

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 23rd September, 1915.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION — REPURCHASED ESTATES, ASSISTANCE TO SETTLERS.

Hon. W. PATRICK asked the Colonial Secretary: Do the Government intend to take steps to assist the settlers on the Bowes and other repurchased estates by extending terms of payment of rent, or otherwise.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The matter will be considered after the re-pricing of the wheat areas and the poison lands has been disposed of.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Roads Act Amendment and Continuation.

2, Government Electric Works Act Amendment.—*Passed.*

BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.5] in moving the second reading said: On two or three previous occasions a very comprehensive

measure, directed to amend the Mines Regulation Act of 1906 was introduced to Parliament, but failed to pass the Legislative Council. This Bill deals with only one phase of the question previously considered by the House. It deals simply with the appointment of inspectors, their duties and the method of their appointment. From this Bill many of the principles embodied in the previous measure are absent. It must not be understood from this that the Government have abandoned those principles. They adhere to them as firmly as ever but, after giving the matter consideration, they came to the conclusion that the time was not opportune to submit the several other and perhaps more controversial amendments contemplated in the Bill previously discussed. But this is really a very important amendment. It aims more directly perhaps than any other at protecting the lives of those engaged in the dangerous occupation of mining, and it does so by provision for more effective inspection of mines by the appointment of workmen-inspectors. That is the only debatable clause in the Bill. The principle of giving the men employed in mines the right to appoint inspectors from their own ranks is not a new one. It exists in different forms in various parts of the world. Even in the original Act of 1895, provision was made whereby the men employed in mines might appoint one or two of their number to discharge those duties. That provision was amended in the Act of 1906 and the amendment has destroyed the objective. Experience has proved that during the past nine years, the emasculated provision has been availed of by the mining community, I am informed, on not more than two or three occasions.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Why?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The reason is palpable, because it was of no avail.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: They did not try it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill provides for three classes of inspector, namely, the district inspectors, who will be the official Government inspectors,

such as we have now; special inspectors, who will be appointed to conduct investigations into special subjects, and workmen inspectors. Under the present Act, there is no power given to any except to a Government inspector to go down and inspect a mine. Workmen inspectors will be selected by the duly registered unions of mining workmen subject, of course, to the approval of the Minister. This is the only aspect of the Bill likely to arouse controversy in this Chamber. It is a question which should appeal to the better feelings of hon. members. There are 6,000 men employed underground in Western Australia. They should be safeguarded against risk of accident as far as possible and their health should be protected. Our mines go down to a great depth; on the Golden Mile several are approaching 3,000 feet, and I understand some have exceeded that depth. The conditions therefore are quite different from what they were ten years ago when the principal Act was placed on the statute-book. That there must be injury to health through working underground at such great depth must be apparent to every hon. member who exercises his common sense. The tonnage of ore broken has gone on increasing. In 1910 the tonnage raised per man was 186; in 1911 it decreased to 184; in 1912 it increased to 203; in 1913 to 214, and in 1914 to 230. This shows that if the value of the ore has diminished, the output per man has increased, and while it is not denied that the increase is due partly to the adoption of labour-saving appliances, it cannot be denied that it is due in no small measure to the speeding up of the men. The value of gold ore per man has been increasing likewise. In 1910, it was £387; in 1911, £381; in 1912, £404; in 1913, £420; and in 1914, £436. It is quite a fair thing to say that the average earning of the men, placed at the highest figure, is £225 per year, whilst they are producing gold to the value of £436 each—that is £436 on an average for every man employed in connection with the industry. This being so it should be admitted that something ought to be done to improve the conditions of the men

who are doing so much to increase the wealth of the State. A heavy toll is being paid for the production of all this wealth. In 1910 the number of fatal accidents in our mines was 20, and the number of serious accidents 587; in 1911, the figures were 37 fatal and 528 serious; in 1912, 35 fatal and 491 serious; in 1913, 26 fatal 491 serious; 1914, 26 fatal and 491 serious, and for the first seven months of this year the fatal accidents have numbered 20 and the serious 487. That is for little more than half of the present year.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: What is a serious accident?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: During the 5½ years I have quoted, the fatal accidents have totalled 173 and the serious accidents 3,667, and a fair proportion of the serious accidents, I might inform the hon. member who interjected, have resulted in men being crippled for life. The percentage of accidents to men engaged in mines and quarries in Western Australia is higher than in any other State. According to the Home Office Blue Book of 1907 the death rate per thousand in 1906 was: New South Wales, 1.18, Queensland 1.2, South Australia .49, Tasmania .57, Victoria .95 and Western Australia 2.21; and in 1907: New South Wales .91, Queensland .75, South Australia 1.15, Tasmania .18, Victoria 1.16, Western Australia 2.51. That appears on the official file in the office of the Minister for Mines: and on perusing those figures Mr. Gregory, the then Minister for Mines, wrote the following minute—

In view of the terribly large percentage of deaths in Western Australia we must seriously consider the advisability of appointing check inspectors.

