

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

Ayes	8
Noes	26
Majority against	18

AYES.

Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Denton	Mr. Taylor
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. North	Mr. Richardson
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lindsay
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Coverley	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Millington
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Munse
Mr. Heron	Mr. Panton
Mr. Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Thomson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wilson
	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

at the same place? If so, what is the reason? 2, Is it a fact that the State Sawmills charge more for karri than for jarrah dump fruit cases, while other firms charge the same price for both? If so, what is the reason? 3, Is it a fact that agents for the State Sawmills have been informed that karri dump cases are increased in price above jarrah dump cases because fruit-growers prefer karri cases?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, The State Sawmills charge 10s. 9d. per dozen for karri dump fruit cases delivered at Mt. Barker. The charge made by other firms is not known to the department. The department's principal clients state that the jarrah cases supplied to Mt. Barker are not equal in quality to the karri cases supplied by the department. If there is any difference in price this may be accounted for to some extent by the extra railage necessarily paid owing to the longer haulage. 2, The State Sawmills do not supply jarrah dump cases. The department does not know of any other firm cutting karri cases. 3, No.

MOTION—RINDERPEST CLAIMS, COMPENSATION.

Hon. G. POTTER (West) [4.33]: 1 move—

That assuming the Federal Government are paying the State Government only £12,700 in satisfaction of all unsatisfied claims arising from the outbreak of rinderpest, this House is of opinion that the Government should appoint a board to inquire into all claims for compensation and should provide the balance of any sum requisite to meet just claims as settled by the board.

I feel impelled to move the motion if only to strike a note of warning lest grave injustice be done to a section of the community who, in an hour of extremity, stood between the Commonwealth and disaster. No one who was brought within the maelstrom of suffering caused by the outbreak and control of rinderpest can ever forget the great disabilities incurred by those people and, having a full appreciation of the facts, no one can remain indifferent to their future welfare. Rinderpest struck Western Australia with cyclonic force and suddenness. Dairymen, market gardeners, and others in the Fremantle district were working at top pressure preparing for the Christmas market when the news passed round that a strange disease had broken out in a dairy herd in the vicinity of Fremantle. In a few days there was grave apprehension, followed by consternation when it was realised that cattle were dying like flies. There was a great conflict of opinion as to whether the disease was rinderpest. So serious was the position that when news reached Melbourne of the

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

QUESTION—FRUIT CASES, PRICES.

Hon. A. BURVILL asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that the State Sawmills charge 10s. 9d. per dozen for karri dump fruit cases delivered at Mt. Barker, whereas other firms charge 9s. 6d. for similar cases of equal quality delivered

devastation caused to our dairy herds, the veterinary experts called to advise the Governments of the Eastern States, and the Commonwealth Government, realised the seriousness of the danger to Eastern States herds. In order to determine the nature of the disease the Federal Government despatched to Western Australia a highly qualified veterinary surgeon who, after seeing the symptoms and conducting one or two post-mortem examinations, diagnosed the disease as rinderpest. The Commonwealth Government, having received confirmation of the suspicion that it was rinderpest, were seized with the gravity of the situation to the whole of the Commonwealth. As was pointed out later on by Mr. Robertson, the Commonwealth veterinary expert, what South Africa suffered from rinderpest was only a mild example of what threatened the whole of Australia. Mr. Robertson conferred with experts of the Department of Agriculture, and Senator Pearce, as deputy of the Commonwealth Government, conferred with the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell. Mr. Robertson immediately devised ways and means to stamp out the disease rapidly, because rinderpest travels so quickly. The means devised consisted of the wholesale slaughter of all affected stock. It was realised that there would be serious loss and, in order to compensate owners, Sir James Mitchell was in a measure forced into an agreement with the Federal Government to pay half the amount of compensation. Sir James Mitchell has been severely censured for having allowed himself to be forced into the position of paying half of what the Commonwealth should have paid. This is not the only occasion on which Western Australia has entered into negotiations with the Commonwealth and has come off second best. It has been our experience that in a case of this kind one might as well argue with a hungry tiger as with the Commonwealth. After the wholesale slaughter of affected cattle, the disease broke out in paddocks that were previously clean, and Mr. Robertson then laid down that the only effective way to stamp out the disease was to kill throughout a zone not only the diseased cattle but also the healthy cattle. When that edict went forth to dairymen whose herds were clean, one can imagine their consternation. Naturally there was some resentment, because they did not understand the seriousness of the disease and how it makes an appearance at considerable distances from the original outbreak. Mr. Robertson, I say it to his credit, went amongst the people upon whose herds he had passed the death sentence, and explained the necessity for killing the unaffected cattle. The convincing argument he used was that the most typical case upon which he had conducted a post mortem was that of a hull from the Fremantle gaol. If any isolation could be complete, surely it would be within the walls of the Fremantle gaol.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is the place for pests, is it not?

