

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Is a dipso-maniac almost.

Mr. ROBINSON: Yes, and requires special treatment for the disease.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I cannot accept the proposed new clause. The measure will take us a long way in the right direction, and on the principle of local option I should have to object unless we could insert all the hours for opening. If we fix an hour for opening in the morning, it might be argued that we could just as well fix the hour for closing at night.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: So you should.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This is an appeal to the people. We should either take the whole responsibility or submit the whole of the question to the poll.

Mr. Thomas: The publicans would be very pleased if you could make the opening hour 8 a.m.

Mr. Robinson: I believe they would.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We cannot assume that. It would cease to be a local option vote if we fixed the opening hour. People would rightly say that if we fixed one hour we could fix the other.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The opening hour is fixed now.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then to take the poll properly the whole of the 24 hours should be submitted to the electors.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We ought not to agree to the proposal on principle if we intend to make the poll a local option poll. I still think it would have been better if Parliament had fixed the closing hour, and saved the country the expense of taking the poll. An anomaly will exist if 6 o'clock is decided upon as the closing hour, because, while the trading hours will be so greatly reduced, it will be absurd to have licensed houses open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The fixing of the morning hour for opening should be done by another ballot paper.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	9
Noes	16

Majority against .. 7

AYES.	
Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. George	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Gilchrist	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Lefroy	(Teller).

NOES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munie
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Chesson	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Bolton
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).
Mr. Mulhany	

New clause thus negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 8th September, 1915.

	PAGE
Papers presented	646
Select Committee, Retirement of C. F. Gale	647
Bills: Government Electric Works Act Amendment, 2R.	647
Weights and Measures, 1R.	658
Roads Act Amendment and Continuance, 1R.	658
Newcastle-Bolgart Railway Extension, 2R., Con.	668

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1, Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912.—Award

of the Court of Arbitration between Coastal Brickyards and Pottery Works Employees' Union of Workers, applicant, and R. O. Law and others, respondents. 2, Roads Act, 1911.—Dowerin Road Board—By-laws Nos. 52, 53, and 54. 3, Statement of Expenditure under the Mining Development Vote for year ending 30th June, 1915.

SELECT COMMITTEE, RETIREMENT OF C. F. GALE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. J. J. HOLMES the time for bringing up the report of this committee was extended for a fortnight.

BILL — GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) [5.35]: I am inclined to agree with Mr. Allen that this Bill furnishes an illustration of the old saying that one thing leads to another. It was Rudyard Kipling, I think, who referred to the condemned murderer who could find no other explanation of his unfortunate predicament than that one thing led to another. He said, "Once a man starts on a crooked course one thing leads on to another until finally he has to put someone out of the way to put himself straight again." It seems to me that the Government entered on a wrong course when they purchased the Perth tramways for more than double their value, and one thing has led on to another until, through the erection of the power house, which, with whatever merits or faults it may possess, seems to have a capacity far in excess of its present requirements, the Government have found themselves in the position that they have to put Fremantle and other municipal undertakings out of the way in order to place themselves straight again. I do not know how other members regard the matter, but I confess that I do not know nearly as much about it as

I ought to do. I do not think the Colonial Secretary in moving the second reading gave the information which he should have given to the House. I think the Government are to blame for their lack of candour in regard to big enterprises of this sort. The whole details of this contract in connection with the erection of the power house should have been submitted to Parliament so that members could give an intelligent vote on the principles of this Bill. About a fortnight ago Mr. Lynn submitted certain questions to the House in the hope of getting some information that we at least are entitled to. But yesterday we find that hon. gentleman complaining that the answers given to his questions were, apparently, judging by the information he has received from other sources, incorrect. I, for one, and I think members will take the same view, do not blame the leader of the House, but in several instances we have had great reason to complain of the cavalier manner in which the Government appear to take the questions submitted by this House. The Colonial Secretary I know has to give the answers or statements furnished by the Minister in whose department the matter arises. Only a week or so ago the Colonial Secretary made a statement, no doubt it was supplied to him, in regard to a similar contract to this, the Nevanas contract, and the statement was absolutely and entirely misleading, inasmuch as it misrepresented the nature of the Agent General's recommendations, and that it concealed from members of the House more than one-half of the payments the Government had to make to Nevanas for the cancellation of the contract. I do not blame the Colonial Secretary, but I think the Government, by not answering the questions fully and freely, and giving the House information which we are entitled to, excite suspicion and opposition to measures of this kind, which, possibly, are quite innocent if we thoroughly understood them. Most members must have been interested in the disclosures made by Mr. Duffell, and Mr. Duffell spoke as one having authority. I do not know if

he is in the confidence of the Government or not on this matter, but he said many things that I did not know, and perhaps he refrained from telling the House many things which he knew. So far as I understand the case, it seems that without calling for public tenders, the Premier, or the Government, let a contract for a sum which may be £200,000 or £300,000, I do not know the figures, but I understand that it is something between £200,000 and £300,000.

Hon. J. Duffell: It is the Commissioner of Railways who made the contract.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I do not suppose the Commissioner made it off his own bat. I understood from what the Premier said in another place that he had let the contract in London, but Mr. Duffell seems to have more information than he has made use of.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Give him notice of questions.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I do not know that I should be in order in asking questions from the hon. Mr. Duffell. I do not understand the whole position. I want to get information so that I can give an intelligent vote on the principles submitted in this Bill. As I understand it, without calling for tenders, the Government let a contract for anything between £200,000 and £300,000, and that the material contracted to be supplied was of German manufacture. Consequent on that and the outbreak of the war an increased cost has arisen, I think £80,000 the hon. member said.