That was in 1907; and nothing has been done since, although every effort has been made by the present Government to place on the statute-book a Bill enabling the appointment of check inspectors. Then, evidence is supplied by Dr. Cumpston, who was appointed a Royal Commissioner in 1907. As the result of his examination, Dr. Cumpston declared that of the men engaged on the mines, 33 per cent.

were suffering from fibrosis. That is a very serious position, and it still exists. Surely these men are entitled to some larger measure of protection than they have at the present time, even if it means some additional tax upon the mining industry. This State is producing 54 per cent. of the total gold yield of Australia, and up to date no less than 25 millions have been paid in dividends, nearly all this money going out of the State. We owe a duty to the men who are engaged in the production of this enormous wealth, and I think we should make practical recognition of that duty. I hope the House will recognise the position, and will extend practical sympathy by placing this Bill on the statute-book. It represents only a small portion of what the Government consider necessary, but it will give great satisfaction on the gold-fields, and I am sure its effect will be a diminution of accidents. In order to show how the question of check inspectors is viewed in other parts of the world, I will read a precis compiled by the State Mining Engineer from the evidence and reports of a Royal Commission on Mines whose sittings extended from 1906 to 1911 in Great Britain. He writes as follows:—

The evidence of Mr. M. Delevingne, representing the Home Office, questions 19 to 28. Referring to the appointment of workmen's delegates to inspect the mines (under powers quite similar to those in our own Act of 1902) Mr. Delevingne says, "The Home Office has been advised by the inspectors that this power, where it is exercised, has been found to be very beneficial." Again (question 24), "In 1899 this system of examination of mines by or on behalf of the men was investigated by a German Commission. They came to the conclusion that the system had given good results in England. the principal practical advantage in the eyes of both masters and men being that its existence was an inducement to the subordinate officials to keep the mines in good order. The report of the inspector for the Yorkshire district says that examinations of this kind do an

incalculable amount of good: they tend to keep the discipline up to the required standard, and to prevent slackness on the part of officials. The question of how this power and its use could be extended and improved is a matter which the Home Office suggests should engage the consideration of the Commission." Page 7. Again in reply to question 66, Mr. Delevingne says that the Home Office most certainly wishes to encourage inspection locally by the workmen, but (question 67) preferred to leave it to the inspectors of mines to answer whether the miners would prefer appointing two men permanently for a district. In reply to question 70 he repeats that the results of having practical working men to inspect the mines have been "extremely satisfactory in every way." Page 36. Questions 392-393. In reply to questions as to alleged victimization of workmen's inspectors, Mr. Delevingne said that "the Home Office has never in my experience received any well-founded complaints that men were dismissed for making such reports, nor has it had any application to provide for their protection." Page 400. The report of the German Commission on the Inspection of Mines by Workmen in Great Britain, France, and Belgium, referred to by Mr. Delevingne, forms Appendix XL to Vol. I. of the Minutes of Evidence. It shows that in Great Britain mine employees select two of their number to inspect and report, at least once a month if they so desire, at their own cost. France—Delegates are elected for three years by secret vote of the men to inspect workings twice a month and that the cost is paid by the State in the first instance but collected from mine owners later. Belgium—The miners' associations and employers in conjunction submit to Government names of candidates for appointment as delegates who are appointed by Government for three years and paid by Government. This report says that "the system of inspecting delegates has generally given good results in Eng-

land, and not very good results in France. In England the system may be said to give general satisfaction. The workmen see in the system the fulfilment of an urgent desire of theirs. For them it is a satisfaction to feel that the mines are examined as regards their safety by men who enjoy their confidence. On the other hand, the mine owners and their representatives recognise the wishes of the workmen as regards such inspection to be justified, and they perceive in the system a means by which any fears of impending danger may best be set at rest. They find that the delegates in general make trustworthy reports and seldom exaggerate, even if they occasionally say too much about trifles. The Government inspectors also fully approve the system of workmen inspectors." The German Commission's report on the French system is not at all favourable, owing apparently to imputed failure to appoint experienced and intelligent men only as delegates, and to the fact that the Government system of inspection and supervision is so complete that there is little use in having the workmen's inspectors also. The German Commission preferred the Belgian system because in it "an important guarantee is obtained for the election of such persons as possess most knowledge of the subject and will refrain from interfering in matters outside their competence. This guarantee arises from the provision that the delegates are not elected directly by the workmen, but named by the Government from a list of candidates proposed for acceptance by a body comprising an equal number of employers and workmen, and that the delegates must have had long practical experience and a certain amount of theoretical knowledge also. Their appointment at a fixed and sufficient salary ensures their greater independence of the employers than is the case with the French delegates. The Belgian delegates entirely cease working whilst holding the appointment, and become

more or less officials." The First Report of the British Commission does not deal with our present subject at all, but the Second Report discusses it very fully, Sec. (iii), p. 21, on "Qualifications of Government Inspectors," and (iv.), p. 26, on "Examination of Mines on behalf of Workmen," containing the conclusions of the Commission, while page 214 contains a minority memorandum on Qualifications of Government Inspectors, and p. 216 one on Inspection by Workmen. On page 228 is a memo. on the system of Inspection of Mines in France. The various arguments on all sides of the matter of appointment of inspectors of mines appear to be very fully and fairly stated in the above reference, and special attention is directed to the remarks on page 25, wherein the Commission recommends that inspectors of mines should be of two classes, (1) highly trained technical men of wide practical experience and (2) a new class of assistants to inspectors. Regarding the latter, the Commission say "We are not of opinion, however, that it is essential that all the work of Government inspection should be carried out by men who are equally qualified. We think that a useful field of work is open to a new class of assistants to inspectors. The type to which we refer is men who have had thorough practical experience in work underground. The work of inspection delegated them ought to be suitable to their qualifications. It is not to be expected that they should decide difficult questions, but matters of detail affecting the sufficiency of timbering, shot-firing, and kindred matters could be dealt with by them with advantage. In fact, as regards many details, such men as these would have special knowledge which would prove very valuable to the higher grade inspectors in the same way as the assistance of a practical mason is of great value to an architect in examination of a building. Although the men so appointed should not be debarred from entering the higher