Hon. G. POTTER: Yes, and this was typical rinderpest. The dairymen had confidence in Mr. Robertson, and they had no doubt that when the disease had been stamped out, the Federal Government would stand up to their liability. We shall see how they have discharged that liability. In the Eastern States it was said that the dairymen of Fremantle had formed themselves into armed squads and had resisted the officers of the Government, both Commonwealth and State. The dairymen were thus greatly maligned. I shall quote one instance to show the co-operation afforded the authorities. A dairyman at Fremantle was culling out his herd. Some of the beasts were destined for the saleyard, and others were booked for country districts. They were put into separate paddocks. Someone informed the owner, "There is something wrong with your cattle, Mr. Shepherd," and he found on inspection that there was something wrong. Transport arrangements had been completed when, in the paddock nearest his homestead, he found five cattle lying dead. He gave instructions to cancel all transport arrangements, saying, "I shall not allow these cattle to go out to the country until I know what is the matter with them." On the following morning the cattle that might then have been in the wheat belt were sick, and that afternoon were slaughtered. This shows how the people in the district "opposed" the officials. I shall not detain the House at any length, because I feel sure hon. members have traced minutely the course of rinderpest in Western Australia, and have a conception of what it would have meant not only to this State, but to the Commonwealth had the disease got away. When the Commonwealth and the State decided to pay full compensation at ordinary market rates for slaughtered cattle, the Commonwealth to pay half and the State to pay half, many people thought that was the end of the trouble. Certainly the most spectacular feature of the rinderpest outbreak was the slaughtering of the cattle, as will be acknowledged by anyone who saw the lethal paddocks. We are told that pigs do not contract rinderpest, but, nevertheless, all pigs in the area affected were doomed to be slaughtered. At a piggery owned by Mr. Robinson there were a number of pigs which were stated by Mr. Hampshire, the Government expert, to be the finest in Western Australia, if not in the Commonwealth. I was present when a deputation waited on the Minister and the advisory board to put forward a plea for these pigs to be spared, it being urged that they could be sent to Rottnest Island or Garden Island for quarantine purposes. They were extremely valuable stud pigs. Mr. Robertson was referred to, and he said, "No, I am sorry, but those pigs must go." He explained that they must go because they were carriers of

the disease. And accordingly the pigs went to the butcher. Certainly some measure of compensation was given in this instance. However, there are phases of the question which escaped the public eye and therefore did not influence public opinion. There was not only the slaughter of the cattle; a hundred other things intervened to create grave injustices to the people in the rinderpest area. While the slaughter was going on, the department were churning out regulations controlling, among other things, the sale of market produce. I do not say the department were wrong in that, but I do say that the people who had to sacrifice their vegetables, or their opportunity to visit the markets, lost equally with those who sacrificed their cattle. But we find the Commonwealth say that they are not going to be responsible for economic or indirect losses. How can loss of cattle be considered a direct loss, and the loss of vegetables an indirect loss? The one is just as much a direct loss as the other. However, the Commonwealth Government do not seem to view the matter in that light. On the other hand, they say they are afraid of granting compensation in that respect lest they establish a precedent. What precedent would they be establishing? A precedent that the Commonwealth Government for once did justice to Western Australia? If it is a precedent, that can be the only precedent. Still, we find the Commonwealth Government going a little distance. After pressure had been brought to bear on them they said, "As an act of grace we shall grant you £7,000 in order that there may be compensation for buildings which were ordered to be destroyed, and similarly with regard to fencing and fodder crops ordered to be destroyed." Out of that amount of £7,000 there was an expenditure of £4,300. When the distributing board in Western Australia asked permission to use the unexpended balance of £2,700 to pay compensation, they were told, "No, you must not use that money to compensate some poor market gardener who was deprived of the right to market his produce. That £2,700 must revert to the Treasury, because it was granted for direct losses, and not for indirect losses." Once more pressure was brought to bear on the Commonwealth Government, and at the instigation of representatives of the State Government, supplemented by our Federal members, the Commonwealth Government, out of the kindness of their hearts, said, "We will give you another £10,000, but that will be all." The claims at present lodged with the Commonwealth amount to about £47,000. When those claims were being discussed in Melbourne, certain members of the Cabinet who were, I will not say unfriendly to Western Australia, but not too anxious that justice should be rendered to Western Australian citizens who had suffered as the result of the rinderpest outbreak, would pick

