

say that the *West Australian* had a letter from their correspondent in London stating that the State Government had agreed, through the head of the Government, that 25 miles along the route of the railway should be given to the Federal Government, as they anticipated that the Federal Government by that could make sufficient to pay for any loss on the railway.

Mr. Frank Wilson: Was Sir Newton Moore in London at the time?

The PREMIER: I am not absolutely certain on that point. However, I will produce the article, and that ought to be sufficient for the hon. member.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Seeing that I never saw the statement in the Press, and that Sir Newton Moore was in London at the time, surely it is a very moderate request to make that the Premier should cable to Sir Newton Moore to get a repudiation of the statement. It is a serious matter, though the Premier seems to think little of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think this discussion is in order.

The Premier: I will produce the paragraph.

Mr. FRANK WILSON: Does the Premier want me to pay for the cable out of my own pocket?

The Premier: No; but I will produce the paragraph first.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 12th December, 1911.*

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

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Annual report of the Observatory.

### SAVINGS BANK AND COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS—RAILWAY ADVISORY BOARD INSTRUCTIONS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I wish to make a statement with regard to questions asked by Mr. Kingsmill and Mr. Moss last week. Mr. Moss asked a question on the 30th November: "Is it the intention of the Government to take immediate steps to remove the Savings Bank business now transacted for it by the Commonwealth Government to some State department?" At the last sitting of the House Mr. Moss asked me a further question on the matter without notice, but I was not in a position to give a definite reply. I am advised that the Premier will make a public announcement on this matter within a few days. As to the question asked by Mr. Kingsmill, I have done all in my power to secure the instructions, but unfortunately the chairman of the advisory board, the Surveyor General, is ill in hospital and that considerably interferes with the result of my efforts, besides I am informed by the secretary to the Premier that in many instances the instructions were given verbally. When Mr. Johnston is well we shall be able no doubt to supply the instructions without delay. The various de-

partments are investigating the matter endeavouring to discover all available copies of instructions, and as soon as I secure them I will lay them on the Table of the House.

#### QUESTION—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY DEPARTMENT.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it the intention of the Government to amalgamate the Department of Inspector of Machinery and Boilers with that of State Mining Engineer, as is the case in Victoria?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The matter has not been considered.

#### MOTION — PERTH TRAMWAYS, PURCHASE BY GOVERNMENT.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (North-East): I beg to move—

*That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that all rights, title, and interests held by the Perth Tramways, Limited, be purchased by the Government.*

In bringing this motion before the House this afternoon I do so knowing that there is a good number of complaints with regard to the running of the Perth trams.

Hon. C. Sommers: Is it not the Kalgoorlie trams you mean?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I can quite understand the hon. member being blind sometimes, but I did not think he was so blind as that.

Hon. C. Sommers: Is there nothing wrong with the Kalgoorlie trams?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I have to get my living in Perth, and so do a number of other hon. members and we know the way the trams are run here. When the tram system was first inaugurated the promoters made a number of promises as to the way the tramways would serve the City, but I think members will agree with me that they have fallen far short of expectations. I am sure if a Bill was brought before Parliament with a view to any private person running trams

in the City the Bill would have scant support from members. Perth is the capital of Western Australia, and if we come from Kalgoorlie or Albany or Bunbury or any other part of the State all feel a sort of interest and part ownership in the capital of the State. For that reason any system of tramways in use in the capital should be subject to the criticism of every citizen of the State. I think the Perth tramways deserve the severest criticism. Perth is a city which I suppose ranks amongst the most beautiful of the capitals of the Australian States. A visitor here, not a great while ago, described our river as a very fine sheet of water, he described King's Park as a beautiful place and he also admired our public buildings, but he stated that there were two things which were not up-to-date, namely, the sewerage of the City and the Perth tramways. He thought the Perth tramways very much out of date. The trams are not able to cope with the business and they are run at such long intervals that people suffer in their business and in their private life. The method of running the trams—if there is any method at all, I do not know of it—the method that seems to be adopted is to run anyhow. There are no special periods for the trams to run, what I mean is that they are not run every quarter of an hour or every ten minutes but they are run anyhow. I have waited—and many members will bear me out in this—for 25 minutes to go to one of the suburbs from the Hay-street section. About a month ago when we had a little rain in Perth I noticed an-unfortunate woman with a child in her arms waiting for over half an hour for a tram to run to North Perth. Something should be done in this matter. The Government should see that this City, being, as I said before, the head town of a State like Western Australia, had the trams run in a way that would keep faith with the people who gave the company the right to run them. I am sure they are not keeping to the agreement, therefore my sole reason in bringing forward the motion is that the House may strengthen the hands of the Government in doing something to make the system a tolerable one.

I am quite sure members have noticed how very crowded the trams are at certain hours of the day. In most cities there is a duplicate service at the busy hours, but in Perth it seems to me we are supposed to sit on one another's laps if we want to go home after the closing of our businesses. I have seen when going round the Beaufort-street curve, ladies and gentlemen knocked off their seats. I do not know, but I think either the line is at fault or the driver is at fault. At any rate it is distinctly dangerous. In addition to that we find the trams crowded with people; and I have seen plenty of people left at the stopping places and they cannot get home within a reasonable time. I do not know who is to blame, but I think the Government of the day can surely do something with a view to making the trams more convenient to the people. I have a note here in regard to the fares on the trams. I should imagine by the fares charged that the Perth Tramway Company must be one of the richest companies in the world. When I was in Sydney recently I rode for a distance of 11 miles for 5d., yet in Perth the company charge 3d. for one mile or a much less distance. The fares to my mind are most exorbitant, although members of Parliament have the privilege of a Parliamentary ticket between Harvest-terrace and Pier-street. Complaints are made in regard to school children. We know that a dozen childrens' tickets can be obtained for 1s. 6d. but the average family consists of three or four children and if these children have to go to school and each pay 1½d. on going and another 1½d. on returning it runs into a fair amount by the end of the week. I think the Government should approach the tramway company to allow children the same privilege as the working man, obtaining a return ticket to take them home in the afternoon. As to transfers, if a passenger does not ask for a transfer on starting the journey, the passenger is told, "you are too late." When the trams first started persons were permitted to get a transfer at the intersection of Hay-street and Barrack-street, but now that rule has been stopped and if a passenger does not

make the request for a transfer on boarding the tram, the passenger is told "you are too late." and that passenger cannot get a transfer to continue the journey on another car. Many people find it is very expensive to be conveyed to the river or other watering places and it takes a man with a pretty good purse to be able to send his family on hot summer nights down to the river side for a blow. Some people live too far away to walk to the river side and in some cases a woman has a child to carry and cannot be expected to walk. Take a run from the other side of Subiaco, or from the other side of North Perth, the fare for an adult is 3d. and 1½d. for a child, that is providing the child is over 4 years of age. In a climate like this representation should be made to allow children above four years of age to travel free to the water side. I hope the Government will see that something is done in that direction. It requires a man, as I said just now, with a pretty good purse to take his family to the river side to get the fresh air when we consider the present fares. Another question is whether the tramway people are not treating indifferently their obligations to the public, as far as the dust is concerned.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I agree with you there, it is a disgrace.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I remember a few years ago the tramway company used to do a lot of watering in the streets, and made riding in the trams comfortable; now, I believe, they are not under any obligation to water the streets because they are contributing a certain amount of money to the municipal council for that purpose. It seems they have their own power house and they have their own water cars, and the least which might be expected of them is that they might run those water cars occasionally along the roads and lay the dust. I do not intend to labour this matter. I expect that members will take some interest in the motion which I have moved, more particularly those who live in Perth, and still further because of the interest that hon. members take in Perth by reason of the fact that it is the capital city of the

State. There are many people who visit the City during the few hours that the mail steamers are in the port, and I do not know whether they can go around all the car routes in the time at their disposal, but I should imagine if they went everywhere it would take them a week. I have brought this motion forward and I leave it to the members of the Council to say whether, in their opinion, there is not some cause for complaint, and whether the Government should not do something with a view to improving the condition of the tramways of the city.

Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett: How much would it cost to purchase the system?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I have heard that the company require half a million of money, but I do not know whether the Government are prepared to go to that extent. What I would suggest is that the Government should purchase a few motor buses to carry the surplus traffic. The Perth Tramway Company do not seem inclined to cater for everyone. I have much pleasure in moving the motion which has already been read.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: You had better include the Kalgoorlie trams in the motion.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I will leave that to the hon. member.

Hon. F. DAVIS (Metropolitan-Suburban): I desire to second the motion and, while doing so, I would urge that it be extended. The nationalisation of such a system means the nationalisation or the taking under the control of the Government all works of that kind throughout the State; the hon. member who has moved the motion has, I think, referred to the one system in Perth. In addition there are tramways in Fremantle and Kalgoorlie.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Buses and cabs.

Hon. F. DAVIS: Only the trams are the subject under discussion. If the principle is good for Perth it certainly must be good for other places, and it should be extended to other centres. There can be no doubt that in England, and in European countries, where the trams have been municipalised, there has been a good result, and, as the principle is somewhat

similar, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that equally good results would obtain here, and, for that reason, I certainly approve of the principle. During the recent elections the subject was mentioned by Mr. Doland and myself at practically all our meetings, and I have reason to believe that the fact was approved by the electors as a whole. As to whether the amount suggested should be given for the trams is a matter for consideration. Personally I do not think it ought to be, because the goodwill of the system is not an asset that should be given consideration, because I take it, when the company obtained the concession, they knew full well it might be possible for the Government to enter into negotiations and take over the system. Just as in the case of the Swiss Republic, where the spirit monopoly was taken over and nothing was paid for the goodwill, I fail to see why, in this instance, any particular sum should be paid for goodwill. It is a business transaction pure and simple when negotiations reach that stage. The principle contained in the motion, being a good one, and being one that is in accord with the views I hold, I shall support the motion.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): In case this motion is either carried or rejected I want to make my position plain. I would not be justified in voting for a motion like this on the information contained in Mr. Brimage's speech. Before I would record my vote in favour of purchasing this company's concession I should like to know the value of the property and I should like to know what it is proposed to give them for it, and not blindly vote for a motion of this kind, which might pledge the House to a certain course of action, and it would be taking up a very stupid and unbusinesslike stand to vote for such a motion without getting full information.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage: That will all come later.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I would like to have it before saying yes to a motion of this kind. I do not like voting on the blind.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage: Probably the Public Works Department will deal with it.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: I am not dealing with probabilities either; I am taking the motion as it is. The last speaker believes in all these things being nationalised. I believe in all public utilities being nationalised, but we have to be careful. Down at Fremantle we have a municipalised tramway scheme and the tramways, minus the light, are not a very good paying proposition; on the contrary they are a losing proposition, and therefore to be asked to vote on a bald question like this is asking too much. I am not saying whether I am for or against the motion. I merely rose to express my opinion that there is no information before the House, and it is, therefore, impossible for anyone to give an intelligent vote on the question.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): I feel very much as the hon. member who has just sat down. I should like to thank Mr. Brimage very heartily for having come to my assistance in sharing my views, and also on behalf of Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Sommers who represent the metropolis.

Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett: It affects the metropolis and the suburbs.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: The other members can thank Mr. Brimage on their own behalf. I hope that the hon. gentleman does not misunderstand me when I tender him grateful thanks for the course he has taken. I think the hon. gentleman has given us a very lively display of that public spirit which should actuate every public mind. Undoubtedly the terms of the motion are much too wide for any member to vote blindly on, although I may say I am undoubtedly in accord with the spirit of the motion. I do think that these trams, and, as a matter of fact, most forms of locomotion which apply to the general public, should be nationalised as much as possible, and if they are to be taken over by anyone I think the experience of the Government in New South Wales should show that it is the Government who should take them over, rather than a narrower body. Indeed, I shudder to think what state of affairs would ensue if the trams were taken over by any one

of the municipalities through which they run. The adjustment of accounts and responsibilities, and all profits, if there be any profits, would prove a task which would be well nigh impossible for the municipalities to settle, and, that being so, it would remain for the central power—the Government—to step in and nationalise the trams in the truest sense of the word. There is a very great deal to be done before even such a scheme can be definitely and intelligently spoken on. The first thing to be done should be to obtain a report from the Public Works Department, if that is the Department that controls the tramway system, to show the value of the trams, their earning capacity, what they are doing, how they are carrying out their duties, and everything of that sort before a motion like that submitted by Mr. Brimage is presented to Parliament. At the same time, as a metropolitan member, I cannot oppose the motion; I do not intend to do so, but I would wish that a great deal more information had been supplied hon. members.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): It seems to me that a motion of such importance as this can hardly be decided off hand. I listened with considerable interest to the remarks of the hon. member as to how the tram service is conducted, but unfortunately I use the system so rarely that I cannot give any personal experience except in favour of the tramways.

Hon. M. L. Moss: If you stood on the back platform of a car you would have a very unfavourable experience.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: On the rare occasions that I do use the trams I find them exceedingly comfortable and think they go along at a good pace, but I do not happen to travel at the times hon. members have mentioned. However, we must always remember that in the case of any tramway company, at certain times of the day, and nowhere have I seen this exemplified more than in Sydney, the trams are so crowded that one cannot even get standing room. This is on short lines and at short intervals, but there are long stages of tramways as a rule which are sparsely patronised and

these are the lines that do not pay. Whether this is a paying company or not, I do not know, but I believe it pays its debentures if it does not pay interest on shares. Anyway it has had the pluck to start the trams in Perth and we might have gone years without if this company had not started them. I remember when the matter was first initiated in London the promoter of the company came to me and asked whether there was any reasonable hope of doing well with trams in Perth and the suburbs. I was pleased indeed that Perth was going to be favoured with trams and I used the colloquialism that he might put the shirt off his back on the venture. With that opinion I think he went to work and the tramway scheme was originated. As to the inconvenience mentioned by Mr. Brimage with regard to the transfers and those sort of things, I am wondering whether that is the fault of the proprietors or the staff. We know for some reason or other there has been trouble between the proprietors and the staff and I was under the impression they were working amicably, but whether these troubles are due to some little difference of opinion or not I cannot say; at any rate it is a question of expediency as to whether we should adopt such a far-reaching motion as this. We would be forcing on to the hands of the Government, or rather recommending, expenditure which they may not be prepared to carry out. It is not as if the subject had been neglected or not thought of, because I saw only the other day that the Perth municipal council had the matter in hand, and if I remember correctly some remarks were made then about the sum of money which would be required to take over the system. We have only to remember that half a million is a large sum and even if the Government were willing to effect the purchase at the present time they would experience some difficulty in getting the money. Under the circumstances, although I commend the hon. member for bringing forward a motion like this, I think he would be well advised to withdraw it for the present after the debate is finished. None of us

are prepared to bind ourselves to this motion at the present time because of the state of the market and many other considerations, and therefore the hon. member would be well advised to withdraw it. I do not think there would be much reluctance on the part of the proprietors to sell the trams because they are not the great financial success that many people seem to think, and they have been attended with a considerable amount of trouble. The hon. member can thus see that under the circumstances he would only be embarrassing the Government if they were at all inclined to take notice of the motion. In face of that I think the hon. member would be well advised if after this discussion he withdrew his motion.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): Like the preceding speaker, I think it would be unwise to force this motion through. We do not know what the cost would be. We do not know if the money could be advantageously provided even if the Government did come to terms with the Tramway Company, and it is too much to ask the House to vote for a bald motion such as this. As a metropolitan member, I should like to see the Government secure this concession, but certainly on conditions fair both to the country and to the company. We must not forget that at the time when the company was floated very few local men were prepared to back up the opinion of the promoters and put their money into the company. I think I am safe in saying that very few shares are held in Western Australia; it is all foreign capital, and as these people had to initiate and develop a tramway system there is certainly a goodwill attached to it. I may say I would rather see the system in the hands of the Government than in the hands of the municipal council, but I hope the motion will be withdrawn. We know that the City council are negotiating with the company, and also that the late Government were negotiating, and probably the present Government also, and to carry the motion might embarrass the Government. It might lead the company to take it as an instruction

to the Government to purchase the concession, and they might put a greater price upon it. Taking all these things into consideration, and seeing that we have had very little information afforded us on the subject, I think it would be well if the hon. member were to withdraw the motion. At the same time I would like to make my position clear, viz., that if favourable terms could be arranged I would like to see the system in the hands of the Government.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East): There is a strong feeling on the goldfields that all members elected to the Legislature from those districts should reside in the vicinity of their electorates. The reason for this feeling is that the goldfields people are afraid that the effects of the environment of Perth on a member who resides there are such that he becomes less useful to the goldfields. I have never given credence to that idea until now, when I find Mr. Brimage, who resides in one of the suburbs of Perth, and has not to put up with the discomforts of the goldfields, bringing forward a motion which he states will cost the State something like half a million of money to put into operation. A goldfields member asks the State to put its hands in its pocket and provide half a million pounds to take over the tramways of Perth. I am not prepared to support that motion. I think before such a motion was brought forward statistics should have been prepared, and that some definite estimate of the cost involved should have been given, and we ought also to have some idea of the profits on running these tramways, so that we might be sure that in giving effect to the motion it would not result in a loss to the general taxpayer. With other members who have spoken I think that now the hon. member has aired his grievance, it would be wise for him to withdraw the motion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): I agree with the hon. members who have expressed the opinion that it would be wise for Mr. Brimage to withdraw his motion. As the motion stands, if carried, it will be a direction to the Government to enter into negotiations at

once for the purchase of that undertaking. It would be a different matter altogether if the concessions were under offer to the Government for a fixed sum, and if the House had full information as to the value of the concern, but there is a total absence of information in regard to the matter, and there has been no offer to the Government. Consequently, at this stage, it would be very injudicious to pass a motion of this sort. I hope, therefore, that the motion will be withdrawn.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (in reply): I certainly thought when I moved this motion that I was doing something in the direction of strengthening the hands of the Government, by getting an expression of opinion from this House as to whether the tramway system of the capital should be purchased by the Government or not. I did not look on it as Sir Edward Wittenoom has done, that it would be practically putting the Government in the position of trying to be obedient to this Chamber, and I do not think now that the wording of the motion would have that effect. It would have been merely an expression of opinion that the tramway system of this city is not run in a proper manner. I am sure that all members will agree that the system is run much worse now than when it was first installed. The carriages are not up-to-date; in fact the whole system is run recklessly and anyhow. I did not quite catch what Mr. McKenzie said, but I think that if a member brings forward a motion respecting the capital city, even if he be a member from another province, he is not doing anything that is wrong. I do not believe in feeling parochial in matters of this kind. The capital of the country is owned by every citizen of the State.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: What is the good of the capital if the industries of the State are not kept going?

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE: I cannot hear what the hon. member says. I should have liked this motion to have been adjourned so that I could have read the hon. members' remarks, and replied at length, but I feel sure that I have not done any harm in bringing the matter forward. I am certain that there are many people in

the City who are dissatisfied with the tramway system, and for that reason I feel that the bringing forward of the motion has done good. I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

## BILL—HEALTH.

### *In Committee:*

Resumed from the 7th December.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.  
Clause 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 203:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: There was a decided objection to this clause. Section 247 provided that local authorities must enter into agreements with hospitals. If the clause was carried in the Bill it would mean that the local authorities might do so. It was further provided that one half of the cost of the people who could not pay should be paid by the local authorities. The whole question hinged on the local authority having to pay half the cost of persons suffering from infectious diseases, so that the whole thing was reduced to a very simple problem. If the Government were disposed to pay the whole of the cost of the indigent cases the trouble could be got over by striking out the words "one half" and inserting "whole." No one could object to an amendment in that direction as the Government would take the responsibility. The fault however with the clauses was that it deprived the Commissioner of the very necessary powers given to him in Section 203. The powers vested in the central authority—now the Commissioner of Public Health—were greatly strengthened by Parliament last session, but they would certainly clash with the provisions of Sections 243 and 247, and the position would be that what real power the Commissioner had to step in promptly would not be known. It was a serious matter to destroy the Commissioner's power to step in promptly where it was necessary in the interests of health. There was no desire to oppose these clauses because he (Mr. Connolly) had taken the last Bill

through Parliament. He was simply opposed to depriving the Commissioner of necessary powers. If the Government would take the responsibility of paying the whole cost of indigent cases the Commissioner's powers could be retained and the simpler amendment he had already suggested could be effected.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: When the Bill of last session was under consideration the Committee affirmed the principle that the Commissioner should not have power to compel the local authorities to establish and maintain hospitals. In order that there might be no doubt about the matter the present Bill had been brought in, Clause 3 of which provided, in effect, that no local authority should be compelled to establish, maintain, and equip hospitals at the direction of the Commissioner, or to enter into agreements for the treatment of infectious diseases. The object was simply to prevent the Commissioner from compelling the local authorities to undertake the expense of these hospitals, or enter into agreements for the treatment of infectious cases.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Both the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Connolly were aiming at practically the one end, although approaching it by different ways. If Mr. Connolly could but look at it as an outside critic he would see that the Colonial Secretary was really on sound principles. The committee should not, by rule of thumb, say that the Government should pay the whole cost of such works as were referred to in Sections 243 and 247 of the Act. Why should not the local people, if they preferred it, contribute part of the cost? It would never do to tie the hands of the Government and direct that in all cases they should pay the whole cost of dealing with infectious diseases. Mr. Connolly maintained that if the Bill were carried it would hamper the Commissioner in the exercise of his powers under Sections 203 and 204 of the Act, but, as a matter of fact, the only limitation on the compulsory powers of the Commissioner would be in regard to the provision for infectious cases, for what might be termed the emergency elements of the Act. He



was satisfied that the Colonial Secretary was on sound lines in respect to the Bill.

