

AYES.
 Mr. Angwin
 Mr. Bath
 Mr. Bolton
 Mr. Butcher
 Mr. Daglish
 Mr. Ellis
 Mr. Hastie
 Mr. Heitmann
 Mr. Henshaw
 Mr. Holman
 Mr. Horan
 Mr. Isdell
 Mr. Johnson
 Mr. Keyser
 Mr. Lynch
 Mr. Needham
 Mr. Nelson
 Mr. Scaddan
 Mr. Taylor
 Mr. Watts
 Mr. A. J. Wilson
 Mr. F. F. Wilson
 Mr. Gill (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Brown
 Mr. Burges
 Mr. Carson
 Mr. Cowcher
 Mr. Gregory
 Mr. Hardwick
 Mr. Hayward
 Mr. Hicks
 Mr. Hopkins
 Mr. Layman
 Mr. McLarty
 Mr. N. J. Moore
 Mr. S. F. Moore
 Mr. Quinlan
 Mr. Rason
 Mr. Frank Wilson
 Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Question thus passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 9.22 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council, Wednesday, 16th August, 1905.

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THE ACTING PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

BILL—ABORIGINES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and read a first time.

BILL—FERTILISERS AND FEEDING STUFFS AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHTING AMENDMENT.

POWER TO ROADS BOARDS.

SECOND READING, ETC.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), in moving the second read-

ing, said: Very few words are necessary to convey to the House the purport of this short measure. The object is to give to roads boards the same power as regards electric lighting that municipalities now possess. Unfortunately, owing to lack of foresight, provision was not made in this direction when the principal Act was passed in 1892; or it may have been, as it probably was, that in the Roads Act then existing there were not such comprehensive powers as a later statute has conferred on these bodies. It has been found desirable that the roads boards should have authority equal with that of municipal councils, to do in this direction precisely what the municipal bodies are in a position to do. There are certain roads districts which are not yet ripe for conversion into municipalities; and although some of them desire to go in for electric lighting, they cannot do so until an amendment of the law takes place. The object of this measure, therefore, is to provide roads boards with an extension of powers in that direction.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

BILL—PERTH MINT AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), in moving the second reading, said: I wish to point out briefly that the object of the measure is to increase the State subsidy to the Mint by the expenditure of £2,500 a year, in addition to the present subsidy of £20,000. When the subsidy was increased to the amount at which it now stands, the output from the Mint was 118,000 ounces per month. Now the output has increased to 130,000 per month. During the last two or three years the annual expenses in connection with the Mint have run up to the full amount of the subsidy; and the Imperial authorities have expressed a wish that the amount of the subsidy should be increased. After going into the matter, we have come to the conclusion that an increase of £2,500 a year in addition to the £20,000 of annual subsidy now granted will be ample for the purposes of the institution.

When the Mint was started in 1899, there were prognostications from various quarters, by members of Parliament and by the Press, that the starting of a Mint in this State would not be a payable undertaking. I am happy to be in a position to state now that the Mint is carried on with a fairly large amount of profit; and this will be evident from a return which I will read to the House:—

Total expenditure on Mint	...	£111,130
Total revenue	...	133,848

Excess of revenue over expenditure	...	£22,718
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Interest on capital outlay at 4½ per cent.	...	£14,542
Net gain	...	£8,176

Members will see that there has been a net gain since the establishment of the Mint in 1899 amounting to £8,176; and the position is so satisfactory that in another six years it is anticipated that the whole cost of the buildings and every requirement connected with the Mint will have been paid for out of profits, if the output of gold continues at the present rate. Members will be aware that the regulations of the Mint have been recently liberalised, and our charges now are lower for treating small parcels than the charges made at the Mint in Sydney or in Melbourne. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