up a ridiculous claim and cry out against public money being granted to meet such absurd demands. We all admit that included in the list are claims which no reasonable Government could possibly recognise.

Hon. J. A. Greig: Is the £47,000 still unpaid?

Hon. G. POTTER: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is it all for indirect losses?

Hon. G. POTTER: All for what we call direct losses. I do not say that the Commonwealth Government or any other Government are called upon to pay the whole of the £47,000 claimed. Our Federal members tell us that some utterly ridiculous claims have been lodged. It is as regards such claims that people who are unfriendly to Western Australia have said, "We will have nothing to do with them." I am moving this motion because I noticed that the Colonial Secretary, replying to a question, stated that the Commonwealth Government were being asked by the State Government to appoint a committee to distribute the £10,000 plus the unexpended balance of £2,700. We are assured that £20,000 would meet the bill after all untenable claims were excised. Whether it is so I do not know, but I am fearful lest the Commonwealth Government should say, "We will close the incident, and appoint a board and hand over the whole of the claims to that board, telling them 'Here is £12,700, pay the claims pro rata.'"

If that course were adopted—I now sound a note of warning—the unscrupulous claimants would get all the fat and the genuine claimants would get all the lean, or possibly not even much lean. Not a halfpenny of the amount should be expended until the list has been closely scrutinised with a view to the elimination of unjust claims. Then there would be some equity. On reliable authority we learn that the Commonwealth Government will not budge one inch further to grant additional compensation. Then it is the duty of the State Government to shoulder the balance of the claims. I do not think the carrying of the motion will hamper in any way such negotiations as may be in progress between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, because, after all, the main object of the motion is to get the claims fully examined in order to provide for eliminating unjustifiable demands and to ensure justice to all. The people who have suffered as the result of the rinderpest outbreak and cannot obtain compensation from the Commonwealth have only the State Government to look to. It is well known that had the disease got abroad throughout this Continent, we should have had an entire stoppage of trade. Ships would have kept away from the Commonwealth as people keep away from a plague patient. They would simply have refused to come here, because, had they visited our shores, they would have been quarantined in other ports. We feel,

therefore, that the sufferers are entitled to what may be termed a moderate insurance premium for the safety of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. A. Greig: How would you distinguish between just and unjust claims?

Hon. G. POTTER: Let me give an illustration. We are told that two hotel keepers who were in the habit of supplying beer and bread and cheese on sale days have put in very substantial claims for loss of business because the Commonwealth Government prohibited stock sales. That is one claim which should go out. There was a committee appointed to deal with all claims, and that committee made certain recommendations. However, the committee being without plenary powers, the recommendations could only be forwarded to Melbourne for consideration.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

MOTION TRAMWAYS AND WATER SUPPLY.

Transfer to Local Governing Bodies.

Debate resumed from the 11th September on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter—

"That in the opinion of this House the Government should immediately enter into negotiations for the transfer of the metropolitan tramway system and the metropolitan water supply to representatives of the local bodies concerned."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.59]: I moved the adjournment of the debate on this motion with the object of referring to some ancient history connected with steps previously taken to accomplish the very object the mover now has in view. The matter is one in which I took a considerable amount of interest in past years, because I always held, in common I think with many hon. members, that it is only right that the various local authorities should have control of services such as water supply, tramway communication, and so forth. The question of water supply might lie in abeyance for the time being, in view of the fact that a select committee is now inquiring into the subject. Indeed, I suggest to the mover of the motion that consideration both of water supply and tramways might be left in abeyance until we receive the report of the select committee, after which we could consider the motion in the light of that report. So far back as 1916, after many efforts had been made by the local authorities to accomplish the very object of the motion, a Bill was actually drafted and intended to be introduced by the Wilson Government. Unfortunately, it never got beyond the drafting stage. The last report furnished by the Metropolitan Water Supply Department shows that even

