

RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. McCourt):

That this House will, on Friday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the consideration of the following resolutions:—

(1.) That in the opinion of this House the importance of the districts of Wild's Meadow, Kangaroo Valley, and Robertson, and having regard to their agricultural and mineral wealth and population, demands the construction of a railway to connect these localities with the Main Southern Line.

(2.) That, as the country has already been examined and certain lines surveyed, it is desirable the best line in the interests of the farmers and producers should be adopted, and provision made for commencing the work as early as possible.

(3.) That the above resolutions be communicated by address to his Excellency the Governor.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 30 September, 1885.

Wallsend and Plattsburg Gas Company's Bill—Bodalla Estate Bill—Federal Quarantine Outports—Case of Graham Bennett—Moore's Estate Act Amendment Bill—Mrs. Stacey—Noxious Trades Site—Adjournment (Compulsory Vaccination—Stamping of Telegrams—A Parcels Post—Telegraph Employees)—Public Health Bill (second reading).

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

WALLSEND AND PLATTSBURG GAS COMPANY'S BILL.

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly, and read the first time.

BODALLA ESTATE BILL.

Bill reported from select committee.

FEDERAL QUARANTINE OUTPORTS.

Mr. MACKELLAR: I wish, without notice, to ask the Attorney-General, if it is the intention of the Government to take steps and at what time to carry out that portion of the resolutions adopted at the Sanitary Conference held in Sydney in 1884, in reference to federal quarantine outports?

Mr. DALLEY: The Government has been for some time in communication with the governments of the other colonies in regard to this matter, especially since the outbreak of cholera at Timor and in other parts of the Eastern Archipelago, as well

as in China and Japan. The urgency and importance of the matter was laid before the Queensland Government by telegram, to which several replies have been received, finally informing this Government that the Queensland Government had decided on appointing a health officer at Thursday Island. With respect to King George's Sound, the western point of contact with the rest of the world, the Government are equally ready to carry the recommendations of the Sanitary Conference into effect; but matters are not yet quite so far advanced. The Government has been in telegraphic communication with Western Australia and with the other colonies on the subject, which has now assumed very great importance since the introduction of small-pox into the colony by the *Oceanien*. This vessel, belonging to the Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes, left Marseilles on June 3, at noon, for Mauritius. On June 8, while she was at Port Said, she received on board a coloured seaman who had been landed from the *Caledonien* on May 12, suffering from small-pox. On June 15, while at sea, one of the crew of the *Oceanien* fell sick, and on the 17th his case was diagnosed as small-pox. On the 25th the *Oceanien* arrived at Mauritius, where the patient was landed on the 26th. She left Mauritius on July 11, at 3 p.m., for Australia, arriving at Adelaide on the 25th, at Melbourne on the 27th, at both of which ports she was examined by the health officer. She came on to Sydney, arriving here on July 30; but as no proclamation existed with respect to the ports at which she had touched, under 17 Victoria, No. 29, she obtained the status of an intercolonial vessel, and was not boarded. On August 9, while she was lying at the Circular Quay, she was found to have three cases of small-pox on board. Had the recommendations of the Sanitary Conference been in force, this vessel, having had a case of small-pox on board during the voyage, would not have visited Adelaide till after having called at King George's Sound, where she would have been submitted to a most thorough and searching examination on behalf of all the colonies acting in concert, and we should in all probability have been spared the trouble, expense, and danger of this outbreak. I allude to that circumstance—

the particulars of which are, of course, fully as they are officially known to my hon. and learned friend Dr. Mackellar—in order to show that the Government is deeply impressed with the necessity of taking immediate steps to aid in carrying out, in conjunction with the other colonies, the very valuable resolutions of the Sanitary Conference on federal quarantine for vessels approaching Australasia.

CASE OF GRAHAM BENNETT.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. JACOB, for Sir ALFRED STEPHEN) :

That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that in addition to the matters forming the subject of the address of this House, dated 9th instant, respecting the case of the prisoner Graham Bennett, his Excellency will be pleased to cause copies of the following matters to be laid upon the table of this House—that is to say—the report of the presiding judge at Bennett's trial, laid before the Executive Council, and all documents in relation to such trial in the possession of the Government of dates prior to the present year.

MOORE'S ESTATE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill referred to select committee.

MRS. STACEY.

Resolved (on motion by Mr. JACOB, for Sir ALFRED STEPHEN) :

That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that his Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of this House copies of the depositions and adjudication at Grafton in the case of Mrs. Stacey, sentenced to imprisonment for an assault.

NOXIOUS TRADES SITE.

Ordered (on motion by Mr. LUCAS) :

That there be laid upon the table of this House a plan (on a scale not exceeding 30 chains to the inch) of the land situated between the north boundary of the National Park and the Forest Road, the Illawarra railway, and the south head of Botany Bay, showing the accurate position of the Rockdale railway-station and the course of the railway to the National Park; also the position of Botany Bay, George's River, and the land on which it is proposed to establish the noxious trades.

ADJOURNMENT.

COMPULSORY VACCINATION—STAMPING OF TELEGRAMS—A PARCELS POST—TELEGRAPH EMPLOYEES.

Mr. CREED: It is with considerable diffidence that I rise to move the adjournment of this House, and nothing but the feeling that the suggestion I am about to make may prove of some, possibly of great,

public utility, would induce me to trespass upon the time and courtesy of hon. members in such a manner. My excuse must be the urgency which exists for the adoption, if practicable, of some means for the lessening, if not entire prevention, of the liability of this colony to frequent outbreaks of small-pox. There can be no question that if this much to be desired immunity could be produced it would be the means of avoiding very great public expenditure, of very much individual hardship to the people who have the misfortune to be in intimate social relations with the patients in whom the disease develops, and who consequently have to be confined in quarantine, and of great dread and mental distress to the public generally. This immunity, I believe, could be brought about by the efficient vaccination and re-vaccination of the entire population, and this is the opinion of all the great sanitary authorities of the world. As we are situated at present, the reports of the late medical adviser to the Government, Dr. Mackellar, show that we have in this colony not less than 100,000 children under four years of age unvaccinated, and consequently liable to be infected by small-pox in its most virulent form; every one of them, should they take it, running imminent risk of death, besides becoming a fertile centre of infection. It must be remembered that even this large number of children does not represent the whole of our unvaccinated population, for a very large number of people above the age of four are also unprotected, that careful research by the most eminent authorities of Europe goes to show that re-vaccination above the age of puberty is advisable, if not necessary, and that this would give practically complete protection from variola. If we ask ourselves how this might be brought about, the only possible answer must be "compulsory vaccination." This is recommended by every authority of eminence in the civilised world. It has been consistently and persistently advocated by Dr. Mackellar, an hon. member of this House, during the period he so ably filled the office of medical adviser to the Government; and it is one of the recommendations made by the late Australasian Sanitary Conference, which sat in this city last year. Vaccination has now stood the test of experience for nearly ninety

years, it is adopted by every civilised government, and is accepted by all eminent sanitary authorities as the sole preventative of small-pox; the evils that possibly might arise from it being considered infinitesimal, whilst its advantages are acknowledged to be vast by the majority of intelligent persons. The report of the select committee of the House of Commons, which comprised gentlemen of all shades of opinion on the subject, emphatically endorsed this view, and is in these terms:

