

to undertake and carry out the said work, subject to the provisions of this act, and for that purpose shall be and have the powers and duties of a constructing authority within the meaning of the Public Works Act, 1912.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: In regard to this clause, I want to point out that in all modern hospital construction not more than twenty-five persons are set down to an acre.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; report adopted.

Bill read a third time.

House adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 7 October, 1913.

Commonwealth Government Land, Jervis Bay—Surrender of Lands at Jervis Bay.—Question Disallowed—Superannuation Bill—Coal-mines Regulation (Amending) Bill—Savings Banks Amalgamation Bill.

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT LAND, JERVIS BAY.

The Hon. H. C. DANGAR asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—(1) Have any negotiations been lately entered into between the Commonwealth and the State Governments as to the transfer to the former of 18,000 acres—or any greater or less area of land at Jervis Bay—other than the land which has been already obtained by that Government? (2) If such is the case, what are the intentions of the Government with respect to the transfer of this large area of land? (3) If any request for more land at Jervis Bay has been made by the Commonwealth Government, what is the alleged purpose, if any, which has been stated for the acquisition of the land? (4) How many miles of water frontage to the bay, and how many acres of land in that locality have already been secured by the Commonwealth Government? (5) What deep-water frontage is included in the 18,000 acres? (6) If the 18,000 acres are transferred to the Commonwealth Government, what extent of deep-water frontage will be left to this state

The Hon. F. FLOWERS answered,—(1) Negotiations in relation to the desire of the Commonwealth to be granted sovereign rights over an area of approximately 18,000 acres at Jervis Bay have been proceeding for the past twelve months. The federal authorities already enjoy proprietary rights over half that area. (2) It is the intention of the Government to introduce a bill into Parliament. (3) As stated in answer to No. 1, the land proposed to be surrendered to the Commonwealth has been the subject of negotiation for a considerable period. The area is required in connection with the establishment of a naval college. (4) About 10 miles and about 9,000 acres. (5) From northern end of Bowen Island to a point east of the northern boundary of portion 24, parish of Bherwerre, county of St. Vincent, fronting Jervis Bay, 460 chains. (6) 580 chains, being 290 chains from point east of northern boundary of portion 24, parish of Bherwerre, county of St. Vincent, to Plantation Point, fronting Jervis Bay, and 290 chains from Lighthouse wharf, to Green Point, fronting Jervis Bay, parish of Beecroft.

SURRENDER OF LANDS AT JERVIS BAY.

The Hon. H. C. DANGAR asked the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,—Whether any plan or report setting forth particulars of the proposed surrender of lands at Jervis Bay is in possession of the Government; and, if so, will he lay such report and plan upon the table of this House?

The Hon. F. FLOWERS answered,—Report and plan will be laid upon the table this afternoon.

QUESTION DISALLOWED.

The PRESIDENT: With regard to question No. 3, standing in name of hon. member; Dr. Nash, I consider that it is not such a question as should be put to the Minister, and therefore I will not call upon the hon. member to put it.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: As a matter of privilege, Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: I do not think it is a matter of privilege. If the hon. member desires to take exception to the ruling of the Chair, he must follow the procedure laid down in the standing orders; he must move a motion of dissent.

SUPERANNUATION BILL.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: When the Superannuation Bill was being dealt with on the second reading the suggestion was made, which was accepted by the Government, that a select committee be appointed to investigate the merits of the bill and report to the House. I think it was the understanding that the report should be presented if possible at 7 o'clock to-night. I might explain to the House that the committee has had one meeting, but it has not so far been able to complete its work; and with your approval, Mr. President, and the consent of the House, I desire to suggest that you should leave the chair until half-past 7 to permit of the committee concluding its labours and presenting its report.

[The President left the chair at 4.38 p.m. The House resumed at 8.55 p.m.]

COAL MINES REGULATION (AMENDING) BILL.

In Committee (consideration resumed from 2nd October, *vide* page 2152—the Hon. Sir NORMAND MACLAURIN in the chair):

Postponed clause 16 (Airways).

The Hon. J. GARLAND: I would suggest to the Vice-President of the Executive Council, in view of the arguments advanced at the last Committee stage, that he consent to the elimination of this clause.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I will raise no objection!

