

to give permission to the municipality to tax all unimproved land values, as is provided for in the Roads Act. With regard to other matters, I shall reserve my remarks until the Bills come before the Chamber.

On motion by Mr. McDonald,] debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10-10 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 18th July, 1912.*

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

### MOTION — RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION, WICKEPIN-MERREDIN.

*Select Committee.*

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) moved—

*That a select committee of this honourable House be appointed to inquire into the reasons for the deviation of the Wickepin-Merredin railway authorised to be constructed by Act No. 10 of 1911, with power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to report thereon, and on the line generally, on Tuesday, 13th August, 1912.*

In submitting the motion standing in my name I do not propose to detain the House for more than a few minutes. At the outset I should like to state that as a young member of this House, in submitting this motion I copied a similar motion dealing with a matter of the same nature, and consequently it contains the same defect as

that which referred to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the Wongan Hills railway and which it was found necessary yesterday to rectify. I would therefore seek the indulgence of the House in asking to be permitted to add the words to the motion, "with power to adjourn from place to place." The proposal is that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into the deviation of the Wickepin-Merredin line. I do not propose to debate at any length the merits of this question, and I should not at all events be disposed to add to the bitterness of the controversy already raging around this matter. My own personal position is that of one who has no convictions and no opinions in regard to the matter. I am scarcely acquainted with a single settler in those districts and no settler has approached me in any way in connection with the proposal. I have received requests from associations numbering a great many people, and these requests I consider to be of sufficient importance to take notice of. The facts briefly are these: during last session of Parliament 82 selectors holding no less than 86,000 acres of land in Kuminin and Kurrenkutten agricultural areas forwarded a petition to the Legislative Assembly praying that their railway should be constructed on the surveyed route, approximately following the advisory board's recommendation and promised to them by the Wilson Government. The petition was presented in another place but it was not agreed to, and an attempt made then to appoint a select committee was also negatived. The Lands Department, when subdividing the Kuminin agricultural area, showed on their locality plans the Wickepin-Merredin railway in close proximity to the subdivisions, whereas the present route will be from 10 to 30 miles distant from the settlers. The prices charged for the land were high, and one of the reasons given for charging those prices was that the railway would run through these lands. On the public plans issued the railway is shown serving these particular districts. This applies not only to the original plans but also to the plans issued since the present Government came into office. It is

claimed, rightly or wrongly I am not in a position to state, and this is one of the matters which the committee will inquire into—that the present route is not within the limit of deviation allowed by the Act, and that if the schedule of the Act authorising the construction of the railway is adhered to, the railway would run through the heart of this district where the 82 settlers holding 86,000 acres of land are resident. They were encouraged by the late Government to spend capital in developing their properties, and large sums of money have also been spent on roads and dams and wells in the district. Generally they claim that the route advocated by them and appearing on the plans issued by the department is the only one that will bring every settler within a twelve-mile radius of the railway. I do not propose to debate the reasons for diverting the route of the line; that is the object for which this committee is to be appointed, and if it is appointed, I suppose, in accordance with the usual practice, I shall be a member of it, and if so, I shall go upon it with a perfectly open mind influenced by nothing except the position of those settlers of whom I personally do not know a single individual.

By leave, motion amended by adding the words “with power to adjourn from place to place.”

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): I desire to oppose the motion. I believe the line is already in course of construction and I fail to see what good will be accomplished by the appointment of this select committee. I do not think any decision they may arrive at will justify the stoppage of the construction already in progress and the alteration of the route. I have also been informed that this committee will cost the general taxpayer at least £25, and of course it may be much more. We want more reasons than those which have been given for the appointment of this committee, but had the line not been in course of construction, I probably would have been willing to consent to the appointment of the committee. I have been informed that the route recommended by the advisory board is being followed and I am going to oppose the motion.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): I presume the leader of the House will say a few words in this connection before the motion is carried, and when he does speak I should like him, if he will do so, to indicate to the House the position the Government are likely to take up in connection with this select committee, and if he can trespass so far, he might also inform the House the position the Government are likely to take up with reference to the last committee which was appointed. I presume, if the select committees are appointed, the Government will carry on, at all events, such portions of the works as would not be affected by the report of the committee, and that the appointment of the select committees will have no influence in the way hinted at by Mr. Cornell of hanging up the work. If select committees are to hang up railways, I, for one, will be very much inclined to doubt the wisdom of appointing them. I hope the Colonial Secretary, when he speaks, will indicate the position which his Government are likely to take up in this connection.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. DREW): I beg to move—