Eight sittings of your committee have been occupied in hearing the evidence of persons who assert that vaccination is useless and injurious, and who therefore object to its enforcement and encouragement by the law. After careful consideration of this evidence, and of medical and other evidence given in reply, your committee agree with the general opinion: That the cow-pox affords, if not an absolute, yet a very great protection against an attack of small-pox, and an almost absolute protection against death from that disease. That if the operation be performed with due regard to the health of the person vaccinated, and with proper precautions in obtaining and using the vaccine lymph, there need be no apprehension that vaccination will injure health or communicate any disease. The small-pox, unchecked by vaccination, is one of the most terrible and destructive of diseases, as regards the danger of infection, the proportion of deaths, among those attacked, and the permanent injury to the survivors; and therefore that it is the duty of the state to endeavour to secure the careful vaccination of the whole population. Your committee have no doubt that the almost universal opinion of medical science and authority is in accordance with Dr. Gull, when he states that "vaccination is as protective against small-pox as small-pox itself;" with Dr. West, when he gives as the result of his experience as physician to the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond-street, and as having charge of between 50,000 and 60,000 children since 1835, that "he does not think that vaccination does produce disease;" and with Sir William Jenner, when he says "I should think myself wicked and really guilty of a crime, if I did not recommend every parent to have his child vaccinated early in life." Against this evidence in favour of vaccination the prevalence of the present small-pox epidemic, especially in the metropolis, has been alleged. Your committee, however, believe that, on the one hand, if vaccination had not been general, this epidemic might have become a pestilence as destructive as small-pox has often been where the population has been unprotected; and that, on the other hand, if this preventive had been universal, the epidemic could not have approached its present extent.

Under these circumstances, I think that the advocates of compulsory vaccination may fairly adopt the position that they are right in their opinions, and that it

[*Mr. Creed.*

should be adopted if its opponents could not produce good evidence of the evils certain to arise from its adoption, and that this evidence should be founded on practical experience gained, and examples existing amongst the population of this colony, and not upon printed reports (which may or may not be true), issued by societies consisting of gentlemen avowedly prejudiced. My professional brethren and myself can have no other object in recommending compulsory vaccination than our desire to see our fellow-countrymen receive the benefits of protection from a most revolting disease, and our opinions are formed not only on our own experience, but upon that of the most eminent, learned, and practical leaders of the profession—one that certainly is as much entitled as any calling in the world to the credit of possessing unselfish philanthropy. I suppose that the most violent opponent of vaccination will admit the advisability of its adoption, if no evil can be proved to have resulted from it. We are continually hearing of various terrible ills as being the result of vaccination. Some of these, every medical man who hears of them knows to be absolutely an impossible consequence of it. Other diseases confidently quoted as caused by vaccination are much more likely to have had other and independent origin; whilst the remaining few, which it may be impossible absolutely to acquit vaccination of being the cause, yet the proof of its responsibility would be equally uncertain. I may say that I have had upwards of twenty years' experience in vaccination in England and Australia, and that I have vaccinated some thousands of children, yet I have never seen a case in which evil resulted from it; that I have vaccinated and re-vaccinated the members of my family and myself on several occasions, the last time being but a few months since, and I believe the experience of my professional brethren is parallel with my own. I think that in working out this important matter we should make use solely of the evidence existing in our midst, and that the Government should appoint a commission on which could be no better or more scrupulously impartial men than the present and the late medical advisers to the Government, Drs. McLaurin and Mackellar, with whom,

perhaps, as a tribute to that spirit of fairness so inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race, might be associated the most prominent opponent of vaccination in Australia, Dr. Brereton. The duty of this commission should be to receive, not proofs of the protective power of vaccination, for this might be considered proved, but the particulars of cases in which diseases or other evils have been caused by it, with evidence in support or confutation of this supposition. Each case might be specially inquired into by Dr. Ashburton Thompson, the admirable Chief Inspector of the Health Board, than whom no one could be more eminently fitted for the work, and whose sole desire would be to arrive at the truth. This commission having concluded its labours, we should, instead of vague assertions, have definite cases to go upon; and, without injustice, might deny the existence of any instances of the evil results of vaccination which had not been brought before it. The opponents of vaccination, having thus had every opportunity of bringing forward proof of the ills they so confidently assert arise from it, should they fail to prove their case, can hardly object to subordinate their prejudices to what is considered by the majority to constitute the public good. In adopting this colony as the field from which the evidence should solely be obtained, every advantage would be given to the anti-vaccinationists; for in no part of the world has vaccination been carried on under greater difficulties, or with less supervision, so that if evils result from vaccination they may be supposed to exist here in greater quantity than anywhere else. It should be borne in mind that there is much greater likelihood of small-pox being frequently introduced into the colony now than there was formerly, and that every day increases our liability, the immensely greater facility and rapidity of communication with countries in which small-pox is endemic having greatly increased our risk. This is shown by the fact that the present outbreak is the fourth since 1881, but four years since, whilst there was only one outbreak in the previous twenty years—namely, that in 1877. I venture to crave the special attention of the hon. and learned representative of the Government to my suggestion, and trust that he, having given it the advantage of consideration by his great

and practical intellect, will bring it favourably under the notice of his colleagues, and that it may have some practical result. I have the honor to move:

That this House do now adjourn.

Question proposed.

Mr. DALLEY: The question which the hon. and learned member has raised on a motion for the adjournment of the House, and which he has submitted with so much ability and learning, is one, doubtless, of a very serious character. It cannot be doubted that it is a matter extremely to be deplored that so immense a number of the infant population of this country, as he has told us, should remain without the only protection from the danger of loathsome disease which civilised nations have yet been able to employ. I feel sure, however, that the hon. gentleman will at once recognise the impossibility of the Government committing itself at present to any declaration as to the necessity of undertaking any such legislative measures as those which he suggests. It may be that the suggestion of the hon. member as to the appointment of a royal commission will be favourably considered by my colleagues; but I cannot do more under existing circumstances, as he will readily perceive, than give my assurance that I will submit his suggestions to them, and that they will be discussed with a sincere desire on the part of the Government to do anything that will result in increasing the protection of the community from disease.

Mr. H. C. DANGAR: I should like to avail myself of the opportunity afforded by this motion to refer to a matter which I am rather surprised to find has not excited a little more public comment. It has been announced that after to-morrow telegrams will have to be paid for in stamps; whether the ordinary postage stamps or a special stamp would be used I do not know. All I can say is that in my opinion a great amount of public inconvenience will result from the regulation. I would like to know what urgent necessity there is for such a change—whether the revenue requires protection from speculation, which no doubt the system of cash payments favours, or whether there is some other reason for this new departure of which the public are not aware. I should like to know whether it has been finally determined that this new rule shall be

enforced after to-morrow. In addition to the inconvenience which would be caused, I think it must be apparent to everybody that a vast amount of difficulty is likely to arise from the occasional incorrect payment that would be tendered for telegrams in the form of stamps. As to the inconvenience of the system there could be no doubt about it. I have seen it in operation in Victoria. Persons who were rather ignorant would frequently affix an insufficient stamp to a telegram and send it some miles to the post office, where it would not be forwarded in consequence of the insufficient payment. I shall be glad if the Postmaster-General will inform us what necessity there is for introducing a practice which I believe will meet with much disfavour on the part of the public.

Mr. MACINTOSH: I wish to draw attention to the proposal which has been originated with regard to the establishment of a parcels post. I do not think there is a country in the world in which there are greater facilities for the delivery of parcels by post than there are in New South Wales. The Government are the carriers to every centre of population. No doubt a parcels post could not be extended to the back blocks on the Darling or the Warrego; but the telegraph system does not extend to those places. It would be very easy to establish a parcels post to Goulburn, Cootamundra, Albury, Wagga, Dubbo, Glen Innes, Newcastle, Grafton, Maitland, Port Macquarie, and many other places in the interior. There is nothing which would unite the people of the old country in sympathy with the population of these colonies more than a parcels post. At present it is exceedingly difficult to send small parcels to England; but the need of some facilities for so doing are very great. I think that the Postmaster-General ought to endeavour to establish a parcels post, even if it has to be carried on at some slight loss. It might, at any rate, be carried on with those parts of the colonies which have the advantage of railway and water communication. I hope that the Postmaster-General will take the matter up, and see if a parcels post cannot be established.