Clause negatived.

Postponed clause 18 (Amendment of section 50 of the principal act).

The Hon. J. GARLAND: I move:

That the whole clause be struck out with a view to the insertion of the following words: "Paragraph (c) of subsection one of section fifty of the principal act is omitted, and the following paragraph is inserted in lieu thereof:

(c) A cage or cages, running in guides, for raising and lowering persons shall be established and maintained at each such shaft or outlet exceeding one hundred and fifty feet in depth: Provided that in every shaft not exceeding one hundred and fifty feet in depth and not provided with a cage a ladder shall be fixed. Such ladder shall not be fixed in a vertical or overhanging position, and shall be inclined at the most convenient angle which the space in which the ladder is fixed allows. Every ladder-shaft shall have substantial platforms or sollars at

intervals of not more than thirty feet. The space between the rungs of a ladder shall not exceed twelve inches, and the rungs shall in no case be less than five inches from the wall of the shaft. A suitable fixture for a hand grip shall be placed above each ladder for the use of persons ascending or descending."

That, I think, will meet the views of the Minister, and should amply safeguard the interests of all parties concerned.

Amendment agreed to.

Postponed clause 19 (Amendment of general rule 12, section 54).

The Hon. J. GARLAND: I would suggest to the Vice-President of the Executive Council that he consent to the omission of paragraph (o).

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I raise no objection!

Amendment (by the Hon. J. GARLAND) agreed to:

That paragraph (o) be struck out.

Bill reported with further amendments; report adopted.

SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Report of the select committee presented and (on motion by the Hon. H. E. Kater) ordered to be printed.

Motion (by the Hon. F. FLOWERS) proposed:

That the resumption of the debate stand an order of the day for a later hour of this sitting.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: Will we have the printed report ready by that time?

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: No; we are going straight on!

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT: I would like to point out that this bill was referred to a select committee for investigation and report. The bill is now back from the select committee to which the House had delegated its function, and the committee has brought up a report. The bill has thus been restored to its original position, and is now in the same position as if no anterior debate had taken place. Hon. members have an opportunity of speaking on this bill just as if the second reading were moved for the first time.

Question—That the bill be now read a second time—proposed.

The Hon. J. ASHTON: I do not find myself in close agreement with anything that has been said up to the present

time in the course of this debate. I appreciated very fully the force of the observations made by the hon. member, Sir Joseph Carruthers, in the speech that he made on the second reading of this bill, that there was a great deal to be said, in considering a matter of this kind, in favour of a scheme of national insurance.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: He would oppose it just as vigorously if I did bring up a scheme of that kind!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: That I do not know; and I am not suggesting that the hon. member should bring forward such a scheme this session.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: No; I will do so next session!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: The hon. member, Sir Joseph Carruthers, claimed that it was unfair for a superannuation bill to be brought forward in the interests of a section of the citizens of this state, to the exclusion of the great majority; but I think that there is a point which is entitled to consideration, in reply to an argument of that character. As I apprehend the situation, the Government does not propose a superannuation bill to deal with a section of the citizens of the state—*qua* citizens—but to deal with a section of the citizens of this state who happen to be its employees. That is to say, as an employer it takes up the position—and in my judgment very properly—that it is a right and proper thing for a provident fund to be instituted in the interests of its employees, in much the same way as many private concerns of considerable magnitude have done. With that principle I have no fault whatever to find. Holding that view, I do not go to anything like the same extent in the consideration of this question as the hon. member, Sir Joseph Carruthers, did. I find that I cannot see eye to eye, on the other hand, with gentlemen like the hon. member, Colonel Mackay, who, speaking in favour of a system of superannuation the object and effect of which would be to get the most brilliant intellects of the community into the public service, would be prepared to institute a superannuation scheme irrespective of all questions of cost. I think a matter of this kind is essentially a business question, which has to be approached by hon. members from