ranks of the inspectorate, yet it should be clearly understood that they could only do so on passing the same examination as that passed by the higher inspectors; for we clearly feel that no man ought to be allowed to deal with the more difficult questions in mining unless he has passed a strict examination of the highest character. No number of years' experience of a practical character should be allowed in the case of the upper ranks of the inspectorate to dispense with the necessity for a theoretical knowledge of mining engineering." The second class of inspectors proposed by the British Commission would be permanent Government officials appointed by the Secretary of State. The Appendix on "Inspection of Mines in France," p. 225, shows that in that country a somewhat similar division of inspectors of mines to that proposed by the British Commission has already come into force, there being "two classes of Government inspectors, (a) Government mining engineers (*Ingenieurs des Mines*) and (b) *Controleurs des Mines*. The system of miners' delegates appointed by the men at their own instance and cost applies in addition to the Government inspection. The British Commission, p. 31, expressed satisfaction with the existing provisions of the law relating to inspection of mines by workmen (which is practically the same as in the W.A. Act of 1906), and said "Our proposal for the creation of a new class of inspectors with lower qualification does not affect the operation of this rule, and we are of opinion that it should be retained in its present form. The right of the workmen in an individual mine to inspect the mine at their own cost periodically by representatives of their own number is a very valuable one."

That lengthy report shows that the question now submitted to this House has engaged the consideration of various countries, and that the results of experience everywhere are uniformly in favour of the principles set forth in this Bill.

Returning now to our own State, a Royal Commission to inquire into this subject was appointed in 1904. That Royal Commission recommended in favour of this method of appointing workmen's inspectors. The constitution of the Royal Commission was such as to entitle its recommendations to respect. The Commission was appointed by a previous Government, not a Labour Government; and the recommendation made by the Commission is in keeping with the proposal now submitted for the consideration of hon. members. As I said previously, this Bill does not express all the Government want, or all the country wants, but it contains a valuable amendment of the existing law, an amendment which must, if properly administered, conduce to the more effective preservation of life among those engaged in the development of the mining industry. The subject matter of the Bill is, I submit, such as to entitle it to the most careful and most earnest consideration of hon. members. It should appeal to the sympathies of hon. members, especially at a time like the present, when appeals are being made from every quarter to our sympathies. We should consider the lives of the workmen who are engaged in mining operations in this State. We should consider also their families, and those who are dependent upon them, and I feel sure that hon. members, seeing that we have only asked for practically one amendment here, will concentrate all their attention upon that one amendment. If they do give their careful attention to it, I feel sure they will give their assent to this Bill.

On motion by Hon. R. D. McKenzie debate adjourned.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.31] in moving the second reading said: As justifying the existence of this measure, I wish to point out that in constructing a drain for the purpose of carrying off storm water from the railway lands at Merredin, the

Railway Department found it necessary to encroach on a small portion of Class A reserve 14803, and requested that this portion should be excised from such reserve and included in the railway lands. The Bill has, therefore, been prepared to effect this purpose. The portion of the land is to be taken from the Class A reserve in order to include it in the railway reserve for railway purposes.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is a very dangerous precedent.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [3.33]: I do not intend to oppose the passage of this Bill. I do think, however, it affords a very dangerous precedent and provides an extremely pernicious hint to public bodies, who may wish to get hold of a Class A reserve. The railway people, it appears, require this drain. I presume it is already constructed through this particular portion of this Class A reserve. Am I correct?

The Colonial Secretary: It is an extremely small piece of land.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: It may be a small piece of land, but it seems to me from what I know of the land around Merredin that it is all very flat land, and they could surely have used their own land for this drain.

The Colonial Secretary: They have encroached on it.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Then the Railway Department is absolutely to blame. While I do not intend to oppose the Bill, I must enter my protest against any public body doing this sort of thing.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Hear, hear!

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: We could certainly stop the department, if we cannot stop other people in this unauthorised expenditure and unauthorised work. I would like to enter my protest against the action of the Railway Department in this direction. It affords a very bad precedent, and as I have said, gives a most pernicious hint to departments, which may wish to obtain parts of Class A reserves, to encroach on the lands first and

then seek for permission to do so afterwards. If they do this sort of thing goodness knows where it will stop.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [3.35]: I do not think the hon. gentleman understands the circumstances. This was an encroachment in-so-far as the laying down of an eight-inch pipe in order to carry off the water from the railway line is concerned. It is a small piece of land that is required for the laying down of an eight-inch pipe for the removal of water of this description.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They had no right to go there; they should first have obtained permission.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Parliament would scarcely expect us to have to delay operations of this nature until a Bill can be submitted for the work to be authorised.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Most certainly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is only a small corner of the reserve.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Have you a plan?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, I have here a plan of the block. It seems to me that the land itself is not much larger than half the size of this Chamber. I have no desire to rush this measure through at all.

The PRESIDENT: Is this a mere explanation, or the closing speech of the debate?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is the closing speech.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Power to excise portion of Reserve A14803:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I should have thought the proper method for the Minister to adopt would have been to have given an assurance to the House that he is in communication with the Merredin people, and that he has their approval and sanction. It would be more satis-

factory to members if we could have this assurance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If there had been any dissatisfaction a protest would long before this have been brought before us. This drain has been laid for some time past. If there had been any cause for complaint no doubt the local representatives of the district would have taken the necessary action. There has, however, been no opposition to the Bill so far as we know.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption, from the previous day, of the debate on the second reading.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) [3.40]: The hon. Mr. Cullen has asked me to make a personal explanation. He says that the motion submitted by him and agreed to by the House was that the debate should be adjourned until Tuesday next.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It is wrongly on the Notice Paper.

The PRESIDENT: It is a mistake on the part of the Clerk in putting this Order of the Day in the wrong place. This will be altered, and we will proceed to the next business.

