself right before proceeding.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The PREMIER : There is very little left for me to say in connection with this Bill. The measure itself is more a machinery measure, merely constituting a Parliamentary Public Works Committee and laying down the methods by

which they must proceed. But I would like to answer the assertion made by the leader of the Opposition that this committee will be a more expensive method of deciding on the construction of public works than the present system of an advisory board. We must remember that it is not merely the fees paid to the members of the Advisory Board for special work performed, but it is the loss to the State through these men being absent from their offices. We are paying large salaries to every one of them. Mr. Paterson, the manager of the Agricultural Bank, receives a very large salary, and if the work of the bank is not being kept properly up to date, or if the work is not sufficient to keep him properly occupied, then he is receiving more than he is worth. The same is the case with Mr. Muir ; he is being paid a high salary, and yet he has done very little work in his office for months past ; in fact, I suppose he would find it difficult to get a grasp of the work in his office, so much has he been away from it in connection with the work of the Advisory Board. This applies to every member of the board. Mr. Despeissis was kept busy doing work in connection with the board, because, I suppose, they could not find anything else for him to do. All these facts must be borne in mind in connection with the cost of the Advisory Board. We are paying these expert officers huge salaries, and they are being taken away from their offices to the neglect of the work for which they are primarily employed.

Mr. Frank Wilson : Will it not be the same under this committee ? Will they not have to give evidence ?

The PREMIER : No, it will not be the same ; they will be called before the committee to give evidence, but they will not be required to leave their offices for a week or a fortnight on end as they do now, for the purpose of making a report on a particular work ; and under these circumstances I think it will be found that, viewing the matter from the standpoint of the loss to the State of the services of these expert officers, it will be cheaper to the country in the long run

to have a standing committee of public works. Something was said by the leader of the Opposition with regard to our cheese-paring policy in reducing the fees of the committee as compared with those paid in New South Wales. I do not know that the leader of the Opposition always took his cue from New South Wales as to the fees to be paid to members of Parliament and public officers; as a matter of fact, he is opposed to the payment of members.

Mr. Frank Wilson: I raised your screw, at any rate.

The PREMIER: That is so, but the leader of the Opposition stated that he was opposed to the payment of members altogether. We have not gone to that extent in connection with this Public Works Committee, and I think the fees proposed are fair remuneration for the work which the members of the committee will have to perform, because, over and above the fees they will be paid out-of-pocket expenses fixed on a certain basis whenever they are travelling.

Mr. Frank Wilson: They would get nothing if you did not give them that.

The PREMIER: Well I am pointing out that they will get travelling expenses over and above their fees. Again, in a State like Western Australia I think that five members should be able to perform all that is necessary in obtaining evidence and reporting to Parliament on works submitted to them for consideration. In any case numbers will not add to the value of the report or the speediness in dealing with a matter; therefore, I contend that a committee of five members will do the work better and more speedily than a larger committee. We have also provided for fair representation on that committee. Our statement to the people was that a committee to consider matters in connection with which the State would be pledged to a considerable expenditure of money should be a committee entirely removed from party control, that the whole of Parliament should be represented on the committee—not merely a party with a majority of two and using the caucus to compel members to support a measure, but every party in Parliament—and that

a committee to consider these works should report not to the Government but to Parliament. For that purpose we are providing that the representation of this Chamber shall be on the proportional representation system, which will guarantee to the Opposition their full proportion of representation on the committee. Again, we are providing that the Legislative Council shall also have a representative. Some persons may ask the reason why we do not give the same representation to the Council as to the Assembly, but it has to be borne in mind that all public works mean the expenditure of money and that this House controls the expenditure of money entirely; in those circumstances it is extending a courtesy to the Legislative Council, and after all giving justice to them, by allowing them representation on this committee at all. I believe they will recognise that we are treating them fairly by allowing them one representative, to be elected by a majority in that Chamber.

Hon. H. B. Lefroy: It is still a representation of 4 to 1.