Hon. Sir E.H. WITTENOOM: The explanation of the Colonial Secretary was not very reassuring. It was proposed by the clause to take away one of the greatest safeguards we had against the spread of infectious diseases, to deprive the Commissioner of the power to compel local authorities to take proper precaution on the occasion of an outbreak of an infectious disease. In the event of small-pox breaking out at, say, Geraldton, would it not be quite right and proper that the central authority should have power to act?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: The Commissioner can do it always.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Yet it had been distinctly stated that the purpose of the Bill was to prevent the Commissioner from compelling the local authority to take proper precautions. To deprive the Commissioner of power to issue these emergency orders would be to do a great deal of harm, and because of that he would not vote for the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill had been brought in to endorse the principle affirmed last session when the Committee, by 14 votes to 8, had refused to give the Commissioner power to compel local authorities to erect hospitals and enter into agreements for the treatment of infectious diseases. Under Section 247 in its present form local authorities were compelled to enter into agreements, without any regard whatever to the necessity for an agreement. If the Committee had since changed their minds on the subject they would, of course, throw out the amendments.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: In the course of the debates last session he had objected to these obligations being cast on the local authorities, partly on account of the small revenues they possessed with which to meet the cost of these indigent cases. Mr. Connolly now said that the Government should assume the responsibility of paying the whole amount. But it was scarcely to be thought that any Government would agree to alter Section 247 in that way, and so give the local

authorities the right to incur very large expenditure and leave it for the Government to foot the Bill. According to the clause, the Commissioner's powers were not to be interfered with at all. What it was desired to do was to remove the compulsion and make the existing section permissive. The great point made by Mr. Connolly was that to do this would be to take from the Commissioner powers he ought to hold in the interests of public health. As a matter of fact it meant nothing of the kind. Section 15 of the Health Act furnished a complete answer to the argument of the hon. member, in that it provided that in an emergency the Commissioner might exercise any or all of the powers imposed upon a local authority, and make such regulations as might be deemed necessary. The Commissioner would still have the power to make the local authorities carry out the legitimate duties imposed upon them under the by-laws.

Hon. W. Marwick: Then there is no necessity for the amendment.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The purpose of the amendment was to make it perfectly clear that while the Commissioner could compel the local authorities to make by-laws, these local authorities with small revenues could not be compelled to erect hospitals and enter into agreements as at present provided in the Act. This was only right, for if any part of the State were to be visited with, say, small-pox, the State as a whole should bear the expense of the outbreak; because it was in the interests of the State as a whole that the means were taken to prevent the spread of the infection.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The amendment appeared to be superfluous, because under Section 15 of the Act the Commissioner would still have the powers the amendment proposed to take from him.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Section 15 of the Act provided merely that in cases of emergency the Commissioner might do certain things. That section would only be brought into requisition when a board sent down and refused to carry out its duties. Section 203, however, provided

that the local authorities should make certain by-laws, failing which the Commissioner had power to do it for them. Section 203 was contained in Part IX. of the Act, which successfully dealt with contagious diseases.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Last session this provision was struck out of the Bill; why was it necessary to insert it now?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Section 203 of the Act gave the Commissioner abundant powers to make regulations and to insist on local authorities making by-laws, but the Commissioner was not able to compel local authorities to build hospitals. They must provide accommodation now, but they could not be compelled to build hospitals.

Clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	18
Noes	..	..	..	4

Majority for . 14

#### AYES.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. R. Laurie
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. W. Marwick
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. J. A. Doland	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett	(Teller).
Hon. V. Hamersley	

#### NOES.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie	Hon. J. D. Connolly
Hon. W. Patrick	(Teller).
Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom	

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 256:

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: It would be better if this clause were left out of the Bill altogether, so that the Government, as had been promised, could bring in a Bill dealing altogether with the registration of nurses next session. During the recess the Government would be able to give consideration to such a measure.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The Bill was already drafted.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: To leave in the words "three years training in an approved institution or institutions" was al-

together too wide a definition. He moved an amendment—

*That the words "approved institution or institutions" be struck out and "a public hospital of 40 or more occupied beds or four years training in a public hospital of 20 or more occupied beds" be inserted.*

This would bring the law up to the standard required in the other States of the Commonwealth. In Melbourne and Sydney that was the training a general nurse required before she could obtain a certificate. If the clause remained at at present too much was left to the board. What was "an approved institution or institutions"? One board might say one thing and another board another thing, and there would be no finality. There should be no attempt made to lower the standard of general nursing, and we could not have a better example to follow than the standard in the Eastern States. If the clause was passed a nurse might move about from place to place, being in one hospital for a little time and then in another, and in the end she might get a certificate without having attended a lecture or passed an examination. By the clause an attempt was made to lower the standard of general nursing by saying that a person ought to serve three years in an approved institution. Who was to decide what was an approved institution. He had no objection to a nurse who, having got her certificate properly, after having served six months received her midwifery certificate, but he protested against the obvious attempt made to allow any nurse who had been three years in any institution to obtain a certificate by putting in six months in a midwifery institution.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What is the English standard?

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: Practically the same as the Australian, which was good enough for him. It was one of the highest in the world. There would be no objection to the six months clause but he was seeking to try to prevent the House allowing the three years' training here and there without having the institution specified. If the amendment were carried there could be no doubt on the matter.

Hon. R. LAURIE: The position, if the clause went through without the amendment moved by Mr. Jenkins, would be that a person might get a certificate after having been in various places not continuously.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: What about the board?

Hon. R. LAURIE: The hon. member might be reminded that boards were sometimes inclined to be, should he say, guided by their own feelings and not by what was exactly right. Personally he had no objection to the six months' training in a midwifery institution, but he did object to the clause as it was. Mr. Jenkins had pointed out what had taken place in other parts of Australia and that was quite good enough for him. We were dealing with nurses who had to deal with human life. A few days ago when the Veterinary Bill was before the House hon. members spoke about the seriousness of allowing men who had been practising the profession of veterinary surgeons for years without certificates to continue to do so, and of the necessity for safeguarding animals. How much more serious was it to protect human life by seeing that nurses had a proper training, and was there a better training ground than that proposed by Mr. Jenkins? In the district in which he lived he was out as far as it was possible to go, and he had been rung up in very serious cases which had been attended by midwives and in connection with which it was found necessary to call in a doctor. If in the first instance these cases had been attended to by properly trained midwives there would not have been the necessity to call in a doctor.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: In the original Act it was provided that a midwifery nurse should be qualified by having twelve months in a training institution for midwifery and he understood that a good many people thought that was a severe training; on the other hand there was a great demand for midwifery nurses in different parts of the State and under these circumstances it was endeavoured to make the conditions a little less strin-

gent by the introduction of this clause. The clause provided that instead of twelve months training they should have three years' training in an approved institution and six months' training in a midwifery institution. The idea was that if anyone came here or was here who held a three years' certificate for nursing they should then be allowed to qualify at the end of six months. The whole matter was bound up in the question as to what qualifications were held in connection with the three years of general training. Exception had been taken that there were no institutions where one could get proper training. In connection with the demands for nurses it would be dangerous indeed to send nurses out long distances unless they were fully qualified and it would be far better in his opinion to have three or four wards in every little hospital and have these wards controlled by certificated nurses. The patients could then be sent to these wards. He was inclined to support the amendment as he did not know of any institutions with the exception of three or four where the necessary qualifications could be obtained.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Colonial Secretary should consent to the rejection of Clauses 6 and 7. There must be a general Bill next session to deal with nursing in general, including midwifery. Would it not be far better to wait for that than to deal with the matter at the present, when there was so little time at the disposal of members? The Colonial Secretary should agree to let the Committee negative these two clauses.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The clause as it stood met with his approval and to his mind it was strengthening rather than weakening the qualification. He approved, however, of some clearer definition being provided with regard to the word "institution." The number of beds in an institution suggested by Mr. Jenkins was, he thought, too high. The number which had been suggested by Mr. Kingsmill, namely, 25, ought to meet the position.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The Colonial Secretary should at that stage agree to re-

port progress so as to enable the amendments being put on the Notice Paper.

Progress reported.

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

## BILL—PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

*Second reading—Amendment six months.*

Debate resumed from the 7th December.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): One of the hon. members who spoke on the second reading of this Bill, I think it was Sir E. H. Wittenoom, said that he felt a good deal of sympathy for the leader of the House on account of the position in which he was placed. I, too, feel a good deal of sympathy with that hon. gentleman, but for a different cause from that assigned by Sir Edward Wittenoom. I feel sympathy as one who some years ago undertook the task which that hon. gentleman is undertaking now. As a member of one of the Leake Governments, occupying the position of Minister for Works, I was entrusted with the introduction of a Bill similar in principle to this, into the then Parliament. I did so, and carried it through the Lower House, but the Bill expired, I forget whether from effluxion of time, or from effluxion of the Government—I think it was effluxion of the Government—and was no more heard of. Governments used in those days to disappear at, so to speak, a moment's notice, and this Government shared the usual fate and disappeared into oblivion, taking with them the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works, which had been successfully put through the Legislative Assembly. I have seen no reason since to alter the opinion I then held. It is true that since that time we have had appointed in this State an Advisory Board, but I think anybody will admit, even those gentlemen who appointed the Advisory Board, that that Board was never intended at any time to be more than what might be called a temporary expedient. It was never thought, I feel sure, that the manager of the Agricultural Bank, the

engineer for railway construction, and the Surveyor General, would practically give up the positions which they occupied, but if the proportion of their time occupied on this work was to be anything like the amount of time which Mr. Moss in his able speech in opposition to the Bill said the proposed committee would occupy, then it would be practically giving up their present positions. I look upon the Board as one which must, like the man in the song, "get back to work." They are not there as a permanent committee for the purpose of settling what public works are to be carried out. A great deal of stress has been laid upon the probable cost of this proposed method of administration, and Mr. Moss has stated that the cost of the committee—and I do not want to follow up this argument *ad nauseam*—would break the back of fifty thousand pounds a year.