*That the debate be adjourned to the next sitting of the House.*

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That will put it off for three weeks.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I would like to ascertain whether Ministers have seriously considered their files to find out whether they are going outside the Act of Parliament which authorised this work. I think it will be the duty of the committee, when appointed, to elicit that information. Certainly it will be impossible for the Government to get warrants signed covering expenditure outside an Act of Parliament. If such warrants were illegally signed, the cost of any work outside the authorisation of Parliament would either have to be paid by Ministers out of their own pockets, or they would have to come down with a condemnation Bill. That will be a matter which the committee will have to inquire into. I would like to impress upon the leader of the House the seriousness of

the precedent that he and his fellow Ministers are venturing to start in this matter. The position will be a serious one. However, I will not further anticipate the inquiry which it will be the duty of the committee to make.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West) : What induces me to rise is the statement of Mr. Colebatch that the limit of deviation prescribed by the Act which we passed authorising the construction of that line has been exceeded. If that is the case, that is a very serious breach of the Act indeed. I cannot for the moment find the volume containing the Act authorising the construction of this particular line, but I think the limit of deviation was fifteen miles.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Five miles on either side.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : Mr. Colebatch has stated that the line has been deviated thirty miles.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : No. He said that it would leave some people thirty miles away from the line.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh : Some people include Mr. Hedges.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : I am not referring to Mr. Hedges or any other individual. In a matter of this kind it is a bad thing to bring in the names of any particular individual. I find that the limit of deviation prescribed by the Act was ten miles on either side of the line. Section 3 of the Act reads—

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Public Works Act, 1902, it shall be lawful for the Minister for Works to deviate from the line as described in such schedule to the extent of ten miles on either side thereof.

If that limit of deviation has been exceeded, then it is very unfair indeed to those settlers who have been persuaded to take up land on the assumption that they would get a railway line within a certain distance of their selection, because we all know that in wheat growing the question of cartage becomes a serious matter as soon as the settler gets twelve or fifteen miles from a line. If the statement of Mr. Colebatch is accurate, that some of the settlers will be thirty miles

from the railway, the Government might just as well not have started to make that line for all the good it will be to these people.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : What is the extent of the deviation?

Hon. M. L. MOSS : I do not know, but I do know that it is proposed to appoint a select committee to get a certain amount of information. Mr. Cornell says it is going to cost £25. Well it will be £25 well expended, but we cannot consider the expenditure of a few pounds in a matter of this kind, nor can we consider the fact that the line is now in course of construction. It frequently occurs that a railway line is entirely completed, and we then have a select committee appointed to consider grave matters that have arisen and that in the public interest demand the closest scrutiny and attention. Mr. Colebatch himself has no grievance; he says that he personally does not know any of the people who signed this petition; but there is a large section of the agricultural community who have selected in this locality, and who, I can plainly see, would never have selected but for the promise of railway communication; and the last thing any hon. member should desire is to prevent the light of day being thrown on the construction of a railway, or any other public work. The more inquiry and the more light we have the better it is for all parties, for this Government and for the last. I am not prepared to delay this matter if the Colonial Secretary desires to do so. Mr. Colebatch says he wants the committee to report on the 13th August, and if it is the intention of the Government to adjourn the House for a fortnight after rising to-night—

