

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1915.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—AUDITING DEPARTMENTAL ACCOUNTS.

Methods of Book-keeping.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier: 1, Does the Auditor General consider that it falls within the scope of his office as defined in the Audit Act to indicate the lines on which departmental book-keeping should go? 2, If not, is it the intention of the Government to so amend the Audit Act as may be necessary in order to provide an audit of the various enterprises which shall enable (a) accounts to be so kept that a continuous audit may be provided by the Auditor General; (b) that it shall lie within the scope of the Auditor General's duties to insist upon correct methods of book-keeping, and to assist each department in its efforts to attain that object? 3, Seeing that the advent of the trading concerns throws on the Audit Department extra work, varying considerably from routine audit, does he propose to have the department re-organised so as to enable the Auditor General to meet the position?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Auditor General replies as follows:—"No, ex-

cept so far as the provisions of Section 54 of the Audit Act apply. In practice, however, any request from the Treasurer would receive attention." My replies:—2, No, as it is considered that the Audit Act and the Government Trading Concerns Act confer all powers on the Auditor General necessary to carry out an efficient and effectual audit of all departmental accounts, including accounts of trading concerns. Section 54 of the Audit Act reads—"The Auditor General may in such yearly report or in any special report which he may at any time think fit to make, recommend any plans and suggestions for the better collection and payment of public moneys and the more effectually and economically auditing and examining the public accounts and stores, and any improvement in the mode of keeping such accounts, and generally report upon all matters relating to the public accounts, public moneys, and stores, and such plans and suggestions shall be considered and dealt with by the Governor. A copy of every special report shall be sent by the Auditor General to the Treasurer before such report is transmitted to Parliament, to enable the Treasurer to make to Parliament any explanation he may think desirable." Therefore in cases where the accounts are not satisfactory the Auditor General may report and submit recommendations for consideration.

Avoidance of delay.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier: In view of the Auditor General's report as to delay in the preparation of accounts required by him from the various trading concerns of the State, does he propose to take steps to consolidate the accounting branches of the departments of State (a) with the object of securing a uniform system of book-keeping; (b) to ensure a continuous audit throughout the financial year; (c) to bring about the production of audited balance sheets to be available to members prior to the discussion of the Annual Estimates?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Since his appointment the Under Treasurer has visited several departments and the principal out-stations of the State, with the object of consolidating the accountancy work of the Treasury and bringing about a uniformity of system of departmental book-keeping, more particularly in respect to the payment of accounts. Recently the payment of accounts of several departments has been transferred to the Treasury, with practical and beneficial results. 2, Where departments have to keep personal and other accounts, in accordance with the special Statutes governing the operations of such departments, no alteration—unless the present system is faulty—is contemplated. 3, Uniformity of system of book-keeping is aimed at wherever practicable, but in many of the trading concerns this is hardly possible owing to the nature of the transactions differing considerably. 4, Instructions were issued in April last to all departments, directing the production of profit and loss accounts and balance sheets of all trading concerns without delay after the close of the financial year, in order that same may be laid before Parliament at the earliest possible date.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SLEEPERS AND THE POWELLISING AGREEMENT.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the Government's attention been drawn to the following statement appearing in the *West Australian* newspaper of 4th August, 1915:—"The Sleeper Contracts.—For 'Trans-Australian Railway.—Testing the Powellised Karri.—Melbourne, August 3.—That the Opposition in the Federal Parliament to the large contracts for powellised sleepers entered into by Mr. O'Malley when Minister for Home Affairs was justified has been amply proved by what has occurred since. Tenders were recently invited by the Home Affairs Department for a large quantity of sleepers for use on the trans-Austra-

lian railway, and the offers of private tenderers for some 63,000 sleepers have been accepted. It has now been decided to accept a tender for the balance of 100,000 sleepers from the Western Australian Government's mills, but these are jarrah sleepers, instead of powellised karri, as contracted for by Mr. O'Malley. It is understood to be the intention of the railway authorities not to lay down more powellised sleepers until it is ascertained whether the 100,000 powellised sleepers which have already been laid prove to resist satisfactorily, as it was claimed they would do, the ravages of white ants"? 2, Will this not involve the State in a serious financial loss on account of the agreement made between the Government and the powellising company? 3, What is the total amount paid under the powellising agreement to the Powellising Company, and the quantity of timber treated under this process, (a) from the inception of the agreement to January, 1915, (b) from 1st January, 1915, to 1st July, 1915? 4, In view of the opinion given by the Federal Attorney General doubting the validity of these patent rights, have the Government taken any action to test the legality of these assumed patent rights? 2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Commissioner of Railways on the 23rd January this year reported as follows:—"Approximately 220,000 powellised jarrah sleepers were used in the construction of the Port Hedland-Marble Bar railway during 1910, approximately 16,000 jarrah sleepers treated by various ant-proof compounds, and approximately 2,000 untreated jarrah sleepers. Where the powellised jarrah sleepers have been used on stone embankments at river crossings they are unbalanced and are cracking at the ends from exposure to the sun's rays, but otherwise they are standing very well and have proved thoroughly resistant to the attacks of white ants. The termites in places have built around the ends of the sleepers, and examination of these has disclosed that the ants have tried to penetrate the wood, but failed; they have been

found in the adjacent ballast, but not in the sleepers. The same cannot be said of the other treated sleepers, which are being attacked by ants to a more or less extent, and a number of these have had to be renewed, being very badly eaten by the termites. Comparison cannot well be made between the powellised and the untreated jarrah sleepers (*i.e.*, on a stone embankment with sand ballast) where the ants are not at all troublesome, whereas the former are laid through what is known to be an active region of the ant, and this has been fully borne out by the manner in which the sleepers treated by other compounds have been ravaged. (Sgd.) John T. Short, Commissioner of Railways." This report from an officer of such standing and ability should outweigh the opinion of those who have not had the experience and have not seen the good results obtained by powellising. 3, (a) Timber powellised from the inception of the agreement to the 1st January, 1915: 15,467,083 super. feet; royalty paid, £10,614 3s. 11d.; (b) 9,148,148 super feet, £4,773 11s. 10d. 4, No. 5, In view of the very great doubt of the successful issue of such a case.