Hon. M. L. Moss: So long as it does not break your back it is all right.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I presume by that saying the hon. gentleman meant it would exceed half of fifty thousand pounds; that is, that it would cost over twenty-five thousand pounds a year for the running of this committee. I scarcely think that the running of the committee will cost anything like that. I do not see that it should cost more than one-fifth of that sum if it is judiciously and economically carried out, and does only the work which is laid down in the Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Do you think any Parliamentary committee would be as good as the present board?

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: That argument does not enter into the question at all, because we cannot go on having the present board. It is impossible that we can retain the Advisory Board. Does Sir Edward Wittenoom mean to say that the manager of the Agricultural Bank can continue neglecting his duties in order that he may tear round the country looking at the proposed routes of railways? It is absurd; and in view of impending legislation whereby it is possible that the scope of the Agricultural Bank will be so much widened, and far more atten-

tion will be necessary for the successful administration of that institution, the services of the gentleman which the bank is happy to have at its head at the present time will be more wanted in his office than in the country examining the routes for new railways. Then, take the case of the Surveyor General. I have been led to believe by what I have seen in the public Press, by reports of the Lands Department, and by information from other sources, that the present is a time of great activity in the Lands Department. Surely the Surveyor General must have his hands fairly full, or else the office is a superfluous one. Which are we to believe? The same is the position in regard to the engineer for railway construction. There have been in the past many new railways constructed, and if the borrowing powers are kind, I believe the same will be the case in future. I understand it is part of the programme of the present Government that they will not in any way bring about stagnation in the country, that they will carry out at least as briskly as their predecessors that public works policy which characterised their administration. That being so, the engineer for railway construction will have his hands full, or in his case, too, the position is superfluous. Some hon. gentlemen have spoken as if the Advisory Board cost nothing, but I would remind those hon. gentlemen that the manager of the Agricultural Bank draws a salary of £1,000.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: He will still draw it.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Yes, but he will be doing his work, and the Surveyor General and the engineer for railway construction draw £700 each, so that we may charge against the Advisory Board the proportion of their salaries represented by the time taken out of their legitimate occupations; and as civil servants as a rule draw travelling allowances, we may take it that their travelling allowances would amount to not less than the travelling allowances of the members of the Public Works Committee. So I scarcely see that the proposed committee

is going to cost very much more than the present Advisory Board. But let me be frank with Sir Edward Wittenoom. If we could retain the present Advisory Board, I would not vote for this Bill, but, as it is impossible to retain the board, I think I am justified in voting for a measure which I proposed some years ago, and in respect of which I have seen no reason to change my opinion.

Hon. M. L. Moss: In the one case you have a board of experts, and in the other case a committee of members of Parliament who are not experts.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I presume in the mind of the hon. member it is impossible to get members of Parliament who are experts in railway construction, but they may be experts in other matters. The functions they will be called upon to exercise will be those of observation and common sense rather than expert powers. Then Mr. Moss made a great point of the crowd of witnesses that these gentlemen were about to call, to whom was to be paid mileage in fabulous sums and extremely large fees for attending. I presume these gentlemen would not call many more witnesses than the present Advisory Board do, and the hon. gentleman may be sure that when the Public Works Committee or the Advisory Board go through a district where there is a possibility of a railway being built, and testimony is wanted, they will get all the testimony they require in that district for nothing. Again, Mr. Moss laid stress upon the possibility of having to hire buildings in which to hold meetings of the committee. I venture to say that if they had to hire buildings the cost of that hire would be infinitesimal; but that would not be the case. Again, he was not quite fair in saying that wherever this committee went the whole five members would be present. If the hon. member will remember certain clauses in the Bill he will recollect that provision is made for sectional committees of not less than two, who may be elected to do any work, I presume at a distance, and who for those duties will have the powers of the whole committee.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You may depend upon it the whole committee will go everywhere.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: The hon. gentleman may depend upon it, but I do not.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I do.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I am sorry I cannot agree with the hon. member. It always hurts me when I cannot agree with him, because I feel that there must be something bad about my case; but I do not think that is so in this instance. However, I am endeavouring to point out some of the points which make me support the Bill. I do not presume to say that this Bill is a perfect one; some of the details I am very far from agreeing with. Let me mention a few points with which I am not in accord. Now, in the first place, the method of election of the committee is in my opinion not as good as it might be. If my opinion were asked about the framing of this measure I would suggest that the committee should be elected by the two branches of the Legislature sitting as one and voting in concord for the five members of the committee. Then again, I most certainly do not agree with the proposition that the Government should nominate the chairman of this committee. That I think is the weak point. I think that the chairman should be selected by the five members after the election has taken place. Furthermore, when we take into consideration the matter of remuneration, it most certainly occurs to me, seeing the nature of the duties to be undertaken by ordinary members of the committee and the chairman, there is far too great a discrepancy between the remuneration proposed for the chairman and that for the other members of the committee. These, however, are details which might easily, if the Bill gets through its second reading, be amended when it goes into Committee, if the Committee think fit to do so. There are one or two other matters, one in particular, to which I wish to refer before I sit down, that is with regard to the standing of the Advisory Board. I am sorry the leader of the House was not able to lay on the Table

certain papers I asked for which have a bearing on the question, papers relating to the instructions issued to the Advisory Board. I say I am sorry, because I know that some of the members of the Advisory Board feel extremely sore about certain statements which have been made in public places concerning instructions which had been issued to them, and I take the opportunity of saying—and after all it is a matter which bears upon the question of a Parliamentary standing committee on public works—that if hon. members would examine these papers when they are laid on the Table, they will see there is not the slightest foundation for the statements which have been made that the members of the Advisory Board had received definite instructions from the late Government with regard to reporting favourably or unfavourably on certain works they were detailed to examine. There is another question on which I would like the leader of the House to say a few words when he replies, that is as to what will be the position of public works upon which the Advisory Board has already reported. I am speaking now of railway lines which, after all, are the only things the Advisory Board are asked to report on. What will be the position of these lines of railway upon which the Advisory Board has already reported, but for which Bills have not yet passed Parliament; lines of railway which are in, so to speak, the transition stage? The leader of the House has already said that the railways for which Bills have passed, as everybody must have known, are in an unsailable position, but there are lines of railway which are reported on by the Advisory Board and for which no legislation has been forthcoming. I would like to know in what position these railways are likely to be.

The Colonial Secretary: They would have to be referred to the committee.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Then I think it is an absolute farce. I do not think there is any doubt about that. They have already been reported on.

The Colonial Secretary: Under the Bill they would have to be referred to the committee.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: But we can amend the Bill in order that we shall not then have an inspection of these lines which will cost twice as much as it should. However, that is another detail—I am glad I asked the question—in which undoubtedly the Bill should be amended. For the reasons I have already enunciated, first of all that I introduced a measure of this sort some years ago and have not seen cause to change my mind since, for the greater reason that we cannot hope to keep our present Advisory Board away from their proper offices for any greater length of time than they are already kept away—and they are now away already too long, for another reason that I do not see, in spite of the dismal prognostications, that the proposed Parliamentary committee on public works is going to be any more expensive than the present Advisory Board, and lastly, for the reason that I think it will be, if not as effective as the present Advisory Board, at any rate just as effective as any secondary advisory board for the same money; for these reasons then it is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, hoping it will be amended in Committee in the three or four directions I have pointed out.

Hon. T. F. O. BRIMAGE (North-East): I rise to support this measure. I believe it will be of great assistance to the Government and also to Parliament. It will be invaluable because the committee will be able to give us a condensed report on any large public works before the State. Consequently I intend to support the measure. I trust also that it will not be too mutilated in Committee, because, as it stands, I think it is a Bill that should go through practically as introduced into this House. Mention has been made in regard to the distribution of the men on this committee, but I certainly think the measure suggests a fair and equitable provision. Seeing the Assembly deal with the public purse of the State, they should have more members on the committee than the Council; moreover, they are more frequently before the country, and consequently are in closer touch with the people of the State. I regret the remarks of Mr. Moss when he spoke on the meas-

ure. I think his allusion to the Labour party's caucus as being likely to control the public works policy of the State was somewhat uncalled for. I cannot agree with him in what he said, neither can I agree with the wonderful figures he presented to this Chamber. We have had these figures before, and we know how much in error the hon. member is. It seems to me he has little or no control over himself when quoting figures in this Chamber. The statement that the back would be broken at £50,000 was quite ridiculous, and I quite agree with Mr. Kingsmill, who says that the committee is not likely to cost a great deal more than the present Advisory Board. True, a good deal of travelling will have to be done, and a good deal of evidence will have to be called, but I venture to say a committee, such as is suggested, will see that white elephants like the Armadale-Fremantle railway, and the Fremantle dock, and a lot of those non-paying concerns, will not be foisted on the State for the taxpayers to bear for all time. There is no doubt there are many public works that require doing, and I believe a committee such as this would examine very carefully into them. I trust the House will pause before they very much alter the measure. I think the Government are obeying the will of the people in introducing the Bill. It was one of the principal planks of the party returned to power to bring this measure in, and I am quite convinced that political opinion at the present time is in favour of the measure. I am certain also that the present Administration are doing what they possibly can to obey the will of the people, and it is to their credit that they have taken this early opportunity of introducing a measure that has been spoken of for some considerable time. The leader of the House has said that once the principle is adopted the rest is easy. I think the principle is a good one. It has worked well in New South Wales for some considerable time, and it is evident it was thought well of by past Administrations in this country, as Mr. Kingsmill has pointed out he introduced a similar measure. I content myself with supporting

the measure and trust it will go through unaltered.

Hon. R. LAURIE (West): I do not intend to support the Bill. I have listened to a great deal of what has been said, particularly to the remarks of Mr. Moss, and Mr. Kingsmill. It struck me that Mr. Moss, in regard to the figures given by him as to the amount that would be expended by the board, rather over-estimated the amount. Mr. Kingsmill agrees that there should be a committee, but he appears to agree that it should be a committee of the House, that is to say, a committee of members of Parliament. I would remind the hon. member of a passage that took place in this House about four years ago. It was a very small measure in which it was proposed by the then Government that it should be open to members of Parliament to become members of a certain board.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Bunbury Harbour Board.