BILL—COTTESLOE BEACH RATES VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.41] in moving the second reading said: I wish to state that through the fault of the late secretary of the Cottesloe Beach roads board, the rate book was not prepared in the manner prescribed under the Act. I secured an amendment of the Roads Act Amendment Bill the other day in this

Chamber, which will be a protection in this respect in future. The Cottesloe Beach Roads Board have a rate book and ledger combined. One folio is used as a rate book and the other as a ledger. It has been ruled that it is not a rate book within the meaning of the Act. The chairman of the board signed one folio of the rate book, and did so in the wrong place. Consequently, the rates were illegally declared and many of those who owed rates refused to pay them, and threatened to plead the invalidity of the assessment. The Solicitor General explained the position in a minute to me. He says that the board in making up their rate book—and this is only one of several boards who have done this, I understand—used a book and a book of accounts combined. I may say that the Cottesloe Beach Roads Board is the only board which has applied to the Government to introduce a validation Bill. Mr. Sayer says—

The boards in making up their rate book use a book and a book of accounts combined. A book is sent herewith.

Mr. Sayer sent along a specimen copy of the rate book, but I did not think it necessary to bring it to the House. Mr. Sayer continues—

If you will open a folio you will find there are 33 columns. Columns 1 to 15 are the rate book, and columns 16 to 33 are for the keeping of accounts. A by-law provides that the columns 16 to 33 shall not be deemed portion of the rate book for the purpose of the Act, but entries shall be made therein by the secretary. You will observe that these columns are ruled to the bottom of the page, and a space is provided for the chairman's initials within columns 28 to 32. These columns not being part of the rate book, the chairman cannot be said to have initialed a page of the rate book. What he initials are really the ledger entries of the secretary.

This is a validating measure in order to get over the difficulty which has arisen. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.45]: I do not intend to oppose the passage of this Bill. It does occur to my mind, however, that after the recommendations of the late Minister for Works (Hon. W. D. Johnson), who went about the country advising municipalities to revert to roads boards, that this state of affairs was apparently at the back of the mind of the then Minister for Works when he was speaking. If that is so, and municipalities followed the advice given, I think we may expect more legislation than appears on the surface at the present moment. I mention this by way of passing, because it occurs to me that the recommendations of the Minister, if this is a specimen of them, are not to the advantage of the people generally.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.46]: I have to-day received a letter in connection with this Bill, but I have not had much time to look into the matter. This Bill is another illustration of the slovenly way in which the business of the country is being conducted. We passed an amendment to the Roads Act the other day, and members did not understand what the effect would be. We also passed a clause, the effect of which was to carry the Act up to the end of 1916. This is only one of many subjects of the greatest interest to those who are connected with roads boards. The Government have, I believe, pledged themselves to bring about a consolidation of the road laws so that they may be brought up to date. I am not in a position to give the full effect of the letter I received this morning, because, like this Bill, it seems to require some examination. It is certainly important that the Government should consider the advisableness of bringing about a conference so that the various Road Acts might eventually be consolidated. I hope the Minister will not insist on the Bill going into Committee this afternoon.

On motion by Hon. A. G. Jenkins debate adjourned.

BILL—GRAIN AND FOODSTUFF.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.48] in moving the second reading said: The Act terminates on the 30th September, and it is not the intention of the Government to re-enact it. The board goes out of existence on that date, owing to the expiration of the Commission, and of course the occupation of the board will be gone. There is no necessity for the continuance of the board, and the Bill enables the Treasurer to take over the assets and liabilities of the board as created by the Act. I move—

That the Bill be 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—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.51] in moving the second reading said: This measure is already on the statute-book and it expires on the 30th of the present month. It was passed as an emergency measure last year, and the object of the Bill before members is to enable the continuance of the Act until the 30th September, 1916. The Bill gives the Government extreme and drastic power. They can, under it, either partially or completely close all the hotels in Western Australia, if they wish to do so, but, of course, it is intended that the powers shall be exercised only in the event of a great emergency.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Could you limit the hours under the Bill?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, in every respect. In fact we could do what we liked under the Bill. So far there has been no necessity to utilise the measure, but it is just as well that it should remain on the statute-book.

Hon. W. Patrick: During war time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. P. Colebatch debate adjourned.

MOTION — ELECTRIC POWER HOUSE, EAST PERTH.

Debate resumed from the 9th September on motion of Hon. H. P. Colebatch, "That there be laid upon the Table of the House all contracts, agreements, correspondence, and papers relating to (1) the erection of the electric power house at East Perth, and (2) the supply of electric current therefrom.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North) [3.53]: I entirely agree with the motion and I hope it will be carried. I hope, also, that this is the beginning of the end of secret contracts.

The Colonial Secretary: Where are the secret contracts?

Hon. F. CONNOR: Everywhere. I am not going into details, but if the hon. member likes I will give him some particulars. It seems to have become the practice, since the advent of the Labour Government, to enter into all sorts of secret contracts. For instance, we have those relating to powellising, pipes, purchase of steamers, and a hundred and one others. Such things have never been done by any other Government in my 24 years' experience as a politician in this State. Certain matters were, I admit, dealt with under what was known as "Form J," but there were never any secret contracts entered into. In those cases money was merely advanced. Even if there is no truth in the allegations which are made by the man in the street that secret contracts are being entered into, the Government should not lose any opportunity of clearing themselves of the charges. There is a great deal of unrest in the country in connection with what are called secret contracts, and the hon. member who has moved the motion is quite justified in asking for the production of the papers so that he might satisfy himself, at any rate,