QUESTION—RAILWAY BRIDGE, NORTH FREMANTLE.

Mr. GEORGE asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that about two years ago the North Fremantle railway bridge was reported as being unsafe for traffic? 2, Were the Government informed that the railway engineers refused to be held responsible for the safety of the bridge under the existing conditions? 3, What steps were taken to deal with the conditions referred to? 4, Do the Government propose to deal with the matter of making the bridge safe for traffic, and when? 5, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No. 3, 4, and 5, Answered by 1 and 2.

QUESTION — GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS AND THE COMMONWEALTH BANK.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it compulsory for Govern-

ment contractors to bank at the Commonwealth Bank; 2, If so, why does the Government thus restrict competition amongst tenderers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—EXPORT OF MEAT.

Mr. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, What numbers of cattle and sheep were shipped to the Eastern States during last July for slaughter? 2, What quantities of frozen beef, mutton, and pork were shipped during July to the Eastern States? 3, If the export of meat is found to be considerable, will he prohibit further shipments until our own people are supplied at reasonable prices?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Cattle 30, value £450; sheep 1,048, value £1,467. 2, Frozen beef 213,817lbs., value £4,272; frozen mutton, nil; frozen pork, nil. 3, The export of meat to the Eastern States so far has not been considerable. The question, however, is receiving attention.

QUESTION—SPRING HILL MINE, PUBLIC CRUSHING.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is the owner of the battery on the Spring Hill mine at Parker's Range complying with the terms of an agreement with the Mines Department to crush for the public? 2, If not (a) will he enforce such agreement, or (b) make some other provision for crushing ore for the prospectors in order to develop the industry in that district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. The company owning the battery is being wound up by order of the court, and operations at the mine and battery are temporarily suspended. 2, (a) Yes; as soon as practicable. (b) If any other company or person is willing to crush for the public at approved rates a subsidy will be given by the Department of Mines.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, MT. HOLLAND.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Water Supply: What provision if any

is being made by the Water Supply Department to obtain a sufficient water supply at the new gold find near Mt. Holland, in order to assist in the further prospecting and development of the district?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLY replied: Near the new find and along the track thereto there is sufficient water without rain for present requirements. As development proceeds the matter of water supply will receive attention, and arrangements have been made for an engineer of the department to inspect the locality immediately and report upon the best means of meeting future requirements, and on receipt of his report further action will be taken.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—ENEMY CONTRACT ANNULMENT.

Third Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker—Kanowna) [4.44] in moving the third reading said: Last night, in the course of the debate on the second reading, in answer to questions, I mentioned, among a list of companies believed to be backed by German capital, the General Electric Engineering Company, and the Optical and Photo. Supplies Company. Undoubtedly it has been rumoured everywhere in the City that those two companies are backed by German capital. However, I have since made a close scrutiny, so far as the proper sources of information are open to me, and I find that what I told the House last night in respect to these two companies cannot be borne out. The honourable and right thing to do is to correct my statement, and I have taken the very first opportunity of doing so. I therefore wish to exclude from the list I gave last night the names of those two companies. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [4.45]: I would like to take this opportunity to say that the report of my remarks in the *West Australian* this morning conveyed the impression, inadvertently, I suppose, that I included the Continental Rubber Company as being one of the companies with which Strelitz Brothers' name was connected. I referred, as Hansard will show, to the two companies just mentioned by the Attorney General. I referred to the Continental Rubber Company as having their premises in the basement of Viking House, which was a fact.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MOTION — MONEY BILLS PROCEDURE, JOINT STANDING ORDERS, TO INQUIRE.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.47]: I move—

That, in view of the report of the select committee appointed last session to confer with a committee of the Legislative Council as to the framing of Joint Standing Orders with regard to the procedure on Money Bills, by which report it appears that the committees were at that time unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, a select committee be appointed to inquire into the best means of overcoming the present differences between the two Houses in regard to such Bills, and that the Legislative Council be requested to appoint a similar committee to confer with the committee of this House on this subject.

This subject is so well known to members that there will be no need for me to give the reasons advanced last session when I moved in a similar direction. Suffice it to say that the committee appointed last session did very good and useful work, and I venture to say that if we had had a month more time, I believe a conclusion would have been arrived at. I hope the motion will be carried, and that the committee will soon get to work so that this difficulty may be overcome, and when it

is this bone of contention which has existed between the two Houses and caused most inharmonious relations for many years will cease.

Question passed.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.48]: I move—

That the select committee consist of the following:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Holman, Mr. Hudson, Mr. James Gardiner, and the mover.

These members comprise the Standing Orders committee of this House.

Mr. HUDSON (Yilgarn) [4.49]: I would like to point out that we have a Standing Orders committee to deal with these matters and the motion will have the effect of duplicating and making a select committee of the Standing Orders committee. I do not know what the Standing Orders committee have done that this motion should be passed. However, it has been carried and the question before the House is that of the personnel of the committee. I have not been consulted on the question of forming one of the select committee, and I have not the time to act upon it. I am still prepared to work on the Standing Orders Committee, but not on any new committee. I am not objecting to performing the duties devolving upon me as a member of this House, but I was not consulted as to whether I would act on the select committee. I am already a member of a select committee, the duties of which will involve a considerable amount of my time during the present session.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.51]: In view of the hon. member's statement I move—

That the select committee consist of the following:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Holman, Mr. McDowall, Mr. James Gardiner, and the mover.

Question passed.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.52]: I move—

That the committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on Wednesday, the 8th September,

Question passed.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.53]: I move—

That the resolution be transmitted by Message to the Legislative Council with a request that a similar committee be appointed to confer with the committee appointed by this House.

Question passed.

NOTICE OF MOTION—FREEZING WORKS, WYNDHAM.