The PREMIER: Yes, but at the present time we have six Ministers in the Government and five of them are in this Chamber, and, bearing that in mind, we are treating another place as fairly in this matter as the Constitution treats them in all other matters. After all it is a committee to report to a house which has five Ministers as against the one in the other chamber, and in those circumstances the Legislative Council will have as fair representation as they have to-day under the Constitution. I have nothing further to say, more than that the formation of this Public Works Committee will not mean, as the leader of the Opposition stated, that the development of the country will be retarded. In fact, the creation of the committee will assist the development of the country, because we will be able to give attention to works that are necessary instead of giving attention to works for the purpose of obtaining further political control. Whether rightly or wrongly, a belief exists in the minds of the people to-day that Ministers give consideration to huge public works from

a political standpoint rather than from the standpoint of the benefit of the people, and wherever one moves about the country he hears the statement made that this work or that work was put into operation by the Government for the purpose of playing to that constituency or to its member.

Mr. Mitchell: The Esperance railway.

The PREMIER: Let me give one instance. I was assured in Beverley on Saturday night last that I would have a deputation waiting upon me to ask Parliament to change the route of the line from Brookton to Kunjin, and it was stated that a great majority of the people in that district were opposed to that route, contending that it should have started from Beverley, which was a better route. I am not going to say whether that contention was right or wrong, but I know this, that having proceeded with the survey of the route from Brookton to Kunjin the Government are going to construct the line along the surveyed route. At the same time, the people of Beverley believed that this line was taken along that route to suit the present member for Pingelly. That may be right or it may be wrong; the fact remains that what has happened in the past leads the people to believe that this sort of thing has occurred, but under a system such as we propose in this Bill it cannot be said that the committee or the Government are playing to any constituency, because both parties and both of the Houses of the Legislature will have representation, and if any members of the committee are inclined to give undue attention to a particular district, the other members who object can bring forward a minority report and draw public attention to it. To-day we have no opportunity of doing that: the advisory boards simply submit a report, and although there may be a difference of opinion in some cases, yet in regard to the majority of works the members of the board are unanimous in their recommendations. Another point about the present system is that the board do not submit the views of those opposing the work, but merely the reasons why in their opinion the work should be undertaken, that is, when they submit a report

in favour of a proposal. To be fair, it would be well to put forward the reasons of those who are opposing a route or a particular work, and with a Standing Works Committee of this kind evidence would be collected from all standpoints, the public as well as the house would be in possession of the facts, and a decision would be arrived at in the public view. Under the existing conditions, we know nothing whatever about a project until the Government have committed Parliament to the work. When a work involves the expenditure of a huge sum of money, for instance the £50,000 which the leader of the Opposition referred to in one case, it is only right for every one in the community to know whether or not the work is warranted. That is all we desire to have, and as we have been assured this evening that the respectable journals of the State are going to support our policy so far as the country has approved of it, then surely they and the members of the Opposition might realise that this is one portion of the platform in regard to which the country gave a unanimous verdict, and accordingly support it.

Mr. Wisdom: How long has it been "the respectable Press"?

The PREMIER: I was just quoting what the member for Murray-Wellington referred to this afternoon. The country has endorsed the establishment of a committee of this kind, and it will relieve the suspicion that lurks in the minds of the people that the party in power very often use their numbers to push through Parliament works on which a huge sum of money is to be expended, not in the interest of the country so much as to gain political support in the country at the succeeding elections. That being the case any honest Government must take the earliest opportunity of introducing machinery to remove that suspicion from the minds of the people. That is our object in introducing this measure, and I hope that it will be supported; in fact, I am sure it will, because every member, on this side at any rate, recognises the justice of it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.



*In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Conditions precedent to commencing public works:

Mr. GEORGE: Works under £20,000 in value should be within the scope of the operations and decision of the Minister for Works, of course, under the supervision of Cabinet. To add works under £20,000 to the investigation of the proposed committee would increase the cost of the committee and delay the construction of public works.

The Attorney General: The clause does not say "shall," it says "may."

Mr. GEORGE: That allowed the Government to do as they pleased.

The Premier: So they should.

Mr. GEORGE: Then why the necessity for the Bill if the Premier wished the Government to do as they pleased? While agreeing with the constitution of a committee for large works, we were not justified in submitting to the committee works costing less than £20,000.