Hon. J. Duffell: I did not say £80,000.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Well, I do not know the amount, but a very large increased cost has arisen and that has fallen, not on the contractor, but on the State. These are three points on which I should like to have some information. I can not add anything to what I have said previously as to letting contracts without competition. All these contracts from the powellising contract down to the present, let by the Government without open tendering, have proved disastrous to this State. and so long as the

Government continue in what appears to be a favourite pastime with them, that of letting contracts without submitting the work to public competition, they will not escape calumny. The whole principle is recognised as wrong. So far as material being of German manufacture is concerned, I do not want to say anything more than should be said. I do not want to suggest that the Government are to blame for not anticipating the war. I say that before the war broke out no Australian Government was entitled to let a contract involving the purchase of a large quantity of German goods without giving the British manufacturers an opportunity of competing. For a long time past it has been recognised by every statesman in the Empire that preference should be given to goods of British manufacture. British manufacture first, and second, goods manufactured by English speaking people. If it is a fact, as Mr. Duffell has stated, that this contract was let, and that it involved the supply of a large quantity of German goods, it was most unbusinesslike and unpatriotic—even if there had been no talk of war, to let such a contract without giving the British and American manufacturers a chance of competing. I do not believe that German manufacturers stood alone in this particular class of goods, as Mr. Duffell says, I believe that the British and American manufacturers turn out as good an article as the German.

Hon. J. Duffell: They are made by a British firm.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: These to be supplied were German; that was in my hon. friend's statement. The contract should have stipulated that they should have been British. As far as the question of price is concerned, again, I say that British manufacturers should have had an opportunity of competing. As far as the extra cost falling on the State, instead of on the contractor, is concerned, most of us would like to have a look at the contract and see how it actually happened that this cost does fall on the State. There seems to be a good deal of resemblance between the Wyndham contract

and this particular contract. In each case an expert was called in to advise. Mr. Nevanas was called in to advise in regard to the Wyndham freezing works and his advice seems to have amounted to this, "I am just the man you are looking for; I am the man to do the job." In the case of the electric power house another firm, Merz & McLellan, were called in to advise, and they were just the people to do the job. To use a colloquialism, it looks as if these people have sold the Government a pup, and to my mind, the mere fact of a man called in to advise the Government in regard to a matter saying "Let me do the work" should excite suspicion at once. If an hon. member wanted to invest in a farm and he approached an agricultural member, whom he knew to be an expert, to be put on to a good farm, and that member said "Yes, I can do it, I have one of my own to sell," would not the prospective purchaser make some independent inquiry first?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And to pay for the advice, too!

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Yes, it was a case of "Pay me for advising and I will do the work for you." The mere fact of these people giving the advice should have suggested to the Government the wisdom of seeking some corroboration of the advice they gave. I am not in a position to express a definite opinion on the matter, but I have been told that this plant is so big and the cost so great, that the Government cannot make it pay unless they can get practically a monopoly of the supply of electric light and power from Fremantle to Midland Junction. That is the information that has been brought to me and I want to know whether it is right. I am told that this Bill is simply a first step in that direction. I do not intend to go into the aspect of the case as it affects Fremantle because that was ably presented to us yesterday. It was a surprise to me that the hon. Mr. Lynn should have rebuked me at this stage for my opposition to the purchase of the Perth tramways. My only regret is that my opposition was

unsuccessful. I was astonished at the support given to the project by the hon. member.

Hon. W. Patrick: They all regret it now.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I told the hon. member then that if he assisted the Government to rob the ratepayers of Perth, the time would not be far distant before the ratepayers of Fremantle would be attacked, but I little thought that the implement he then helped to forge would be used against the undertaking in which he has manifested such an interest. It was surprising, knowing his knowledge and experience of tramways in such an enterprise as that at Fremantle, that he should have allowed the citizens of this State to have a worn out contraption forced upon them carrying watered stock of at least a quarter of a million, and it was equally surprising to me that, after having played so prominent a part in bringing the Fremantle enterprise to a successful issue, he should have been willing to see the ratepayers of Perth prejudiced in the interests of the Government's craze for nationalising everything. In regard to the purchase of the Perth tramways, the members of the Metropolitan-Suburban province supported the Government. They did not mind the Perth ratepayers being sold because a sort of a promise had been given that the ratepayers of the municipalities about Perth were to reap certain advantages. Whether the advantages have materialised or not, those hon. members probably know. Now we find members representing the same province supporting the Government on this issue. The ratepayers of Fremantle are being attacked, and I believe there is some suggestion that the ratepayers of the municipalities around Perth and Fremantle are going to benefit by the condition of affairs the Government are seeking to set up. I do not hesitate to express my opinion that I regard the present Government and the party behind them as hostile to the ratepayer, whether municipal or roads board. The idea of the Government is that every issue should be decided merely by a