The Colonial Secretary : It is not the intention; we will adjourn for a week.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) : I have no desire to block a committee being appointed on this or any other matter connected with the present Government or with any past Government, but I do think that the opportunity might have been given to the leader of the House to get further information for

us. Then in the event of that not being obtained, this committee might have been able to be of some use. Personally, I believe that the motion for adjournment might have been carried, as it would be only for a week, in order to give the Minister an opportunity to obtain the necessary information. By so doing we might have saved the country a lot of expense and also a lot of the time of members of this Chamber.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I think this committee should be appointed. There is an old saying, "The truth fears nothing but concealment." We want the greatest light thrown on these matters, particularly in a case such as this, where so much prominence has been given to a particular proposal. We know that the Minister for Works went up to inspect that route, but we do not look upon the Minister for Works as an expert in railway construction or land settlement, and it has been asserted that the deviation of the line is contrary to the wishes and the advice of the advisory board. There is no desire to prevent the construction of any portion of this line, and I believe there is no difference of opinion as to its construction to a certain point; but, after it reaches that point a deviation not authorised and not intended by Parliament or by the advisory board is now intended by the Government. If the House is going to adjourn for even a week, there is time for the committee in that week to take some evidence, whereas if we adjourn the appointment of the committee, there is a possibility of the work being delayed. If there is nothing to hide, and I repeat, "Truth fears nothing but concealment," surely it is the duty of the House to afford every opportunity for enlightenment on a matter that concerns so many deserving people. I have met many of the people, though I know none of them personally except Mr. Hedges, but this House has the opportunity of selecting the committee by ballot, and the Government would be only doing their duty and acceding to the desire of this House, if they granted the committee without delay.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I only desire to say that I

had no intention of attempting to prevent the appointment of a select committee. My sole desire in moving the adjournment of the debate was to enable me to furnish hon. members with information.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): As it seems to me that there may be a division on this question—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: There will not be.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then that is satisfactory, for I shall be able to be even more brief than I had intended. I will say ditto to the comments made by Mr. Kingsmill. I am certainly at a loss to understand why the adjournment was not permitted, because although Mr. Colebatch gave us a very impartial statement, and although Mr. Moss asked for light on the subject, I do not know that we are going about it in the right way. I do not mean that as any reflection on Mr. Colebatch. He has, I understand, a petition from these people who are his constituents, and it is his duty to present it; that is, he puts the best face on the position of affairs. If Mr. Colebatch himself had strongly objected to the adjournment, I could have understood it, but I am unable to understand why other members refuse to allow the question to be adjourned.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: The work of construction has commenced.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Mr. Kingsmill dealt with that, and as I am sure there will not be a division I am satisfied.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East): I rise to support the remarks of Mr. Colebatch. I personally feel that there is nothing that we need fear and that there is nothing to conceal. So far as the adjournment is concerned, I think that a delay of that nature is unnecessary. If we are to adjourn for a week a splendid opportunity will be afforded the committee in the interval to take evidence, and go on the spot, if necessary, to make the fullest inquiries. The explanation of the Minister and of the Government would be available to that committee, so that I fail to see that there will be anything gained

by an adjournment for a week or a fortnight before we could hear what the Minister might have to tell us in regard to this matter. Personally, I believe that the Ministry have every intention of dealing out justice to all of these people, and that if these settlers are to lose this line there will be some other line that will take the place of the one which they had anticipated was to serve them. I have every confidence that something of the kind will be done, and I believe that would be the explanation of the Minister if we had this adjournment. A great deal more information would be obtained by the committee, and it is only just to these men that they should be able at least to feel that the Government are giving them a chance to put their case before the country. I know it is the feeling of many settlers that they have not so far had that opportunity. I hope that the motion for the appointment of the committee will be agreed to.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (in reply): I would just like to say a word or two in reply to some of the remarks of those who wish to delay or oppose this motion. I would be the last to seek to burk discussion by opposing an adjournment, but this is no new matter; it has been before the country for some time, and this motion has been on the Notice Paper for several days. I should also like to remind hon. members that some time during last session no less than eighty-two settlers petitioned another place for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into this question. The petition was refused. I do not know how it appeals to other hon. members, but it appeals to me as an extraordinary procedure that any branch of the Legislature should refuse the petition of practically the whole of the people in this area, presumably on the ground suggested by Mr. Cornell, that it was going to cost £25. To my mind, the matter of cost does not enter into the question at all. I am sorry to say that the progress which is being made in the construction from the two ends of this line is not at so rapid a rate that we need have any fear of the construction party reaching the point of the deviation before the committee has time to report; but if this