Mr. W. H. SUTTON: I desire to draw attention to the answer which I have received this evening to a question. I certainly cannot understand that answer, as

[*Mr. H. C. Dangar.*

it is not at all consistent with the accounts which I have received of the matter to which it refers. Many officers of the Telegraph Department are very much dissatisfied with the way in which they have been classified under the Civil Service Act. I am given to understand that station-masters in the Telegraph Department who were looked upon as scientific officers—men with £200 and £250 a-year—have not been included in the general division, but have been placed under clauses 7 and 8 of the act—in other words, they have been classed with messengers, housekeepers, and persons of that description. These gentlemen, many of whom have heavy responsibilities upon them and large numbers of persons under their control, are not entitled to receive the increase of £25 a year provided under the act for those under the above classification, but one of only £10 a-year; whilst officers in the same department, who are under their control—mere clerks—will receive under the regulations the full rate of increase provided by the act for those in the general division. I hope that some more definite and satisfactory information will be forthcoming from the Government on this subject.

Mr. NORTON: I cannot understand the difficulty of my friend, Mr. Dangar, in respect to the use of postage stamps as payment for telegrams. If the hon. and learned member had read the regulations he would have seen that the matter is a very simple one. I believe that the introduction of the system of stamping telegrams will be very beneficial to the revenue and exceedingly convenient to the public. I will give a short history of the circumstances which have led to the introduction of this measure. When I first undertook the management of the Post Office certain merchants pointed out to me the great inconvenience which they were put to by being compelled to pay by cash for telegrams when despatching them, cheques not being received as payment; that after bank hours they were put to great inconvenience to get cash in order to pay for their telegrams. I took the matter into consideration, and it struck me at once that if stamps could be used instead of the senders of telegrams being required to pay cash their difficulty would be got rid of.

Mr. H. C. DANGAR : Their difficulty, no doubt !

Mr. NORTON : I consulted my officers and found that the practice of using stamps for telegrams had been introduced many years ago, but that it then became a dead-letter because people would not use the stamps. The reason why the public would not use the stamps was that there was a special stamp for telegrams as well as the ordinary postage stamp. I understood at once that if people had to purchase two kinds of stamps they would necessarily be prejudiced against the system. I find that stamps are used in other countries for the payment of duties to the Government, and the practice is very advantageous, as it prevents speculation on the part of officers, and also by clerks who are sent to pay these small fees. Having determined to make the experiment of introducing the system, I induced one of my officers, who was going to Melbourne, to inquire into the working of the system there. He was a little prejudiced against it, but after having seen its operation in Melbourne he returned perfectly prepossessed with its advantages, and determined to advocate its introduction here. I cannot see what difficulty any one can have in using stamps. I have been obliged to issue two new stamps, one amounting to 5s., and the other to 10s. A merchant can now stamp a telegram in his office, and send it down to the telegraph office, and have it transmitted. If he chooses to pay at the window, he can purchase stamps there. It will be seen, therefore, that no difficulty can possibly arise with regard to the use of stamps. It will simplify our accounts, and will facilitate the business of the Post Office. With respect to the parcels post, I do not think that this is a proper occasion to discuss a matter of such great importance. The subject is too large a one to be gone into on a motion for adjournment. The establishment of a parcels post would involve an enormous expenditure. It is true that such a system could be established in those localities which have the advantage of railway and water communication, but that would only be establishing the system where people already have the benefit of easy and cheap communication. It is in the distant parts of the interior, where postal matter is conveyed on horseback, that a parcels post is

really required. In those districts, however, it is impossible to establish it. We cannot carry parcels along postal routes which are only served by horses. In England they have hesitated a long time before establishing a parcels post, and they have only lately introduced it, notwithstanding that the country is covered with a network of railways, and means of communication of every description. The parcels post there, I believe, carries parcels up to the weight of 6lbs. for a nominal charge. The introduction of such a system here is an impossibility. The postal revenue at present shows a deficiency of £60,000 a year, a great part of which arises from the carriage of newspapers free. That, however, is the policy of the country, and I am not able to alter it. If we were to add to this the carriage of parcels, the deficit instead of being £60,000 a year would be three or four times that amount. I believe that the forcing of any such innovation upon the department would delay other matters, the carrying out of which would be much more beneficial to the public. If we had not this large deficit we might possibly reduce the postage on letters to a uniform rate of 1d. throughout the colony, and that would be a much greater boon to the public than the establishment of a parcels post. I find that in India parcels up to 15lbs. weight are sent by post ; but the Director-General of the Post in India informs me that there they have a large number of men constantly waiting for small jobs who are willing to run any number of miles with a parcel for a few halfpence. We have nothing of that sort here. However, the parcels post will be introduced here if possible. I have been considering the matter for the last twelve months ; and if I can see the possibility of introducing it with any practical benefit to the public I will do so. As to the classification of the officers of the Telegraph Department, I may state that the telegraph officers have been making a great deal of trouble lately. They have been writing to the newspapers in a way that, in my opinion, is exceedingly improper. Instead of coming to me they have been making trouble and difficulty, and posing before the world as great sufferers whose claims were not properly considered. These men are not persons of scientific attainments as they represent

themselves. The bulk of them are no better in point of fact than compositors; indeed they do not require so much intelligence as a compositor. Their duties are of the simplest description; they have to listen to the sound of the instrument or to read off the tape, which any one can learn to do in a very short time. No special qualifications are required for their calling, and they are generally appointed without any examination except, perhaps, of the slightest description, merely as to reading and writing. I cannot see that they have any great claim for consideration as scientific men. If, however, there is any fault to be found at all with the existing arrangements it must be attributed to the Civil Service Act, for which I am not responsible any more than the hon. member, Mr. Suttor. Whatever grievances, however, the officials to whom he refers may show themselves to possess will, if possible, be corrected. The act is at present on its trial, but has not yet been in force long enough to show how it will work; but where any defects are made known the Government will do their best to remedy them.

Mr. STEWART: I wish to say a few words in reference to the proposals of the hon. and learned member, Dr. Creed, as to compulsory vaccination. It perhaps might be taken for granted that there would be no difficulty in passing a bill establishing a system of compulsory vaccination. I, however, am not of that opinion. I know there is great opposition to compulsory vaccination outside Parliament, and also in the Legislative Assembly. At the same time, I am not opposed to any such measure. Compulsory vaccination however strictly enforced would not stamp out small-pox, or prevent it being established in any country. There are several reasons for this. It is very easy for any one to neutralise the effect of vaccination after the operation has been performed. This can be done by the application of soap and water or caustic. Another reason is that after vaccinators have been appointed there is no certainty that they perform the operation properly, and many people who are supposed to have been vaccinated are not really vaccinated at all. It has been found on the other side of the world that many people who have submitted to the