counting of noses, and their pet aversion is to that principle which has its practical application in this Chamber and in the municipalities and roads boards throughout this State, the principle that those who pay the piper should call the tune, the principle that political power shall not be entirely divorced from responsibility. I have no hesitation in warning ratepayers generally that unless they come to the assistance of other ratepayers whose interests are being attacked by the Government, no matter whether they themselves are immediately interested or not, it will be bad for them. Unless they hang together, it is a sure thing that the Government will hang them one by one. I do not intend to express my opinion as to how I propose to vote on the issues raised by the hon. Mr. Allen. I think he placed before the House a very lucid and convincing statement, one of the clearest I have ever listened to, and it certainly impressed me very much. I have tabled a motion for to-morrow that all the papers relating to this matter be laid upon the Table of the House. If the Colonial Secretary agrees to the motion, it may be possible for us to find out the information we want, but I do not think that will be the easiest or the quickest way of getting it, and I suggest to Mr. Allen that, when the second reading of the Bill has been passed, he move that the Bill be referred to a select committee of say three members, who, without any undue delay, could place us in possession of all the information that I think the Colonial Secretary should have furnished us when he moved the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [4.51]: The hon. member who has just sat down has referred to that old saying, one thing leads to another. He is quite right. It is also an old saying that chickens come home to roost. I believe, if the Government thought when they were fondling the secret contract egg which has developed into such a chicken, not an ordinary farmyard chicken but a vulture such as it appears has come to light, they would have had nothing to do with it. I will oppose the

second reading of the Bill for various reasons. My first reason is because the Bill is the latest embodiment of a principle which the present Government have followed ever since they have had an opportunity to follow anything, that is the principle of the destruction of local government; I shall oppose the Bill secondly because the leader of the House has inferred that he values only one part of the Bill, and that is the part which strikes at local government; and, furthermore, I am going to oppose the Bill because I shall not have a chance, in Committee, of initiating any amendment. This secret contract has turned out as I have no doubt others will turn out in future. In my opinion, secret contracts, as entered into by the Government or members of the Government, must be either foolish or wrong, not to put it in any plainer language. The Ministers, or the Government, who make themselves parties to a secret contract are acting either foolishly or wrongly and we have the alternative of knowing that we are being governed either by foolish persons or by wrongdoers. It is not a pleasant alternative for any country to have. Surely the experience that the Government have had with regard to secret contracts should have been sufficient; yet only yesterday the existence of another secret contract was disclosed, a secret contract which might have remained secret indefinitely, perhaps until the purchased steamer arrived here, had not it been for the fact that I drew a bow at a venture, so to speak, and happened to hit the mark. I have alluded to the policy of the destruction of local self-government. That is abundantly evident in this Bill; it was evident in the clauses of the Bill which preceded this measure, and most of all in the Traffic Bill, and it is a most peculiar thing that the apostle of secret contracts, the present Minister for Lands, is also the principal opponent of local self-government. This is a fact exceedingly to be regretted, and I will not be a party to anything which will take away from the local authorities those powers which they possess to-day. It would be very

foolish for them to delegate those powers to any other body. Allusion has been made to a subject which I may confess I can scarcely bear to hear mentioned, and that is the purchase of the Perth tramway system. It is a good thing for a man to make a finish of a state of mind inconvenient to him, and I want to take this public opportunity, as this subject is intimately connected with this Bill and the issue involved, to say that there has been no political action in my somewhat long political experience which I regret as I do my support of the purchase of the Perth tramways. When I remember the specious promises held out as to how the tramways would be run and what improvements would be made and how the ratepayers of Perth would be benefited, I am indignant, not only at the Government but more at myself, for having been so misled by those specious promises. Supposing we pass the Bill now before us and accept the estimate of .85d. per unit given for the production of current, how can we, in view of past events and the wrongness of estimates then given to us, believe that the present estimate will prove anything like correct. I can place no trust in what has been said. My attitude towards the Perth tramways purchase amounted to this, that it was a choice between municipal and State trams. I did not think the municipality of Perth, not in conjunction with so much as in opposition to the various other municipalities by which it was surrounded, could possibly have run the tramways to advantage, but I do not think that, in conjunction with the municipalities, it could ever have run them half so badly as the Government have run them since taking them over. I am speaking now after a trip around Australia, and I say ours is absolutely the worst service in Australia. If any member has been around the world, I am quite prepared to hear him say that ours is the worst system in the world. Instead of getting better, it seems to be getting steadily worse. I do not know that I need say anything more with regard to this Bill. The pup sold to the Government, judging by its size, appears to be a fairly

healthy St. Bernard, with a very evil tendency and if it is encouraged in this way, it will not be long before the Fremantle people will be severely bitten by it. I propose to get rid of the animal as quickly as possible and for that reason, and because I am not in a position to table any amendment in Committee, shall vote against the second reading and with the hon. Mr. Lynn.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East) [4.57]: I admit it is a nice point as to how far members ought to go back upon the history of this matter when dealing with the specific objects of this Bill, and yet I can quite understand the attitude of the hon. Mr. Allen as a guardian of the interests of Fremantle. From his point of view I think there would be justification for following the advice given by the hon. Mr. Colebatch to have this Bill referred to a select committee, but the actual burden of the Bill itself is one on which members must make up their minds, and, whatever one's sympathies with Fremantle might be, I do not see how the main object of the Bill can be refused. By the consent of this House the Government have taken over the running of the Perth trams. I voted for that. I say this only because several members have been denouncing that action of the Government. I voted for the taking over of the Perth trams by the Government, and I would do so again, on the broad principle that the controller of the City and suburban railways should control the tramways as well. Having taken over the Perth tramways, the Government have also taken over the electric lighting and power from the City. I think, necessarily so. According to Mr. Allen, the Government have made a sad bungle of the electric power works, and that certainly is a matter for investigation. But the point of the Bill is this. The Government, having established their own electric lighting and power works, want to serve Government purposes in and around the City. They also wish to serve the Naval Base which, although it represents a Commonwealth undertaking, is a natural outlet for the State Government's electrical enterprise.