The Minister for Works: It is not proposed to do so.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no need for the power to be in the clause. No railway was likely to cost less than £20,000. The works likely to be submitted to the committee of less value than £20,000 would be minor buildings and drainage schemes, but surely the Minister for Works could find time to cope with these smaller works. The time of Ministers was taken up in the past dealing with larger works, and the smaller works had not received sufficient attention. Surely now the Minister was to be relieved in regard to the larger works he could find time with profit to himself and the Ministry to go into the minor works. It would necessarily mean that works would be hung up during the deliberations of the committee if small undertakings were submitted to the committee, and many works would not be dealt with by them and reported on until the next sitting of Parliament, whereas many of them should be in hand before Parliament sat. The Minister might provide the funds on the Estimates, but until

the Parliamentary committee investigated them no money could be expended, which would mean delaying a lot of work the country requires. Therefore the last portion of the clause giving power to remit works under £20,000 in value for investigation by the committee should be deleted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be wrong to submit minor works to the Parliamentary committee. It was essential that the Minister, acting with instructions from Cabinet, should take responsibility; and that was just what was proposed. However, special circumstances and special cases might arise of works under £20,000 in value which Parliament as well as Cabinet might think it fit for the committee to investigate. In this case Cabinet would take the responsibility of submitting the propositions to the committee. The clause demonstrated clearly these works would only be referred to the committee when Ministers thought it fit. Ministers must take the responsibility; and the clause as drafted clearly demonstrated that only in special circumstances would advantage be taken to call upon the committee to examine works valued at under £20,000.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member used the expression "Parliament might think fit," but Parliament might not be sitting when the works might need to be gone on with. During recess the Government must use their judgment, make their inquiries and accept their responsibilities. With greater time at his disposal the Minister for Works should take full responsibility for the minor works under £20,000 in value. To refer them to the committee would mean delay and would not be for the benefit of the country. We should certainly draw the line at works valued at £20,000.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Murray-Wellington scarcely grasped the object of the clause, or the object of referring the works to a Parliamentary Public Works Committee. It was not to avoid Ministerial responsibility, nor to allow Ministers to shirk work. The real object was to prepare evidence for the consideration of members of the As-

sembly. Every work, where it was of the value of £20,000 or more, had to be submitted by the Government to the Public Works Committee. The Government had to take the full responsibility, and they employed the services of the committee to obtain every species of evidence that could be brought to bear upon the work in question. The evidence had to be printed and published, and placed in the hands, not only of the Ministers but of every member of Parliament, so that no one could have the excuse of voting in ignorance. As to the power of the Ministers to submit any work, it might be desirable in a work under £20,000 in value, that the Government should have some evidence upon it, and that members should know why they were voting this way or that. There might be a work which would cost, when completed, £19,950, and it might be advisable that in a work of that value, or less, to obtain evidence in connection with it, so that it might be placed before members.

Mr. George: If a Minister knew that a work would cost £14,000 he could lay that information before the House.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: But there would be the committee for that purpose, and the committee could obtain information better than the Ministers. The object was to expedite the collecting and publication of evidence, and give the fullest possible information to every member of Parliament. The clause only said, "The Minister may refer a work of that kind to the Committee."

Mr. George: They can do what is necessary without the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The inference would be that only works of the value of £20,000 should be referred to the committee, and that works under that amount should not be referred to the committee. This was only a saving clause, that if there be any special occasion when some work ought to be initiated and the utmost publicity given, the Minister could say to the committee, "Investigate all the circumstances connected with the work before we submit it to the House, and let us have full reports on the matter." Then all the evidence could be taken and placed in the hands of members before they

spoke upon it. He could not see on what grounds the hon. member wished to limit the power of the Minister. The responsibility was always with the Minister and with the Government. They must take the responsibility of submitting the work and recommending it, and proposing it in the House afterwards.

Mr. Wisdom: Not of rejecting it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When the amount was over £20,000 they pledge themselves, but under that members could reject any measure, or deal with it as they liked. After the matter was referred to the committee a responsibility was undertaken. If the clause was taken out it would be possible to deal with any great public work piecemeal. The clause gave the opportunity to have everything that was desired; there would be no delay. Although the House was sitting the committee could be sitting all the time. The only provision that was made was that the committee should not sit whilst the House was actually doing business.