last year the operations resulted in a loss of £8,295.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And according to the figures it may be £10,000 this year.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. Even after 1916, further conferences were held, and about 18 months ago members representing metropolitan and metropolitan suburban provinces met together upstairs and discussed the question of water supply. The officials of the department furnished to us an interesting schedule giving the figures not only for Perth and suburbs, but also for Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. That schedule showed how the boards in the Eastern capitals are constituted, together with the capital expenditure, revenue and working expenses in each instance. In Melbourne there is a board of 40 elected by the municipal councils. In Sydney the board consists of seven members. The president and two members are appointed by the Government, while two are elected by the city council, and the remainder by suburban councils. In Brisbane the board consists of nine members. The president is appointed by the Governor, and eight members are elected by the board's ratepayers. According to the figures presented to us, the capital expenditure in Perth up till 1920 was £2,067,321. Since June of 1920 the amount has increased considerably, and it is now something like £2,700,000. The position is very serious, calling for grave consideration. It prompts me to suggest that the House will scarcely agree that immediate negotiations should be entered into, as desired by the hon. member who moved the motion.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is proposed to add some four millions to the cost of the water supply within the next six years.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is so. It we were to rush this matter, possibly we might embarrass the Government by driving them to the local authorities with the fervent request, "For Heaven's sake, take the load off our hands." As a practical instance of the difficulty of raising money, I may say that the Fremantle Tramway Board, in their last loan of £21,000, had to provide, not only interest of 7 per cent., but an additional 4 per cent. sinking fund and 5 per cent. depreciation. So out of revenue they have now to furnish 16 per cent. in respect of that loan. It will be seen, therefore, that the handing over of the tramways and water supply to the local authorities is not a matter for immediate action. I believe that local authorities should have control of these public utilities, but the question is, can those local authorities be induced to take over the obligations in connection with those public utilities?

Hon. J. Duffell: That is the crux of the whole thing.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am pointing out these facts to impress on hon. members that the motion ought not to be hurriedly passed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It merely asks that negotiations be entered into.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, but it asks that they should be immediately entered into.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It will take some time even to enter into them.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The local authorities from Fremantle to Midland Junction have been in conference over this for many years past. It is not new at all.

Hon. J. Duffell: One conference sat as far back as 1908.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, I have presided at some of those conferences, and I know how much work has been put into the negotiations.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Two years ago the Minister for Works called a conference to consider it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, quite a number of meetings were held at that time. We have a schedule showing the position of the Water Supply Department from its foundation. It is seen from the accounts that only in two or three years has there been any surplus after paying expenses. On every other occasion there has been a substantial deficit. It is not the sort of scheme that one would rush into. The bodies who undertake the control of such a service will be committed, not only to serious obligations to meet existing capital expenditure, but also to meet renewals and renovation; for numbers of existing services will require to be renewed within a short time. Many of the pipes that were well suited for certain districts in earlier years, now require to be replaced with pipes of greater capacity to serve the increased population. Others again are now worn out. In regard to the taking over of the trams, also, negotiations have proceeded between the local authorities for years past. In 1915 or 1916, as the result of conferences, various resolutions were passed by the united local authorities interested. There were present at these conferences representatives from Subiaco, from Victoria Park, from the Perth Road Board and from Claremont. They discussed the matter and eventually made certain proposals to the Government for the taking over of the trams. It would not be fair that one local authority should exercise control over a service extending beyond its own boundaries. The result of last year's operations of the trams is not inviting, for it shows a loss of £150 odd. I think the Minister is struggling hard to see what can be done to improve the position this year. I would make this suggestion to the Government. The trams were taken over by the Government by certain methods which did not evoke that meed of praise we might expect a Government to receive in matters of that nature. They passed legislation and got behind the City Council, and acquired the trams and the rights under the agreement. When the City Council originally arranged for the right to construct tramways to be

granted to the old company it was provided, in the agreement between the City Council and Mr. Dickenson, that the council should have the right to acquire the trams at certain stated periods. I think at the end of 21 years, and then again at the end of 28 years, the right was granted to the City Council to acquire the trams at actual valuation but no allowance for good-will.