in regard to what took place in connection with the erection of the power house at East Perth.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [3.56]: The leader of the House has stated that any member who is desirous of inspecting the papers may do so, and he has explained that the papers are essential to the daily working of the concern in question. The facts he has given are sufficient to justify me in voting against the proposal, that the papers be laid upon the Table of the House. If the Minister had shown any desire to prevent members from inspecting the papers I would have voted for the motion, but in face of the promise he has made, and the wideness of the debate, I will record my vote against the motion.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East—in reply) [3.58]: I must apologise for my absence from the House the other day when this motion came up for discussion, and I am grateful to hon. members for keeping the debate going in order to give me the opportunity of replying briefly to the objections raised against the motion by the Colonial Secretary. Reading the Colonial Secretary's speech, I gather he accused me of abusing the privileges of Parliament. I wish to assure him that I said nothing in moving the motion that I would not be prepared to repeat in the most public place possible, and so far as that other portion of the accusation in his speech is concerned, which to my mind seemed to be somewhat in the nature of a threat, he must excuse me if I refuse to take it seriously. The Colonial Secretary is very fond of telling this House that Parliament has sanctioned this, and sanctioned that. This is a case in point. I think we were told that Parliament agreed without a division to the erection of this power house. That is quite correct. Having fought the question of the purchase of the trams, hon. members realised that if the Government bought the trams they would certainly have to build a power house, but they did not contemplate that the power house would run into an expenditure of £300,000 and stretch, octopus like, its tentacles over the whole of the metropolitan area, re-

quiring an absolute monopoly and a right to supply current for light and power from Fremantle to Midland Junction in order to make it pay. I venture to say had the Government done, as they should have done, and placed the whole scheme before Parliament, and told Parliament what was their intention, the tramway purchase and a large electric power scheme involving an expenditure of anything between £800,000 and a million of money, neither would have been passed. The finances at that time were not in such a state to warrant the diversion of so large a sum of money from the proper task of developing the resources of the country. The scraps of information which have been afforded since the motion was tabled have whetted my appetite for more. I do not intend to go to the office of the Commissioner of Railways to see these papers. I want the information to be made available to members and to the public. There is no necessity for the papers to lie on the Table of the House for more than a day or two. Members in that time will be able to glean the information they desire and the papers can then be returned. I do not suppose any member in this House knows what the standing of Merz & McLennan is in connection with this matter. The public is entitled to know if the Government are going on with the expenditure of the £800,000.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Messrs. Merz & McLennan may be honorary advisers.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Possibly they are, but whatever they are I want to know. About two years ago in answer to questions in another place the Premier stated that the total amount involved in contracts let in England up to that time was £180,000. Of course that was not the total. Now we are told that the estimated cost is £290,000. I am curious to know, and I hope the papers will reveal the fact, if that amount covers everything. Does it cover the cost, which I am informed on good authority would be considerable, of altering most of the electrical appliances in use in the metropolitan area. Will the £290,000 cover that or has that cost to be added to this

enormous total? There is another point I will ask members to consider. If I have read the Colonial Secretary aright, in replying to the objection raised by Mr. Allen in connection with the adoption of the 40-cycle system—and I do not intend to indulge in technicalities which I do not understand—the Colonial Secretary said that the 40-cycle system had been adopted for a special purpose, but he said that the 50-cycle system would have been preferable but the Government had adopted the 40-cycle system in consequence of the project to electrify the railways through the Darling Ranges. If the people of the metropolitan area, having been saddled with an expenditure of £400,000 for a system which is not the best, and if the Government come to the decision to electrify the railways through the Darling Ranges, and I doubt whether they have—there have been rumours about it but Parliament does not know anything about it—what is to be the cost? If the Government are going to instal at a cost of £300,000 in the metropolitan area a system that would not be the most desirable thing, they must first of all come to a decision as to whether they intend to electrify the railway through the Darling Ranges. I doubt if the Government have come to that decision. If they have Parliament should have been advised of the decision and the evidence on which that decision was arrived at. We want to see the papers to know if the Government have decided to electrify the railways through the Darling Ranges. There is another reason. Something over 12 months ago, before the last general election, a motion in almost similar terms as the one under consideration was submitted by the leader of the Opposition in another place, and the Premier after what I can only describe, without being offensive, as a petulant speech, the model no doubt on which the Colonial Secretary framed his speech the other evening, raised no objection to the papers being produced but he cracked the party whip and defeated the motion for the production of those papers. I hope the House will carry the motion so that the public may have the information

which to my mind was improperly denied to them 12 months ago.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	15
Noes	4

Majority for .. 11

Question thus passed.

AYES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. R. D. McKenzie
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. E. McLarty
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. F. Connor	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. G. M. Sewell
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. W. Kingsmill	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Millington
	(Teller).

Question thus passed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE, HORSE-RACING CONTROL.

Interim report, to adopt.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion of Hon. F. Connor as follows:—"That, in the opinion of this House, effect should be given to the recommendations contained in the interim report of the Joint Select Committee on Horse-racing."

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [4.10]: I desire to offer a few remarks on the motion before the Chair. I was under the impression that this committee was appointed to do something and the main reason for their appointment was to deal with the question of the control of racing. It was urged that there was too much racing, and too much sport, in Western Australia. This committee was foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech and we find that one of the first acts in this House and in another place was to appoint a committee. The interim report of the committee does not set out how many meetings have been held. If I were to venture an opinion I would say

that the committee was too large and the evidence brought forth is puny. The committee bring forward a proposal to the House upon which no inquiry was needed. It was paramount to any individual that there was street betting, and the local authorities have power to stop it. The police I know on many occasions summon bookmakers for street betting and they are fined accordingly.