I do not see how Parliament can refuse to allow the State Government to supply the Commonwealth Government with electricity. I do not see how Parliament can stand in the way of Government's supplying electricity to all its own institutions and works, and also to Commonwealth institutions and works. Therefore I consider that the main object of this Bill must be conceded. I do not see how Parliament can refuse it. I do not think the Colonial Secretary will have any desire to rush such a Bill as this through. It is too serious. If a select committee got to work in earnest and pushed forward inquiry, I think it would do a world of good; and if a proposal to that effect is made I shall feel bound to support it. The real object of the Bill, however, Parliament is, in my opinion bound to grant. I wish to make one suggestion to the Colonial Secretary. Clause 4 of the Bill makes provision for an appeal in the case of any difference between the Government and the local authorities. That appeal is from the Commissioner of Railways to the Minister for Railways. Under earlier Administrations there was a distinction between the Commissioner of Railways and the Minister for Railways, but under the present regime there is none. The present Minister claims to be Commissioner, as well as Minister. Under the present Administration the Commissioner of Railways has, unfortunately, been ousted from his office. He is in the utterly false position of being responsible for the railways and yet entirely under the control of the Minister.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He has been in that position for years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Yes, since the present Ministry took office. The Minister has in effect said to the whole of the railway service, "Look to me. The Commissioner is all right, and may have his uses, but you look to me." He has taken that attitude, and I want the Colonial Secretary to understand that no rational member of Parliament could think of an appeal from the Commissioner to the Minister under the present regime as being anything else than, I will not say bluff, but I will say an unmean-

ing thing. It would be of no use whatever. And there ought to be an appeal. The appeal will have to be to some authority under the public works arbitration legislation. Whether to a resident magistrate or to a judge, it will have to be an appeal to an independent party; not an appeal from Phillip to Phillip, from the Commissioner to the Minister. I do not see how the House can refuse the real object of this Bill, but I do think, in the light of all that has been said by Mr. Allen, that it is a good suggestion to refer the measure to a short, sharp, and quick inquiry by a select committee.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.6]: Like Mr. Kingsmill, I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill. My reason for doing so is that the measure appears to represent an extension of a State industrial enterprise, or as it may be termed, a State commercial concern. Personally, I am opposed to even the slightest extension of any of the Government industrial enterprises, for the reason that the results we have had before us in recent times have been so deplorable that I consider we ought not to give the slightest encouragement to the establishment of any more of these enterprises. The proposal under this Bill is to extend the Government electric enterprise to Fremantle and to the Naval Base. That means extension of this particular State enterprise. When we look round on the various undertakings already being conducted by the Government and see what I may call the extensive failure involved in all of them, surely it must be recognised that it is not our duty, as representatives of the people, to afford opportunity for the extension of these failures still further. It may be argued, and I suppose in some places it is argued, that some of the State enterprises have possibly reduced the cost of meat or the cost of fish, or something of that kind. If State enterprise has done those things, it has done them for the benefit of a few people, a small part of the community, at the cost of the whole of the community. I do not think any of these State enterprises have shown the

slightest profit—real profit, at all events. Another reason why I oppose the Bill is that I do not believe in any Government, whether Liberal or Labour or any other kind, running industrial enterprises, for the simple reason that it is impossible for Governments to control such enterprises properly. All Governments are more or less subject to the votes of the people, and this applies more particularly to Labour Governments. Therefore, as a rule, these State enterprises are to a very large extent in the hands of the employees, and political pressure and patronage and the power of the unions are exercised in them to such a degree that it is impossible for Governments, and especially a Government dependent on the favour of the popular vote, to carry them on successfully. Apparently we have an instance of this in the State Implement Works. It is contended that there things are all at sixes and sevens. I know nothing of the matter myself, but I have heard that in the State Steamship Service the discipline is of the most ordinary nature.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Of the most extraordinary nature, is it not?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Perhaps "extraordinary" would be a better word. At all events, in circumstances where discipline is of the highest importance for the safety of life, it is extremely lax. Without blaming any individual Government, I say that it is impossible for Governments to carry on trading concerns satisfactorily. To recognise this we need only glance at the agreements which have been referred to this afternoon. There is the Nevanas agreement relative to the Wyndham freezing works. I do not suppose there ever was before presented to Parliament such a case of careless business methods, if all that we have seen in the newspapers is true. Any Government or any Minister allowing a file to be conducted in the way which has been described in the Press, with dates and papers missing here and there, by that very fact shows how impossible it is for the State to run large enterprises satisfactorily. I am one of those who are absolutely opposed to any Government carrying on trading enterprises, and more especially