The Speaker called on the notice of motion by Mr. Taylor—

That in the opinion of this House, the system lately adopted by the Government of entering into a secret contract, or contracts, which have not been advertised in the usual manner by the Tender Board, is subversive to the principles of sound Government.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.55]: I address the House with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to make an explanation. Since I gave notice of this motion the Minister for Works has laid on the Table of the House the papers in connection with the negotiations for the Wyndham freezing works. These papers have been largely sought by members to-day, and I have been unable to go through them sufficiently in the time at my disposal. As the papers constitute an important factor in connection with my motion I might, if I proceeded with my motion this afternoon with insufficient knowledge of what is contained in the file, do some injustice to somebody. Holding that view it is not my intention to proceed with the motion this afternoon.

Mr. MALE (Kimberley) [4.56]: On a point of order, has the hon. member's motion been adjourned, or withdrawn, or what is the position?

Mr. Green: Simply that it has not been moved.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has not moved his motion and I cannot compel him to do so. Since he has not moved it, the motion lapses,

RETURN — RAILWAY FREIGHT AND HAULING COSTS, GOS- NELLS-MIDLAND.

Mr. ROBINSON (Canning) [4.57]:
I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing (a) the number of tons of Collie coal brought from stations south of Gosnells to Midland or passing through Midland Junction to any station beyond Midland (all lines) during twelve months ended 30th June, 1915; (b) the number of tons of railway sleepers and timber brought from stations south of Gosnells to Midland or passing through Midland Junction to any station beyond Midland (all lines) during twelve months ended 30th June, 1915; (c) the number of tons of all other freights brought from stations south of Gosnells to Midland or passing through Midland Junction to any station beyond Midland (all lines) during twelve months ended 30th June, 1915; (d) the total cost of hauling the total tonnage referred to in paragraph (a) 10 miles during the said period; (e) the total cost of hauling the total tonnage referred to in paragraph (b) 10 miles during the said period; (f) the total cost of hauling the total tonnage referred to in paragraph (c) 10 miles during the said period.

The object of my motion is to gain some information on the subject of the work of the railways around a triangle, two sides of which are already constructed. Members are aware that a line runs through Gosnells on to East Perth and Perth, and that a line runs from Perth through East Perth to Midland Junction. The distance from Gosnells via East Perth to Midland Junction by railway is 21 miles, whereas straight across country skirting the Darling Range, the distance is 12 miles. It is obvious, therefore, that Collie coal, sleepers, and other heavy freights coming up the South-Western line from Bunbury, Collie, and other places in that direction and destined for Midland Junction are hauled over 10 miles more than is necessary. This is purely a matter of railway economy. In my motion I am not finding fault, but am

simply asking for information. The information should enable us to decide whether any improvement can be made. The motion relates mainly to Collie coal and sleepers. In the event of a railway being built, say, from Gosnells or thereabout, to Midland Junction, skirting the hills, it would, in addition to shortening the journey, as I have pointed out, open up 30,000 or 40,000 acres of land which is now comparatively speaking unimproved. This is very fertile land, and being quite close to the metropolitan area would, if developed, prove a good thing for the State. At the same time I wish to say I am not in favour at the moment of expending any money in this direction, but the information can very easily and quickly be supplied by the Railway Department, and it will prove helpful when dealing with the railway policy in the future.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [5.0]: There is no doubt the hon. member has a particular object in view and has expressed that object in his motion. His one idea, I understand, is to save the country as far as possible, when funds are available, from having to run several long lines of railway when it can, by the construction of another line, reduce the mileage considerably. There is no doubt that this is correct. The matter has been brought before Parliament on several occasions by myself in regard to running a railway on the south side of the Swan river to Fremantle, which would greatly reduce the mileage of lines to that port from that side of the river. I am perfectly satisfied with the advice of the Premier when he advised people in Fremantle and other places that it would be almost a matter of compulsion that a line should be constructed to reduce the mileage as shown by the hon. member. Funds, however, are not yet available for this. The time is not far distant, I hope, when the line will not only be constructed from Gosnells to Fremantle, but from West Midland to Burswood and thus on to Fremantle on the south side of the Swan river. This will be rendered necessary in order to meet the trade which trends

towards the port of Fremantle. I hope the hon. member's idea will soon be realised, not only for the short distance named by him but for the greater distance I have mentioned.

Mr. Robinson: I did not desire to embarrass the Government by asking for too much.

On motion by the Premier debate adjourned.

BILL—GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. McDowall in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 5:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The municipalities concerned, outside Fremantle, wish to have some control over the Commissioner when constructing these electric works. The term "electric works" covers everything in connection with an electric station, from the smallest bracket to the power house. At the present time lines cannot be erected without the consent of the municipality concerned. The municipalities outside Fremantle have no desire to harass the Government, but they do claim that they have a right to control their own streets, and they wish to be treated in a reasonable way. If the clause is passed as printed they will have no protection whatever except that the Commissioner may give them three days' notice, and at the expiration of that term may proceed to do the work in any form that his workmen may think fit. I desire later to move a new clause which will read as follows:—

Section 7 of the principal Act is amended by adding to Subsection 2 thereof a paragraph as follows:—"If an agreement is not arrived at between the Commissioner and the local authority upon any of the following matters, namely, the placing of electric lines under, over, or through any land or the route to be traversed by any electric line, through or across any thoroughfare, or other public place, or

the plans of buildings to be constructed within the district of such local authority, and any such matter in difference shall be referred by the Commissioner to the Resident Magistrate, as sole arbitrator, and the decision of such Resident Magistrate shall be binding on all parties, and final."

This amendment refers only to electric lines. If the Commissioner or his workmen intend to put up certain posts in a particular street and the Council object, and no agreement can be come to, they bring the matter before the resident magistrate, who says whether the objection is reasonable or not. It is due to the local authorities that there should be this protection. I intend to let this clause pass as printed and to move for the insertion of the new clause I have mentioned later on.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "authority" in the fourth line of the proviso, to the end of the proviso, be struck out.

I do not think it will inflict any hardship on the Government if these words are struck out of the proviso. There are many local authorities which have established electric light works to-day, although they are bordering other districts which have such works. The authorities in those districts, who have not works of their own, may desire to secure their lighting from a neighbouring district. I contend that they should have that right if they so desire, and should also be enabled to take it from the Government if the Government can supply them at a cheaper rate. The clause as at present distinctly prevents this.