Hon. F. Connor: You are wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not wrong. I know of dozens of convictions in Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Notwithstanding the power which exists to deal with these individuals, the committee have brought forward a recommendation that Parliament should immediately proceed to pass legislation to deal with the evil. The recommendation is based on legislation now in operation in New South Wales. Racing and all forms of sport are responsible for betting and if there is too much sport, correspondingly there will be too much betting. The function for which they were appointed was to bring in legislation to control or reduce horse-racing, but the committee have not carried it out. At the inception of their inquiry, I publicly expressed the opinion that if the circumstances warranted dealing with the overplus of sport and racing, the Government should have taken the bit in their teeth and grappled with it themselves.

Hon. F. Connor: Hear, hear!

Hon. J. CORNELL: And I am of opinion now that after the experience of the committee, the Government are sorry they did not do so. Had that course been adopted, we would probably have now had on the statute-book legislation restricting the number of racing dates and restricting sport during wartime. If we are to wait for the committee to guide us, I think it will be a case of "How long, O Lord, how long!" It has been said as the session will probably close early that is the reason for bringing in the interim report, and the committee hope to have a full report available before the session closes.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Next week.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the committee had got steam up earlier, they could have had a comprehensive report ready now, instead of the one before us.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: We have been sitting nearly every day.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is the fault: the committee have been sitting too often and talking too long. There is another point which justifies my opinion that the Government should have dealt with the matter. There are members of this House not on the committee who possess as extensive a knowledge of sport as those on the committee.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Whose fault is that?

Hon. F. Connor: Do not be envious. The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. CORNELL: Some members are modest and do not push their claims to inclusion on a committee and probably some are of opinion that they do not understand enough about the subject to take part on such a committee. The question of expense is also worthy of consideration. I venture to say this will be the most expensive select committee appointed in the last three or four years.

Hon. F. Connor: It has not been so far.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It may not have been so far—

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: They have not been to Wyndham yet.

Hon. J. CORNELL: This is another expense which could have been saved. What will be the result of the labours of the committee provided their report is agreed to and legislation is passed? For over 20 years in Victoria and New South Wales there has been machinery to deal with street and shop betting. Has it succeeded in stopping such betting? No, and it never will do so. All the legislation in the world will not prevent people from betting. The fewer the opportunities the people have to bet, the less betting there will be. Mr. Millington has remarked by way of conversation that there is not a racing club in Western Australia which would not pat the committee on the back for doing something to help

them. The clubs are of opinion, and have held the opinion for a considerable time, that street and shop betting should be abolished and the only reason they have for wishing to suppress it is to encourage people to go to the racecourses and do their betting there.

Hon. H. Millington: And pay their licenses.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not a puritan. I have been through the mill as a punter and a sport. I have listened to wise men in years gone by as to how I should invest my money on different horses, but I have come to the conclusion from experience that it is a game well left alone. So far as making the people moral or preventing them from betting by Act of Parliament is concerned, it is impossible. This will be achieved only by experience and experience does not always have the desired effect on the optimistic gentleman who thinks he can make a fortune by investing a pound on a race. If the committee's report is adopted and effect given to it, I am of opinion that will be the last which will be heard of the matter this session.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: That will be the fault of Parliament or of the Government.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not know whose fault it will be, but the fault for this puny effort rests with the committee.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: The committee are doing their best.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If this is their best to date, they ought to have kept it back until it was bettered. This is a very minor detail of what the House expected the committee to suggest. The committee had plenty of material to guide them. In Victoria there is, and has been for a considerable time machinery to regulate racing dates, and the committee's action in aiming at street betting, which already can be dealt with, and by ignoring the major issue, suggests a desire to shelve the work they have been asked to do.

Hon. H. Millington: The racing club witnesses have got them on to a side track.

Hon. J. CORNELL: What will be the effect if this motion is passed, and if

legislation is agreed to in regard to betting off racecourses? It will still be possible to go down to Tattersall's Club and put 5s. on a horse.

Hon. F. Connor: Are you a member?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not and the hon. member knows full well there is not the least necessity for a man to be a member to have a bet at any of the leading sporting clubs in Australia.

Hon. F. Connor: I do not know that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Twenty years ago I went to the toney club of Australia so far as sporting is concerned—the Victorian club. I had never been in Melbourne in my life before, but I knocked at the door and asked for Mr. Jack Cohen, and he came out. I said "I want a pound on so and so," and I got it.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I hope you won.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I did not; I lost. This sort of thing will continue.

Hon. F. Connor: What has that to do with the question?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member seems to think that the recommendation of the committee is a matter of urgency and that it is the be-all and end-all in connection with the curtailing of betting and adding something to the savings of the community.

Hon. F. Connor interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to desist from interjecting.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I never had enough money to throw any away foolishly. I hope the House will rise to the occasion and ask the committee to bring in something worthy of consideration and something which will minimise, in these times of stress, the racing in this State. I had the pleasure of heading a deputation a thoroughly representative deputation including many parsons and business people, which waited on the Premier in Kalgoorlie regarding the overplus of racing, and never once during the discussion did the question of street betting arise. If street betting is so rampant in Perth it is just as rampant in Kalgoorlie. In conclusion I think the interim report of

the committee is not in accordance with the expressed views of those responsible for bringing about their appointment.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.28]: I did not intend to speak on this motion because I am satisfied that the remarks of the hon. Mr. Connor, in moving the motion, were sufficient to convince any reasonable person that the committee have devoted a tremendous amount of time to bring in even this interim report. I rose to speak because most of the members of the committee in this House have already spoken and therefore will not have an opportunity to speak again. To say the least, I can only regard the remarks made by Mr. Cornell as most uncharitable. The hon. member is no doubt aware that it is within the powers of municipalities to take certain action in regard to street betting. The police also have power to summons, but they have not the power to arrest. I take it that one of the reasons for bringing in that interim report is to get legislation which will invest the police with the necessary power to arrest people offending in this direction. I contend that the thanks of the House are due to the gentlemen who have devoted so much time to the consideration of the evil. Had it been left to the Honorary Minister to bring down an interim report, then, to judge from the attendance which he has given to the joint select committee, I think we would have got the interim report when the angel Gabriel sounds his trumpet. I sincerely hope hon. members will embrace this opportunity of acquiescing in the suggestion of the committee, and I have therefore much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.31]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: My reason for asking for an adjournment is that I have just risen from my bed, having unfortunately been struck down with influenza. However, as it is the wish of hon. members to get through with this matter, I shall say a few words before