to this being done by a Labour Government, dependent so largely for its existence on those who are employees of these State concerns. In the circumstances, I intend to oppose the second reading. It is not as though the defeat of the Bill would create any hardship, because I understand the municipality of Fremantle are quite capable of supplying all the electricity that is required, and at a reasonable cost. The municipality have gone to considerable expense and trouble in erecting works of their own, and there are the works at the Government's command. I do not intend to refer to the terms or anything of that nature, because it is beside the question at present; but I do think that if this Bill were carried the result would be to extend State industrial enterprises. Therefore I intend to vote against the second reading.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North) [5.12]: I rise to speak in the interests of fair play. I hold that if this Bill becomes law it would work an injustice to one of the principal cities of this State which, when I arrived here 23 or 24 years ago, was the principal city. Perth was not much of a place at that time. Fremantle was then the centre of all the commerce of the State. One reason why Fremantle was at that time so successful lay in the fact that the railway workshops were situated there. Being an Irishman, I am sorry that I have not a grievance on that score against the present Government. Those workshops were not removed by the present Government, but they were removed, and consequently Fremantle suffered. Fremantle deserved to suffer even after that misfortune, because of the fact that the city refused a very good offer made by a powerful London syndicate to construct tramways in Fremantle. It is within my personal knowledge that the agents of the syndicate went to Fremantle and estimated the traffic, with the result that they were quite satisfied to build tramways. Fremantle, however, refused. The Fremantle people at that time were more or less socialistic in their ideas. They are suffering for that now. They said, "We will not allow it; we will not have any private enterprise." In the meantime

the Perth tramways were built by private enterprise, with the result that the people who resided in Fremantle left that city and came to Perth to reside, and that the commerce of Fremantle left Fremantle to come to Perth, where it remains to-day. That was the result of Fremantle's refusal to have anything to do with private enterprise. That is history. In the Parliament of this State I fought for the rights of the city of Fremantle, when the great question of the workshops came up. That was one of the most burning questions of that time, as some of the older members of this House, for instance, Sir Winthrop Hackett, will remember. Fremantle was defeated on that question. Fremantle missed the bus because of the refusal to accept what was offered, namely, locomotion suitable for the times, and locomotion at a cheaper rate and on better terms than Fremantle has to-day, although the Fremantle tramway enterprise is successful. That is all leading up to the question of this Bill. I shall try to prove what I have said. It would be a pleasure to me to pass this Bill if the result would be what I hope it will be. Fremantle after having refused as I just now pointed out to allow private enterprise to develop her works then took up the matter and built the tramways, power station and light station under municipal control. One would think that after having driven out private enterprise Fremantle would be quite safe with municipal control. But what do we find? The powers that be not only seek to knock out private enterprise but also all local governing rights. That is what this means. The figures quoted by Mr. McLaren are convincing. He told us that the current under the new scheme, which is to be supplied to Perth at .85d. would cost over 2d. when the installation of the new plant and machinery necessary was completed and paid for, and that they would have to sell it at 1½d. Is this State to be driven into the position that there is to be no such thing as local government, and also no such thing as private enterprise allowed in this State? It looks so to me. I feel strongly on the question of the Wynd-

ham freezing works, referred to just now by another hon. member. I could tell members more than they know perhaps on that subject. I can tell them this, that so long ago as the 1st March this year I was told by the proprietor of the principal pastoral business in Australasia that a contract had been secured by Mr. Nevanas. I pooh-poohed the idea. I will say further, that there are other things at the back of that contract which have not been brought out; but, I am not going to say very much on that subject just now. I desire to point out what the effect of this Bill will be on the interests of Fremantle. If the Bill be carried the Government will be permitted to supply all the Government departments in Fremantle, which means the scrapping of the Fremantle plant.

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: They will still have to supply the trams.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I want hon. members to understand what is going to be taken away from Fremantle under this Bill, business for which they have already provided the necessary plant—and I have not yet heard it said that they have overcharged—the Fremantle hospital, Fremantle Gaol, Sewerage Department, Customs Department Harbour and Light Department, police quarters, schools, police barracks, police dwellings, military barracks, the drill hall, military dwellings, gaol warders' dwellings, medical officers' quarters, Commonwealth and State offices and the North Fremantle workshops. And that is only portion. There is the lighting of the whole of the railways, which I presume is at present supplied by the local authority. Then there is the electricity used in the harbour. Those are all the best customers; and it has to be remembered that the other consumers in Fremantle have to pay rates whereas the Government pays no rates at all. The price charged is I think suitable. Yet the Government, in furtherance of its new style of nationalising everything—I call it pure socialism—asks this House to agree to a measure which will inflict an injustice on those people. The people of Fremantle deserve better from us than that we, as

the representatives of Fremantle should agree. I am not a representative of Fremantle but I was once called the fifth member for Fremantle; and I think that as such I carried out my duties well. I hold that this Bill is not in the interests of Fremantle. I cannot argue against the proposition that the bigger the concern the cheaper one can produce; I believe that to be correct. But at the same time the Fremantle plant was established and built up under Government conditions and it should not be choked off at this stage. I hope that the Bill will not be passed; it will be an injustice to Fremantle, and will not be in the best interests of the State as a whole. I think the people of Fremantle should be allowed to carry on as they are. I go further and say they have a right to any value that may accrue by the establishment of the Naval Base. I think that almost belongs to them as a vested interest.