The Premier: No, it does not.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If the clause is passed as printed the Government can invade the territory of any local governing body which has not works established. In the Claremont roads board, for instance, if the Government could invade that territory there are some people who would soon become customers of the Government, and some who would go to Subiaco for their electric lighting. If the sup-

pliers are divided in this way it will not be to the interest of the people. Local authorities who have not established works should have the same control over their territory as a body which has its own works. The striking out of these words will still leave to the Government the right to go into any territory to supply their own needs, or the needs of the Commonwealth Government. If they want to supply private consumers they should have to get the consent of the local governing body. It appears to me that the Government are desirous of crushing outside local authorities.

The Premier: That is absolutely incorrect.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I contend that the agreement was made in the interests of Perth and Fremantle municipalities, and that outside bodies are being treated unfairly. We find that bodies, as far away as Fremantle is from the power station, will be able to get their electric current at a far cheaper rate than can the local authorities around the city of Perth—

The Minister for Works: All the better for them.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: At the expense of the taxpayers of the country. The local governing bodies outside Perth, within the five miles radius, are penalised, as well as the people in the State, for the purpose of supplying current to a few favoured bodies.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. Some members take up rather a peculiar attitude on some of these proposals, and particularly upon this measure. The hon. member, if he stands for anything at all, stands for freedom in trade and fair competition. The works erected in East Perth are owned by the people and are for the benefit of the people. The people should get the benefit of these more modern works and should not be prevented from doing so by some action on the part of some local authority. The general public own the works to be operated under this Bill. The Government are anxious not to worry about supplying current on a retail basis, but to let that

be done by the local authorities; and to this end the Government have offered the local authorities beneficial terms.

Mr. Griffiths: It should be optional for the local authorities from whom they take current.

The PREMIER: I am assured that there are in North Fremantle certain establishments desirous of obtaining current from the Government. Now, the municipal council of North Fremantle cannot give authority to anyone to supply current within their boundaries, and the Fremantle plant cannot supply the current that is required. Why should an obstacle be placed in the way of supply of current to those customers from a modern plant? The cheaper the Government can supply current, the better. In the old country the establishment of up-to-date electric works is promoting the establishment of other industries. Adjacent to the Government's up-to-date electric works in East Perth, steel works might be established by the Federal Government for the purpose of supplying some of the means of national defence. Every industry should be given the opportunity of obtaining current from the Government, and no parochial body should be allowed to prevent that.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: But you should not place disabilities on local bodies.

The PREMIER: The Government are prepared to supply any local body with cheap current.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: But the Government cannot supply it to Subiaco.

The PREMIER: In that case, let Subiaco become a part of Greater Perth. The Government can supply current anywhere within the metropolitan district on terms which will allow the local bodies a fair profit on retailing. I hope the Committee will allow the Government the freedom provided by this clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not sorry the Premier has brought in North Fremantle, because this clause, if carried as printed, will prevent the Government from supplying any current in North Fremantle.

The Premier: There are no electric works in North Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. There are electric instalments in North Fremantle.

The Premier: But North Fremantle has not established electric works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, electric works within the very broad definition of that term in the principal Act. I wish to show the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) that the effect of supplying current to consumers distant from the centre of production at a cheaper rate than to those in the immediate neighbourhood of the power house is not likely to be a loss, but rather a gain, to the State. Fremantle to-day sells current to North Fremantle and Cottesloe at a fraction over 2d. per unit. At the same time the Fremantle municipality charges consumers in Fremantle 6d. per unit. If the North Fremantle and Cottesloe municipalities were not supplied at a cheaper rate, then the Fremantle electric works, instead of making a profit of £2,000 for the year 1913-14, would have made a loss of about £900. The explanation is that the generation of the larger supply of current results in a reduced ratio of administrative charges. If the Government works at East Perth were to supply only Perth and the tramway system, the Perth municipality would not obtain current at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit. Under the law as it stands the owner of a factory situated in a municipality which has no electric works of its own, would not be able to obtain current from another supplier without first obtaining the consent of the local authority. For that reason the Commissioner of Railways should have power to supply current to individuals located where no electric works exist.

The PREMIER: My colleague has rightly drawn attention to a point which might prevent this clause from being effective. Apparently, under the principal Act, if a local authority has merely a meter within its boundaries, the Government would be prevented from coming in to supply current there. The term "electric works" was intended to apply only where generating stations had been established. I propose to add words making this clear, when the amendment

of the member for Subiaco has been defeated.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I am not satisfied with the explanations of either the Premier or the Minister for Works. In reply to the observations of the latter, I have not denied that the electric works established, and the attitude adopted, by the Government will prove of some benefit to the State. My objection is that certain municipalities are to receive favoured treatment, while a heavy disability is to be imposed on others. If the clause is passed as it stands, the Government would be able to invade the territory of North Fremantle, for instance, and the North Fremantle council would not be able to say them nay.

The Minister for Works : That is not so.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is the opinion of the Premier, at all events. If it was optional with the North Fremantle council from whom they took current, they would have the Government and the Fremantle council competing to supply them. North Fremantle might be able to obtain a very low quotation from the Fremantle council if that body could get the whole of the lighting of the Fremantle district. On the other hand, if the Government, in spite of everything, could come in as a competitor and take a fair proportion of the trade, the Fremantle council would be prevented from quoting cheaply. Undoubtedly, the local governing bodies should have the option of saying from whom they will take current. They are not likely to accept the dearest offer. It appears, however, that the Government are trying to kill fair competition. Subiaco was the first municipality in the metropolitan district to establish a municipally-owned electric station, and the resulting benefit to the people of the whole of Perth was enormous, because the reduced price in Subiaco compelled the Perth Gas Company to lower their charges. Local authorities within five miles of the city of Perth cannot obtain supplies from the Government, but are compelled to purchase from the Perth City Council, who purchase from the Government at a cost which is not to exceed $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit.