Hon. R. LAURIE: Yes. There is nothing like consistency. On that occasion the hon. member made use of words to the effect that unless he saw, as he had seen in the framing of a previous Bill for which he was responsible, a man standing out who was fit to take the position, he could not agree to such a clause as was put into the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act being put into the Bunbury Harbour Board Bill. Now, what is the position to-day? The same hon. member rose a few minutes ago and supported a measure that is going to allow members of Parliament to be absolutely in the same position, or, shall I say, probably a worse position.

Hon. W. Patrick: A better one from their point of view.

Hon. R. LAURIE: If we follow the hon. member's words afterwards, members will see that even he made it perfectly clear to us that when it came to an election for these positions, it would be a partisan affair, that is to say, it would be partly board. He said a fairer way would be to have the two Houses voting together; so that it must be in the mind of the hon. member that the majority of the members elected would be elected from

a party point of view. There can be only one from this House, and in the other place there would be three from the Government side.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Not under the proportional system.

Hon. R. LAURIE: Yes, under the proportional system it will work out that way. But the point I want to emphasise is that the two gentlemen preceding me should be consistent. One of these gentlemen went the length four years ago of stigmatising a man who held a position of trust as nothing better than a civil servant; the words are in *Hansard*.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: He cannot be better than a civil servant.

Hon. R. LAURIE: It is all very well for Mr. Kingsmill with his "funniesities" he uses now and then to cover up the track. The position is this. It was pointed out by an hon. member who has spoken since Mr. Kingsmill sat down, that a gentleman holding such a position was no better than a civil servant, and that when the Government require his vote he will have to vote with them. In this matter we must remember that if we are going to follow Mr. Kingsmill of ten years ago we are going to vote for the Bill. But something has happened in the meantime; he changes his views, and says that unless the man who is going to be appointed has special ability he (Mr. Kingsmill) would not be a party to his appointment. Are there any members standing out in this House, or in another place, as being capable of filling the position? I am not against the present highly paid gentlemen being stood down, but I believe that you will be infinitely better service if you take certain professional men and ask them to report for you.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: You will still have the advice of those gentlemen.

Hon. R. LAURIE: We have the advice of professional gentlemen such as Mr. Paterson and others, acting on the advice of men who gave that advice to them; that is all we have. We hear of a statement as having been made by someone, but we feel that it is very different from the statement that was actually



made. I believe the Government would be wise in having an advisory board, but I am totally opposed to an advisory board unless we know that skilled men are going to be on it. I believe the Government should have expert advice, and that we should take every precaution before building these works.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Make a Royal Commission of it.

Hon. R. LAURIE: It would be very much easier, and would possibly mean more fees. Still I think there is room for an advisory committee. But that advisory committee should be absolutely clear of Parliament; should be in keeping with Mr. Kingsmill's views of four years ago and not with his views of ten years ago. I shall vote against the Bill, because I believe it cannot be of much assistance to the Government unless the Government want to shirk responsibility, want to be able to say to the people of a district "The advisory board are against you," or, on the other hand, "The advisory board say that this work is imperative." It will not be the same if we have a professional board, because they will give excellent professional reasons why the work should, or should not, be carried out. I am also satisfied that, notwithstanding all the good that has been said of what has happened in New South Wales, there is something to be said on the other side of the question. I can remember 18 years ago in New South Wales, when one member of that committee would say "Shall we have a meeting this morning," and another would say "Oh, I don't think so," while still a third would say "I think we had better"; and a meeting would be held. I do not say this sort of thing will happen here, but there is always the possibility. I have seen Royal Commissions here which sat until a protest was raised, and members of the present Government, with other hon. members, have exclaimed against meetings of 15 or 20 minutes being held. Let us have professional advisers, and it will be far better for the country. I shall oppose the Bill.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND (Metropolitan-Suburban): I desire to support the Bill, notwithstanding the opposition exhibited towards it. It all resolves itself into a question as to whether it would be wise to have a Public Works Committee constituted of members of Parliament, or the present advisory board. As pointed out by Mr. Kingsmill, I think the services of the existing advisory board will probably not be much longer at the disposal of the present or any other Government.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Why not make them the committee?

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: That might be possible, but we can appoint a Parliamentary committee which would have these particular gentlemen's services as expert witnesses. Notwithstanding all that has been said against the committee in New South Wales, we must recollect that it has obtained for over 20 years. It is interesting to notice the various opinions held by members of Parliament in New South Wales in respect of that committee. In 1904, a resolution was moved by Mr. Carruthers, the then Premier, to suspend the operations of that committee for one year. In speaking on that occasion Mr. Carruthers said he differed from those who thought that a body of experts could take the place of a Parliamentary committee. He stated that the experts could at all times be availed of in the matter of giving evidence, but that it would be far better to have a Parliamentary committee for the purpose of adducing that evidence. Mr. O'Sullivan, in opposing the suspension of the committee, said the Parliamentary committee had saved to the State of New South Wales, in round figures, since its existence, 18 millions of pounds.

Hon. W. Patrick: How did he make it up?

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: I will make it up for you in a few minutes.

Hon. C. Sommers: It was made up by throwing out impossible proposals.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: Perhaps so, but the fact remains that prior to the appointment of the committee railway lines were passed on the advice of experts who obviously were free from the in-

fluence of that committee, lines that have since proved to be losing propositions.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Not a single one.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: Oh, yes. There was the line from Goulburn to Cooma, which has been a losing proposition to the extent of £39,090. Then there was the line from Demondrille to Blayney, on which a sum of £32,806 has been lost, and there was another line, from Sydney to Kiama, which has meant a loss of £32,498. And Mr. O'Sullivan went on to quote other lines which had been constructed on the advice of experts but which had the full figures; I am merely taking the extent of £400,000.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is not 18 millions.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: I have not the full figures; I am merely taking the statement of Mr. Carruthers, whose political beliefs were very different from those of Mr. O'Sullivan. Further than that, the value of this committee will lie in the fact that we will have advice from a committee of that description placed before the House. At the present moment we have not the advantage of getting that advice at first hand as we would have after the appointment of a committee such as is proposed in the Bill. Objections may be taken to the details of the measure, and indeed I agree with some of the suggestions offered by Mr. Kingsmill. In order to give as wide a scope of representation as possible, I would be inclined to favour both Houses meeting for the election of the committee; but, as I have already indicated, the whole question resolves itself, not into the cost of the committee—I think the figures submitted by Mr. Moss will not bear examination at all—but into the question of which is the more effective method of safeguarding the expenditure of public money on railways and other public works. I think the committee could be free from political influence. As a matter of fact, members, in speaking to the resolution submitted by Mr. Carruthers, said that the committee had relieved the position considerably in that it had freed a considerable amount of political influence which had surrounded public works construction prior to the existence

of the committee. If it will do that in this State, it is a measure perfectly justifiable, and one which should be adopted. I do not wish to labour the question. I am fearful the Bill is going to have a stormy passage, but I did not desire to cast a silent vote upon it. I am perfectly free from any selfish feeling in the matter, and I think that when Parliament has an opportunity afforded it of obtaining first-hand information in regard to public works proposals members should embrace it. I do not agree with Mr. Moss that the members to be appointed on this committee would sit merely for the purpose of drawing their fees.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I did not suggest anything of the kind.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: But the hon. gentleman meant that they would be inclined to sit on trivial occasions in order to draw a bigger salary. That was the inference.

Hon. M. L. Moss: All I said was—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will stand when making an explanation.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I do not wish to make an explanation. I was merely interjecting.

Hon. J. A. DOLAND: We must free our minds from the belief that the gentlemen who are to compose this committee will sit merely for the sake of fees. I am quite sure there are many members in both Houses who are prepared to give their best services to the State, and to give them free from any of the log-rolling which might obtain if we had not a committee of this sort. I shall support the Bill.

Hon. F. DAVIS (Metropolitan-Suburban): I rise to support the Bill because I am thoroughly convinced of its usefulness. It has been stated on the public platform, and Mr. Kirwan has confirmed the statement, that in the past there have been occasions when Bills were submitted for public works, particularly railways, without sufficient information to enable members to cast an intelligent vote. That state of affairs ought not to exist, because for any custodians of the public purse to vote away money without knowing the character of the work on which it

is to be expended is not in the best interests of the State. My further reason for being strongly in favour of the measure is the fact that if it is carried and becomes law, we shall have in this Chamber one, at any rate, who will be thoroughly conversant with the details of any work it is proposed to carry out. From some years of experience of public bodies, debating and considering certain matters, it has often been my experience that on some occasions a long debate on a particular subject has been suddenly brought to an abrupt termination by some person being able to speak with authority on a given point, stating that such a thing was a fact, and speaking with authority on that point closed the discussion, because all present recognised that he was able to speak with authority on the point. In the future when measures are debatable in this House, if there is a member here who has been right through an inquiry and able to give information directly it is asked for, we shall be in a much better position to decide clearly and intelligently on all measures that come before the House, and we shall be able to save a great deal of time in discussions, if we are able to obtain definite information from a member who is a member of the committee. Although it is possible we may obtain excellent information from experts' reports, there are often details that occur to the minds of those who are taking part in a debate that are not dealt with in the report, and on which point it is not possible from the reports to obtain the information necessary for one to give an intelligent decision. If we have a member in the House who can give us that information when required, we would have someone who would be able to assist us very materially in making up our minds thoroughly and well.

Hon. M. L. Moss: We have always the Minister.

Hon. F. DAVIS: The Minister not being on the committee would not be so much in touch with the evidence given before that committee as a member appointed from this House. And the Minister has his own work to do, which takes up his time entirely if he does it thor-

oughly, therefore he could not be in the position to give the information which a member would be in if he were appointed directly by the House on to the committee, therefore, I contend, we should have the Bill in operation. Many members have given other reasons in favour of the measure, which I shall not traverse now, but I want to make clear the point that if there is a member on the committee from this House we shall be able to decide wisely and well on all public works which come before us.