Hon. A. G. Jenkins: But the Naval Base was not anticipated when they started their works.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I agree it arrived too late. If the people of Fremantle had taken the course they should have done and permitted the establishment of up-to-date means of locomotion by private enterprise, Fremantle would to-day be the city of Western Australia, instead of Perth. I say this after 23 years experience, therefore I should know. I intend to vote against the second reading of this Bill not in any spirit of antagonism to the Government but purely on the ground that I do not consider it in the interests of the people.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) [5.23]: I also intend to oppose this Bill. I think the local governing bodies should be encouraged to supply ratepayers with all facilities such as light and tramways. If the Government be allowed to supply its own departments the enterprise which has been established at Fremantle must be a failure. I agree with Mr. Connor that the result will be that their best customers would be taken away from them. I am opposed also to any extension of the Government enterprises. I

have yet to learn that there is any class of enterprise which cannot be more successfully conducted privately than by the Government. It is claimed that the Government should step in in the case of monopolies. I will quote an experience of a monopoly, the Perth-South Perth ferries. In the old days the company running this service made a profit stated at £2,000 per annum. The Government, very unfairly I think, forced the company to sell at the Government's price and the people were told that they would be better catered for under the Government than previously. What do we find? They built a new boat which has been laid up and is not likely to be running again for some time.

Member: Is that so?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Yes, the last time I went to South Perth I was told that the new boat was not running. I travelled by one of the old boats, formerly called "old tubs," which has been used on the ferry service for years. The boat was worth nothing according to the company; but it seems that the old tubs are the only reliable boats the Government have got now. That was a monopoly. The old company was making a handsome profit, yet now with a worse service and the same old boats there is no profit. Seeing that the municipal concern at Fremantle is giving satisfaction it is not a fair thing that the Government should be allowed to interfere at this stage in the way proposed in this Bill. The Government have already a monopoly in this connection as I understand it is proposed to supply the whole of the railways between Northam and Fremantle. As I stated I am opposed to any further extension of Government enterprises of this nature.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS (Metropolitan) [5.29]: The objection to this Bill, as I understand it, is that the Fremantle municipality have erected a plant and machinery and have acquired land. But why they should on this account be forever granted a monopoly for all time to supply the whole of the power required at Fremantle I cannot see.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: We have always had that permission under an Act of Parliament.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: Can the hon. member show me an instance where under any Act a monopoly is granted for all time. I cannot see why the Government should not be permitted to supply themselves after having incurred a heavy expenditure. Why should the Government be debarred from supplying their own institutions with their own electric light? We have heard a very able speech from Mr. Allen. No one could have put the case more clearly to the House. That hon. member said they were running the best tramway service in Australia, and that the Fremantle trams were supplying electric light at a price with which the Government practically could not compete, or only on equal terms. That hon. member surely must allow for the fact that Fremantle is certain to grow, that there will be more private consumers for the power locally supplied. Why, therefore, should he object to the Government coming in and seeking to supply State institutions in Fremantle, and State institutions only? Surely if the Government have an electric lighting plant, in respect to which the supply is greater than the demand, it would be the supremest folly to say "Oh no, you can let that current go to waste," although the Government institutions in Fremantle would be applicants for that power and would be only too willing to pay for it, and notwithstanding also that it would help to keep the scheme going. Fremantle has for many years been spoon-fed by the Government. In proportion to their population they have had more money spent on public works than has any other part of the State. They have had harbour works and all those immense institutions referred to by Mr. Connor.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: They are for the State, not for Fremantle.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: But the money has been spent in Fremantle. Does the hon. member say that because those institutions have been put there, the municipality is to have control over them

for all time in respect to the supply of electric light? Surely if the Government have this immense machinery here they should be allowed to supply their own institutions with electric light. Some comment has been made about supplying the Naval Base. That institution was never thought of when the Fremantle power house was first built, and therefore the Fremantle Tramways Board cannot claim that they are going to make any loss on that score. Why should not the Government compete with the municipality for the supplying of the Commonwealth with electric light beyond the boundaries of the municipality? It will be a question of which can supply the light at the more reasonable cost. If the Fremantle Tramway Board can do all that Mr. Allen has said they can, they have no reason to fear competition from the Government. Therefore, why object to the Government coming in. It is not a fair proposition, to come to the House and say that because Fremantle has erected an electric lighting and power scheme, that therefore they are to have, for all time, the sole right of supplying any department, State or Commonwealth, with electric light.

Hon. F. CONNOR: That is for the House to decide.

Hon. A. G. JENKINS: Certainly. But I think it is a most unfair proposition. That is why I am supporting the second reading. The Government, having incurred this expense, having the plant erected, and having, moreover, a surplus of power, should have the right to supply their own departments; and if they can make suitable contracts with the Commonwealth, they should have the power also to carry out those contracts.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West) [5.35]: I do not intend to deal with the construction or cost of the power-house. That, I think, is rather beyond the question. At the same time I am not prepared to quarrel with the Government when, in erecting a power house at a cost of nearly £300,000, they have made provision not only for present requirements but for future needs also. I think it is