Mr. Mitchell: What about eight hours a day?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That never yet applied to Parliamentary work. When the late Government were in office their days were of 25 hours all through. The member for Murray must see that his proposal would mean increasing the responsibility of the Minister instead of diminishing it.

Mr. GEORGE: What he endeavoured to bring before members was that as the Ministers were relieved from the necessity of going into the bigger works, which necessarily in the past must have taken a great deal of time, they would have plenty of time to thoroughly investigate the smaller ones. Assuming there was a proposition before the Minister to cost £10,000, he could only desire to put it before the committee, because there were circumstances connected with it which, to his mind, showed the necessity for investigation, apart from his officers or himself. If a Minister was satisfied on that point it must be a question which could wait until Parliament met, and the bringing it before Parliament would give the Government all the power they desired. Works

of this minor nature should be within the scope and the power of the gentleman who occupied the position of Minister, otherwise the work of the committee would be so heavy that they would not have time to go into the smaller matters. Why burden them with work? Why not let the committee have the opportunity of getting to work, and then if it was found that they had plenty of time at their disposal, the alteration could be made to the clause. He did not like the permissive business or "the Government may." We should be able to define our intentions.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; and the report adopted.

## BILL—EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: Seeing that members on both sides of the House were agreeable to the passing of a Bill similar to this, I anticipate that there will not be any necessity for me to go at any length into the question of altering the day of the weekly half-holiday in connection with our shops. The leader of the Opposition promised electors of the State that he would favour a change from Wednesday half-holiday to Saturday half-holiday if the question were first submitted to the electors for their choice. The Bill provides that the electors shall have that choice in the manner desired by the leader of the Opposition. It will be noted that it is proposed to repeal several sections of the parent Act. In the first place, the Governor-in-Council has power to proclaim the Early Closing Act in certain municipal districts. The Bill gives the Governor-in-Council wider powers than those in existence. The Governor may provide not only for municipal districts, but for provinces, for electoral districts, and for municipal or roads board districts, and two or more of these districts

may be united into one shop district. The Bill also provides that there shall be a district called the metropolitan district, which shall consist of the Metropolitan province, the Metropolitan-Suburban province, and the West province. That will constitute an area from somewhere about Midland Junction down to the south of Fremantle, and all this area will be formed into one shop district. The Bill provides also that Wednesday is the statutory half-holiday and that shops must be closed at one o'clock on Wednesdays. But we have made a slight alteration here, whereby we provide that shops which are closed on Wednesdays at one o'clock must close on Saturdays at nine o'clock in the evening instead of ten o'clock, as at present. The reason for this is that several shopkeepers in the metropolitan area have already by agreement decided to close on Saturdays at nine o'clock, and this, I believe, is coming to be the time at which shops will be closed in general on Saturday nights. Therefore it was thought advisable to follow the provisions existing in the other States, under which the long Saturday night shall not extend beyond nine o'clock. We have made a provision similar to that introduced some time ago by the then Attorney General, Mr. Keenan, whereby, if any shopkeeper in the district of Perth who desired to choose to close on Saturdays at one o'clock he can, under proclamation, have the privilege of opening his shop on Fridays until nine o'clock in the evening. When this matter was under discussion two or three years ago many shopkeepers avail themselves of the Saturday half-holiday found they could not keep open on Friday nights without violating the law. Indeed some of those shopkeepers were fined for keeping their shops open on Friday nights instead of Saturday nights, and we now make provision for the fulfilment of the wishes of those shopkeepers. We also provide that the question of Saturday, as against Wednesday, half-holiday shall be submitted to the electors on the Assembly rolls in a shop district, and if a majority of those electors decide upon Saturday as the closing day then all shops in that district must close at one