They are in the position that they can compel the Subiaco Council to keep their own works on and generate current at what would be a losing proposition, because it will be possible to get it cheaper from this other place, or they can force the people in the outskirts to pay interest and sinking fund on the enormous amount of money they have wasted in the purchase of an obsolete plant. If the Government will accept my amendment it will not prevent them from selling to the local authorities. No local governing body would prevent them selling there if they could sell cheaper than any other source of supply which might be in existence, and the amendment I have moved will bring that about.

The PREMIER: The hon. member says that all he desires is that the local authorities shall have freedom of sale. That is the very reason, and the only reason, for allowing the words in question to remain in the clause. The North Fremantle Municipal Council recently told the Commissioner that they were willing to take current, but subsequently they withdrew that notification because the Fremantle Council said to them that, if they gave their consent, a clause would be put in the agreement fining them a pound a day.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: This amendment will not affect that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member wants the local authority in each district to have its own will as to how the people within its boundaries shall obtain current. The words in question must remain in the clause to permit the North Fremantle Council to allow the people in accordance with their own desires to obtain current from us. They entered into an agreement to allow the Fremantle power station to supply current within their boundary exclusively before it was ever thought that we were going to erect a power station at East Perth on modern lines. Why should we now permit of unfair competition because of an agreement which was entered into at a time when those who now desire to get out of it could not see what was going to happen? There is also the Cottesloe district.

They obtain current from Fremantle and they are paying 2d. or 2½d. a unit for it at Fremantle, and, as the loss in transmission is heavy, the result is that they are paying 2½ or 3d. a unit. We can take it down there and allow the Fremantle council to arrange with the Cottesloe people to purchase it retail at about 1½d., and Fremantle can make more profit than they are making to-day, while Cottesloe will reap the advantage. In regard to North Fremantle, we can get the consent of the council, but we cannot act on it. Hon. members must recognise that, as science progresses, we must take advantage of it. We are establishing electric power works costing a large sum of money, and it would be absurd on the part of the Government, were some other method of supplying current discovered to-morrow which would mean a huge saving we did not scrap our existing plant, but allowed someone else to come in and reap the advantage from the new system. We must always take advantage of everything that is modern.

Mr. Gilchrist: Did the North Fremantle council give Fremantle the concession for a number of years?

The PREMIER: They did.

Mr. Gilchrist: Then how can you break it?

The PREMIER: I am prepared to accept the advice of the Solicitor General before that of the members for Fremantle and East Fremantle. All we are desirous of doing is that where a local authority withholds its consent unreasonably, we should be able to take current to the district and supply the people there.

Mr. Gilchrist: Has Fremantle invested a certain amount of capital in view of the fact that they got a concession from North Fremantle?

The PREMIER: We are desirous of getting a cable down there for supplying our requirements.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Would it pay Fremantle to scrap their plant?

The PREMIER: It would.

Mr. Carpenter: They do not think so.

Mr. Willmott: How many years has the concession to run?

The PREMIER: Four years. Why should a local authority be permitted to take up an unreasonable attitude to prevent the people from obtaining the benefit of cheaper electricity simply because it has a plant in its own district?

Mr. Allen: They must see their agreement through.

The PREMIER: Our proposal was to make an agreement with them for 50 years.

Mr. Allen: But they cannot break their agreement.

The PREMIER: North Fremantle and Cottesloe cannot break it, and just because they cannot do that they are to be compelled to pay more than is necessary for their current. This Bill would never have come down if the Fremantle authorities had agreed to accept current from us in bulk. Why also should the Government who own an electric plant be prevented from supplying their own requirements? Was there ever anything so absurd!

Mr. Gilechrist: If the Fremantle works were privately owned, you would not have brought down a Bill to do away with the concession they have from the North Fremantle council.

The PREMIER: The Bill does not do that. We have to get the consent of the local authority before we can even put a cable through the district. As I have already pointed out, Claremont can withhold its consent to the taking of a cable through its territory and beyond it. That is an unreasonable restriction placed upon ourselves and the public.

Mr. Allen: You do not desire to come into competition with Claremont and Cottesloe?

The PREMIER: Certainly not. We are prepared to enter into an arrangement with the Claremont council to supply them in bulk at practically cost.

Mr. Allen: But they cannot enter into any new agreement until their existing agreement runs out.

The PREMIER: No. The same applies to the Harbour Trust. We cannot and do not propose to supply the Harbour Trust until their existing agreement runs out. But we want to supply in large quantities to the naval base, and

to do that we must take the cables down there.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Did not the Minister for Works say that the naval base would not take the current?

The PREMIER: I do not think that is correct. I think we will be supplying the naval base with electricity within six months if we can take the cable down there. That is why I want the Bill passed. I cannot understand the attitude of some hon. members, who seem to imagine that the Government are robbers trying to take people down. Here we are subject to these vexing restrictions, notwithstanding that Parliament could take away all the powers of those local authorities to-morrow.

Mr. Allen: The people would not stand it.

Mr. Carpenter: You must show some sort of consideration for the local authorities.

The PREMIER: Could any more consideration be shown than is manifest in that proposition we made to Fremantle? Absolutely no.

Mr. Bolton: The people of Fremantle would accept it if they had an opportunity.

The PREMIER: The fact is they have a little generating station in Fremantle, and because of that they want to generate their own electricity. The price we submitted to Fremantle is lower than that at which they can generate their current. Our works have been established on behalf of the people, but we now find ourselves hedged in with all sorts of restrictions. When local authorities act unreasonably it is only right that we should be given some authority by Parliament to curtail their powers.

Mr. ROBINSON: If the discussion we have listened to could have been heard by members of the Fremantle council, probably a different attitude would be adopted by that body. I cannot help thinking that this subject is not properly understood down there. There is a wide-spread feeling in Fremantle that the Government intend to rob them of something. It seems to me that nothing of the kind is intended and that if

a cross-table conversation could be held between the Premier and the members of the Fremantle council, an amicable arrangement would be arrived at.

The Minister for Works: I am doubtful of it.