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

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION AMENDMENT.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew), in moving the second reading, said: The object of this Bill is to secure the better attendance of children at schools. In the Public Education Act of 1899 it is provided that children of not less than six nor more than nine years of age, residing within a distance of two miles of a school, measured by the nearest road, are compelled to attend, and that children of not less than nine nor more than fourteen years of age residing within three miles are also obliged to attend;

but there is no provision to force parents of children who are within easy touch of railway communication, to send children to school; and the object of this Bill is to enable the authorities to compel these people to take advantage of railway communication to send their children to school. The State has gone to considerable expense in establishing schools in various parts of the State, but it has been the experience of the Education Department that a great many parents within easy touch of schools through railway communication take no opportunity whatever to send their children to school.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Who will pay the railway fares?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: At the present time there is no charge on the railways for these school children attending school, and it is intended to continue that system. I should be very sorry to ask members to pass a measure of this kind which would force parents to pay the children's fares. It would not receive much support. The children will be carried free; so there is no reason why steps should not be taken to compel the parents to send their children to school if they can travel by train. There is another clause in this Bill to which I desire to draw the notice of members. It is that dealing with habitual truants. Before a child can be sent to an industrial school at present, the parent must admit that the child is beyond control; but as a rule the parent admits it to the truant inspector and, when brought into court, finds some other excuse and does not cast any blame on the child. Therefore it has been found impossible to compel these children who will not to attend school, or to enforce the Act. It is proposed in this measure that the parent can at any time be called upon to show cause why the child who neglects to attend school should not be sent to the industrial school. Clause 4 requires that the proprietor, head master, or principal teacher of any elementary school shall, at the end of every month and quarter, furnish a summary of the attendance. At present private schools are required to keep registers, but are not required to send in returns. If a child is irregularly attending a Government school and steps are taken to prosecute, the parents withdraw the child from the Government school and

send him to a private school, with a result that he is outside the supervision of the Education Department, unless the department goes to the trouble of sending inspectors regularly to inspect the registers at the private schools. We propose to compel the proprietors of these private schools to furnish regular monthly and quarterly statements of the attendance of the pupils being educated in these schools. I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. MALEY (South-East): I am pleased that some effort is being made to insist on children in country districts being sent to Government schools; but while an advocate of the education of the children, I must take the opportunity to point out that it often happens that considerable injury is inflicted on children in remote parts of the State who are compelled to travel to school by trains which are not, in my opinion, suitable. The word "suitable" appears in this Bill; and a good deal depends upon the meaning of the word. Mr. Haynes will bear me out that children in the vicinity of Cranbrook and other stations along the Great Southern Railway are very well served with the morning train from Albany; but the only available train by which they can return is one that lands them at the siding at 8 o'clock at night; and then they have to go two miles through the bush to their homes. I have seen children in a pitiful condition at Cranbrook. They have been taken care of by the master of the school at Cranbrook, and given every attention until a very late hour so that they can catch the train that is perhaps overdue; and I have wondered how these children have fared when they get out at the other end, and whether some one will meet them. Therefore a good deal depends upon the way in which the Act is read. I think it is my duty to put this matter before the Minister in the hope that no hardship will be inflicted. I know the difficulty of drafting Bills that will meet every case. Possibly this may be an exception; but while we may recognise it as such, I cannot help putting the exception before the House.

HON. R. F. SHOLL (North): I think the hon. member has put his finger on the weak part of this Bill. A child nine years of age, living within a distance of

twelve miles of a school with a suitable train service, is compelled to attend school. What is a suitable train service? The child may be landed at eight or nine o'clock at night within two miles of his home.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The magistrates decide that.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: The matter should be made perfectly clear in the Bill. It does not affect the male child so much as the female child. The female child of tender years may leave home early in the morning and be kept waiting for hours at night on a railway platform.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is not a suitable service.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: I think it is a dangerous provision that may work hardship on those living in the country. The present Act ought to be sufficient to meet all reasonable requirements. This clause may work hardship and be dangerous to children of tender years who leave home in the morning, and have to travel long distances by rail and two miles through the bush to school.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I am quite with Mr. Maley in this matter. During the past eight or nine years I have seen rather too much of these children travelling by train to schools along the Great Southern Railway and getting home at late hours at night. But that is not the only inconvenience; another is that the children become most impudent. For pure cheek you cannot beat the child that has been twelve months travelling on a train to school, or 90 per cent. of them. They are put into carriages in a hurry with all sorts of passengers, who perhaps are glad to see someone with whom they can chat, and the consequence is that the children become most insolent and impudent. It is a pity to see this. When they first start to travel they are all full of innocence, and it is pitiful that the children have to ride in the trains. They think they have a right over the trains because they travel free of expense, and that they have a right to squeeze themselves into any compartment. The people in the train take advantage of the opportunity to chat with the children, and ask them for examples of their education; but I think this House might well consider this question seriously before passing the clause. I would go so far as to make it