operation more than once or twice are still unvaccinated. Some operators do not properly perform the operation, or they do not use proper matter for the purpose. I am of opinion that there would be very little need for the establishment of a system of compulsory vaccination if the Government would only offer facilities for those who seek to get their children vaccinated. During the last small-pox scare in Sydney people flocked to the public vaccinator in crowds. There were great numbers of women with children in arms, and children at their knees, and these people were kept waiting from morning to night in a small room, with a ceiling about 7 feet from the floor—an apartment which was not half big enough to accommodate them. In some instances the children were sick. I visited the establishment myself on two or three occasions, and I spoke to Dr. Egan on the subject; but that gentleman informed me that he could obtain no assistance, and that he had no proper accommodation for those who went to be vaccinated. I went to the Treasury and informed the Minister that in my opinion something ought to be done immediately to provide assistance and better accommodation; but I quite failed to impress upon the Minister the necessity for taking any action. All that I could get out of that gentleman was that the Government had given orders that the officers were to spare no expense. If people have to suffer the sort of thing I have described at the hands of the public vaccinators, they certainly will not go to be vaccinated. About twenty-five years ago, when I was living on the coast, many people brought their children to me to be vaccinated, and I vaccinated them with cow-pox which I got from animals in my herd. They came to me because they had to dance attendance from day to day upon the public vaccinator, and were put to very great inconvenience. I wish the Government to understand that if they make sufficient provision for vaccination, it will scarcely be necessary to establish a system of compulsory vaccination, as the people will resort to this means of protection without any compulsion whatever. Proper arrangements ought to be made in the country as well as in the towns for the vaccination of the people. During the last scare when a number of children were

[*Mr. Norton.*]

vaccinated the virus did not take effect owing, I believe, to the vaccinator not using proper vaccine. The Government should not listen to those who advocate the use of calf lymph. It is a sham. I was once called upon to examine it and I found that it was nothing but cow-pox transferred from the human being to the calf. If there is danger in transferring the virus from one arm to another there is also some danger in taking the virus from animals, as animals are subject to diseases which may be communicated to human beings. As soon as pleuropneumonia broke out amongst the cattle at Illawarra I could not use the vaccine from the cow any longer. There is not a better qualified vaccinator than Dr. Egan in the colony. He has performed the operation in thousands of cases, and no man could do it better than he does it. He takes very great care that his operations are effective, and I believe that he rarely has to perform the operation twice in the same case. The Postmaster-General referred to the fact that newspapers are carried free by post as if he disapproved of it. The hon. member probably does not know why the postage on newspapers was taken off. It was really done in the interests of the public. There are thousands of people in the interior who, if they do not get a newspaper, do not get any literature at all. Thousands of newspapers are sent away simply because there is no charge, and people send newspapers about to each other until they are quite worn out. If anything is to be done to prevent the spread of education, why should we begin with the working-classes? We are spending thousands a year on the University, and no one can see what good it does. Appoint a commission to find out what education the University is giving, and you will find that it is only imparting a knowledge of words, forms, and ceremonies—not a knowledge of things. If we are going to economise, that is the place at which to begin. It took four years of almost constant agitation to get the tax taken off newspapers, and it was not done without some very good reasons for it. Newspapers ought to be carried free, because if they are charged for it limits their circulation.

Mr. LUCAS: I can quite bear out the remarks of the hon. member, Mr. Stewart,

as to the difficulty which people have to get their children vaccinated. It has been a not uncommon thing for people to lose two or three days in attending on the vaccination officers with their children, because there was not a sufficient number of vaccinators employed. If sufficient facilities were afforded for re-vaccination I am convinced that nine-tenths of the people of the colony would have their children vaccinated. We ought to have vaccination officers all over the colony, and in Sydney there should be seven or eight in the different parts of the city as well as several in the suburbs. I think that the pre-payment of telegrams by means of stamps will be a very great convenience indeed. The hon. and learned member, Mr. Dangar, thinks that some difficulty will arise from people insufficiently stamping their telegrams, but that difficulty will be easily got over. If a letter is insufficiently stamped, the person to whom it is sent is compelled to pay a double charge, and a similar course could be adopted with regard to telegrams. The public will very soon learn the amount of the charges for the telegrams. The hon. member spoke about the inconvenience of people having to use stamps. Hon. members will remember the great inconvenience to which people were put when they had to use duty stamps some years ago. In many parts of the country they could not get them. I therefore moved a resolution affirming that postage stamps should be used instead of duty stamps, and although the motion was opposed by the Treasurer and the Postmaster-General, because it would be impossible to ascertain the amount of duty derived from each description of stamp, I had the honor of carrying that motion. If the Postmaster-General will allow postage stamps to be used instead of duty stamps, I do not see that any inconvenience will arise at all. A person who lives a long distance from a post office would find it much more convenient to stamp his telegrams than to send money to the office. I am very glad that the Postmaster-General has determined to introduce the practice of using stamps, and I have no doubt that it will result in a material saving in the department.

Mr. MACKELLAR: I think that the hon. member, Mr. Stewart, has entirely misconceived the object of the mover,

which is that a royal commission should be appointed to inquire into the alleged evils which have arisen in New South Wales in consequence of the practice of vaccination, with a view of coming to a definite conclusion as to whether the introduction of a compulsory vaccination bill is advisable. I would point out that my opinion is entirely opposed to that of my hon. friend, Mr. Stewart, that such an enactment would not stamp out small-pox. I think that the history of all the small-pox epidemics in other countries where compulsory vaccination laws have been in force shows that if such an enactment would not stamp out the disease it would reduce it to such narrow limits that we should be able to relax the extremely arbitrary laws which we bring to bear upon it now. I have carefully considered for many years the reasons which probably have prejudiced the people of this country against vaccination. I have myself investigated scores of cases of alleged harm resulting from vaccination, but I have not been able to satisfy myself that they were founded on good grounds. I take it that the chief reason of the prejudice of the public against vaccination is that a number of agitators have continually kept the supposed evils of vaccination before the public through the press. They have also alleged in the most barefaced manner that small-pox is no longer the terrible disease that it was in ancient times, and that the general improvement in the sanitary condition of the people of England has done more towards the eradication of small-pox than vaccination. It would not be difficult to show that this is absurd. Take the case of the city of Baltimore in the United States. Baltimore is a much more healthy place than Sydney, the death-rate there being from 18 to 20 per cent. less than it is in Sydney. That is to say, the death-rate in Baltimore is about seventeen and a half per thousand, whereas the death-rate of Sydney is from twenty-one to twenty-three per thousand. The city of Baltimore is a town of about 400,000 inhabitants, and a few years ago 800 persons died of small-pox in that town in one year, to say nothing of the number of persons who were attacked by the disease and survived. Probably they numbered not less than 10,000—that is to say, that about one-fortieth of the people of Balti-

[*Mr. Mackellar.*

more were attacked by the disease. It is probable that the people who suffered from the disease in that town were for the most part unvaccinated. We know that no thoroughly-vaccinated city has suffered as Baltimore suffered. In the United States, although they have no compulsory vaccination law, things are made exceedingly uncomfortable for those who are not vaccinated. Any immigrant who arrives is liable to be detained on the railways unless he can show a certificate of vaccination. I have had these certificates here on many occasions, persons having brought them out in the expectation that there would be some such regulation in force here as that under which they are required to produce these documents in America. I can mention another instance to show that small-pox is as virulent now as it ever was. In the town of Ciara, on the coast of Brazil, in South America, 12,000 people died of small-pox in the months of December, 1877, and January, 1878. If these are not the exact figures they are approximately correct. In 1875, in Borneo, 5,000 persons died of small-pox in a town of 30,000 inhabitants. The disease is just as virulent as it ever was. The comparative immunity from it of the countries of Europe is entirely due to vaccination. I do not think there would be any difficulty in showing that. In my opinion the proposal of the hon. member, Dr. Creed, is calculated to do nothing but good. It cannot do any harm if we learn the truth. As regards the statement that there are not a sufficient number of vaccinators in the colony, I am in a position to say that that is not exactly correct. If the number of vaccinated persons in the colony is divided by the number of vaccinators, I do not think it will be found that more than twenty or thirty persons have been vaccinated by each.