Hon. W. PATRICK (Central): I am opposed to this measure. I consider it contains several very vicious principles. In the first place it will have the tendency to remove from the Ministry in power for the time being their responsibilities, and will have a very great tendency to remove the responsibility from the two Houses of Parliament. I think Mr. Doland said it was a question of a permanent advisory board or this proposed Parliamentary committee. I do not see why that should be so; if the present Advisory Board is not available. There is no earthly reason why we should not have a paid advisory board, a skilled board of experienced men who, from time to time could report on any work the Government wish to carry out. It is proposed that, after a Bill for a public work has been introduced and passed without discussion, it is to be handed over by the Government for the time being to this committee, and one inevitable effect will be to produce the log-rolling which Mr. Doland referred to, which is the usual system of carrying on business in the United States of America, where all public business is carried through committees. It is an easier matter to log-roll with five people or two or three people than with 80 people.

Hon. J. A. Doland: This House decides.

Hon. W. PATRICK: The position is this: that all works involving an expenditure of more than £20,000 are to be left to this committee to report on; they are to meet from time to time. There is no time mentioned within which they are to bring up their report; they can take six

months if they like; and until they have made their report the Government cannot take action to carry out the work, and it may be a work of very great public urgency. As a matter of fact I believe, probably at the present moment, or tomorrow, the Government propose to introduce several railway Bills, to have them through before the measure is passed, otherwise it will be necessary to refer them to the committee, or these works will have to be delayed, possibly to the benefit of the public, but more likely to the injury of the public of Western Australia.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: All these works have been reported on by the Advisory Board.

Hon. W. PATRICK: That is possible, but we have had the statement from the leader of the House to the effect that the measures that have not already been approved of by Parliament will go before the committee. Mr. Doland referred to the statement, I think he said made by Mr. O'Sullivan in New South Wales, that 18 million pounds worth of work had been saved in New South Wales. I asked the hon. member to make up the 18 millions, and he made up half a million, but the 18 millions could not be made up, because they were works which had been referred to the committee but which were reported against. If such a committee is appointed and the works are referred to them and reported on favourably, it is almost the duty of Parliament, at least it is the duty of the Ministry, to carry them out. It so happens that we have a much better and bigger example to fall back on than New South Wales. In the United States of America the system is, at the beginning of each Congress, to refer every department of the Government to committees. In the House of Representatives the Speaker appoints the committees—the Speaker is the leader of the House—there is no Executive responsible to the House, the members of the Executive do not appear in the House, but the Speaker, who is really the leader of the House, moves the introduction of a measure, which is carried a first and second time without discussion,

and it is referred to the works committee, or financial committee, as the case may be, and what is the result? That nineteen-twentieths of the measures referred to these committees never see the light of day again; they are shelved in a great number of cases. The measures do not see the light again as the result of the log-rolling, which is a very simple matter when dealing with five men instead of dealing with 80 men.

Hon. B. C. O'Brien: Are they committees or select committees?

Hon. W. PATRICK: Committees appointed exactly like this committee will be appointed, during the duration of the Congress.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Appointed by the Speaker.

Hon. W. PATRICK: Elected from the members by the Speaker in the House of Representatives, and in the Senate by the members themselves. It does not matter who they are elected by. In the case of the United States the Speaker, who represents the dominant party, elects them all, but the Senate has a check on them the same as we have a check on another place. Here the Government control the election of the majority, which would come to the same thing as electing the lot. As far as carrying out the business is concerned, I do not think it is necessary to say anything further, except that I think the inevitable result will be to remove the responsibility from the Government of carrying out the public works, and remove the responsibility from Parliament, which would mean delay of public works which otherwise would be carried out rapidly. I certainly shall vote against the second reading.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE moved—

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

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): I want to have a few words to say in regard to the Bill. I admit that it is

necessary to have an advisory board, otherwise the collective wisdom and experience of men who know what they are examining, men capable of reporting on these measures, will be lost. It has been mentioned that amongst others Mr. Muir is on that board; he has other duties to perform, and there are very few men in Western Australia who are as capable of reporting on the construction of a railway as that gentleman is. Mr. Paterson, it goes without saying there is no better man, and I look on Mr. Johnston as another experienced member of this board. There we have men of exceptional qualities from all-round stand-points, and while I say straightaway I think it is necessary to have such a body I strongly object to the method of electing the body proposed by the Bill. That is to say, under the Bill they are elected by Parliament, I care not which branch of the Legislature, but I myself inside of Parliament would not be prepared to vote for this man or the other man because I have not sufficient experience of the capabilities of the gentlemen. When we come to Subclause 2 of Clause 2 of the Bill what do we find, that the committee are to be elected from time to time by each Parliament. They may be in only for a few months, and then they are simply out of the running. I say, as I said before, we want experienced men, we do not want men who are in to-day and gone to-morrow for the many reasons advanced by Mr. Kingsmill. I shall certainly oppose the Bill. While I admit we want experience, at the same time I fail to see how that experience is to be found in the two Chambers. Again, I say the members of Parliament have pretty well enough to do looking after their business in Parliament, and further, before we can pass a measure such as this, it is absolutely necessary to pass a Bill, I think, whereby a member can receive remuneration as well as his honorarium.

Hon. F. Davis: That is in the Bill.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: That is the thing I do not believe in at all. If members want to do this work, then let them

do it freely and for nothing. I oppose the measure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (on amendment): This Bill undoubtedly introduces a novel principle in connection with the carrying out of the public works policy in the State of Western Australia, and I submit, with all due respect, it does not warrant the treatment which has been accorded to it by this House. It has received most hostile treatment, and I am surprised indeed at the course the debate has taken. Members have furnished very ingenious explanations as to the reason for the operation of a similar measure in New South Wales. I think all must admit it has survived all political vicissitudes which it has met with at the hands of successive Governments. It has been said truly that Governments have been loth to move for its repeal because it would be an unpopular step, that it would mean certain members being deprived of their emoluments, and other members being deprived of prospective pecuniary advantages. But the whole of the members who have spoken in opposition to the measure seem to have missed the most important question, that is about the people of New South Wales. If this was a wicked measure, if it was designed to bribe members of Parliament as has been insinuated, do hon. members mean to tell me that the people of New South Wales would have tolerated such legislation so long? It has been in existence there for 20 years. It was re-enacted 10 years after it became law, and the people of New South Wales must have come to recognise the usefulness of the legislation, otherwise they would have demanded that it should have been swept off the statute-book. Mr. Moss stated that the administration of this measure would entail enormous expenditure, and that it would break the back of £50,000 a year, and that the remuneration of members would be only a bagatelle compared with the total expenditure. I say that is a wild and reckless statement which will not bear investigation. In New South Wales there are seven members, whilst in Western Australia it is proposed to have five. The New South Wales chairman receives three

guineas a day, and in Western Australia, if this Bill becomes law, he will be paid two guineas; and while in New South Wales members are paid two guineas a day, in this State they will receive one guinea per day. That in itself, as hon. members must recognise, must mean a substantial reduction in the figures. The New South Wales vote last year for fees and travelling expenses as well—and Mr. Moss lays a considerable amount of stress on travelling expenses—was £4,500; the travelling expenses were 30s. per day. They cannot possibly do anything like that in Western Australia, because the travelling expenses even of Cabinet Ministers are only 25s. a day. The office expenses, salary, postage, stationery, and everything else in New South Wales amounted to £1,400. There is a shorthand writer who receives £300 a year. The total amount set down in the Estimates last year in connection with the administration of the Act in New South Wales was £6,200. I wired for this information and got it in order that hon. members might thoroughly understand the position. I will read the wire I sent to Sydney and the reply which I received. I telegraphed on the 8th instant to the Secretary of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Works as follows—

Piloting Bill through Parliament, Standing Committee on public works on New South Wales lines; need information to combat opposition. Kindly wire me not later than Monday amount paid members each of your Committee last financial year, also total travelling expenses, witnesses' fees printing, and also furnish me with any information likely to assist.

The reply I received was—

Vote last financial year for fees and travelling expenses £4,500. Fees two guineas to members and chairman three guineas. Travelling expenses thirty shillings a day. No fees paid to witnesses.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Our Bill provides for fees.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The wire continues—

Printing done by Government Printer. The printing bill in our State would be very small indeed. It is not likely that the whole of the evidence taken in connection with the meetings of this committee would be sent to the Government Printer to be embalmed in type. The same course would be gone through as has been done in the past with the reports of the advisory boards. These have been typewritten and have been presented in that form to Parliament. The telegram continues—

Shorthand writing done by *Hansard* for £300. Office expenses, including salaries £1,000.

Hon. M. L. Moss: On these figures it would cost as much as the whole of the salaries of the Ministry.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hon. members will see that the total cost to New South Wales was £6,200. In discussing this Bill I submit the relative importance of New South Wales and Western Australia. The expenditure for the year 1910-11 in New South Wales was £13,038,150, while in Western Australia it was £3,447,732. Then, again, in 1909-10 New South Wales spent from Loan Funds £3,246,640, and Western Australia only spent £1,209,505, or a little less than one-third. We will go a little further than that. In 1909 New South Wales spent on railways (and our Public Works Committee would be engaged, to a large extent, on railways) £2,471,285 and Western Australia only spent £529,054. New South Wales spent over five times as much in the construction of railways in 1909.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You are losing sight of the most important fact, that the committee might have recommended the construction of these works years before.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can prove further that in 1910 the committee recommended the construction of public works to the extent of £3,750,000, and the actual expenditure that year was £3,246,640. In connection with water supply and sewerage, New South Wales spent in the same year £578,110, and Western Australia spent £94,921, less than one-sixth. In harbours and rivers

the total expenditure in New South Wales was £158,720, while in Western Australia we spent £93,948. These figures, I contend, give a good idea as to the amount of work our committee would be called upon to perform in comparison with the amount of work which the New South Wales committee has been required to do. There is four times as much expenditure, according to these figures, no matter which way hon. members take them, in the Public Works Committee in New South Wales as there is in Western Australia.

Hon. W. Patrick: Their railways cost eight times as much as they do here.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The total cost of the upkeep of the committee in New South Wales is £6,200. Mr. Moss said that the appointment of this committee in Western Australia would practically break the back of £50,000, yet in New South Wales, where the committee has to inspect and report on works four times the magnitude of those which would be carried out in Western Australia, the cost was only £6,200. Another point is that there will be fewer members on the Western Australian committee, and this will considerably reduce the expenditure. Every day the New South Wales committee sits it means an expenditure of 15 guineas, while in Western Australia it would cost only six guineas. Every day in New South Wales that the committee travels it means an expenditure of 10 guineas, while in Western Australia, even taking the 30s. basis—that will be impossible according to our conditions, but we will assume it is 30s.—it will only cost £7 10s. A simple sum in arithmetic will enable hon. members to come to a conclusion as to the comparative cost of the two committees. Hon. members will find at most that the committee in Western Australia will cost £1,654 a year. There is another way of looking at it. There are 300 working days in the year, exclusive of holidays, yet if the committee sat 150 days in the year—

Hon. M. L. Moss: A sitting is not necessarily of eight hours, it may be of

only 10 minutes. There is nothing in the Bill to fix the duration.