o'clock on Saturday. I might point out that two or three years ago a majority of shopkeepers in the areas, which under the Bill will be the metropolitan shop district, decided to close their shops on Saturdays at one o'clock; but it was found that the Minister did not have power to proclaim the whole of the areas one district, and in some of the areas, although the majority of the shopkeepers were in favour of closing on Saturdays, a few were against it. The effect of this was that, while in the majority of the areas in the metropolitan district the shopkeepers were unanimously in favour of closing on that day, a small number of shopkeepers were able to defeat the object of the majority, with the result that the half-holiday had to be taken on the Wednesday. Seeing that the shopkeepers have disagreed, and seeing that the shop assistants, who also have had the matter under consideration, have not been able to get the question settled in the way they desire, the Bill proposes to put the question before the people most affected, namely those persons who trade at the shops, and on their votes it will be decided whether the shops are to be closed on Saturdays or on Wednesdays. Again, if one-tenth of the electors, by petition to the Governor, demand that a poll of the electors be taken for the purpose of ascertaining whether any shop district should close on Saturdays or Wednesdays, as provided by the Bill, such poll will be taken; but so far as the metropolitan shop district is concerned, there will be no necessity, in the first instance, for any such petition. Every provision has been made for the bringing of any other shop district under the operations of the Bill. All the provisions of the Electoral Act which refer to an election of a member of the Legislative Assembly will apply to any poll taken for the purpose of deciding this question of half-holiday. I wish to draw attention to one or two departures from the parent Act. In the first place we provide that any shopkeeper who trades or sells goods of a line not mentioned in the exempted shops in Schedule 1, in addition to goods so mentioned, shall be compelled to abide by the provisions of

the Early Closing Act. It is known that in many instances a shop which is not exempt under the Act has been compelled to close at the hours set out in the Early Closing Act, while a shop in another line, which has been exempted, may, by putting up a bit of a barricade around the one department, remain open in its other departments, and in a large number of instances these shops sell goods of a character not included in the list of exemptions. We propose that any person who trades in lines under exemption and also in lines not exempted shall close in the manner provided by the Bill. Again, in Schedule 1 of the Act it is provided that butchers and dairy produce shops are exempt. Under the schedules of the Bill we do not propose to exempt them at all. Grocers sell butter, eggs, bacon, cheese, and so on, produce that is sold in dairy produce shops. When we had the Saturday half-holiday agitation, this position as between the grocers and dairy produce shops almost led to a riot in Fremantle. Under such conditions we think it is unfair that a grocer, part of whose stock consists of dairy produce, should be compelled to close while other shops selling the same goods are allowed to remain open, and in fairness to those grocers in the same area we do not propose to exempt dairy produce shops from the terms of Schedule 1. In regard to butchers, a request has been made, not only by employees, but by a number of employers, that they shall not be included in the exempt shops. But there is a clause in the Bill to the effect that the Governor, by proclamation, may declare an earlier hour for the opening of such shops. This was inserted with a view to dealing with butchers' shops, because if a butcher is to close at one o'clock in the afternoon, it is necessary that he should open at an earlier hour in the morning. For that reason we propose to give power to the Governor-in-Council to make provision for the opening of these shops at an earlier hour. To-day the butchers' shops open at about six o'clock in the morning; their hours have been fixed under an Arbitration Court award and the Early Closing Act applies to them except as regards the

hour of opening. That is what we are proposing to do in this Bill. Hon. members will agree with me that it is necessary, on Saturday particularly, if butchers close at one o'clock they should have the privilege of opening before eight o'clock in the morning, and provision is made whereby the Governor-in-Council can grant that privilege where it is found necessary to do so. I do not know that I can explain the provisions of this Bill any further without going into details, and realising that members on both sides are supporting the Bill, I have much pleasure in moving—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Mr. MITCHELL (Northam) moved—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

The Premier: No. We have discussed it session after session.