wise to have the additional power. But the question that presents itself to me is, will the Bill, if passed, do any injustice to Fremantle? I am aware that Fremantle has incurred an expenditure of £150,000 to provide electric light and power in the district, and I understand there has not been a single complaint against the charges being made, and that altogether it has been a very successful business undertaking. It seems to me somewhat hard that this opposition should crop up, and that the people should not have the full benefit of their outlay of £150,000 which has been so well expended. At the same time I cannot divest myself of the fact that the Government having been allowed to spend nearly £300,000 of the general taxpayers' money, it would be unfair to the general taxpayer to prevent the Government from supplying this electric current to their own institutions. At first, until I read the Bill, I was entirely opposed to this power being granted to the Government, and even now I would vote against the second reading if there were any proposal in the measure for the Government to supply private consumers in the municipality. But as it is clear that it is only intended to supply Government institutions, I have a doubt as to whether I can go so far as to deprive the Government of that right. It seems to me that, having this electric current, and much more than is required at present, it is hardly fair that the Government should have to buy from an outside source. We might on the same reasoning say that the Government should not build their own offices in Perth, but should lease offices from the municipality, so that the municipality should thereby benefit. I think the case is on all fours. I do not intend to vote against the second reading. My sympathies are with the people of Fremantle. I am a ratepayer there myself and I desire to see the town prosper. I think great credit is due to the municipality for the way they run their trams and the way the business of the municipality generally is carried on. Certainly they have a better tram service and a much cheaper one than the Government are at present

running in Perth, and therefore they are deserving of every encouragement. But I have that strong objection expressed by Sir Edward Wittenoom. I, too, am not prepared to grant any concessions to the Government to go on with these socialistic enterprises. Only a day or two ago I saw in the newspaper that the leader of the Government had said at a public function that, although there was a loss on some of the socialistic undertakings, yet regarding them as a whole there was a profit. I do not know which of them is showing the profit. It seems to me that the Government's case is on all fours with that of the old lady who was running a big business and who declared that she lost on every article she sold, but that the turnover was so great, the magnitude of the business was such as to enable her to carry on. I feel that, if I am to do justice between the Government and the people, I must not vote against the second reading. I will hear the reasons which no doubt the leader of the House will be prepared to give in his reply, more reasons than we had from him when introducing the measure. My mind is quite open as to which way I shall vote when it comes to a division. I think the Government should supply their own requirements when they have already paid for this costly power house, and that, even entering into another municipality, it should be their right to provide their own requirements. If they were going beyond that I would have no hesitation in voting against the second reading.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West) [5.42]: When the Government first launched their socialistic enterprises, I was thoroughly convinced that they were not going to be conducted on business lines, but rather that they would be conducted at the cost of the State. I think, without any feeling at all, that we have had abundant evidence that everything which has been undertaken by them has been a huge failure. My idea is that it would now take a Cabinet of the best men of Western Australia to put these concerns on a profitable basis. Even the ordinary affairs of State cannot be successfully handled by inexperienced men.

I feel the Government have had ample opportunity of showing what business capacity they have, and to my mind everything they have touched has been bungled. I will vote against the second reading.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.43]: I have no desire to give a silent vote on the question. I have listened carefully to the debate. It seems to me we have given authority to the Government to enter upon these works, and it is in the interests of the general taxpayer of the State, who has to foot the Bill, that he should get the most out of the service which his money has provided. I have no hesitation in supporting the second reading.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.44]: I also intend to support the second reading, for the following reasons. In the first place, for good or for ill, the people of the State have acquired a supply of electric power in the metropolitan area, and the people of the State are now the shareholders of that enterprise. If it is an unfortunate conflict between the interests of the State as a whole and the interests of Fremantle, I am afraid the interests of the State must prevail. However, I trust no injustice will be done to Fremantle. Listening to the speeches of Mr. Connor and Mr. Jenkins I was reminded of the time of my boyhood, when there was always an unfortunate conflict between Perth and Fremantle. Indeed it extended so far that when we went down to Fremantle to play them cricket, the boys of Fremantle used to gather on the old bridge and throw stones at us. As to the question of the Naval Base, it seems to me that it is affected by two spheres of influence, one in connection with the supply of electricity to the Commonwealth Government, and the other in connection with the port of Fremantle, which has also to compete in supplying that power. I presume that the Commonwealth will prefer to take the tender of the lowest bidder. I hope, at all events, that this will be the business principle upon which the Commonwealth will act.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is fixed up, is it not?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The enormous province which I have the honour to represent, extending from Midland Junction to Cottesloe, seems to have somewhat diverse interests in this question. Cottesloe is, I believe, concerned, and somebody has said that Claremont is also concerned. Cottesloe, I know, is somewhat concerned that the Government should not be allowed to compete against them. Midland Junction, again, has different interests I believe, and so on over every portion of the Metropolitan-Suburban province. One of the products of electricity, I believe, is ozone, and ozone is not the prerogative of Fremantle alone, in spite of the "Fremantle Doctor." Cottesloe, for instance, can claim some, and Claremont has a fraction. It has even affected the air of Perth, and I believe there is a distinct aroma of ozone from the fish shops of Midland Junction.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is no relation to the filter beds.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I trust that some concession will be granted to Fremantle with reference to their continuing to supply those Government departments which they have previously supplied. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—ROADS ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