only applicable when the travelling can be done during the hours of light. If we can go that far, by all means let us have a clause of this kind; otherwise I will not agree to it. I think this is a kind of thing that should be left optional, and there should be no compulsion unless children can be sure of leaving home and getting back in daylight hours. I do not oppose the second reading, but we must endeavour to stop the late travelling of school children on railways, and reduce the anxiety which this practice causes to parents. I think the practice of keeping children so long from home in travelling to and from school is injurious to their health, and it may lead to other consequences of a serious kind. I think also we should put a check on fares in some way, because we do not know what Minister for Education may be in power at a future time, and he may want to charge railway fares for children travelling to and from school. The clause relating to the travelling of school children on railways should be passed conditionally that no charge is to be made to parents for their children travelling by rail to and from school.

HON. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan-Suburban): While supporting the second reading of the Bill, I feel inclined to agree that it would be somewhat of a hardship, at all events in the present state of Clause 2, to enforce the attendance at school of children living not more than twelve miles distance, ten miles of which may be travelled by railway. As to what is a suitable train service, I think the word "suitable" needs to be defined, and we should see that only those train services which would enable children to leave their homes and return within daylight hours should be regarded as reasonable. I am pleased to hear from the Minister that it is the intention of the Government to start an institution in which truant school children can be effectually dealt with. Members will notice that by Clause 3 of the Bill any child who is a habitual truant may be sent to a certified private industrial school, for a period not exceeding six months. My experience when Minister for Education was that the sending of habitual truants to the present kind of industrial school was practically of no

use. Punishment of children who play truant habitually should be short and considerably more severe, though of course a judicious severity, than is likely to be the case in the present industrial schools. When a habitual truant is sent to such a school, he finds the school is not really a deterrent, and so it has not the desired effect on his future conduct. It would be very effective I think, if it were possible, to place in some centres of population truant schools under State management; and I think the cost of maintenance would be covered by the fees which parents would have to pay for the detention of their truant children sent there as a punishment. I hope the Government will take that into consideration at an early date. I do not oppose the second reading; but unless some definition is made in Clause 2 as to what will be considered a suitable train service for children going to and from school, I shall think it my duty to move in Committee the excision of that clause.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): This matter has had a good deal of consideration by the Education Department, and the object of inserting the word "suitable" in regard to train service was to meet the circumstances which have been mentioned by several hon. members. It was considered that the interpretation of the intention of the clause should be left to the discretion of magistrates dealing with cases under the compulsory attendance provisions of the Act. Surely the magistrates may be relied on to exercise common sense, and they are not likely to support any prosecution against a parent who refuses to send his child to school simply because it cannot return home till 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening. The department would never dream of prosecuting in such a case; and even if the department did prosecute, no bench of magistrates possessing common sense would inflict any penalty in these circumstances. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: What would be a suitable train service?] A train service that would not land the children near their homes before 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening would not be a suitable service, and I do not think any reasonable man would agree that it would be suitable. The Bill may safely remain as it is, and I shall be glad to consider in Committee any reasonable suggestion

that may be made for carrying out the intention of Clause 2.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): Australia has decided that we are to have compulsory education, and that children are to be as well educated in the State schools as it is possible to do. We must be careful, however, for though I have some sympathy with members who have spoken about not requiring children to travel to school when they cannot return home in the daylight hours, we must be careful that we do not place undue difficulties in the way of the Education Department, and thus create opportunities for some careless parents to neglect every duty they owe to their children. I feel sure, with the Minister, that judging from the decisions given by magistrates in administering the Act in regard to compulsory attendance at school, a liberal interpretation will be put on the meaning of Clause 2 in regard to what would be a suitable train service. At the same time I do not see any difficulty to the department in regard to inserting a definition of the word "suitable," so as to make it clear that the intention is that the children shall be able to return to their homes in daylight hours. We find the practice prevails very largely of sending children to school by train along the main lines of the railway system, and we know that the schools are already numerous along some of those lines, and are increasing; so that the difficulties anticipated under this Bill, if interpreted in a proper manner, should be obviated to a great extent by the railway facilities now existing in the State. I believe the Education Department are doing their best to provide schools for the children of settlers in agricultural districts, and I think we may anticipate very little difficulty from the wording of Clause 2. In regard to Clause 3, dealing with the methods to be adopted for sending truant children to an industrial school, I am in entire accord with this provision as to habitual truants; for I know that a large number of parents do ignore the duties devolving on them. But there is another danger which has occurred and should be guarded against, that is that some parents think they have a perfect right to throw on the State, on the general public, the duty of taking care