Hon. J. Duffell: I think they were to revert to the City Council in 1928.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: At the end of 35 years from the date of the concession or right the whole of the tramway system, or undertaking, together with rails and everything else, was to revert to the City Council.

Hon. J. Duffell: Within the city boundary?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes. If the Government wished to show their magnanimity, and to place the City Council and the other local authorities on the same basis as they would have been had not the Government exercised that extraordinary power by means of statute, they would give to the local authorities the right they had under the original agreement made between them and the concessionaires.

Hon. J. Duffell: There would be a rumpus if they did.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am sure that suggestion will appeal to the Minister, and that he will send it on to his colleagues for favourable consideration. It should also appeal to Mr. Baxter. For the time being, having regard to the position of the Tramway Department and the Water Supply Department, the consideration of the motion might be deferred in order to give the Government an opportunity to consider this suggestion. We are told on the one hand that the tramways are going to be supplanted in the near future by motor buses, or some other means of conveyance.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is all bunkum.

Hon. J. Duffell: He knows.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member must be an authority on the point. Assuming he is correct there is no reason why he should not seek to help the local authorities to secure something that ought to prove profitable for them, and that will assist to lessen the rates which they impose upon the unfortunate ratepayers. The tracks will probably require to be renewed, and extensions made, if the trams are to be continued as Mr. Gray suggests.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I do not suggest extensions, but it is nonsense to suggest they will be superseded.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It will be all the better if they are not. That confirms me in the idea that I should press the suggestion that the local authorities should be placed on the same basis as they were prior to the acquisition of the tramway rights by statute, on the part of the Government. Probably the rolling stock will require to be renewed, all of which means added capital. Any particular body, created for the purpose of taking over the trams, would

find a difficulty in raising capital at the present time owing to the heavy cost. I have given members the position of the last loan of the tramway trust at Fremantle. That meant providing 16 per cent. on the loan of £21,000. If a tramway board were created, and had to provide something of that sort, and, as I have stated as a result of the operations of the trams last year, there was a loss of £155, how would they provide the necessary interest, sinking fund and depreciation? I do not see how they could do it. Whilst I am fully in sympathy with Mr. Baxter, and in his ideal, I move an amendment—

That "immediately enter in" be struck out, and the words "at the first convenient opportunity renew negotiations" be inserted in lieu.

This would allow the motion to stand over until the report of the select committee now sitting in connection with the water supply is received and also enable members to give further consideration to the matter.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.23]: It must be refreshing to members representing the metropolitan area to find a member of the Country Party taking such a keen interest in metropolitan affairs. Whenever I have visited various parts of the country I have received a welcome and spent an enjoyable time at the hands of country representatives. It is not often one has an opportunity of expressing appreciation for kindness extended. The motion and the amendment afford this opportunity. I am sure Mr. Baxter moved the motion with the best of intentions. I do not propose to refer to the former part of it at present, but will have something interesting to say when the select committee that is now sitting bring in their report. I will, however, deal with the second part of the motion. Mr. Nicholson gave an interesting account of the early period when the tramways commenced operations in the city. Perth was a different city then compared to what it is now. Its environments were very different; it was sparsely populated, and there was plenty of sand in the thoroughfares. There were very few macadamised roads, so that the tramways arrived as a great boon to the community. A very astute gentleman came out from London to manage the trams, the concession for which had been acquired by an English company. Mr. Baxter would have been well advised to peruse the agreements that were entered into by that astute gentleman with the various local governing bodies in whose boundaries the trams were to operate. To indicate something of the astuteness of that gentleman, it may be recalled that the first agreement entered into by him was with the City Council. As a result of the concession to run the trams over their roads, the council were to receive a commission of 3 per