Mr. ROBINSON: Regarding the position of Cottesloe and North Fremantle, both those local authorities are taking their current from Fremantle under an agreement. Neither of them has a station coming within the meaning of the proviso. That is to say, the Government could run their lines into Cottesloe and North Fremantle for the supply of their own works there, but both Cottesloe and North Fremantle are prevented by their respective agreements from dealing with the Government for four years to come.

The Premier: No. Under their present agreements they are not able to give consent to our putting wires through their territory.

Mr. ROBINSON: Well, suppose they had power to do that, they could not take current from the Government in view of the agreements they have entered into, even if that clause were not there, because they are bound by their agreements to Fremantle. But, at the expiry of their agreements, those municipalities will be at liberty to secure their current wherever it suits them. I cannot see anything in the clause which will do an injury to any of those municipalities. It appears to me the Government are taking an action on behalf of the whole people, for the good of the people. I want to ask the Premier for some information. The local authorities on the north side of Perth are within the agreement entered into originally with the gas company, and taken over by the city council, and are therefore within what is known as the five-mile radius, where the city council exercises sole rights. I presume those authorities to the north will still be bound to take their current from the city council?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. ROBINSON: It would not be possible for them to take current from the Government, as they are within the sphere of influence of the city council.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: In other words, at the mercy of the city council.

Mr. ROBINSON: I understand that the city council is getting the current delivered to it at a particular rate and that when the council distributes the current it has to take into account overhead and distributing charges, that some outside mains and the maintenance and cost thereof fall on the city council, together with the interest and sinking fund relating thereto, and to its own undertaking, and that it passes this on at cost price. As a member of the Perth Roads Board I attended a conference with the city council two or three years ago, at which we received a promise from the mayor of Perth that the northern suburbs should not be, as the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) suggests, at the mercy of the council, but that the council would pass the current on to us at cost price. I merely wish to show the attitude of the city council in this respect. I know that body is agreeable to supply the current at cost price.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Will they include in the cost price the interest and sinking fund on obsolete works?

Mr. ROBINSON: Presumably yes, but even when all that is accounted for, I understand the cost price will be somewhere in the neighbourhood of twopence, or about one-third of the price now being paid in the northern suburbs. Having all this in view, I think the proviso in the clause is reasonable and proper.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is some relief to my mind to find there is a rift in the Ministerial lute in respect to this question.

The Minister for Works: There is none.

Mr. CARPENTER: I will leave it to the Premier and the Minister for Works to settle between themselves, but if the Premier has as much power over the Minister for Works as he is asking the

Committee to give him in the Bill, I am afraid the Minister for Works will go down. It is evident that the member for Manning (Mr. Robinson), and I suppose some others, have been impressed by what the Premier stresses so continuously, namely, that magnanimous offer the Government made to the Fremantle Tramways Board. The Premier has persisted that the Government offered something almost a gift, and that the Fremantle council, in a parochial spirit, would not consider it. When speaking on the second reading, I referred to the fact that the Fremantle council, presumably acting in the interests of its ratepayers, considered the Government's offer, and upon consideration decided that they could not accept that offer.

The Premier: There was no consideration.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Minister for Works, by interjection yesterday, asserted, and the Premier now reasserts, that the offer was not considered by the Fremantle council. In other words, that they turned it down without giving it consideration. That is a very serious reflection to make upon a public body.

The Minister for Works: Not when you know them.

Mr. CARPENTER: If it be true that the Fremantle council turned down this proposition without full consideration, I am as ready as anybody else to blame them, but I cannot conceive of any reason why they should have adopted that attitude. By an interjection this afternoon, the member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) showed that he had some misconception of the subject. To talk of vested interests standing in the way of something the Government are trying to do beside the mark altogether. It is a question of a representative body acting, not for personal gain or from any personal motive, in the interests of the people who have elected them to that body. The Premier: That cannot possibly be correct.

Mr. CARPENTER: It is correct. The people of Fremantle have put £150,000 on this plant.

Mr. Allen: That includes the tramways.

Mr. CARPENTER: Yes.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: They will have to scrap only the boilers and dynamos.

Mr. CARPENTER: The most profitable branch of the concern is the lighting.

Mr. Allen: The Government do not propose to interfere with that.

The Premier: No.

Mr. CARPENTER: The Fremantle authorities say that, having considered this scheme—I have seen the official reports of the manager to the board—they would lose so much by having to scrap a portion of the plant, and that the Government proposition would be unprofitable. They are entitled to put the position in this way if they are convinced, after full consideration, that it is so. In fact, they would not be doing a fair thing to those they represent if they did otherwise. If it is true, as the Premier and Minister for Works state, that they have not given it full consideration, I am prepared, if the Premier will lay his hand for the time being, to approach them for an assurance, backed up by evidence, that it was fully considered, or an admission that they acted parochially and were actuated by prejudice or a desire to preserve their scheme against that of the Government.

Mr. S. Stubbs: They are sure to acknowledge that!

Mr. CARPENTER: I have only the interests of the Fremantle people to serve.

Mr. Bolton: They have not had a voice.

Mr. CARPENTER: If they are given an opportunity to say whether—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is this a second reading speech?

Mr. CARPENTER: I hope not; I am simply following the line taken by the Premier. If the clause is passed in its present form it will put into the hands of the Government a bludgeon to coerce the Fremantle council to do something which at present they cannot see their way clear to do. Is it fair that both public bodies should receive equal consideration, and if the Premier is convinced that the matter has not been fully considered he should hold his hand, and I will make

it my business to see that the council have a special meeting and that anything which can be done to throw further light on the matter is done. Then, if the Committee are convinced that the matter has not been fully considered, I shall not say another word against the passing of the clause. But I object to the Government getting authority to electrocute the ratepayers of Fremantle and cause them monetary loss because the Government have a scheme which they think will not be profitable unless they can obtain some of the business now being done by the Fremantle board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am willing to accept the clause and to assure the hon. member that if there is any rift within the lute I am not concerned in it. I have no desire to make allegations against the Fremantle council, but will state this fact. There was a conference of the Tramway Board, East Fremantle council, and the Fremantle council, and before the question was gone into at all, a Fremantle councillor moved that the Government's offer be not entertained.