the standpoint of business men, doing, according to their best judgment, what they believe to be a fair thing to the servants of the state, and at the same time paying due regard to what they believe to be the true interests of the taxpayers of the state, out of whose pockets the cost of any superannuation scheme that is not borne by the servants themselves will have to come. With what might be regarded as the main basis of this proposal, I think I may say I am in agreement. The underlying basis of this bill is to establish a superannuation fund in character wider, and very much more comprehensive, than anything that has been attempted in this state before, or, so far as I am aware, in any other state. That is to say, our ideas of superannuation in the past, in regard to the state, have been embodied in schemes which have aimed at making provision in the form of a personal pension to the retiring officer. This scheme goes very much further than that. It proposes to provide a personal pension for the officer who has fulfilled his years of service, and upon his death, if he predecease his wife, to give to her a pension of half the amount granted to the retiring officer, and if there be children under the age of 16, up to that age to make an allowance to each member of the family. That, it need hardly be said, is a very broad and comprehensive system of providing for the public servants. The bill provides in the main that half the cost of these benefits shall be paid by the officer himself, and half the cost by his employer, the state. For the time being I am applying my observations entirely to the question of how this bill affects the state officers, without regard to outside employments which are also included in the bill. I accept without question the scheme of the bill, and I assume that the privileges which it is proposed to give the officers, their widows and children, are accurately computed actuarially, and that the whole of the benefits which are to be given by the administrators of the fund will be paid for in annual contributions of equal value. As the scheme is framed, there seems to be little danger of the fate which overtook the 1884 Superannuation Fund overtaking this one. It is difficult to see, if the actuarial computations be accurate, how this fund can ever find it-

self in difficulties ; and the main, and, in fact, the only point, that has to be considered in estimating the cost to the state of this scheme is to ascertain how much of the contribution is paid by the state to earn each individual pension and the dependent pensions, and how much in the aggregate those payments will amount to in the form of a burden upon the general taxpayer. My first impression when I took this bill in hand—and when the hon. member moved its second reading, I had not so much as glanced at the pages of the bill—was that the scheme provided from end to end on a half contribution by the employer and a half contribution by the employee ; but, as hon. members know by this time from the discussion that has taken place up to the present, there are very material departures from that principle. Taking the report of the actuarial sub-committee, dealing with figures which were compiled, I think, in 1910 or 1911, there were found to be 15,900 men and women in the public service to whom this bill applies, and of that number some 9,000 were over the age of 30. The bill, in its treatment of officers over the age of 30, makes a very radical departure from the basis to which I have referred. It provides that instead of the officer paying the rate appropriate to his age in his contribution, he shall be allowed to contribute for a pension up to a certain amount as though he were only 30 years of age. The bill further provides that the difference between the rate for age and the rate applicable to age 30 shall be paid by the state, in addition to half the contribution. That leads, speaking for myself personally, to some very unlooked-for results—results which in their effect enormously increase the burden of this system upon the state over and above what it would be if the state paid half the amount of the contributions, and the officers half the amount of the contributions. I have, for the purpose of making a comparison, divided all the officers over 30 years of age into groups separated by five years ; that is, officers of 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and in the last case 59 years of age. Under the provisions of this bill, if the officer elects to contribute for a pension of £104 for himself, £52 for his wife if she outlives him, and £13 for each child under the age of 16, the respective amounts of the total contribution paid