Mr. Mitchell: It is an important Bill. Motion put and negatived.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): I think that the Government may well be congratulated upon bringing in this piece of remedial legislation. It is nothing new to this House to have legislation dealing with the closing of shops, and it is certainly nothing new to the people of the State to have the cause of the shop assistants advocated. At the elections recently held it was a burning question, extending far beyond the metropolitan area, as to the hours at which shops should close, and almost every member or aspirant for Parliamentary honours was asked by those people interested whether he was in favour of an alteration in the existing law. I think that in view of the fact that the shop assistants have asked for such a long time that they should receive the same holiday as people engaged in other avocations, and in view of the fact also that most of the members, at any rate on this side of the House, are agreed to their demands, it cannot be said that this Bill comes with anything like surprise to this House. It was one of the questions most agitated during the recent elections, and there is no reason whatsoever why there should be the least delay of any kind in passing

into legislative enactment the measure now before the House. The Honorary Minister may also be complimented upon the clear and concise method in which when introducing the Bill he explained its operations and its relationship to the existing law. Inasmuch as it makes provision by means of a referendum for the alteration of the late closing day from Saturday to Friday, the Bill will meet with my hearty support, and I think I can claim to represent a very large number not only of shop assistants but of shopkeepers, because one of the things we may congratulate ourselves upon is the fact that not only is it a Bill agreed upon by the shop assistants but the shopkeepers themselves, with scarcely an exception, have endorsed its principles. Now, if the shopkeepers endorse the Bill and the shop assistants have been long agitating for it, the only persons who remain to be consulted are the general public, and I think the general public are not so ungenerous and selfish as to deny the shop assistants the right for which they are asking. The general public in almost all instances, apart from the shop assistants and shopkeepers, have their half-holiday. Their week's work ends on Saturday at midday and they have the remainder of that day and the Sunday to recuperate from their labours, and it would be invidious and ungenerous on their part not to extend to the shop assistants the same advantages as they themselves enjoy. I think that the general public will deal generously and sympathetically with a proposal such as this, and will not be found wanting in giving to the shop assistants their necessary period of rest. At the present time, the shop assistants certainly have a Wednesday half-holiday, but that is a sort of hybrid holiday. It is, in many instances, a very questionable one, and it is a mere break in the middle of the week, hardly deserving of the title of a holiday. Some persons are working on that day and some are not. It has not the appearance or the surroundings of a holiday, and as the holiday feeling is absent from it, this Wednesday half-holiday is nothing more

than a fraud, a delusion, and a snare, and the shop assistants have found it so. By giving them a half-holiday on Saturday instead of on Wednesday they will be given sufficient time to recuperate from their labours. They will be relieved from the foetid and heated atmosphere of the city, and will have an opportunity of going into the quiet country lanes, or taking advantage of our pleasant stretch of river, and the enjoyment of these gifts of nature will lead to a more healthful life amongst them. The atmosphere of a shop, with the long hours and the crowds of people passing in and out all day long, is not the best, and those who have to live in this sort of atmosphere require a change if anyone does, and a change of as considerable a time as it is consistent with the general convenience of the public to give them. There may be one objection to an alteration of this kind, but it seems to me a very small one, namely, that as the wages are paid on Saturday morning it would inconvenience the wage earners if the shops were closed on Saturday. But there is an easy remedy for this. If necessary, the wages could be paid on Friday. There is no reason why the wages should not be paid on that day instead of on Saturday.

The Premier: They are paid on Wednesday.

Mr. DWYER: Wednesday, or any other day. In any event that objection seems to be mere playing and trifling with the principle which is at stake in this Bill. Besides, the measure has excellent precedents to recommend it. In all the Eastern States we find that the principles embodied in this Bill as regards the closing of shops have been put into practice, and I know from personal experience that there is no inconvenience, at any rate in Melbourne where the shops all close at one o'clock on Saturday and keep open to a late hour on Friday. The interests of the people may well be considered as safeguarded. I do not consider that in the metropolitan area, at any rate, there is any real reason for the holding of a referendum. But the fact of a referendum being embodied in the Bill will take from it any appearance of

trying to force the people's hand. I am confident that the verdict of the people will be almost unanimous in favour of this much-needed change in our legislation, and I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### RESOLUTION — STANDING ORDERS, LAPSED BILLS.