cent. on the gross tramway takings, and in the year 1928 the tramways within the city boundary were to revert to the Council. A further agreement was entered into with the Subiaco municipality, which also provided for the 3 per cent. commission, and also that the tramways operating within the Subiaco boundaries were to revert to that municipality in the year 1932. The same sort of agreement was made with North Perth, Leederville and other suburbs. As a result of these negotiations a grave difficulty arose in the minds of those gentlemen who in 1906, 1907 and 1908 were negotiating to take over the trams from the company, together with rolling stock and everything vested in it. This difficulty arose from the fact that the company at that time was not sufficiently strong financially to extend into the various suburbs tramway facilities such as are required by the growing population. In those days they were in straits similar to those of to-day in the remote parts of the metropolitan area, where transport facilities are needed. Conference after conference was held with a view to the local governing bodies acquiring the rights of the trams. The bone of contention was the different periods during which the agreements ran, and the reversion of the trams to the various local governing bodies. It was after these conferences had failed that the then Government stepped in. There was a great improvement in the tramway service of the metropolitan area, immediately following its acquisition by the Government. True, a great deal of money had to be found to augment the rolling stock, and repair the tracks that were in a bad way in many cases, and were a source of danger to life and limb. Further than that, the Government realised the necessity for additional electrical power for tramway and other purposes, and entered into arrangements resulting in the establishment of the power house at East Perth. That makes a considerable difference in the position. However, it is still a matter that can be well considered at some future date by the Government with a view to appointing a board to manage the tramway system on lines similar to those adopted at Fremantle. Under that system the people in the suburban areas would probably have the benefit of better facilities and, perhaps, cleaner trams than they have at present. I do not wish to infer that the condition of the cars is any worse to-day than 12 months ago, but there is room for improvement in the appearance, comfort and cleanliness of the trams. If control were handed over to a board, there would be great improvement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You can get a seat in the tram cars since the advent of motor buses.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Perhaps so. Some country members seem to consider that the tramways are run at a loss and do not

understand why the people in the country should have to bear a proportion of the expenditure involved. Generally speaking, the tramway system is not a losing proposition, notwithstanding what Mr. Nicholson has said.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Can the Government run anything at a profit?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I am satisfied they are running the tramway system at a profit. Although a small loss of about £150 was shown on last year's workings, some thousands of pounds were spent in repairing the tracks, making them safe, laying down heavier rails, and making extensions. That being so, country members need have no fear that their constituents will be called upon to pay much towards that loss.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Were all the repairs and renewals paid for out of revenue?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I am not prepared to say that they were, but I have no reason to disbelieve that the greater proportion of that work was paid for out of revenue. The proposal covered by the motion is worthy of consideration by the Government and, as a result of the debate, they may be able to arrive at a decision as to whether it would be best to hand over the control of these facilities to a board, or for the Government to institute such improvements as are necessary and to continue controlling the tramway service themselves. In the circumstances, I support the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5,35]: My reply will cover both motion and amendment. The Government will be prepared to immediately enter into negotiations for the transfer of the metropolitan tramway system and the metropolitan water supply to representatives of the local bodies concerned. If those local bodies are prepared to do business, they should first approach the Government. It must not be understood that, in adopting this attitude, the Government desire to part with these public utilities. At the same time they do not seek to place any obstacles in the way of the municipalisation of the services. If Mr. Baxter's motion and Mr. Nicholson's amendment go to a division, I must vote either one way or the other. I shall vote not as a member of the Government, but as a member for the Central Province.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

BILL—HIGH SCHOOL.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Application of proceeds:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not propose to ask the House to postpone consideration of the Bill any longer, because I understand negotiations will be entered into between the City Council and the High School, and that it is necessary for the High School to secure this power to sell the land.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I would like some information. If the Bill be agreed to, will that affect the price to be paid for the land? It may be that the High School authorities will demand a higher price for the land than they are entitled to receive, once the Bill is agreed to.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They will not be able to sell the land unless the Bill is agreed to.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I am not only an old High School boy, but one of the governors of the High School. The reason that power to sell the land is necessary is this: the majority of the school buildings, apart from those used as the boarding house, are on the reserve opposite Parliament House in Havelock-street. The boarding house and head master's residence are on the block in George-street. The High School governors have recognised for a long time that this is undesirable and have been awaiting a convenient opportunity to ask for power to sell the block in George-street. That block is not held as a Class "A" reserve. It is practically a fee simple given to the governors of the High School in trust for the purposes of secondary education. The powers under which the governors hold that land enable them to mortgage it, and I have no doubt that it was intended that they should have the power to sell as well. Owing to the obscurity of legal phraseology, it is open to dispute as to whether they do possess that power. As everyone knows, the High School governors have a heavy mortgage on the property; they need only default in the payment of interest and the property may be sold by the mortgagee. The High School governors do not want to do that, but ask Parliament for power to sell the block so that the proceeds may be applied to the erection of further buildings, either on the present block in Havelock-street or, with the consent of the Governor-in-Council, on some other site. The High School is not a wealthy institution. Like most other educational bodies, it is much involved, but it is extremely successful. The governors are doing what they can to provide a good secondary education for not only the young people of Perth but also for those from the country districts. The success of the school is evidenced by the fact that we have more than 300 students there and a large number of boarders. We wish to sell the land and devote the proceeds for the purposes of the High School, probably in erecting buildings in Havelock-street. I understand that the Bill has been held up in order that the City Council may have an opportunity to resume portion of the land fronting on Hay-street which is at