the question is put. Some hon. members appear to be under the impression that the joint select committee on horse-racing have been enjoying a huge holiday. I can assure those hon. members that such is not the case. Both Houses should, I think, feel pleasure in the fact that the joint select committee have, on the evidence put before them, taken a step that may lead to one of the most effective measures for curtailing the gambling evil. One has only to visit St. George's terrace when a race meeting is being held on the goldfields or in the Eastern States, to see to what an extent street betting is carried on. The evidence before the joint select committee has shown conclusively that the police have not power to deal with street betting. It is indeed regrettable to find that one member of the joint select committee who has attended only a single meeting—

The PRESIDENT: I must warn the hon. member that it is out of order to refer to the proceedings of the committee until the final report has been brought up.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I regret very much that I may not continue in that strain. I should have liked to say something in that connection, in view of the attitude of certain members. However, when hon. members who have no knowledge of the evidence which has been taken rise in another place and endeavour to ridicule those who have that knowledge, and who understand what they are proposing, the members I refer to take up a ridiculous position. Their attitude shows their strength in that direction. It is ridiculous on their part to endeavour to deride the efforts of the select committee to effect good. As regards street betting, I hope a Bill will be carried this session giving the police power to suppress that evil. The police are eager to get that power, and there is no gainsaying we have in the police a fine body of men who are eager to carry out their duties and who will make good use of the legislation proposed.

Member: The police want all the power.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member interjecting himself assisted the other day to put more power into the hands of the police. The power in connection with street betting, however, is one which the police ought to have, and we as members of this Chamber should see that that power is given them. Once legislation in that direction has been passed, a considerable step will have been taken towards the restriction of the gambling evil.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: The joint select committee was appointed for the specific purpose of inquiring into the question of the control of horse-racing in this State, and of making recommendations to the Government with a view to the introduction of the necessary legislation. The interim report now before the House deals with only one phase of the question, a phase which is only indirectly connected with horse-racing. In the opinion of the Government it would have been far better if the committee had waited until they had taken all possible evidence and made the fullest investigation, and then brought up a complete report with full recommendations. I may say that I am entirely in sympathy with the wishes of the committee as expressed in this interim report. As far back as two years ago I went fully into the matter of shop and street betting, and the whole of the material for the preparation of a Bill is already in my office. Had it not been for the outbreak of the war, I feel sure that a Bill in that connection would have been submitted to Parliamentary consideration already. Legislation of that nature is necessary in normal times, and more necessary now. The Bill to which I have alluded will be a drastic one, with severe penalties; and my only doubt is whether Parliament would endorse it. I feel certain, however, that at the present time such a measure would go through both Houses. It is not my intention to oppose the motion. I wish simply to have a free expression of opinion from

hon. members, so that I may submit their views to the Government.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North—in reply) [4.38]: I think I am bound to make a reply to some of the speeches which have been delivered. The first thing I have to say is that no justification is required from me for the motion submitted to the House, in view of the work already done by the joint select committee. Personally I think it is possible that before the session closes a full and exhaustive report may be furnished to Parliament by the committee. However, in case something occurs to prevent that, the committee think it their duty to endeavour to deal with what, after all, is the worst feature of the gambling evil. It is not so much horse-racing, although the committee has dealt extensively with that phase of the subject. I do not want to discuss horse-racing at this stage, but I may mention to hon. members that evidence already taken by the committee extends over 101 printed pages. A lot of thought has been put into it, and a lot of work has been put into it.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It will cost a good bit.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I know it has cost me a lot of thought. The committee have examined 42 witnesses. After that, to be told by members of another place, and also here, that we had no right to submit a report on one phase of the question, is astounding. If that one phase were dealt with by the Legislature, the labours of the committee would be justified. It is possible to bring in a Bill for the improvement of the breed of race horses, or for the curtailment of the number of racing dates. As regards the latter, I hold that the Government acted irregularly in dictating to the racing clubs on what dates they shall race. The Government had no legal machinery for that action. All the same, I commend them for having taken it. I am in sympathy with the Government on that point. Still, it was illegal on their part to tell proprietary clubs, who put their money into the business years ago, "You shall race when I like," whether "I" be the Premier or the Honorary Minister. The proposal for

the appointment of the joint select committee originated in another place, where the Honorary Minister moved in that direction. He must have had reasons for thinking the appointment was necessary. He is a member of the Government. The Honorary Minister was one of the committee appointed in another place, and he appeared at the first meeting of the committee and nominated a chairman.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think it is right for the hon. member to divulge what took place at the meetings of the committee until the report has been received.

Hon. F. CONNOR: This is part of the report.

The PRESIDENT: Until the whole of the report has been received.

Hon. F. CONNOR: If I am stopped, I cannot give my arguments in favour of the motion—if I am not allowed to describe what has led up to the motion. I must bow to your ruling, Sir. I was going to say, if I may be permitted, that the gentleman I refer to did two things—he attended a meeting of the committee and nominated a chairman.

The PRESIDENT: I must again appeal to the hon. member not to divulge the proceedings of the committee until the whole report has been received.

Hon. F. CONNOR: May I refer to that gentleman's statement in another place?