Message from the Legislative Council forwarding resolution that Standing Orders be adopted similar to those in force in the Commonwealth Senate, providing that the consideration of lapsed Bills may be resumed at the stage reached by such Bills during the preceding session and asking the Assembly to pass a similar resolution, now considered.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) moved—

*That for the greater expedition of public business it is in the opinion of this House desirable that Standing Orders be adopted by this House similar to those in force in the Commonwealth Parliament providing that the consideration of lapsed Bills may be resumed at the stage reached by such Bills during the preceding session; and that the Standing Orders Committee of this House confer with the Standing Orders Committee of the Legislative Council with the object of drawing up Standing Orders to carry out the terms of this resolution.*

He said: In moving this motion it is hardly necessary for me to say very much in its favour. Its real purpose is to provide that if a Bill has reached a certain stage in this Chamber, and its passage has been interrupted by the prorogation of Parliament, by resolution in the following session the Bill can be reinstated on the Notice Paper and proceeded with at the stage at which it was left in the preceding session.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Does that cover the preceding Parliament?

Mr. TAYLOR: No; only the preceding session of the same Parliament.

It will only apply when a general election has not intervened, and a Bill can only be reinstated by a resolution of the House in which it originated. That is the Standing Order in the Commonwealth Parliament and it has been largely availed of in that Parliament. Many times we have had comprehensive measures brought down to Parliament on which there has been a good deal of discussion and over which there has been expense in printing the measures and the debates, and the Bills have been lost, not because the House was not anxious to pass them, but because prorogation came along and did not allow the measures to get through, so that the whole of the work done on them was practically wasted effort. In these cases the Bills have to be brought down again next session and have to go through all the stages passed through in the previous session. Now, by passing this motion, the House can decide by resolution whether a Bill can be reinstated on the Notice Paper at the same stage when it was interrupted.

The Premier : How are we to decide it is the same Bill ?

Mr. TAYLOR : All measures brought down to Parliament are kept in a bound volume as they first enter the Chamber, and there is no difficulty in finding out from the records kept by the House what stage a Bill may have reached. We will take up the Bill at the exact stage where business was interrupted by the prorogation. If we were in Committee on a certain clause and an amendment to that clause was being discussed and progress was reported and the Bill was not brought before us again on account of the slaughter of the innocents, as it is generally termed, at the prorogation, that Bill could be taken up at that very stage. It is perfectly clear it will save a lot of time and a lot of expense. It is for the House to decide whether it is wise to reinstate a Bill at the stage where it was interrupted ; and considering this has been adopted by the Federal Parliament and has been passed by another branch of the legislature of this State for three

or four years in succession, I hope members will accept the motion I have moved.

Mr. Dooley : What happens when a change of Government takes place during the course of one Parliament ?

Mr. TAYLOR : The new Government need not take up the Bill if they do not think it necessary to submit a motion. They have control of the business. On the other hand if they do think it necessary they are at liberty to do it. The Standing Order would not apply if a general election intervenes. There is no need to labour the question. I think it is quite clear to hon. members. It is for the House to decide whether a Bill shall be taken up or not by resolution without the slightest feeling of party politics being introduced. I hope the House will accept the motion I have moved.

Mr. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) : I have not the slightest idea of opposing the motion. Indeed I support it ; I think it will be a wise provision and result in the expediting of work in both Chambers of the Parliament of this State. I did think that perhaps a Bill which had reached a certain stage might be reinstated in a new Parliament, but I understand from the member for Mount Margaret this is not the case, as the Commonwealth Standing Orders clearly lay that down. So long as we are protected in that respect—and it only means that a measure having reached a certain stage during the preceding session of the same Parliament can be reinstated by resolution—I can see no objection whatever ; indeed I think it will be an advantage and I propose to support the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) : I have no desire to oppose the motion, or at least that portion of it where we to an extent affirm the resolution ; but in all matters that affect our Standing Orders the Standing Orders Committee should first be asked to consider and report ; and as this motion has not been before our Standing Orders Committee, I think it is only due to the committee and this House that they should consider it, or any motion that would deal

with an amendment to our Standing Orders. For that purpose I move an amendment—

*That all the words after "Legislative Council" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu, "and be requested to consider the resolution and report on Wednesday next."*

They may then, if they consider it desirable, advise the House to make the necessary amendment to our Standing Orders, and may submit the necessary amendment so that it will not cause delay. It will be just a matter of affirming the desirability, and at the same time giving the Standing Orders Committee an opportunity to consider and report as to the advisability of adopting an amendment to the Standing Orders. I think the member for Mount Margaret will recognise the desirability of consulting the Standing Orders Committee on all amendments to our Standing Orders.