Mr. Thomson: Before they knew anything about it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before they had received information which we were prepared to give. They had before them merely the hypothetical figures to which reference has been made. If I mistake not the Fremantle council could scrap their plant and reap a profit of £365 per annum over the cost for which they can generate current at present.

Mr. Robinson: In scrapping the plant, they would not lose at all, but could sell it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Putting the value at its lowest figure they would probably get £6,000, and beside that must be remembered the fact that they would be able to get current at a cheaper rate. It is necessary to spend £12,000 to £14,000 to increase their plant in order to supply present customers.

Mr. Carpenter: That is another matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. it is not. I do not think Fremantle will

be affected much, though it is bound to lose a customer in the Harbour Trust. If the Government undertake to supply current at a cheaper rate and allow Fremantle to make 100 per cent. profit, it is only fair that the Government should be able to work their own institutions as cheaply as possible. Fremantle has had a very good offer and has turned it down.

Mr. GILCHRIST: Country members are agreed that the Claremont and Fremantle councils should not be allowed to prevent the Government from taking their cables through their municipalities. Regarding the dispute at Fremantle, the Government made an offer and the council had a perfect right to accept or reject it. Whether the council discussed the matter for three minutes or thirty days, the outcome was that they turned down the offer. The Government now propose to enter into competition with the Fremantle council.

Mr. Bolton: That is not so.

Mr. Carpenter: It is absolutely so.

Mr. GILCHRIST: If it is true, as the member for South Fremantle interjected, that the people of Fremantle are not in accord with the members of their council in this matter, they have it in their own hands to give a direction to the council. The Government have no right to assume the contrary until such action has been taken by the ratepayers.

Mr. Bolton: I did not definitely say they were not in accord; I said they had not had any say in the matter.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The ratepayers could, if necessary, take action by way of deputation, petition, or public meeting, but we have no evidence that any such action has been taken. Fremantle's position seems to be that the works have been established on the distinct understanding that they should have a monopoly of the supply within their own area. The North Fremantle council have had the right to erect works within their municipality and exercise monopoly within it, but have granted the Fremantle council a concession, which terminates four years hence, to supply current within their district and to have a monopoly of that supply.

The Minister for Works: You are not quite right. North Fremantle is supplied in bulk and has its own works.

Mr. GILCHRIST: That does not matter. North Fremantle had the right to its own works, but granted this concession to Fremantle. If at Fremantle there had been a big private concern and the North Fremantle council had given it an exclusive concession to supply current to that district until four years hence we would never have heard of this measure providing that the Government might enter the North Fremantle district and compete with the Fremantle works.

The Premier: This clause does not provide it now.

Mr. Carpenter: The hon. member is absolutely correct.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The provision reads—

Provided also that the Commissioner shall not sell or supply electricity within the district of a local authority otherwise than to a Government department or agency, State or Commonwealth.

The Premier argued that it was unfair to the State trading concerns in North Fremantle to be excluded from the benefit of cheaper current which the Government works would be able to supply. That would mean entering into competition with the Fremantle works, and while the concession is in operation the Government and the North Fremantle council must stand honourably to its terms.

The Premier: What has that to do with the Harbour Trust?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. GILCHRIST: I am speaking purely as an outsider. It seems to me that the case of the member for Fremantle (Mr. Carpenter) is sounder than that of the Premier. I desire to see the Government electric works succeed, and commend the Ministry upon the enterprise they have shown in constructing works at East Perth. I agree to giving the Government the right to carry their cable through a particular municipality

to another, so long as they do not interfere with existing contracts and concessions. The attitude of the Government as the owners of the new works in East Perth is merely the attitude of a powerful trust taking an unfair advantage of a weaker rival. The idea of this clause is to give cheap electricity to the State Implement Works. I would suggest to the hon. member for Fremantle that instead of the amendment he proposes, he should move that the words after "local authority" in the second line be struck out, namely, "otherwise than to a Government department or agency (State or Commonwealth), without the consent of such local authority," and that the following words be inserted at the end of the clause, "and also provided that no existing concessions or contracts for the supply of current be interfered with." I understand that the contract or concession between North Fremantle and Fremantle states that there will be no competition in the supply of current within the North Fremantle municipality.

The Minister for Works: There cannot be competition under this clause.

Mr. GILCHRIST: The Government are proposing to carry their cables through North Fremantle, and supply the State Implement Works and other Government concerns within that municipality with current.

The Minister for Works: Which the Fremantle people do not supply to-day.

Mr. Carpenter: They are supplying the Harbour Works and other Government undertakings.

Mr. GILCHRIST: Have the Fremantle council at present the right to supply current within the North Fremantle municipality for another four years, and is that an exclusive right? I know that any particular person can erect his own plant and supply his works with electricity.

The Premier: Why should not the Government have that right too?

Mr. GILCHRIST: The Government have the right to erect a plant and supply the Implement Works, but it is not right that they should override any con-

tract made between the North Fremantle and the Fremantle councils, after the latter council has possibly added to its plant and its expenditure in connection with its works.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I intend to vote for the clause as printed. Those municipalities or roads boards which have made agreements are protected under common law. We are, therefore, bumping up against something which does not exist.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment to Section 7:

Mr. WILLMOTT: This is altogether too arbitrary. To simply post a notice in what may be considered by the man posting it to be a conspicuous place on the land or premises is not sufficient. Any small boy might come along 20 minutes afterwards and tear down the notice, but because it has been fixed that is to be sufficient. I therefore move an amendment—

*That all the words in the proviso after "if," in line five, be deleted, and the following words inserted in lieu:—
"It is posted by registered letter to the address given in the certificate of title of the registered owner not less than 14 days before beginning the work."*

I think this is only right and fair, and feel sure that the Premier will fall in with my views.

The PREMIER: We had a provision in the principal Act to give notice to the owner or occupier of any premises. The proviso only applies to unoccupied land or premises through the owner being out of the State. If an owner is absent from the State we could not possibly find him in order to give him three days' notice. We are not amending the principal Act at all except for the purpose of making a proviso that when any owner of any land or premises is not within Western Australia any notice under this subsection shall be deemed to have been well and sufficiently given to him, if it has been affixed or displayed on or over a conspicuous part of such land or premises, and left so affixed or displayed for at least three days.