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by the state on the one hand and the employee on the other hand are as follows : At 35 the employer pays £21 6s. per year towards the employee's benefit, the employee pays £13 2s. ; at 40 the employer pays £32 14s., the employee £13 2s. ; at 45 the employer pays £51 18s., the employee £13 2s. ; at 50 the employer pays £90 18s., the employee £13 2s. ; at 55 the employer pays £202 18s., the employee £13 2s. ; at 59 the employer pays £517 2s., for the one year which has to be paid for, and the employee £13 2s. The percentage of the total contributions paid by the state in each of those respective groups is as follows : At the age of 35 the state pays 67 per cent. of the total payment ; at age 40, 72 per cent. ; at age 45, 80 per cent. ; at age 50, 87 per cent. ; at age 55, 94 per cent. ; and at the age of 59, 97 per cent. ; while, when the age of 60 is reached, under section 83 of the bill the officer who has, before the commencement of this act, reached the age of 60; takes the pension of £104 per annum and the dependent pensions without any payment at all. That is to say, the clause provides that where the officer, at the commencement of the act, is 60 years of age or over, he takes a pension forthwith, with a provision that such pension shall be paid from the fund, and shall be repaid to the fund by the employer in monthly payments. Now, taking that provision as it stands, I would not regard it as making so heavy a demand upon the public purse if it were to be considered alone. But in order to get the full effect of its operation we require to go back to the history of the public service at the time of and prior to the passing of the Public Service Act of 1895. Prior to the passing of that act the great majority of the public servants—and in certain classes all—were compelled to contribute to the Superannuation Fund which was created by the act of 1884. The Public Service (Superannuation) Act of 1896 gave to all officers in the public service prior to 1896 the right to either continue contributing to that fund, and so keep alive their pension rights, or to discontinue contributing to the fund, in which event they were entitled, upon retiring from the service, to a refund of the amount which they had already paid to the old superannuation fund, plus 3 per cent. interest, and plus a gratuity

in the form of a month's pay for every year of service. I would like to read clause 70 of the Public Service Act of 1902. That clause definitely divided the public servants of the state into two sections, namely, those who were in the service before the end of 1895, and those who joined the service afterwards. The clause provides:

No person who, on or after the twenty-third day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five, enters or becomes employed in any department of the public service to which this act applies, or was not at such date a contributor to the superannuation account under the provisions of the Civil Service Act of 1884, shall be allowed to become a contributor to or to acquire any right to any payment by way of pension, annual superannuation, retiring allowance, or gratuity out of such superannuation account. Nor shall any person to whom this act applies, except as in the next succeeding section provided, receive out of the consolidated revenue of the state any payment, by way of pension, annual superannuation, retiring allowance, or gratuity, either directly or indirectly.

It was made a term of the employment of all officers who joined the service after the passage of that act that they should receive no pensions and no gratuities. Now this bill deals with officers contained in these two groups. Under clause 83 of this bill, an officer of the age of 60 years at the time the act comes into operation is entitled to a pension of the dimensions I have stated, and the dependent pensions; but that does not represent all he is to get by way of provision for his old age. He will, in addition to this pension, be entitled as he is at present—under the Public Service Act of 1902—to a refund, with interest, of his contributions, supplemented by a gratuity at the rate of a month's pay for every year of service. The same thing applies to an officer of the age of 55 years. He can buy a pension for himself, his widow, and his children, the total value of which from the date of the commencement of his contribution to his retirement from the service is £216 per annum. Of that £216, the state pays £202 18s. per annum, while the employee pays £13s. 2s. per year for five years. The employee makes a total contribution of £65 10s., and in exchange he receives a pension of £104 per annum, plus £52 for his wife if she outlives him, and £13 a year for each child under 16 years of age. In addition to that, he

gets a refund of all his contributions under the old act plus a gratuity of one month's pay for every year of service. History shows cases where the contributions and the gratuity have amounted to £1,000 or even £1,500. It would be possible with a bare payment on his part of £13 2s. per year for five years for the employee to get the advantages offered by this bill, together with the gratuity and a refund of contributions amounting to another £1,000 or £1,500. That would impose a very heavy burden upon the taxpayers of this country. The equity of the case would have been better met if officers who are entitled to rights under the existing law had been given an opportunity of exchanging those rights according to their cash value for benefits of a similar cash value under this act. I have given the question most careful, and I might almost say painful, consideration, and I can see no rule of logic or reason to justify officers getting all the benefits provided under the existing law plus the benefits which they are offered under this bill. In regard to the costs of this measure, the select committee, of which I happened to be a member, has brought up a report. That report has been hastily arrived at. Every member of the committee realised during the two brief sittings which were held that they were asking a very great deal of the expert witnesses in demanding from them at such short notice statements of the probable cost of the scheme. I do not know whether these gentlemen would be prepared to pledge their professional reputations as to the accuracy to the last penny of the estimate they gave, but I do not think under the circumstances they should be asked to do so. But, judging from the attitude which they took up, I think it might be safely assumed that that estimate might at all events be taken for the purposes of this discussion to be as approximately accurate as we can, perhaps, expect or require. It has been pointed out in the select committee's report tabled by the hon. member, Mr. Kater, that the cost of the scheme, so far as what might be called the public service proper is concerned, would be about £4,120,000, to which has to be added certain other Government departments which are enumerated in the definition clause defining