present held by the High School governors in trust. Mr. Lovekin has not expressed a wish that the governors should give that land to the City Council, but Mr. Cornell, who followed him, said that the governors should give that land to the city authorities in order to widen Hay-street.

Hon. J. Cornell: I was hardly as blunt as that.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The hon. member said that if the High School did not hand over the land, he would oppose the Bill horse, foot, and artillery. I do not know that he desires more blunt language than that. The position is that the High School governors have no power to give away anything that is held by them in trust. As a result of the speeches of Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Cornell, the governors have received a letter from the City Council asking them to give to the council a certain frontage in Hay-street, comprising 378ft. in length by a depth of 27ft. It would constitute nearly a seventh of the total area at present held by the High School, and it is needless to say that if the High School Governors gave away that land they would betray their trust.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They would be giving away £5,000.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: A considerable sum, because that block is one of the most awkward blocks in the city. It is a triangle with a frontage of 378 feet to Hay-street, with an apex to St. George's-terrace, the frontage there being merely 20 feet. If 378 feet multiplied by 27 feet were taken off the base, the block would be materially damaged.

Hon. J. A. Greig: It would enhance the value of the remainder.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: As the buildings stand on that block, if the portion not built on were deprived of an area 27 feet by 378 feet it would make it almost impossible to subdivide the block for the purpose of sale. If the City Council resume this land it will undoubtedly materially damage the value of the remainder of the High School ground. Dealing with the interjection just made by Mr. Greig, I can assure him that that will not be the case at all. If the City Council resume all the land they require down to Milligan-street, to widen Hay-street, then of course that might enhance the value of the portion of the High School block that will remain, enhance it relatively to the value of that portion at present. But the City Council have been talking about a new Town Hall, to my knowledge, for over 20 years, and instead of getting that new Town Hall they have no fewer than three old ones, namely—one in Murray-street, one in William-street, and one at the corner of Barrack and Hay-streets. If they take 20 years to consider the question of building a new town hall without arriving at finality, how long will it take them to resume the whole of the land they want between Milligan and George-streets for the purpose of widening Hay-street? Mr. Cor-