of their children. That is a danger we have to face, and it largely prevails in various parts of the country; so that great care will have to be taken to see that those parents who are inclined to evade their responsibilities and cast on the Government the burden of supporting and educating their children, shall not find excuses for doing so. It is right that the parent should be made to pay for a child who is a habitual truant and has to be sent to an industrial school. I think the industrial schools existing can be made fit to deal with such cases. Children do not like the restraint of an industrial school, and it has a deterrent effect to that extent. It is highly desirable that children who are neglected by their parents should be put in an efficient institution, to be trained up and made into good citizens. The Government institution is only a sort of receiving house, from which the children are passed on to other institutions. The industrial school under the control of the Salvation Army is, I believe, an institution in which proper principles are inculcated. I shall be ready to support the suggestion made for establishing a truant school, if there is found to be need for such an institution, and it may meet a want which industrial schools do not provide at present. With regard to Clause 4 (regular returns of school attendances), I am entirely in accord with this provision, and it has been wanted for a considerable time. The compulsory clauses of the Education Act have been evaded, and children are taken from State schools and sent to private schools because it is found that they will be allowed to attend there less regularly than in State schools. I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Compulsory attendance:

HON. G. RANDELL: What was the meaning of "or other reasonable means of access"?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A child might be by road six miles distant from school; but by a short cut might be

only one and a-half miles distant. If he had reasonable means of access, he could be forced to attend.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: From Perth to South Perth direct was a mile; but the distance by road was much greater.

HON. W. MALEY: One would almost like to be a schoolboy again, to take advantage of the facilities afforded by the clause for trespass on orchards and other private property. The wording was not quite proper, and might lead enterprising children into serious trouble. The interpretation of "reasonable means" might be difficult.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The clause seemed reasonable enough. In the South-West some children lived on the side of a river opposite to the school. In summer they could cross the river; in winter, owing to the swift current, they could not cross even by boat. Doubtless a reasonable interpretation would be put on the clause. Such children must attend in summer, but need not in winter. The danger from trespass was slight, save that the children might cause fires.

HON. W. KINGSMILL moved an amendment—

That the following words be added to the clause: "Provided that no train service shall be deemed suitable which does not enable such children to leave and return to their residences between the hours of sunrise and sunset."

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Proprietors of private schools to make monthly and quarterly returns of attendance:

HON. G. RANDELL moved that the word "of," in line 2 of Subclause 1, be struck out, and "after" inserted in lieu. Evidently the intention was that the quarter should close before the return was furnished. How could a complete return be sent in before the end of the quarter?

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Schedule 1—agreed to.

Schedule 2—amended consequentially.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved "That the House at its rising do adjourn until Tuesday, 29th August."

HON. R. F. SHOLL: The Government seemed to be anxious to keep all the work back till the end of the session, the same as was done last year. This House had just had a long adjournment, and now another was proposed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The debate on the no-confidence motion kept business back.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was very unfair to charge the Government with the responsibility of keeping business back from this House. There was another party in another place which had a big say in these matters. Some progress had been already made and several bills dealt with in this House. He did not wish to bring members from the country for perhaps half an hour's work next week.

HON. R. F. SHOLL: When would the return relating to Royal Commissions be put on the table?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was prepared a week ago, but it seemed to have got astray. He would see that it was placed on the table as soon as possible.

HON. J. D. CONNOLLY suggested that the adjournment should be for a fortnight, because it would be inconvenient for goldfields members to attend here a fortnight hence, as certain important matters were going on in connection with the Eastern Goldfields.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There would probably be a fair quantity of legislation awaiting members by the time the House met on the 29th.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned accordingly at 5:40 o'clock, until Tuesday, 29th August.