The PRESIDENT: That would be contrary to the Standing Orders. The immediate question is shop and street betting.

Hon. F. CONNOR: May I quote newspaper reports, Mr. President? I saw in this morning's *West Australian* a report of a debate in another place. In the course of that debate, a reference was made by an Honorary Minister to a motion brought before another place. I think he said it was a joke. If there is a greater political joke existing than the Honorary Minister himself, I do not know of it. The same gentleman, referring to this motion, said that it was like a mountain bringing forth a mouse. The style of that Honorary Minister is most dignified.

The PRESIDENT: I must again remind the hon. member that it is contrary to the words and to the spirit of our Standing Orders to speak in that strain.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Just say the Honorary Minister is a disaster.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I was going to say that from what I saw in a newspaper this morning—I think hon. members will understand what I refer to—somebody who spoke of a mountain and a mouse would be doing a good thing if he himself produced something other than rats. The evidence before the joint select committee shows that in the interests of the community street and shop betting should be stopped. Other reforms will be suggested when the complete report comes down, but in case it is not in time for action this session it is unanimously regarded by the committee, after due deliberation, that legislation in the direction indicated by the motion is essential. If the Government do not attend to this they will be failing to carry out the proposal they themselves brought before both Houses of Parliament. The whole question resolves itself into this: Is there undue gambling? The committee say there is. It is the one fact not yet disputed. Mr. Holmes said he would be in favour of allowing street gambling if necessary, but I feel certain the hon. gentleman scarcely understood the full meaning of his remarks. To prevent street gambling certain additional powers are required by the police. We have that on evidence from the police and the detectives. They say there is no power of arrest, and that it is impossible to deal with this evil without that power.

Hon. J. Cornell: They want the easiest way.

Hon. F. CONNOR: They say it is the only way. Therefore, I think they ought to have that power. The motion is definite enough. It indicates on what lines it is desirable that the Government should proceed. The New South Wales Act is suitable to the purpose, although in my opinion it is scarcely drastic enough. By the newspaper this morning I saw that a Mr. Foley was opposed to the motion because it does not go far enough. He

thinks that women and children ought to be brought into it. If the requested Bill is introduced by the Government there is nothing to prevent them including in the Bill the question of betting by women and children. Personally I do not see why a woman should not have as much right as a man to bet, although on the other hand I would provide a very heavy penalty against betting by children. By the same newspaper I saw that another gentleman held that street betting was infinitesimal. I can only conclude that he did not know anything about it. It is the worst feature of the betting question.

Hon. J. Cornell: More money changes hands in a week on the unregistered courses than in a year on the street.

Hon. F. CONNOR: The opposition to this motion has come as a surprise to every member of the select committee. Are the Government in earnest in their proposed endeavour to handle this question? When the committee was appointed I thought they were, but now I do not think they are in earnest. I think there must be something behind it.

Hon. J. Cornell: I do not think the committee are in earnest.

Hon. F. CONNOR: If the Government are not really in earnest on the question why did they have the committee appointed? Seeing that the committee was appointed on the initiative of the Government, and that the committee has done good work, why do not the Government back up the committee instead of trying to get out of their implied obligation? I know there is more happening than I dare speak of. I can scarcely say what influence has been brought to bear since the committee was appointed, but influence there has been. It is quite patent. The man in the street knows it, and the members of the committee know that they are not getting that encouragement which they have a right to expect from both Houses of Parliament. Yesterday my colleague, Mr. Ardagh, rebuked me on the score that I was premature in referring to the racing at Bieton which we attended yesterday. Perhaps it would have been better to have waited.

But it had a direct bearing on the motion. I saw a trotting race down there, and I can honestly say I never witnessed more deliberate roping in my life. Surely this has a bearing on the motion. Because even the man betting in the street and thus breaking the law has a right to be protected, and if he bets in the street on those horses I saw racing at Bicton he has no possible chance of winning. In conclusion I challenge the Government to refuse to bring in the legislation asked for. I claim that the support of Parliament is due to the committee, and unless we get that full and unqualified support, I for one will certainly resign from the committee.

Question—put and passed.

House adjourned at 5 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 23rd September, 1915.

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

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Lands (for the Acting Premier): Audit of Trading Concerns under the Trading Concerns Act, 1912, as on the 18th September, 1915.

QUESTION — ESPERANCE-NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

Mr. THOMSON asked the Minister for Works: What tonnage of material for the construction of the Esperance-North-

wards Railway has been sent to Esperance—(a.) sleepers; (b.) rails and fastenings? 2, What is the name of the firm which has been given the charter? 3, What amount per ton has been paid, or is to be paid, for freight on same? 4, Were tenders called in the usual way? 5, How many miles of line will such material construct?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, (a.) About 688 loads; (b.) about 166 tons, also 6 jetty wagons and sundries. 2, No charter has been made. 3, Rails, fastenings, and sundries, £1 7s. 6d. per ton; 6 jetty trucks, £31 8s. the lot; sleepers, £2 per load. 4, It is not the usual business method of calling tenders when booking freight. 5, Two miles of rails and fastenings; 11 miles of sleepers.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

Control of Trade in War Time Act Continuance Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [4.33]: Before the Orders of the Day are called I desire to ask the House to agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders for the sole purpose of enabling the passing of Item 3 through all its stages to-day. This is rendered necessary because, unless we get the Bill to the Legislative Council to-day, we shall be unable to re-enact it before the expiration of the Bill on the 30th September. I will explain the details of the Bill later.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You only wish to suspend the Standing Orders for the purpose of dealing with this one Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as to permit the passing of the Control of Trade in War Time Act Continuance Bill through its remaining stages on this day.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is an absolute majority of the House present and I declare the motion carried.