the word "employer." The extra annual cost of these departments to the state is set down, roughly, at about £47,500. If we are making a proportion sum of the capital cost of this scheme as compared with the cost of the public service proper, it will mean that this bill as it stands—assuming that it applies only to those branches of the service which the actuaries have estimated it as applying to—would involve a cost of something over five and a quarter millions. Now, in the opinion of some members of the committee—myself included—although, for reasons stated in the report, we did not discuss this and many other things—the definition of "employer" contained in the clause covers many classes of public servants who have not been included in these calculations. The clause reads :

"Employer" means the Crown acting in the Government of New South Wales, the Commissioners of the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Pastures Protection Board, the Municipal Council of Sydney, the Board of Fire Commissioners of New South Wales, the University of Sydney, and the trustees of the Sydney Grammar School.

I leave out consideration as to whether the bill applies to the police force. It ought not to apply to the police force, seeing that they already have a pension system provided, or to the railway service for the same reason. But if the bill applies to a body like the Sydney Harbour Trust, I can see no reason at all following the words of the definition why it should not also apply to the railway service and the police force. The estimate of cost is based practically and entirely, so far as the public service is concerned, on the number of officers set out at page 10 of the actuarial sub-committee's report. If any large number of officers is to be taken in in addition to the members enumerated there, then the cost of the scheme must be enormously increased.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Has the hon. member any doubt but that the railway service and the police force are excluded?

The Hon. E. W. FOSBERY: The bill does not say so!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: We made that absolutely clear!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: There is no doubt that they are included, but I cannot think that the bill would be allowed to

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leave this House without its being made perfectly clear that the police force and the railway service are not included.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: We are prepared to do that!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: Apart from that, there is still a great deal of uncertainty in my mind as to the number and classes of employees who will be dealt with under the bill. Clause 11 reads:

(1) Every employee shall (except as elsewhere in this act provided) contribute to the fund from the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, or from the date of the commencement of his employment, where such employment commences after the said first day of January.

Provided that the Governor may by proclamation in the *Gazette* exclude any class of persons casually employed for less than six months from the operation of the above provisions.

The Governor's power to exclude state employees by the provision is limited to persons casually employed for less than six months. It would not be competent for the Governor to exclude from the operations of the act by proclamation any other classes of officers except those who are casually employed for less than six months. If the bill is as wide in its operation as that proviso suggests, it follows that the cost which the gentlemen who worked out the scheme actuarially set down must be enormously increased. As to how far the Legislative Council is prepared to go in making this clear I do not know, but if the Minister gets the second reading he should take steps to make clear beyond all doubt that the cost laid down before the select committee will not be greatly exceeded.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: How am I to do that?

The Hon. J. ASHTON: So far as it can be provided for, by seeing that the provisions of the bill do not extend to classes of employees not contemplated in these calculations, or, if it is considered advisable to widen the scope of the bill and include several thousand persons who do not at present fall within its scope, then before we finally pass the measure we should have some reliable estimate of the increased cost due to a change of that kind. I make the request not for the purpose of imposing a heavy burden upon the hon. member, but because I think the House is entitled to an approximate esti-