Mr. DARLEY: If I recollect aright a royal commission was appointed to inquire into this subject at the close of 1881 or the beginning of 1882. I believe at that time a large number of gentlemen were examined and their evidence was taken, and I think laid on the table of the House. I believe that they not only examined a great number of medical men who were in favour of vaccination, but also a medical gentleman who was not in favour of vaccination, and he gave his

reasons for objecting to it. All these papers have been published, so that, in point of fact, we are in possession of as much information on the subject as we should be able to get if we were to appoint another royal commission. If the Government intend to take the matter up, I see no reason why, relying upon the evidence then given, they should not bring in a bill to deal with the question. I am afraid that merely appointing a royal commission would be simply to repeat in 1885 what was done in 1881 or 1882. The evidence taken then was that of the most skilful men in the colony, the majority of whom I suppose would be again examined should another royal commission be appointed. Unless something is done, based on the evidence which was given before the royal commission to which I have referred, I am afraid there is very little probability of any result being achieved by the appointment of another commission.

Mr. CREED, in reply : I think the hon. member, Mr. Stewart, and the hon. and learned member, Mr. Darley, have rather missed the chain of my argument. What the hon. and learned member, Mr. Darley, stated in regard to the royal commission having sat in 1881 is perfectly correct. A large number of medical men were examined on that occasion, and all were in favour of vaccination except Dr. Brereton, who does not believe in it. I think it would be of no use to have another commission of that kind. That commission was appointed to show the advantages of vaccination. I have now assumed that the advantages are ascertained facts, and accepted by a large majority of people ; but before we can pass a compulsory act—which I think advisable, though it is disputed by a great many—we ought to ascertain whether the evils said to arise from vaccination are really the result of vaccination or not. The necessity for such a measure is disputed by a great many who conscientiously form their opinion upon evidence which I think will very frequently turn out to be wrong. My suggestion is, therefore, that a commission should be appointed to find out the evils which are said to have arisen from vaccination. I think they are very small ; but some people believe that they are very great. If there are any instances in which evil effects have arisen from

vaccination, I wish to have such cases brought forward and searchingly inquired into. I think that such a commission would effect a very useful object, because on the termination of its labours we should then have no more vague assertions that these evils resulted from vaccination unless it was absolutely proved that such was the case. If it could be proved that there were one hundred cases in which downright evil had arisen from vaccination, that would make me hesitate before I voted for a compulsory vaccination bill. But I do not think we are likely to have any proof of anything of the kind. To show the absurd instances which are given of the evil effects of vaccination, I may mention that of a boy who, by some freak of nature, has almost no development of chin. This, I have been seriously told, is the result of vaccination. The case is continually quoted as evincing the evil effects of vaccination, and when I laugh at the statement I am told that I am prejudiced. I want to show my complete freedom from prejudice. I believe that the defect in the case to which I have alluded is owing, not to vaccination, but to some hereditary taint. The medical profession are generally actuated in matters of this kind by unselfish motives. They realise in their professional avocations the importance of taking action for the public good, more than most other people, and they come forward to try and remedy evils which they see prevalent, and while doing so are frequently accused of having some selfish motive in view. They are called narrow-minded because they will not give any weight to the views of persons who are without training and knowledge, and not so disinterested as themselves. The hon. member, Mr. Stewart, thinks that compulsory vaccination will not do more than would be done by providing ample facilities for vaccination, but I think the hon. member is in error. I have had a great deal of experience of vaccination both in this colony and in England, and I know that it requires a very great scare indeed to induce people to be vaccinated voluntarily. There can be no doubt that a child can be vaccinated with less injury, less constitutional disturbance, under three months old than at any other period of its life, but mothers are averse to taking their children when

so young to be vaccinated. They put it off from time to time, no doubt out of love for the children, but nevertheless it is wrong and a great cruelty. Jenner vaccinated a child which had been born only twenty hours. As an instance of the little influence which the providing of facilities has on vaccination, I may mention that last year the Government established a vaccination station in the eastern suburbs, and appointed a public vaccinator who had the public confidence, but in the course of thirteen or fourteen days only some ten children were taken to be vaccinated. Some of those were for re-vaccination, and hardly one was under the age of three months, which is the best time. I do not think that the question could arise in this colony of stamping out small-pox by means of vaccination, but if we had a thoroughly protected population the risks of infection would be very small, and consequently less rigorous measures might be taken to guard against it. In London I have seen as many as twenty cases of small-pox cases in one day, and no one ever concerned himself much about them. One often sees also in London one or two children in a family suffering from small-pox, and though the sanitary conditions are favourable for the spread of the disease, yet other children belonging to the same family who are protected by vaccination do not catch it. My suggestion, which I think the circumstances warrant, is that the Government should appoint a commission before which persons who believe that evils have resulted from vaccination may bring forward what evidence they can, and if it be shown that such an amount of evil would follow as would render the compulsory vaccination of the entire population an arbitrary and injurious measure, I, for one, would not vote for it. I am confident, however, that if any cases were brought forward in which evil results were alleged to have proceeded from vaccination, it could be shown that the allegation was not well founded. The hon. member, Mr. Stewart, also thought that there was an equal likelihood of disseminating the disease by inoculation from the calf as by inoculation from the human subject, and there can be no doubt that what the hon. member says is quite true. I myself would prefer in many cases to vaccinate

[Mr. Creed.

with human lymph; but there is this advantage in favour of taking lymph from the calf, and that is that a *post mortem* examination may be made of the animal from which the matter has been taken, and thus we may know with absolute certainty whether it was free from disease or not. I hope that hon. members will understand that my suggestion is not to inquire as to the advantages of vaccination, but to give to people who disbelieve in it an opportunity of placing on record the evils which they believe to exist.

Question resolved in the negative.

PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. DALLEY: Having by the permission of the House on the last day of its sitting substituted the bill now before the House for the one originally introduced by me, I took advantage of that opportunity to go fully into the scope and objects and provisions of the measure. It will therefore be unnecessary to deliver any address now in moving the second reading of the bill. If at the conclusion of the debate which will no doubt take place the bill should pass its second reading, I propose to defer its consideration in Committee for a week, in order to enable hon. gentlemen to consider and prepare any suggestions for the amendment of the bill which they may deem desirable. I move:

That the bill be now read the second time.

Question proposed.