BILL — NEWCASTLE-BOLGART RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.50] in moving the second reading said: This Bill pro-

vides for the extension for about four miles of the railway authorised by Parliament in 1912 for a distance of 31 miles from Toodyay to Bolgart. The reason for the proposed extension is in order to bring the terminus of the line as close as possible to the main road between Wongan Hills and the Midland railway. The site selected originally as the terminus of the line is found to be unsuitable for the purpose, and on recommendation of the district land inspector the present proposed terminus has been substituted. For the information of the House, I may say that of the 31 miles of this railway already authorised, the clearing and grubbing of over 20 miles have been completed; the earth-works are finished for a distance of 15 miles; and the new Bolgart station is approaching completion. The country to be served by this line is already settled, and the advent of the railway will result, we are informed, in considerably increased production, as the settlers are waiting only for the construction of the railway in order to increase the area already under cultivation. In this respect, the proposal now under review differs from most of the railway proposals which have been submitted to Parliament. Ordinarily railways are useful as pioneers of production. In this instance the pioneer work has been done, and the railway is required for the purpose of extending production. At the same time, the railway will be of material assistance to settlers who are now at too great a distance from a railway for the carrying on of farming on profitable lines. Some of the farmers have to cart their wheat no less than 25 miles, and it is impossible, as hon. members will readily recognise, for farming to be carried on in a profitable manner under such conditions. The Government have been approached to extend this line even further in a northerly direction, but we would not be justified in asking Parliament to approve of new railway construction of any magnitude until those lines which have already been approved of have been constructed. When the finances permit, the Government will be prepared to take

into consideration the further extension of this railway, but for the present we are asking Parliament to approve only of the extension of four miles for the reasons I have already stated. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.53]: I am pleased to support the second reading of this measure. It is unnecessary for me to mention to hon. members that it is serving one of the best districts in the State. It is a small extension. I regret that the Government have not seen their way to take the line considerably further, but every little that is done in the way of railway extension is most thankfully received by the farming community.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: And the general taxpayer pays the deficit.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The district has not only produced large quantities of wheat, but it is a producer of large quantities of stock, wool, and other produce, and I think that Fremantle gets a fair share of the trade which is being done, and will get a fair share of that which will be added by this extension. It will certainly meet the wishes of the community in that direction, and bring them to the terminal roads. We note that in many districts one of the troubles is that a railway runs to the centre and the settlers are waiting for the roads to run down to connect them with the railway. In this case, I am glad to see that the Government are running the railway along to the connecting roads without stopping at some inconvenient spot where the settlers cannot reach the sidings. There are some blunders which have been made along the route of that railway, but it is unnecessary for me to refer to them now. I believe that the same blunders have been taking place on many other railways. As we proceed along with these various railways, it is to be hoped that the engineers who have made these blunders from time to time will benefit by their experience, and that the settlers will not be put to inconvenience and trouble such as, in many instances, they have been put to in the

construction of these cheap railways. I am pleased to support the second reading of the Bill, and hope that the work will be brought to an early termination.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.59 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 8th September, 1915.

	PAGE
Petition: Press representative excluded from the Gallery	660
Papers presented	666
Ministerial Statement-Budget	666
Questions: Agricultural Lands Purchase Act and Land rents	666
Industries Assistance Act and Lists of settlers	666
Tramway free passes to returned soldiers	666
Electric current, proposed selling rates	666
Police non-commissioned officers	666
Expeditionary forces, Allowances withheld, Blankets at Blackboy Hill Camp	666
Railway feeder roads, Yillimining-Kondinin	667
Railway shunting operations, Beverley	667
Harbour facilities, Geraldton	667
Railway coal supplies, Bunbury	667
Enemy subjects in Government employment	668
Joint Select Committee, Money Bills procedure	671
Bills: Weights and Measures, 3a.	671
Roads Act Continuance, 3a.	671
Permanent Reserve, 1k.	671
Papers: Pipe manufacture, Monteath Bros. Contract	671
Motion: Police Constable Campbell, to inquire as to treatment	671
Expeditionary Forces, disabled soldiers	705
Return: State Sawmills, employees	704

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

PETITION—PRESS REPRESENTATIVE EXCLUDED FROM THE GALLERY.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Perth) [4.30]: I have a petition to present. It

is couched in respectful language in accordance with the Standing Orders and it ends with a prayer. I move—

That the petition be received.

The Attorney General: Who is it from?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I ought to take the House into my confidence respecting this matter proposed to be brought before it by the member for Perth. Although the hon. member did not consult me regarding his intention of presenting a petition, I feel he should have done so.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: I only received it five minutes ago while the bells were ringing, and I asked the Clerk to inform you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I accept the hon. member's explanation, but I may say that through quite other channels it came to me as early as last night that a petition was to be presented. I accept the hon. member's explanation that he did not receive it till five minutes ago. The House will remember that the other evening a person in the Press gallery was adjudged guilty of contempt because of an insulting note which he sent to the Minister for Lands, and it was resolved by the House that that person should be removed from the Press gallery until such time as he apologised to the House and the Minister. I may say that an apology was submitted to me late on the Thursday night. When I perused it I found that it was one which in my opinion would not be acceptable to the House, that it was not such as I felt the House should receive, and I instructed the Clerk to notify Mr. Morrison that he must send an apology in proper form, without either explanation or qualification. I insisted upon this because I take it the House expects that I as Speaker shall insist upon respect being given to its decisions, and that any person, whoever he may be, shall do that which is expected from every member of the House. If any hon. member had made the reference to a Minister or any other member which was made by Mr. Morrison from the Press gallery, he would have been com-