mate of the cost to the taxpayer before it is called upon to give a final vote which will put the measure on the statute-book. I realise that the discussion is a good deal complicated by the possibility, if it is not a positive probability, that this bill may be held to be a money bill which it is beyond the province of this Chamber to amend. If I were perfectly certain that the law regulating the relations of the Houses was such that it would be impossible to amend this bill, I would be compelled to vote against the second reading, because notwithstanding the views I hold on superannuation generally, there are so many figures, so many risks of vastly increased cost to the taxpayer in this bill, that I would not be prepared to shoulder the responsibility of putting the measure upon the statute-book in its present form. Whether the Vice-President of the Executive Council will be prepared in the course of the subsequent discussion to make any statement for the guidance of the House, or whether we will be able to get light on this question before we reach the third reading I do not know, but I wish to make my own position perfectly clear. I propose to cast a vote for the second reading of the bill, with the intention of endeavouring to get some amendments in Committee, but the amendments I would like to see in this bill are of a character no doubt exceedingly difficult to draft. That is to say, they require a more thorough knowledge of the facts surrounding the various cases which will crop up than any member of this House can unaided be expected to have. In voting for the second reading, I wish the hon. member in charge of the bill to distinctly understand that I reserve to myself the right, unless this bill changes its form very radically in its course through Committee, to vote against it on the third reading. It is only fair to make that statement to him, and I do not want to deprive the hon. member of the opportunity of clearing up some of the troubles with which, according to my judgment, this bill is beset.

There is one other clause to which I should like to draw attention before I sit down, and it is a clause which, although it has crept into the bill in a very unostentatious way, requires the very careful consideration of the hon. member in

charge of the measure and of the House. I refer to subclause (3) of clause 21, which provides that every contributor shall be entitled to elect to retire on a pension on the completion of thirty-five years' aggregate service. Hon. members do not need to be reminded that the law at present regulating retirement from the public service fixes the age of 60 as the retiring age. Under subclause (3) of clause 21 that law, which is a very well known one in the state, is proposed to be repealed, and every contributor to this fund is to be allowed to retire from the public service after thirty-five years' aggregate service. So that a young man who joins the service at 17 or 18 years of age will be allowed by this bill to retire from the public service at the age of 52 or 53, instead of the state having the right to demand a continuation of his services until he reaches the age of 60. There is one minor point to which I would like to draw the hon. member's attention before I sit down, and it is involved in clause 16:

(1) Each employer shall contribute to the fund regular payments at prescribed periods in respect of each contributor employed by him, based (except where otherwise in this act provided) upon the number of units of pension for which such contributor contributes, upon sex, upon the age at which such contributor commences to contribute for each unit, and, in the case of a woman contributor, upon whether she contributes for a pension payable at age fifty-five or age sixty; and such payments shall be in accordance with the tables of contributions prescribed.

If the hon. member turns to clause 79, he will find it is provided:

The Governor may, on the recommendation of the board, make regulations providing for matters expressed by this act to be prescribed, and for the better carrying out of the provisions of the act, and in such regulations may provide penalties for the breach thereof.

Looking at the contribution to be paid by the employer under the bill, clause 16 says that they shall be as prescribed, whilst in clause 15 it is provided that

during the five years commencing on the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, and until other tables of contributions are prescribed as hereinafter provided, the tables of contributions for men and women according to ages set out in schedule one shall be in force, and shall apply to both employers and employees.

The point is a minor one, but it wants consideration before the clause is reached in Committee; it is that clause 15 provides that the table of contributions set out in schedule 1 shall apply to employers as well as employees, which I have no doubt is the intention; but clause 16 provides that the table of contributions to be made by the employer shall be as prescribed, which would leave it in the hands of the Governor and Executive Council to alter the table of contributions so far as the employer is concerned, whilst the contributions of the employees are fixed.

I do not wish to add anything to what I have said. What I have said fairly states the view I hold on this question and the various provisions of the bill. It is greatly to be regretted from the standpoint of the Government, the public service, and this Chamber, that we should be called upon at this time in the history of a dying Parliament to deal with a question of this kind. No more important bill could be submitted to the Legislature, having regard both to the large number of people whose rights and privileges are affected, and to the very heavy charge which the acceptance of a bill of this kind imposes on the general taxpayer; yet we are asked to consider it at the eleventh hour of a session which is the last session in the life of a Parliament. I do not think it is fair, I repeat, either to ourselves or to the Legislative Council that Parliament should be put in a position of that kind.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: We had an example to follow!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: I am not here to defend the wrongdoings of other people. I am here to state what I believe to be the reasonable attitude for this House to take up in the interests of good legislation, and I feel perfectly certain that whatever may be done proper justice cannot be done to this bill in the time we have at our disposal.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: Without entering into a prolonged discussion upon the details of this bill, the main point we have to consider is the amount of money which the adoption of this superannuation scheme will cost those people who are not in the Government service, in the service of the City Council, the Board of Water Supply and Sewerage, the University or