Mr. STEWART: I hope the House will not allow this bill to be passed without discussion. There is one part of the bill in particular about which it might have been expected that something would be said, and that is the part which makes provision for the establishment of a board of health. I have not been able to discover for what purpose such a board is required. It seems to me that it will entail a great expense, and place the people under a host of authorities of one kind and another. First of all, there is to be the health board, consisting of seven members; then the local authorities, and after them a host of inspectors—inspectors of slaughter-houses, inspectors of cow-houses and dairies, inspectors of bakeries, and of almost every other industry. I am

pretty sure that there will be considerable conflict of authority amongst so many officials. We ought, moreover, to have some very good reason for the establishment of this board of health. It is supposed that the board of health will be able to reduce in some way the rate of mortality. That expedient has been tried in other countries without success, and we have no reason to think that the board of health which will be appointed under this bill will be able to give us any guarantee that the death-rate will be reduced by any measures they can devise. The death-rate fluctuates in different parts of the world in spite of sanitary authorities and boards of health. I am confident that it will cause a great deal of annoyance and harassment to the people, and that, too, without doing any good worth mentioning. I think the bill could be administered very well without a board of health if the necessary powers were given to local bodies. Municipal councils have great powers under the bill, more than they have at present, but they are to be subject to the board of health in Sydney, whose orders they must obey; why I do not know, and have been unable to find out. We ought to have the reason explained before we pass the second reading of the bill. The board is to consist of at least three duly qualified medical practitioners, the Inspector-General of Police, a civil engineer, and two other persons. I cannot understand why a civil engineer has been specified more than any other person. I can understand the propriety of having some medical men on the board; but I should have thought that an architect would have been as useful as a civil engineer, seeing that a great deal of disease arises from unhealthy dwellings. Perhaps a veterinary surgeon would be of use also. I think that if the laws of health were more generally known a great deal more might be done to improve the sanitary condition of the colony than could be done by any board of health. Let the people at large have some of the knowledge which is essential to the medical man, some knowledge of anatomy, that they may understand the apparatus they have to deal with; some knowledge of physiology, and the functions of the various parts of the human body; some knowledge of chemistry, that they may understand the changes which take place as the

result of the operations which are going on in the human frame. That sort of knowledge cannot be given to all; a great many people would not trouble themselves about it, but many young people would gladly avail themselves of it; in fact it has been thought so much of that numbers of times proposals have been made that it should be taught in the public schools, the very last places where anything of the kind should be introduced, for various reasons. Public schools are charged with the elementary education of the young, and when that is completed the children are removed, many of them, indeed, being removed before their elementary education is completed, and at that period they are incapable of comprehending the subject properly. That knowledge however could be given in the higher schools or colleges, or itinerant lecturers might be appointed to lecture in Sydney and the principal towns, and not merely to lecture, but to demonstrate as well, so as to make actually visible what cannot be learned from books. Human subjects are not required for this purpose; the resemblance between many of the lower animals and man being so close as to enable such animals to be used for the purpose of demonstration. The matter might very well be taken up by some of our schools of arts. We have a technical college, but at present that subject is not taught in it, though one would think that nothing is of greater importance than a knowledge of the functions of the human body. Speaking of the Technical College, I may remark that there seems to be no method in the studies pursued in it. One day there is botany, and the next architecture or drawing; instead of the subjects being arranged in a progressive order, one leading into another, the plan adopted bears more resemblance to an encyclopædia or a dictionary. I am persuaded that if the masses of the people were taught merely an outline of anatomy, physiology, and chemistry, in the course of another generation the grown-up people would be better able to take care of themselves and those under their charge than they are at the present time; far more capable than if they were crammed with Latin and Greek, which can do them no good. These subjects ought also to form part of the education of architects, nurses in hospitals, captains of ships, and all pro-

fessional men. I have been taken rather unawares to-night, because I fully expected that there would be a long debate on the second reading, and I did not prepare myself to speak to-night. I think, however, that when hon. members look into the subject they will see that the functions of the board of health are not defined, nor are the purposes for which it is to be established defined. The proper thing to do is to teach people to take care of their own health, for if they are too ignorant to do it for themselves no one else can do it. There are instances of people in the highest circles of society who have suffered in health owing to ignorance of some of the simpler sanitary laws. If the bill should go into Committee, as I suppose it will, the functions of the board of health ought to be defined, and the necessity for its establishment pointed out. In other respects the bill is a great improvement on the existing law. Our existing quarantine laws, for instance, are hardly intelligible; but this bill, besides codifying the existing law, is expressed in such clear language that the meaning cannot be misunderstood. If all our laws had been as intelligible there would have been very little work for lawyers. I see that in one part of the bill provision is made for a certain amount of space to be provided in rooms used for sleeping; but that provision is founded on a mistake. Some years ago sanitary reformers got it into their heads that all rooms used for sleeping should contain a certain amount of space in proportion to the number of the inmates; but the fact is that you may have perfect safety in a small room, and great danger in a large room. It all depends on the ventilation. You may be as safe in a ship's cabin as in a church, perhaps safer; for however large the chamber may be, the air becomes contaminated almost immediately unless there is proper ventilation; and if the room were reduced to one-half the size, with the same number of inmates, it would be perfectly safe if proper ventilation were provided; but that is a subject few architects or shipmasters understand. Miners at the bottom of mines understand it far better. The effects of heat on the air, and the effect of our own bodies on it constitute the basis of our knowledge of atmospheric phenomena.

[*Mr. Stewart.*

Mr. MACINTOSH: I was rather surprised to find that this important bill was about to pass its second reading without any hon. member offering to speak upon it, and I think the hon. member, Mr. Stewart, deserves the thanks of the Council for stepping into the breach. The bill is one of the most important that has ever come before Parliament, and I think that the framers of it deserve great credit for the industry they have shown. With the greater portion of the bill I entirely agree—namely, that portion which comprises what has been taken from English acts and acts in force in this colony; but with the invented part I cannot to a great extent agree. I think that it would have been better if the Government had kept to the old lines of legislation. The bill proposes to repeal a great many acts which are now in force, and among them the act constituting the City Improvement Board, which has been in existence a number of years. I do not know that there will be any great harm done by repealing that act, for I am not aware that the board has done any great amount of good since it has been in existence. But the old adage that every man's house is his castle and that no man dare enter it seems also about to be repealed by this bill. If the circumstances of the country make that step necessary, as I think they do, of course there can be no objection to it, for no man has a right to use his house so as to cause it to be an injury to his fellow-man. With reference to the constitution of the board, I see that the Inspector-General of Police is to be one of the members. Well, the Inspector-General of Police is a very excellent officer, admirably qualified for the duties he has to discharge, but I think he has sufficient to do without attending to any boards. He has some thousands of men under him, some of whom are most refractory, and engage in a considerable amount of correspondence with him. In fact he felt it his duty to resign his position on some board connected with the Immigration Department. I think it is detrimental to the efficiency of his department that he should be a member of any board. His position should be somewhat analagous to that of the Attorney-General, that is to say, he should keep aloof from all other departments so that he may give

the Government independent advice on matters about which he is consulted. The medical officer of the Government should occupy a similar position. His main duty should be to advise the Government, and he should keep clear of all boards. We know what boards are. We know that they act in a most arbitrary manner in carrying out their duties. Then again we are a democratic community; the Government is an elective body, and all the local authorities are elective bodies, and yet we must have a nominated buffer between the Government and those local bodies in the shape of this health board. There is no precedent for the appointment of such a board. All boards in England are elective. The English Health Act only applies to parts of England, and does not apply at all to Scotland or Ireland, and the local boards are elected, not nominated by the Government. To show what is thought of local boards in England I will read to hon. members the remarks of Vice-Chancellor Wood in the case of the Attorney-General *v.* the Metropolitan Board of Works, with regard to local boards in general. He says:

There is frequently a disposition in public boards to exercise their jurisdiction in a manner which is not conciliatory; which does not evince a due regard for the interests of those who may be affected by their acts; in fact, to assume a sort of judgment and an exercise of power which they would think an impertinence on the part of others, and therefore they do not adopt that reasonable course of conciliation and free and frank communication which it appears to me gentlemen who are intrusted to exercise those public rights ought beyond all others to adopt.

I think our own experience of boards does not differ very much from that. They are exceedingly arbitrary in their action, and seldom do any good.

MR. H. C. DANGAR: Do you mean to say that the Metropolitan Board of Works has done no good?