motion were adjourned from time to time it is possible that the construction might have reached this point before the committee had finished their labours. But there will be two phases to this inquiry. The report of the committee may influence the direction in which the line is to be built; if so, it is important that the committee should have finished their work before the construction party reaches the point of deviation. On the other hand, if the report does not influence the direction of the line the inquiry will, at least, give the settlers an opportunity of saying whether justice has been done. The name of a certain gentleman has been mentioned in an interjection. To my mind, it only shows that some people are not prepared to judge this matter from an impartial point of view. Speaking on behalf of those 82 settlers, who have taken up between them nearly 90,000 acres of land, I say that if we are to reject their request, refuse to give an inquiry, refuse to hear them, and refuse to see whether injustice has been done, simply because it is going to cost the country £25, it is altogether too absurd an argument to hold ground for a moment.

Question put and passed.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East): I move—

*That the Select Committee consist of the Hon. C. A. Piesse, Hon. R. G. Ardagh, Hon. V. Hamersley, Hon. C. Sommers, and the mover.*

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): I second that. I hope the committee will report by the 13th August. I do not feel disposed to grant any extension of time because it is expedient that the construction of the railways should not be put off by the deliberations of this committee being unduly protracted.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): I support the remarks of Mr. Moss in regard to the necessity for an early report, and I extremely regret that the leader of the House is not in a position to inform us as to what attitude the Government are likely to take up in regard to the construction of this line between the appointment of the committee and the report thereof. It is a very import-

ant point, and one all members of the House would like to be enlightened on. I feel extremely uneasy on it myself, and I wish the leader of the House could give us some idea of what the Government are going to do in this connection.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): In order to view the proposed deviation and the old route, the committee will find even the 13th August too early a date, and I think that if the committee should require another week it is wise to notify it, and to see that the House should not insist on a report by the 13th August; in order to obtain evidence over a scattered area like this, it will take fully a week before the selectors will have knowledge that a committee has been appointed.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not in order. The question of time was settled in the last motion. The question now before the House is simply the names of the members to comprise the select committee.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): When I came here to-day I had no intention of opposing the appointment of a select committee, and I did not anticipate that questions would be sprung upon me which would necessitate a meeting of the Cabinet in order to come to a determination. Mr. Kingsmill expects me to give a reply on the spur of the moment I am not in a position to give, and which I cannot possibly give until I consult the Government; that is exactly my position; if I had the information I would supply it to the House.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: There is none to supply at the present time?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.  
Question put and passed.

## BILL—ELECTION OF SENATORS AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), in moving the second reading, said: In 1903 we passed a Bill which subsequently became an Act entitled the Election of Senators Act, 1903. That was in conformity with the Common-

wealth Electoral Act, but, during last year, the Commonwealth Electoral Act was amended, consequently it necessitates an amendment of the Election of Senators Act, 1903. The amendments contemplated are merely formal; there are three—an extension in the time for the return of the writ, the naming of the day (Saturday) on which the poll shall be taken; also extending the time for the taking of the poll. The letter we received from the Prime Minister will clearly place the position before hon. members. On the 15th January, 1912, the Prime Minister wrote the following letter—

I have the honour, at the instance of my colleague the Minister for Home Affairs, to forward, herewith, a copy of the Amending Electoral Act, passed by the Parliament of the Commonwealth during the session which closed on the 21st December last: and to specially invite your attention to—

- (a) Section 12, which provides that 'the day fixed for the polling shall be a Saturday;
- (b) Section 13, by which Section 89 of the Principal Act is amended to provide that 'the date fixed for the return of writ shall be not more than ninety days after the issue of the writ; and
- (c) Section 16, which amends Section 137 of the Principal Act by extending the time for closing the poll until 8 o'clock in the evening.

May I ask you to be so good as to introduce during the next session of your Parliament a Bill to amend the State Act relating to the Election of Senators (1903), with a view to placing the State law in harmony with the Commonwealth law in these matters.