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Grammar School. We have not the slightest idea of what the cost of this scheme will be to the public generally. The Government are entitled to furnish the House with reasonable information on an important question of that kind. To the present they have supplied us with no information at all. I am not now speaking against the bill; but I think the Minister in charge of the measure will agree that this is the most important bill introduced this session, and quite the most important bill submitted to the Legislative Council for a very long time. We must bear in mind that the select committee in the limited time available have not been able to obtain information on this question of cost, and, after all, it is the general taxpayer who will have to bear the burden. The amount of money involved will have to be extracted from him by some form of taxation or other. In the interests of the public this information should be forthcoming. Although we are not a representative body, I hope we represent the public; indeed I take the liberty of saying that we represent the public of New South Wales quite as well as, if not better than, the Assembly. If we would do fair service to ourselves, as well as to the position we hold, we should ask for more time to consider the questions involved in the report which has just been read. The hon. member, Mr. Ashton, furnished his views upon the matter, but that is not the way to get the information we want. The Government have no right to introduce a bill of this sort without being able to say what it will cost. They have not attempted it. They have not given information of any kind, not even approximate, upon which we can form an opinion as to whether or not we should adopt this measure. Under the circumstances it is only fair and reasonable that the consideration of the bill should stand over until next Tuesday. It may be that the Government do not understand the position. It may be that whilst the Government think the cost to the community will be thousands of pounds, it will really represent millions. From what I have seen of the bill I think it is quite possible. It may be that this bill will involve the public in an enormous cost, and remember this is not a question of cost in the ordinary sense; it is a question of putting a

burden upon those who do not come within the purview of the bill. These are the people who will have to pay, and, Lord knows, they are taxed heavily enough already. When we consider the importance of this bill from the financial point of view, I think it is only fair that this Chamber should have an opportunity of considering it more in detail, and, in doing so, have the assistance of the report presented by the select committee. I shall therefore move that the debate stand adjourned until next Tuesday.

The Hon. MARTIN DOYLE: We will all have gone home by then!

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: To ask for an adjournment until Tuesday is not an unreasonable request. There is other business of an important nature that can be gone on with meanwhile. I submit that we ought to have time to properly consider this bill. The Government has given us little or no information; indeed, I do not think they have the information themselves. They have not given us even approximate figures as to the cost of the scheme, but it is quite possible that with the help of the report of the select committee we may be able to arrive at a knowledge of what the scheme really means. The main question is, "What is this bill going to cost those who will have to pay?" I move:

That the debate be adjourned until next Tuesday.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: The hon. and learned member knows well that in moving this motion he does it with the full intention of preventing a division on the second reading. He must know that if his motion for the adjournment of the debate be carried, the bill will be lost, for Parliament will not be in session next Tuesday. A subterfuge of that kind is of no avail. This House must be prepared to accept the responsibility of rejecting this bill if the motion of the hon. and learned member is carried, for the motion is tantamount to rejection of the bill. I simply rise to say this, so that the House will understand exactly the position that I am placed in. I could not accept the motion for the adjournment of the debate until next Tuesday. I should be only too glad, possibly, to oblige the hon. and learned member with an adjournment if

it would be the means of giving him any more information than he possesses at the present time or cares to have, but it would not have that result. Other hon. members may be more interested, but I am quite sure that the hon. and learned member who moved this motion would have no more information than he has now, or cares to have, and I say that clearly and distinctly. There is a limit in all these things. Surely the hon. and learned member does not think I am such a political simpleton, or so unaware of the usages and resources for burking discussion. It is too feeble altogether. The hon. and learned member knows it is the intention of the Government to close down, if possible, to-morrow night.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: I do not!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I said it was their intention to close down the second week in October.

The Hon. J. ASHTON: If the Vice-President of the Executive Council was bound by that statement this bill would not be before us now!

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: The hon. member did not mention this bill!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Yes, I mentioned it.

The Hon. J. GARLAND: The Vice-President of the Executive Council mentioned it as one of too great importance to hurry on!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Yes, just as the hon. and learned member did when introducing a bill in the closing days of the session before his Government went out of office.