Mr. TAYLOR (on amendment): I am inclined to think I can accept the amendment, but I do not know that there is any necessity for it. I may be wrong—I have not been on the Standing Orders Committee except for a short period last session and the committee never met, so I have no knowledge; I am frank on the matter—but I believe if this motion were carried as I have moved it, the Joint Standing Orders Committee of both Houses would meet and confer as the motion directs and, without any further consultation of Parliament, frame Standing Orders in keeping with the motion and in keeping with the desire and wishes of the House, and the amendment would be placed in our Standing Orders by the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. Frank Wilson: It will have to come back to the House for ratification.

Mr. TAYLOR: Certainly the Standing Orders would need to be ratified by the House, but the motion as I have submitted it would enable them to meet and frame Standing Orders in keeping with the desire of the House. The amendment only asks that they should meet and report next Wednesday.

Mr. Frank Wilson: It is only delaying it a stage.

Mr. TAYLOR: We will have to wait until next Wednesday for the committee to report.

The Premier: That is better than waiting until next session.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the committee wish to meet on Friday they could frame the amendments and submit them to the House on Tuesday and they could be ratified at once.

The Premier: Make it Tuesday if you like. They can report in accordance with the motion and you can adopt their report straight away.

Mr. TAYLOR: As the Premier thinks the amendment will expedite matters, and as it does not affect the principle of the motion, I am prepared to accept it.

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended put and passed.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): In view of the resolution which has just been carried, I desire to move—

*That a Message be returned to the Legislative Council acquainting them accordingly.*

The other House sent a resolution for the consideration of this Chamber—

Mr. Frank Wilson: And we passed another.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have added to their resolution to make it apply to this Chamber, and my addition is not an amendment. It will be found that the only thing I have done to this resolution is to delete the word "Senate." Senate is in keeping with Legislative Council, and I have added "this House," so as to put it in the same position as the House of Representatives. All we have to do now is to transmit a Message to the Legislative Council acquainting them that we have agreed to their motion in the form I have intimated.

Mr. Nanson: But we have not agreed yet; we are waiting for the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the hon. member will read the Legislative Council's Message, and the first part of the resolution,



he will find that we have agreed to it. We have added to it, but we have agreed to the resolution.

Question put and passed.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: 1, Appointment of the Royal Commission on Miners' Lung Diseases (ordered on motion by Mr. Heitmann); 2, Application for forfeiture, Mikado gold mining leases (ordered on motion by Mr. Taylor).

*House adjourned at 9.5 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 23rd November, 1911.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Copies of Orders in Council under Audit Act; 2, Copies of approval to amendment of regulations under Audit Act; 3, By-laws of road boards—Yilgarn, Broomehill, Swan, and Drakesbrook.

### MESSAGE—STANDING ORDERS, LAPSED BILLS.

Message from the Assembly received acquainting the Council that it had passed a resolution in reference to lapsed Bills similar to that passed by the Council.

## BILL—APPELLATE JURISDICTION.

### *Recommittal.*

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY Bill recommitted for amendment.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

New Clause:

Hon. D. G. GAWLER moved —

*That the following be added to stand as Clause 6:—"No appeal to the Full Court from an order absolute for dissolution or nullity of marriage shall hereafter lie in favour of any party who, having had time and opportunity to appeal to that Court from the decree nisi on which such order may be founded, shall not have appealed therefrom."*

Under the present Act an appeal was allowed on a decree absolute within three months. A period of nine months might elapse before the decree nisi was made absolute, and the people concerned would not be able to marry during that period. This provision was in the English Act. The period which might elapse between the decree nisi and the decree absolute varied up to six months, and the new clause provided that having had time up to a period of three months and not appealed, the parties should be precluded from appealing after the decree absolute was made.

New Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Local Courts Act Amendment.

2, Public Works Committee.

Received from the Legislative Assembly.

## BILL—VETERINARY.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (North-East): In supporting the Bill before the House I think some steps should be taken in regard to the regulation of the practice