My colleague desires me to mention that it has been found to be necessary on the occasion of every Senate election to apply to the Governor of the State for an extension of the period (sixty days) fixed under the existing law for the return of the writ—

That is the point; they had to apply on each occasion for an extension; but, in

this legislation we introduce, and which has passed the Commonwealth Parliament, the extension will be made by law from sixty to ninety days.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Does this deal with ordinary State elections?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes. The letter proceeds—

And that unless the house of polling for Senate and House of Representatives elections are made identical, great confusion and loss of Senate votes would, it is feared, result when the elections are held on the same day.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Are they not identical now?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not since the passing of the Commonwealth Act, 1911. The matter was referred to the Chief Electoral Officer, who stated—

The matter is not one which in any way directly concerns this department, and it would appear, if the Government agree to the alterations suggested, that the Parliamentary Draftsman should be notified in order to enable him to take necessary steps.

There is no objection to the Bill; it is simply to bring our law in reference to the matter into line with the Commonwealth.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Have the other States done the same?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I could not say; I dare say they have. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): The only objection I see to the Bill is the fixing of Saturday as the polling day. It is surely a matter of sentiment that we should fall into line with the Commonwealth, but on the matter of law the Constitution of the Commonwealth leaves the conduct of the election of senators to each State. It is perfectly within our rights to have our own arrangement; still, as a matter of sentiment, it is desirable that all the States should fall into line with the Commonwealth electoral law. The only difficulty I see is with regard to Saturday, which is not a good polling day, because it excludes a large and important section of the community

from the poll, or makes them act contrary to their religious beliefs.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Why can they not vote on Saturday?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: They object to it.

Hon. F. Davis: They are an inconsiderable section of the community.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am referring to members of the Hebrew faith. As a matter of Federal sentiment, I vote for the Bill. Sentiment is worth considering, and it is on that account desirable that all the States should fall into line with the Federal electoral law.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): Not only the Jews, but the Seventh Day Adventists are affected. I do not know what the number of the Seventh Day Adventists may be, but I am satisfied they would very strongly object to Saturday being a polling day. I do not hold any strong opinions on the subject, but I do not think I would have chosen Saturday as the polling day. It seems to me possibly one of those things put through without anyone taking notice of it, and causing a great deal of trouble afterwards. I suppose the Government have considered this aspect of the question.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Did the Commonwealth Government give any reasons for wanting Saturday?

The Colonial Secretary: No; only it was in their Act.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): It would be a pity to do violence to anyone's religious feelings. The Jewish community and the Seventh Day Adventists, probably a great number of them, would feel it a great and unnecessary hardship, and an act of interference with their religious consciences. In Committee I shall support any movement to put in any other day but Saturday.

Hon. F. DAVIS (Metropolitan-Suburban): When Mr. Cullen was speaking, I interjected that those he referred to were an inconsiderable section of the community, but for the moment I did not understand that the hon. member was not referring to the Seventh Day Adventists, whom I had in mind and who are a small section of the community. So far as the

Hebrews are concerned, I understand their laws allow of their doing this on the Sabbath without violating their consciences, so there cannot be any objection on the ground of its in any way interfering with their religious scruples to have to vote on Saturday. As for the great majority of the people, it appears to me Saturday would be a most excellent day, both for the residents in the towns and for the residents in the country. Of course, those in industrial centres have a half-holiday on Saturday, and would therefore have ample time to record their votes; so by this means there will be obtained an almost complete urban vote on the question, and so far as the country residents are concerned, I understand it is the custom to leave work at least a little earlier on Saturdays. So that with regard to all sections of the community, with the exception of those previously mentioned, it would be an advantage to hold the election on Saturday. Indeed, so far as our own elections are concerned, Saturday would be a good day.