Hon. W. Patrick: I do not think the question of cost has anything to do with the principle of the Bill at all.

The PRESIDENT: Order.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY:

These interruptions are most embarrassing. If the committee sat 150 days it would mean an expenditure of £950 in fees; if the committee sat 300 days it would mean an expenditure of £1,900. Mr. Moss has just told us that these prospective members would be drawing salaries as much as Cabinet Ministers, and the total cost would be something like £50,000 a year. I remember when I introduced the Public Service Bill into this House there was a statement made that huge expenditure would be involved. One member said it would cost £50,000 to administer the Act. I might inform hon. members that the total cost last year of administering the Public Service Act under the Commissioner was £2,340.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I am sorry you mentioned the Public Service Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was stated by one member of this House that it would cost at least £50,000 a year, and by another that it would cost a huge amount to administer the Public Service Act, and yet the figures have dwindled down to £2,340.

Hon. M. L. Moss: My objection is to the principle of the Public Works Committee Bill, not the cost.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If all the members of the committee travelled 75 days I consider that would about fit the Western Australian conditions, and on the allowance paid to Cabinet Ministers, the cost would not be more than £468 15s. Of course, conveyances would be required occasionally, but these are provided for the advisory board, as well as travelling expenses. With regard to witnesses, I have already explained that in New South Wales witnesses, except experts, are not paid, and no doubt a similar practice would be adopted in Western Australia. It has been stated also that the fact that our trading

concerns are paying interest and sinking fund is proof that there is no necessity for the committee. I say that it is no proof at all. The success of our trading concerns is probably due to the abnormal prosperity existing in this State during the last ten or fifteen years. There is no doubt that if we had had in existence during the last ten years a committee on the lines laid down in this Bill, the trading concerns of Western Australia might be showing an infinitely greater profit to-day than is the case, but, of course, there is no means of investigating a matter of this nature. We can only come to the conclusion by general observation. From the tone adopted and the remarks of some hon. members it seemed to be expected that in order to defend this Bill I should produce in this House ten or twelve pages of foolscap showing a list of public works which should not have been undertaken in this State. I do not think any hon. member would expect the Government to embark on such an enterprise. It would be an impossible situation, it would serve no good purpose, and there could be only one result from such a step. Mr. Moss stated that this Bill would enable the party in power to appoint practically four more Cabinet Ministers. Let us analyse that statement and see how it works out. Assuming that the Chairman is a Ministerialist, we must recollect that the poll in another place will be conducted on the proportional system. If it were conducted on strongly party lines there could be only two Ministerialists appointed in another place, and one Oppositionist. This House, if it votes on party lines and according to its traditions, must return a member in complete sympathy with the Opposition.

Hon. M. L. Moss: This House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, this House. Consequently, and there is no use denying it, the result of this ballot would be that there would be three Ministerialists on the committee and two Oppositionists. There is no doubt about that at all. Therefore I cannot see where the four Cabinet Ministers come in, and I maintain that no reasonable objec-

tion can be urged to the constitution of the committee.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: The Government would suggest to that committee the works to be carried out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Moss stated that works would be suggested to the committee which no sane Government would submit to Parliament. Any Government who acted on these lines would show total incompetency and a pitiable lack of backbone; they would make themselves the laughing stock of the country and their end would be sure at the first election. Then we were told that the committee would be a buffer between the Government on the one hand and the people on the other. Now, if the Government want a buffer there is a buffer already in existence, the Advisory Board. The Board have been used as a buffer in the past repeatedly, and if the Government wished to retain them they could do so. Western Australia, Mr. Moss stated, has a more extensive stretch of territory than New South Wales. We all admit that, but the extent of populated country is not so great; a vast portion of our territory is populated only by blacks. So far as I know there has been only one public work of great importance started and completed in the North-West during the last 20 years, and that was the Port Hedland to Marble Bar railway. That railway furnishes the best possible argument in support of this Bill. Who reported on that line? A committee representing both parties in Parliament, representing at any rate the Ministerialists of the day and the Oppositionists of the day. They travelled over the country and reported favourably in connection with the line.

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: Has the line been a great success?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has been a great success.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Nonsense.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Moss stated that with a Labour Government in power and when the dominant party in the Lower House have only 26 supporters the Government would be able



to control caucus, and the hon. member proceeded to explain that there would be six Ministers, two honorary Ministers, the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, and four members of the committee. Now, in the first place, caucus appoints the Ministry; there is no doubt about that. Then as soon as the Ministry is appointed, according to Mr. Moss, they appoint the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees.

Hon. M. L. Moss: No, caucus does that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Well, how can the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees be under the thumb of Ministers and how can Ministers dominate caucus? I have studied this for two days to see how the Government can dominate caucus. As regards the four members of the Committee being appointed by the Government, I think that point has been successfully blown out. At the most, the Government could only appoint three and the Opposition would have the right to appoint two, if they chose to exercise it. My contention is that the advantage of a Parliamentary standing committee over the Advisory Board would be that the committee would possess great statutory powers, the power of inspecting land, of demanding the production of plans and papers, and of examining witnesses on oath.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You have all that power already.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is no such power.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Yes; a select committee has that power.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But there is no such power vested in the Advisory Board at the present time. A select committee would have these powers, but the select committee could not sit while Parliament was in recess, and most of this work would be done while Parliament was not sitting. Then each House would have a representative on the committee, and, as has been pointed out by Mr. Davis and other hon. members, that is another great advantage, because when any Bill in connection with a work which has been advocated by the committee is submitted to Parliament we shall have in

this Chamber at least one member who is familiar with the undertaking, and who will be able to answer any questions that are asked him. At the present time the Minister who introduces a measure has to rely solely on the report of the Advisory Board. The Board may not supply all the information which members consider necessary, and if they seek information outside that, the Minister in many instances can only supply it from his own imagination. Mr. Gawler stated that it was a question of amateurs *versus* experts and he preferred the experts. But in this Bill there is special provision that whenever it is thought necessary the committee can call experts to their aid. It would be very difficult, indeed, to get a body of experts on the whole of the public works of the country, for it must be remembered that the committee will consider not merely railways, but all classes of public works.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: The committee would report on experts' evidence.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They would have the evidence of experts and submit reports for the consideration of Parliament. It might as well be said that every judge of the supreme court who hears and determines cases, and every member of Parliament, for that matter, should be an expert in all branches of trade and every profession of life in order to be an efficient judge or a competent member of Parliament. The hon. gentleman also stated that a member might be called upon to report on a work in his own district. I think it is scarcely likely that a member of the committee would visit his own district for the purpose of reporting on a work that was proposed, but, supposing that he did, his attitude would be viewed with suspicion by other members of the committee and what influence could he possibly have? At the present time a member of Cabinet is in much the same position. He has to consider the requirements of the whole of the State, and we might as well say that because a member of Cabinet represents a particular district he would show special favour to that district. If he attempted to show favouritism he would be set upon by the

rest of the Cabinet. Mr. Cullen, in my opinion, took the correct view of this Bill. He said that the Government have a mandate to administer the affairs of the country and they think they can do better work in this way. That is exactly the position. The present Government have been returned to power by an overwhelming majority; previous to the elections they declared this as portion of their policy, and they were returned by the people well knowing that when they were returned a Bill of this nature would be proposed. They are placed in power and they are likely to remain in power during the term of the present Parliament; they want to carry out a public works policy on these lines and no other lines, because they believe that by adopting this principle there can be a considerable saving in public expenditure. The Bill has passed another place by a large majority, and now when it comes into this Chamber members say, "we shall not allow you to carry out your public works policy in the way you contemplate."

Hon. M. L. Moss: That is not a fair statement.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We say that this is essential in order to carry out our public works policy in a manner satisfactory to the country, and now members are going to prevent us from doing so. There is only one object of the Bill, that is to protect the public funds, to direct expenditure in the proper channel, to avoid gross waste, to remove the suspicion of Ministerial sop-throwing, and create a feeling of confidence among money lenders that any funds lent to Western Australia shall be judiciously expended.

Hon. M. L. Moss: It is rather unfortunate that as you introduced this Bill you had to seek a fresh loan.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The previous Government had to go cap in hand to the Federal Government for a loan, and the position is not due to any act of ours or to any administration of ours. We have been left a legacy.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East): I am sorry to speak after the Colonial Secretary has replied.

The PRESIDENT: The Colonial Secretary has not closed the debate; he was speaking on the amendment.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE: I realise the matter has been thoroughly debated, and that there is to be a keen division, but I would not like to give a silent vote. I would like to have on record my opinions as to the advisability of carrying the Bill through, otherwise my inclination is to support the measure in the hope that, if the second reading goes through, it will be amended in Committee in accordance with the ideas I hold. I believe that the main principle of the Bill is a good one. As a matter of fact, the principle of having inspection and due inquiry before building most of our railways was adopted during the last few years by the previous Administration when they appointed an inquiry board to make an inspection of and report on each railway before it was built. Therefore the principle was adopted by the Government that has just gone out of office. All the railways to be built are now referred to a board composed of the heads of departments, and it must be admitted that the results have been excellent. I see no reason why the results should not continue to be excellent if a Parliamentary board is appointed, not exactly on the lines the Bill proposes, but on the lines I shall try to explain. A board appointed on these lines would tend to extend and amplify the inspection and the inquiry that will be given to each public work of an important nature. Sworn evidence could be taken. That is not the case with the board of departmental heads. The Parliamentary board would be able to take the sworn evidence of the departmental experts, who could make inspections of various works. If I had spoken before the Colonial Secretary I was going to suggest that he should give an undertaking that in Committee he would bring in certain amendments. They are very much on the lines suggested by Mr. Cullen in his second-reading speech. He was quoting, I believe, from the New South Wales statute-book, and he informed us that in New South Wales, before a public work was undertaken, it was necessary for the Government of the day to