Mr. Hudson: How are you to find out that he is not in Western Australia?

The PREMIER: We must, of course, endeavour to find the owner, but if he is not in Western Australia and is known to be absent we must have this proviso. When certain works are in course of construction that are of an urgent nature the works ought not to be stopped and men thrown out of employment until such time as we can travel round the world and find the owner. We cannot commence any work until three days' notice has been given. If the owner is absent and no one is in occupation and no agent has been left, are we to hang up any work that has been started? We do not propose to pull down premises or put a wire through the front room or do anything of that description. After all, the Commissioner is under the control of Parliament, and Parliament will not permit him to do anything of an arbitrary nature. It is unreasonable to ask the Government to find the owner wherever he may be, and ask them to deliver this notice.

Mr. Willmott: I am simply asking for the minimum notice of 14 days.

The PREMIER: That might be possible in some cases, but not in others. Three days' notice will be sufficient in most cases. There is not likely to be any difficulty. It is merely a matter of notifying the man that we are going to attach a wire to his premises or do some such work. If we cannot find the owner it should be sufficient to post the notice.

Mr. Willmott: The proviso relieves the Government of that responsibility.

The PREMIER: It does nothing of the kind. It only relieves the Government of the responsibility of finding the owner if he is known to be outside the State. If he is inside the State we have to find him, or deliver the notice to him or the occupier. There is no desire to avoid delivering a notice on the occupier or owner if he is in Western Australia. Will the hon. member consent to withdraw his amendment for the time being to enable me to move an amendment which will come earlier in the clause than his?

Mr. Willmott: I agree.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "any," in the first line of the proviso, the word "unoccupied" be inserted.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Why not strike out "premises" altogether?

The PREMIER: They might be occupied.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: There will be no objection in respect to vacant land.

Amendment passed.

Mr. WILLMOTT again moved his amendment.

Mr. ROBINSON: I support the amendment of the member for Nelson. The object of the clause is to provide that, in case the owner or occupier is out of the State and cannot be found, notice may be posted on the land or premises. But a man may leave the State temporarily, his land in the meantime being unoccupied. If a notice were posted to him, it would reach his agent, or perhaps his family, whereas a notice merely affixed on land or premises may not be observed, with the result, possibly, that the proposed work might be done without the owner's knowing anything of it. Therefore, the notice should be posted to the owner as well as placed on the land or premises. Departmental officers sometimes make blunders, and one object of giving notice is to enable the owner to make representations, if necessary, to the departmental head. The proposal of the member for Nelson is fair and reasonable, and I should have expected in the ordinary way to find it embodied in the Premier's Bill.

The PREMIER: The amendment would not attain the object desired, because the only case in which the proviso applies is that of an owner who is outside Western Australia. What is the use of giving 14 days' notice to a man in America, say?

Mr. Robinson: The notice would be given to his agent.

The PREMIER: The agent is the owner, to all intents and purposes.

Mr. Robinson: No. That is in substitution.

The PREMIER: The amendment will not operate as desired. The principal Act contains a provision that three days' notice must be given to the owner if he is in the State.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The whole difficulty could be overcome if the Premier would consent to the striking out of the word "premises."

The Premier: I will not do anything of the sort.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is unreasonable that a notice should be posted on vacant premises. Serious damage might be done, without any possibility of redress for the owner. Some notice should be given to the owner or his agent. In the case of an absent owner there might be difficulty, but that would apply only as regards vacant land. Where there are premises, there would always be an agent. However, the amendment of the member for Nelson would not overcome the difficulty. The address on a certificate of title might not be the address of the owner at all. The owner of Perth land, for instance, may be domiciled in Wyndham. Protection is more necessary to the owner when he is out of the State than when he is in it.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: I do not think that under any circumstances 14 days' notice will help an owner who is out of the State.

Mr. Robinson: His agent will get the notice, or his people will.

Mr. JAMES GARDINER: If the absent owner has an agent in this State, the agent will get the notice, or the owner's office will. But an address obtained from a certificate of title would frequently be useless. If the owner of land here removed to Victoria, for example, he would not have the alteration of his address endorsed on his certificate of title. Of course, a public work should not be hampered in order that the whereabouts of a man who is absent from the State may be discovered. If the man is in the State, then, as the Pre-

mier said, the Government have to find out his address.

Mr. ALLEN: We are imagining difficulties which are not likely to arise. No one who has a property of value will go out of the State leaving himself unprotected, or unprotected by an agent. To forward a notice to the address on a certificate of title would frequently lead to the notice never reaching the owner. Land might be sold on terms, and the purchaser would not be registered until the purchase was completed. Thus the notice would go to the original owner, who would simply put it in the waste-paper basket as of no interest to him.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Effect of amendments:

Mr. CARPENTER: This clause makes parts of this Bill retrospective. There is always a certain amount of risk in inserting such a clause, but I suppose the Premier has some reason for asking us to pass it. It may be that he desires to validate something that has been done since the original Act was passed.

The PREMIER: We have put down a ring main around Perth from which the local authorities and the Government will take a supply of current in bulk, and in doing that we had in some cases to pass through unoccupied premises. In other directions work has been performed where the owner has been absent from the State and we have not been able to give notice. That is why we had to make the clause retrospective; it was to legalise these actions.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 4:—Section 7 of the principal Act is amended by adding to Subsection 2 thereof a paragraph as follows:—"If an agreement is not arrived at between the Commissioner and the local authority upon any of the following matters; namely, the placing of electric lines over, under, or through any land, or the route to be traversed by any elec-

tric line through or across any thoroughfare or other public place, or the plans of buildings to be constructed within the district of such local authority, any such matter in difference shall be referred by the Commissioner to the Minister as sole arbitrator and the decision of such Minister shall be binding on the parties and final."

New clause—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday, 24th August.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 8.6 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 24th August, 1915.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Boya Quarry; trading account, profit and loss account and balance sheet of, as at 30th