nell in uttering something of a protest against Parliament giving a strip of its frontage to Hay-street unless the City Council acquired some of the High School land, said that the proceeding would be an abortion. The governors of the High School feel that if the Council acquire the High School frontage of 378 feet by 27 feet and then do not go any further, it will be a miscarriage of justice.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is a better one than mine.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I hope the Bill will not be delayed any longer. It is six months since the High School received two very fair offers for the purchase of the block. Had the governors chosen they could have disposed of the block by exercising the powers they possess. They did not do that; they preferred to go to Parliament and get a clear title for the purpose of sale. The matter has already been before the House for over a month and although there does not appear to be any valid objection to the purpose for which the High School governors wish to sell the land, the Bill has only now reached the Committee stage. I understand that the City Council want to buy the whole of the block, cut off what they require, and sell the balance. If that be so we cannot negotiate with them until the Bill goes through Parliament any more than we can negotiate with a private dealer. If the City Council wish to have the land they can make an offer and it will be entertained by the governors of the High School.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will you give preference to the City Council offer?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The trustees cannot give preference to anybody, and I am speaking for myself when I say that the City Council will have just as good a chance of buying that land as any other would-be purchaser. I read in the paper that some of the city councillors were not aware that there was a project to widen Hay-street. I have no idea how long the City Council will take to make up their minds to carry out this work. Let them make up their minds quickly and if they wish to buy this land let them buy it. If they don't want to buy it let them resume that portion they require to widen Hay-street and pay compensation just as if they were dealing with a private person. The governors of the High School are entitled to as much protection from Parliament as is any private owner of land. I am astonished at the interjections and the attitude of Mr. Lovekin. That hon. member wishes that the City Council should get some advantage over the High School. There is no greater stickler in this House for the rights of property owners than the hon. member. Under the Closer Settlement Bill, although the Government only propose to ask for power to take land that is not being utilised reasonably, he cannot give his assent to the proposal. He now says, "Let the High School give preference to the City Council." I hope members will not hold up this matter any longer.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: When the Bill was first before the House I suggested a postponement of its consideration in order that the City Council, who needed a portion of the land for widening Hay-street, should have an opportunity of considering the matter. I entered into correspondence with the Mayor and the Town Clerk with a view to getting them to do something to acquire the strip that is necessary for the purpose they have in view. The Mayor and councillors, probably adopting the suggestion thrown out by Mr. Cornell that the High School should give the land, evidently thought they might put it up to the High School and that the High School might be generous enough to give it. Of course I realise that the trustees have no right to give away any part of this property. As the Bill was coming on again to-day, I had a telephonic conversation with the Town Clerk who told me that the matter was still under consideration, and that on Tuesday next there would be a meeting at which a proposition was to be made by which the City Council, instead of exercising their powers of resumption, should buy the whole property, take off the strip they required, and sell the rest. It is understood that the High School has had two offers in the neighbourhood of £13,000 or £13,500, and I take it that the City Council, if they propose to buy, will have to come in somewhere at about that price. When I interjected that the City Council might be given preference, I meant that assuming Brown was to offer £13,000 for the land and the City Council were also prepared to offer £13,000, the High School authorities, being unable to get a higher price, would give the City Council preference, all things being equal. It would be right, I think, to let a public body have that land in preference to a private individual. It is obvious, if the land is sold to an individual, and the City Council has to resume it, they will have to pay a higher price than would be the case if they were the original purchasers.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: How could we negotiate with any private dealer if we said that we would give the City Council preference?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not see how you can negotiate at all, but suppose you have two offers and the City Council puts in another, and these are all the offers you have, I should say, looking at the interests of the community, you should give preference to the City Council, and if the High School authorities did not do that, then it would be for the House to give the City Council an opportunity to exercise their powers of resumption in the ordinary way before they were penalised by the sale to another person.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why hold up the Bill?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I see no reason to do that, because, as Dr. Saw says, it will take some little time to pass through another place and no one will be injured.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I hope the Bill will be passed. Dr. Saw is not the only member who misunderstood Mr. Lovekin. He started by suggesting that the City Council should have preference. If that goes out to the public, no other offer will be forthcoming. Mr. Lovekin next suggested holding up the Bill till Tuesday to enable the City Council to take action. I would not hold up anything for the City Council to come to a decision on, because they seem incapable of coming to a decision. Even if the Bill were held up till Tuesday to enable the City Council to submit an offer, there would be no power for the governors of the High School to sell. The governors have done the right thing in the right way to clear the title, and should receive our support.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Dr. Saw's speech has shown that the Shylock proclivities are as inherent in governors of the High School as in other people.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: We are simply fulfilling a trust. Would you have us abuse it?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The site was given for a school, and it has outlived its purpose, and the governors regard the matter from the standpoint of a Shylock.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I do not think that is right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: All Dr. Saw's arguments hinged on the statement that to give preference to the City Council would discount the value of the property. This is one of the most valuable blocks in Perth. If it were sold to a private individual, he would quickly recognise its value and demand his pound of flesh. It was not spitefully that I suggested the High School authorities should assist in a very laudable object. If they handed over a strip of land for the widening of Hay-street, the balance of the block would be as valuable, or more valuable, than it is at present. Hay-street cannot remain an alley-way; sooner or later the City Council must face the problem of widening it.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: This block would make a good town hall site.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It would. I agree with Mr. Holmes as to the procrastination of the City Council. It is time that by a thunderbolt or a sudden charge of electors they were compelled to come to a decision. They do not seem able to make up their minds to do anything. Now we have a definite declaration on behalf of the High School governors, and I hope the City Council will bring an end to their glorious state of indecision.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.