bring a specification of the work before the Legislative Assembly, and a resolution had to be carried by the Assembly affirming the desirability of having the particular work constructed, after which the work was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which made a report. This report was then sent to the Government of the day and they had to take the responsibility of framing a Bill and bringing it before Parliament. Then, of course, the Bill had to pass both Houses before the work was gone on with. On these lines the initiatory responsibility would rest with the Government, and it is my desire, if this Bill becomes law, that it shall be in such a form that the responsibility shall be on the shoulders of the Government, and on the shoulders of the Government alone. The Government of the day, representing the dominant party in the other Chamber, should take the full responsibility of saying a work is desirable, and that it should be reported on by the Committee; and after the committee's report is submitted the Government should prepare a Bill and bring it before Parliament; and then the responsibility will rest with Parliament as to whether the work is to be constructed or not. As the Bill before us stands now, the Government get rid of that responsibility. I wish it to be clearly understood I cannot support the Bill if the Government are going to shirk their responsibility in any shape or form. I shall also suggest an amendment as to the constitution of the committee. The Bill shall not go through with any support of mine as it is at present. I gather that Mr. Kingsmill's idea is that the committee should be elected by the members of both Houses sitting together. That is a very good idea. If that suggestion fails, if we cannot have that done, then I think the Council should have more representation than one on the committee. I think we should certainly elect two members and the Legislative Assembly three, and that the five sitting together should select their own chairman. A good deal has been said as to the expenditure of this committee. I think the statements in regard to expense have been exaggerated. I cannot see that the committee is going to

cost anything like what has been suggested. As a matter of fact, with the members being paid one guinea a day, it is getting as near to making the positions honorary as we could possibly have them; in fact, it would be difficult to get any two members of the Council to spend the time travelling about the country at the remuneration of one guinea a day with hotel expenses. At any rate, for sometime to come the great public works, outside the building of railways, will necessarily be in the capital, or in the immediate vicinity of the capital, and there may not be a great deal of travelling to do, so that it will make the cost of travelling for some years to come very light indeed. No doubt we have been particularly fortunate in Western Australia with regard to our great public works. All our large trading or commercial concerns have been very successful. Most of them are paying not only interest but working expenses, interest, and sinking fund. To have a continuation of the good results that I have already spoken of, I fail to see that any harm can be done by having a standing Parliamentary committee to whom all works costing over £20,000 should be referred. Then when their report is made to Parliament, Parliament will take the responsibility. But, in the first place, the Government of the day, representing the dominant party in the Assembly, must take the responsibility. These are my views on the measure. I shall support the second reading, but when the measure gets into Committee, if the Colonial Secretary or some other hon. member does not move to make the amendments I have outlined, I certainly will frame the amendments myself and put them to the House with the hope that they will be accepted. I would like to see the Bill improved as far as possible, and I feel sure the Government will be acting in the right direction if they accept amendments on the lines I have indicated.

Hon. W. MARWICK (East): I have listened with great interest to the discussion on the Bill. I hold somewhat similar views to those of Mr. Kingsmill in reference to the advisory board, and for this reason I feel inclined to give my vote to

the second reading of the Bill. I know from experience that the gentlemen who constitute that advisory board have rendered good services in their capacity as expert advisers to the Government, but, while they were attending to those special duties the departmental offices they are supposed to be in charge of have suffered somewhat from the loss of their services. I know that while we had Professor Lowrie on that board the loss of his services was keenly felt by his particular department; in fact, I venture to say it was at least partly due to his having been occupied so much with the advisory board that eventually his services were lost to the State altogether. For that and other reasons I feel that some change should be made in our system. The Government should be responsible for the carrying out of all public works, and should not try to shift any of the responsibility on to a Parliamentary committee, or an advisory board. Personally, I would prefer to see the committee established on lines similar to those of the one already in existence, but its members should be engineers of, shall I say, a lower standard—I mean, they should not be the actual heads of departments. If the Bill is passed I am sure it will be necessary for the members of the committee to take around with them surveyors and engineers. It has been said that there was nothing wrong with the policy of the country before the establishment of the advisory board; but we must remember that there were no works of any magnitude carried on except those that were of such exceeding importance as to need the best expert opinion to be obtained in older countries; for instance, in connection with the Fremantle Harbour scheme, and the Coolgardie water scheme, we had to bring in experts from other parts of the world. Last session we passed 12 or 14 Bills for the construction of railways, and I hope to see this sort of thing continued. I do not know any of these railways, and I have heard it said that some of them were put down in wrong places, but I venture to think that that is not correct. There have, of course, been many deputations wait upon Ministers in regard to these

railways, but while there is so much public work going on it is inevitable that we should have these deputations. The average man wants a railway to his back door, and when he finds that the line is going in another direction, thinking that he and his friends may be able to induce the Government to make a deviation in their favour, he organises a deputation with a view to securing his end. I expect the proposed committee will be able to wipe out that sort of thing, for once they have furnished their report to Parliament it will only rest with Parliament to adopt or reject their suggestions. I have spoken on this question merely to intimate which way I intend to vote. If the Bill passes we will have an opportunity in Committee of amending some of the points with which we do not altogether agree.

Amendment (six months) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	10
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5

#### AYES.

Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. M. L. Moss
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. J. T. Glowrey	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. R. Laurie	Hon. E. M. Clarke
Hon. E. McLarty	(Teller).

#### NOES.

Hon. T. F. O. Brimage	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. F. Davis	Hon. W. Marwick
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. R. D. McKenzie
Hon. J. A. Doland	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. M. Drew	(Teller).
Hon. W. Kingsmill	

Amendment thus passed.

Bill thus rejected.

### BILL — EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT.

#### Second Reading.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: I do not propose to detain the House very long. I may say the Bill has been de-

signed, primarily, to give the shop assistants the benefit of the Saturday half-holiday. Hitherto all efforts to accomplish this have failed, and the Bill proposes above all things to try to give that privilege to the shop assistants. It is thought that the shop assistants should have the chance of taking their holiday at the same time as almost every other class of employee, and, as I say, that is the chief reason for introducing the Bill. I may briefly explain some of the provisions of the measure. In the first place, the Governor may, by proclamation, declare certain areas shop districts and, in addition to that, those areas will be widened as compared with what they are under the existing Act. An area may now include municipal, roads, and electoral districts, or electoral provinces; they may all be included in shop districts. The metropolitan district will include the three Legislative Council provinces, Metropolitan, Metropolitan-Suburban, and West. All other districts hitherto proclaimed will continue until nullified, as it were, by some other proclamation. It is also provided that any other proclamation in the metropolitan district is not altered unless abrogated specially by the Bill. The closing time under the Bill for the late night will be 9 o'clock, instead of 10 o'clock.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: All the shops make it 9 o'clock now.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): In Perth, perhaps, but not in certain other parts of the State.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: Why not do away with the late night altogether?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): The Bill will apply to all parts of the State. Under the old Act the choice was given to the shopkeeper of deciding on what day he would close late, and on what day the assistants would receive the half-holiday. That has not worked satisfactorily, and provision is here made that the public, who are most affected by any change, shall have the right of saying on what day the shops shall close in the respective districts. The public will make their choice at a poll, which will be taken on the roll of the Assembly electorates

comprised within the particular shop district. Provision is made as to how that poll is to be taken; returning officers will be appointed, and almost every provision for taking a vote at an Assembly election will be recognised in connection with the vote regarding the half-holiday.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Do I understand that the public will say on what day the shops shall close?

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): For the half-holiday, yes. In the metropolitan area the Governor, by proclamation, will decide when the poll is to be taken, but in the other districts it will only be done by petition, which must be signed by one-tenth of the electors on the roll. If a poll has been taken to decide what shall be the day for closing at 1 o'clock, another poll cannot be taken for two years; that will obviate the necessity of taking a poll perhaps upon the complaints of a few who may be desirous of having a change every three or six months. In addition to that, there are one or two provisions in the Bill for striking out some of those shops that have been in the exempt schedule. For instance, butchers and dairy produce dealers are struck out of the exemption schedule in the Bill. With regard to butchers I may say that a petition has been received both from the employers and the employees asking to have provision made in the Bill that their shops shall be treated the same as other shops, and shall not keep open after the hours prescribed for the ordinary shops. There are some amendments which we shall ask leave to introduce into the Bill in Committee, and which I take it will be on the Notice Paper to-morrow. They are unimportant amendments, although there is one in relation to dispensers which, I believe, is causing some anxiety at the present time. We propose to place dispensers in exactly the same position as chemists and druggists. It is said there are private dispensaries which are not chemists' shops. It is not the intention of the Government to do anything to prevent dispensaries opening at all hours that may be necessary. There is one other matter I should like to mention before sitting down, and that is in reference to

news agencies; they are exempt, but if a newsagent is dealing in fancy goods, and it constitutes a part of his business, he also will have to close at six o'clock, the same as other shopkeepers. I do not know that I need say more in explanation of the measure. It is very short, only three or four clauses, and when we get into Committee we can discuss the matter perhaps a little more thoroughly. I have much pleasure in moving—

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

On motion by Hon. J. D. Connolly, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Tuesday, 12th December, 1911.*

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

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

Mr. MONGER (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Will the Minister place on the Table the report of the Advisory Board on the Wickepin-Merre-

din Railway, together with all correspondence referring to same and reports of interviews (if any) and replies given to the various deputations that have waited upon previous Ministers in connection with the said railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: I have no objection to placing the papers on the Table.

### QUESTIONS OMITTED FROM NOTICE-PAPER.

Mr. SWAN: I desire to ask, Mr. Speaker, why a series of questions I gave notice of some days ago has been converted into a notice of motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Because, in view of the questions asked, I deemed it advisable they should take the form of a motion for a return.

Mr. SWAN: Is it not usual to notify members asking questions in that way?

Mr. SPEAKER: No, it is not usual.

### QUESTIONS (3)—RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

#### *Tickets for Long-distance Trains.*

Mr. BOLTON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is the Minister aware that instructions have been issued by the Railway Department which prevent the issue of tickets for country trains or the gold-fields express unless the passenger travels by the connecting train? 2, Does the Minister approve of the instruction that passengers desirous of leaving Fremantle for the country prior to the departure of the connecting train must purchase single tickets to Perth? 3, Will the Minister take steps to stop this unfair centralisation of railway revenue and inconvenience to the travelling public?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No such instructions have been issued, but country tickets issued at suburban stations are not available for break of journey within the suburban area, *vide* pages 16 and 17 of the Coaching Rates Book. This has been done to prevent fraud. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.