MR. MACINTOSH: I do not say that; but the Metropolitan Board of Works is an elected, not a nominated body. But the opinions of this board of health are to be final and conclusive; there is to be no appeal, even to the Supreme Court. And there is to be no responsibility; the board is to be able to do what it likes. There is to be no authority over it. Even the Minister is to have very little to do with it. The board besides will have an immense amount of patronage in its

hands. It is to have the appointment of medical officers for any local board in any part of the colony. The local bodies are not to have the right of appointment, though they will have to pay the salaries. In England the local authorities communicate directly with the Privy Council, or with the Secretary of State, and not with a central board of health. The members of the boards are sworn to administer the acts to the best of their ability, and any person may appeal to the Secretary of State to compel the board to apply the law to remedy any matter which arises within their authority. They must do it, or in default they can be fined severely. It has been the fashion to decry municipal councils, and to say exceedingly hard things of them; but so far as I can see entirely without justification. A large number of members of both houses of Parliament have been members of municipal councils, two members of the Government and several members of the Legislative Assembly being at the present time members of municipal councils. So far as my experience goes I am not aware that municipal councils are guilty of greater bungling with regard to the works they have to carry out than the Government are, and I defy any one to show that municipal officers are less skilful than the officers of the Government.

MR. DARLEY: What about the Town Hall foundations?

MR. MACINTOSH: They were very bad, certainly; but if the hon. and learned member will take a walk down King-street he will see houses built by private individuals and designed by architects of the greatest reputation which have foundations of the worst character. That, of course, does not excuse the municipal council or the Government; but the fact is that it is impossible at the present time to make men carry out their work in a proper manner. It is not always the contractors' fault, for there are men who pride themselves on slumming their work. It is many years ago since I heard the opinion expressed that no house should be less than 20 feet above the sea level, and my experience since has shown me the wisdom of it. When Darling Harbour was reclaimed the Government, adopting a very short-sighted and culpable policy, sold the land in small allotments, and now

you may see houses with their foundations not more than 2 or 3 feet above high-water mark, so that we have the Government of the country to thank for that most unhealthy spot. The same remark applies to Woolloomooloo to a large extent, and had it not been for the action taken by certain individuals, myself among the number, the Government would have disposed of Wentworth Park in the same miserable manner in order to recoup themselves for the expense of reclamation. They were nearly doing the same with the land reclaimed at Rushcutters' Bay. I think the municipal councils would carry out the provisions of the act more satisfactorily than the proposed nominated board. Why should the municipal council of Sydney, or Woollahra, or Redfern, or any other municipality be under a nominated body like that? Medical men are greatly to be praised for the services they render in preserving the health of the community; but as a rule they are men who ride hobbies to death, and it is seldom that they are practical men. What do they know about one quarter of the matters with which this bill deals? The very training of a medical man prevents him from having such knowledge. We all know how they are trained. They are generally sons of gentlemen who have had little to do with practical matters, and they learn nothing of practical matters themselves. Many of the subjects to which this bill relates could be dealt with better by practical men than by medical men. There is no part of the training which medical students get in the universities at home which qualifies them to carry out many of the provisions of this bill. As a matter of fact, we know that very few doctors among us pay any attention to practical matters. Why should they be considered better qualified than others to deal with such matters? They are not chemists or analysts.

Mr. STEWART: Many of them are!

Mr. MACINTOSH: Take the case of the hon. member, Mr. Stewart, himself. I cannot call him a medical man, but I must call him a professional man, and he has shown that he has as much knowledge of medical science as many medical men, and we have seen how he differs in opinion from the medical gentlemen who have spoken.

[Mr. Macintosh.

Mr. H. C. DANGAR: Doctors differ!

Mr. MACINTOSH: Yes; and we are to have three of them on this board. The medical adviser of the Government is to be the president of the board; he is to be the despot who is to carry out this Algerine law, for that is what it is. Why should he be taken away from the important duties he has to perform as adviser to the Government? There are many questions upon which the Government have to seek his advice, and his opinion is likely to be biassed by the opinions of the other medical members of the board.

Mr. STEWART: And responsibility will be divided!

Mr. MACINTOSH: Of course; that is in order to relieve the Government of responsibility. Referring to the provisions relating to quarantine, I see that the Marine Board is not mentioned in connection with them.

Mr. H. C. DANGAR: They have a special power delegated to them!

Mr. DALLEY: The Marine Board have nothing to do with quarantine!

Mr. MACINTOSH: I think the medical adviser of the Government should be free of all responsibility in regard to quarantine, and should act simply as the medical adviser of the Government; for if he is mixed up in the proceedings of the board he cannot give an unbiassed opinion. I think also that the local authorities should be directly under the Minister, as is the case in England, and as is the case in regard to our own municipal councils. The Colonial Secretary has the supervision of the whole of the municipal bodies of the colony, and I am not aware that any evil has resulted from that arrangement so as to justify a preference for a nominated board. The local authorities might be made to carry out the provisions of the bill, the members being sworn for that purpose if necessary, and in any case where they failed to do their duty an appeal might be allowed to the Supreme Court, or to a court of quarter sessions, or to the Colonial Secretary, but do not let us have this board. Look what a staff of officers it will require in order to exercise its powers all over the colony; for, although its seat is to be in Sydney, it is to have the appointment of officers and inspectors, and to inquire into everything that takes place. We may be sure that it

will never accept the opinion of the local authority, but will go upon the spot to satisfy itself, like a jury taken to examine some place where a cause of action arises. That will be a nice state of affairs, and yet it cannot be otherwise as the bill stands. We know that when a case of small-pox or other infectious disease occurs in the country, the Board of Health will not trust the report of the local authorities, but sends a doctor from Sydney to investigate the case. How can we have efficient local authority when it is distrusted in that way? If we are to have the services of competent men, we must trust them. I think that we may safely trust to the persons elected by the people to carry out the law. The law is necessary, but it is the people themselves who must carry it out, not an irresponsible board, which cannot inspire public confidence. Take the case of the Sydney Improvement Board; it has been in existence four or five years, but it has done nothing but what the city council could have done.

Mr. DARLEY: It has done a great deal of good!

Mr. MACINTOSH: They have not done a great deal of good that I am aware of. What they have done has been in some cases to prolong the existence of unhealthy and unsafe buildings. If the municipal councils were made the local authorities under this bill —

Mr. DARLEY: I hope not!

Mr. MACINTOSH: I do not see why they should be considered incompetent; but if they are not competent the people should elect other men who are competent. We might as well have one man to rule in the whole matter as an irresponsible board.

Mr. CREED: The Mayor of New York has been intrusted with absolute power!

Mr. MACINTOSH: The corporation of New York is possessed of privileges which date from the time of Charles II and were originally derived from the Dutch when the place was called New Amsterdam. It has more powers than any corporation in England. I have no confidence in the proposed board or in the government that will appoint it. The Metropolitan Board of Works is a body different altogether in its constitution and character from this proposed health board.

It has a revenue almost equal to the revenue of New South Wales, and it has so improved London as to make it almost a new city. Its powers were restricted at first, but after a little experience they were extended, and now the board can expend money to any amount, and it is an elected board.

Mr. DARLEY: With a high qualification!