On motion by Hon. M. L. Moss debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 5.18 till 5.23 p.m.*

#### BILL—SUPPLY (TEMPORARY ADVANCES) £150,254.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

#### *Second reading.*

The Standing Orders having been suspended,

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), in moving the second reading, said: The object of the measure is to enable temporary advances to be legally made to departments to pay salaries and wages per medium of field orders, and also to make payments on behalf of other Governments as requested, including the Home Government, such as the payment of Imperial pensions. From the date on which the Treasury Accounts were reorganised in 1881 to the 30th June, 1911, all temporary advances to be recovered have been shown in the balance sheet as moneys taken out of the public account to be sub-

sequently met on a final charge against votes or to be recovered from other Governments or persons. But there has been no proper appropriation by Parliament. The money has been sent away in order to pay railway men, but between the time the money has been sent and the time the vouchers came back, there has been no protection and there has been no justification for this proceeding. It has never been questioned, but we desire that the proper course should be adopted. I can give an explanation of the items in the schedule.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: There is an item "Expenditure advance, £69,000."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: All departmental expenditure is paid by departments. In order to do so moneys from the public account are placed to the credit of special advance accounts. Necessarily, reimbursements are made from time to time until the end of the year, when the advances are repaid to the Treasury, thus making all expenditure final against votes. Lump sums are sent from the Treasury to paymasters without any appropriation and the account is debited as soon as the money is sent, then when the receipts come back the account is credited and balanced.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: What is that special item of £69,000? The other items are set forth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have given the explanation. All departmental expenditure is paid by departments, and in order to do so moneys from the public account are placed to the credit of special advance accounts. At Geraldton, for instance, it is necessary to pay officers regularly, and the money is paid to the credit of a paymaster at a local bank. The paymaster draws cheques against it and sends down vouchers and the account is revived.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I think the hon. member thought that amount was for the purchase of steamers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: On the 30th June that advance disappears and fresh Parliamentary authorisation must be obtained if we are going to comply with the Constitution Act.



Hon. H. P. Colebatch: There is another item, "Treasury paymasters, £25,000."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, that is another on the same lines. The Treasury paymasters draw orders on the Treasury for the payment of accounts transmitted to them. These are debited until the vouchers are scheduled and the account is recouped accordingly. Supposing they get £40,000, they are debited with that amount, but it remains £40,000 the whole time, so long as every voucher they get signed is credited. Supposing this Bill was not passed and it was decided not to adopt the course followed by previous Governments, what would occur? The men working on the railway lines could not get paid until a voucher was sent in, and to obviate this we pay lump sums to the credit of the paymasters.

Hon. F. Connor: "Deferred freight rebates," is that not against the law?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The freight is paid in full and subsequently a certain portion of it is rebated by the shipping owners.

Hon. F. Connor: Is that not against the law?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not aware that it is, it is in accordance with specific arrangements. With regard to the item "Director of field works," the wages of men employed in outlying districts have to be paid before the vouchers charging them to proper heads of services are received by the respective departments and the Treasury.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Just to cover the gap of a few days.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, or no money could go out of the Treasury before the presentation of a voucher. I beg to move—

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

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-West): Looking at this Bill, in one way it is an act of supererogation. It is equivalent to the Government saying "You have been blaming us for unconstitutional procedure and now we are going beyond the demands of the Constitution." Insofar as these items are intended to be what they pur-

port to be, there is no need for the Bill, but on the other hand I would like the Minister to understand that we accept his bringing in of the Bill as an assurance that he will not say afterwards that £150,000 being an advance to the Treasurer is an open cheque to him to do as he likes with. I am not seriously afraid that he will, but I think the very fact that he is professing to do away with supererogation, justifies a word of caution that in future nothing is to be regarded as an open cheque and everything must go to what the Minister has given the House to understand it will go to.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is a public act of repentance.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: If I understand aright the £69,000 is for ordinary and not urgent expenditure.

The Colonial Secretary: Yes, the money has already been voted by Parliament.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I must congratulate this House on the success of its action in giving the Government a dignified remonstrance as to its failure to amend this constitutional practice in the past.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and *passed*.

## ADJOURNMENT—ONE WEEK.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) moved—

*That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, 30th July.*

He had informed some of the members that the House would adjourn for a fortnight, but there was an important question, that of the purchase of the trams, which should be decided at an early date so that the tramway company would not be kept in suspense. Contrary to his previous statement he was obliged to call the House together on Tuesday week.

Question passed.

*House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.*