Mr. MACINTOSH: Well let us have a high qualification here, so long as the board is elected. This proposal to establish a nominated board is a disparagement of our system of local government. Our quarantine laws are much the same as exist elsewhere, and I do not think that much can be said against them. I have no doubt that they are highly necessary for the prevention of epidemic diseases. Medical men seem to put a great deal of faith in deodorisers and disinfectants; but I have none, and I think you will find that the authors of the act of 1875 had not much faith in them either. There is one provision in the bill of which I cordially approve, and that is the one which says that no dwelling shall have a less frontage than 15 feet. I should be willing to vote for a frontage of not less than 20 feet. It is disgraceful that in a large continent like this we should be cramped together, owing to the greed of a few people who want to make money. The bill, though very long, is after all not long enough, because it deals in insufficient detail with many matters. I am sure that it is the shortest health bill which the author has seen during his researches. No doubt it contains ample powers for the making of by-laws to carry out the provisions of the act; but this nominated board, though in all probability knowing nothing of the local circumstances, must have all the by-laws of the local authorities submitted to it for its approval. Hitherto all by-laws have been submitted to the Government, and have been laid on the table of both houses of Parliament, and on their publication in the *Gazette* they have acquired the force of law. This board is to dictate to the whole country and to say what is wanted in different parts of the interior. It must be a very wise body. I am not aware of any body of medical men in Sydney who could pretend to know what is suitable to Wagga, what is suitable for a flat country, and what is suitable for a

hilly country. This board would crush those local bodies. The Government have all the necessary information. They have their high officers, who can give them information upon every matter at a moment's notice. The board would not be able to do that, and if they attempt it they will require a regiment of officers. They are to have power to send medical men to any part of the country. Clause 79 says :

Any such appellant shall within one calendar month after the service of such notice give to the local authority and to the said board notice in writing stating his intention to appeal and the grounds of his appeal and shall within two days after giving such notice enter into a recognisance before some justice of the peace with sufficient securities conditioned to prosecute such appeal without delay and to abide the order of the said board and the determination of the said board in or concerning the premises shall be conclusive and binding on all persons.

It seems to me that there is no appeal.

MR. DARLEY : No !

MR. MACINTOSH : That is a nice power to give an irresponsible body who can know nothing of the local circumstances. They are to have a power which has never been granted before in New South Wales. If such powers are to be exercised, let it be done by some authority appointed by the people. Let the people get at them. Clause 84 says :

Within three calendar months thereafter such local authority shall prepare an improvement scheme for such area and shall submit the same for the approval of the Board of Health who may refer the same back to the local authority for modification alteration or addition.

It appears from this that local bodies 500 miles away are to be at the beck and call of this irresponsible board, composed of men who by their training will be unfit to fulfil the duties which they are to be appointed to perform. I see that a great deal of this bill has been taken from the English act. I do not like the words which they have taken from the English act with regard to lodging-houses. The words "common lodging-house" have been introduced into the bill, but I do not think that the description is a very happy one. I do not think it describes the generality of the lodging-houses in New South Wales. There is one clause in the English act which requires that the rooms in a lodging-house shall be numbered, and that they shall accommodate a definite number of lodgers and no more. The English act also requires that a copy of the by-laws

[*Mr. Macintosh.*

shall be kept hanging in a conspicuous place. These are provisions which we can very properly incorporate into our own legislation on this subject. Clause 101 says :

A common lodging-house within the meaning of this act is a house in which or in any part of which persons of the poorer class are received as lodgers for short periods and though strangers to one another are allowed to inhabit one common room. It does not include an hotel or inn.

I do not know how they interpret that clause ; but I do not consider the definition a very happy one. The rates charged at common lodging-houses are from 15s. to £1 a week. Since the new licensing act was passed, many of the hotels in the country have been considerably enlarged, so as to provide more accommodation for travellers. At the present time there are a number of hotels in Sydney which may be regarded as common lodging-houses. They provide board and lodgings for a large section of the working-classes, who pay from 15s. to £1 a week. The bill does not apply to hotels, and there is nothing in the Licensing Act under which hotels, which are carrying on the business of common lodging-houses, can be regulated. I think that these hotels ought to be brought under the operation of this measure, and if the framers of it had chosen to take cognisance of them, they would have been able to obtain the fullest information on the subject from the Inspector-General of Police. I approve of the provisions of the bill with regard to the adulteration of food. I see that a publican may be fined for adulterating his liquor, but not for watering it. He is allowed to water it until its strength is reduced to 25 per cent. under-proof. There is something ridiculous in the provision with regard to the erection of slaughter-houses. It appears that the Sydney Board of Health would dictate to the local authorities of such places as Wentworth, 800 miles away, as to the sort of provision they should make for the slaughter of animals. This board is to be presumed to know what is required better than those living in the district. I say that the Government are the only authority who ought to deal with such a matter. The Government have the means of obtaining all necessary information ; but this board will only be able to obtain it at an enormous expense. The bill gives the board power to deal with the drainage ; but

what we want here is a board of works to carry out a comprehensive system on a thoroughly independent basis. I do not think that the members of the proposed board of health will be qualified from their experience and training to deal with such a question. It seems to me that powers are to be given to this board which they cannot properly carry out. If they are to carry them out they will require a large staff of officers. We shall have the country ruined with boards and staffs of officers. I see from another part of the bill that people on the Murray or the Murrumbidgee will not be able to put up a bath-house or a wash-house without the approval of the board. I refer to these small matters to show the absurdity of centralising all this controlling power in Sydney. The board are even to give their opinion as to what is a polluted well, and as to how it is to be dealt with. If we have proper local bodies we ought to intrust them with these powers, and not put them in the hands of an irresponsible body such as this board will be. There is no provision in the bill as to the removal of members of the board. There appears to be no power whatever to remove them. Are they to remain members of the board until they die? I have said a good deal in favour of the bill, because it is a measure which in many respects is deserving of commendation. There are some new clauses in the bill, and with nearly every one of them I find fault. Those portions of the bill which have been taken from other acts are of a very satisfactory character. If we are to have a new government department, let us have a department of health. We want to have the law properly carried out. We do not want an irresponsible body that may carry out the law, or may if they choose wink at any evils which they ought to remedy. The health of a community can only be preserved by having good drainage, pure water, and pure air. It cannot be done by the use of disinfectants. I think it very probable that the use of disinfectants is an evil, because it does not get rid of the nuisance, it only prevents us from detecting it by the warning which the sense of smell affords. I apologise for having occupied so much time, but the matter is one in which I feel a great interest. I have given it as much attention

as I could. I have left my mark on the cleansing of the city of Sydney. I can claim to be the author of the present system of sewerage. I was laughed at when some twenty years ago I suggested that the present Bondi system of sewerage should be adopted. I have given as much attention to the sewerage and water systems as any man in New South Wales.

Mr. MACKELLAR: I move:

That this debate be now adjourned till tomorrow.

Motion agreed to, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7-10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 30 September, 1885.

General Election—Clerk to Exhibition Commissioner—Bridges on Existing Lines of Railways—Case of Mrs. Stacey—The Agent-General—Trans-Pacific Mail Service—Clerk to the Colonial Exhibition Commissioner—Crown Lands Act—Hay Gas Bill—Case of Sergeant Behan—Dismissal of Mr. Lucas—Vale of Clwydd Coal-mining Company's Bill—Secretary for Public Works (Mr. Wright)—Private Bills.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

GENERAL ELECTION.

Dr. ROSS asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—Is it the intention of the Government to take any steps to cause the elections at the next general election to fall all on the one day?

Sir ALEXANDER STUART answered,—Inasmuch as the Government fail to perceive the advantages of all the elections taking place on the one day, it is not their intention to depart from the usual custom.

CLERK TO EXHIBITION COMMISSIONER.

Mr. ABIGAIL asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—Is it true that the son of his Excellency the Governor has been appointed private secretary to Sir Patrick Jennings, the Executive Commissioner for the Colonial Exhibition to be held in London; if so, will the Minister say at what salary, and for what term?

Sir ALEXANDER STUART answered,—Mr. A. P. B. Loftus has been appointed secretary to the Executive Commissioner for the Colonial Exhibition to be held in London. The appointment will be in force until the closing of the exhibition, and the salary will be at the rate of £600 a year.