The Hon. J. GARLAND: The difference is that we gave you plenty of notice!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: The hon. and learned member, Mr. Ashton, did not speak half as favourably of that bill as he has done of this one. He said to-night he would vote for the second reading. Anyhow, I only wish to draw attention to the actual position and to make it clear that if this motion for adjournment is carried it will mean the rejection of the bill. To have a motion of this kind carried is a humiliation to the Government.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: I think that of all the sessions of Parliament I have ever attended this one is most extraordinary. I had occasion the other night to put a

question to the hon. and learned member, Mr. O'Connor, as to whether he was speaking as a member of the Labour party in opposing the bill. I did it really with honest intent because I was always under the impression that members of the Labour party were entirely opposed to a scheme of pensions for public servants of this state. As far as this House is concerned, we have not had one speech to show that the principles on which the Labour party have existed in this state have been altered. I do not propose to carry that argument further. I heard read here to-night, by the chairman of the select committee on this bill, a statement as to millions and millions of pounds being involved. I must say that I am not in a position to fully understand what was read. I do not claim to be one of those who can understand figures of that kind without an opportunity of seeing them in print. If I did understand them I might be prepared to support this bill and help it through Parliament, but I most certainly am not prepared to vote for the second reading of this measure, or indeed of any other measure, if I am in the position of not being able to understand what I am doing. Such being the case, I think it is a reasonable request that the House should have an opportunity of looking into this matter before going any further.

The Hon. MARTIN DOYLE: And killing the bill!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: As to that, I do not care what happens to the bill. I should rather do that than vote without knowing what I was doing. We must have information when dealing with a bill of this kind, and I for one am not prepared to go on unless we have that information. I am not prepared to go one step further. Does the Vice-President of the Executive Council think he is going to bludgeon us? I have often wondered during this session if the Vice-President of the Executive Council has changed his attitude and wants to bludgeon members of this House into doing as he wishes.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I would not waste my time in trying to bludgeon the hon. member!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: The Vice-President of the Executive Council at one time was very glad indeed to have my assist-

[The Hon. Dr. Nash.]

ance. I have spent a good deal of my time and energy in helping him and his Government.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: This is a declaration of independence!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: I want nothing from the Vice-President of the Executive Council or from anybody else. I think it is a wise thing that the hon. and learned member, Mr. Pilcher, has proposed. I do not plead guilty to the impeachment that I want to kill this bill. I do not want to do anything of the kind. I do not go into bills for political reasons. I deal with them solely from the point of view as to whether they are good or bad for the country. That is one of the outstanding characteristics of this House. We can deal with everything that comes before us on a sound and broad basis. I cannot go further with the bill at this stage because at this moment we have upon the table a document which has been ordered to be printed, but which has not yet reached the printer's hands. I must have a copy of that document in my hands before I am prepared to deal further with this measure. I shall support the motion for adjournment. If we have to come back here next Tuesday I am quite prepared to do it. If it is in the interests of the country that we should review a proposal involving so heavy a charge upon the taxpayers I shall be quite prepared to come back here.

The Hon. MARTIN DOYLE: The doors will be shut!

The Hon. Dr. NASH: Whose business is that? If the Government take the responsibility of closing the doors of Parliament, let them. I am not going to close them. If it is in the interests of the country that they should not be closed, let the people who close them take all responsibility. My responsibility is to understand what I am doing, and act intelligently, and uphold the interests of the people of this country. I certainly think the House should, and I shall, support the motion for adjournment.

The Hon. A. W. MEEKS: Speaking on the motion for adjournment, I wish to say that I shall support it on the grounds already set out. It is no fault of this House that the bill is brought forward at this late hour of the session. It is entirely the fault of the Government for

introducing this measure at so late a stage and giving us so little information. As a matter of fact when this bill was introduced by the Vice-President of the Executive Council he never even told the House what it was going to cost until the question was put to him, and then he mentioned a sum which, if the figures given in the select committee's report are correct, was very much short of the mark. When the report of the select committee was presented, I know that several hon. members expected that the usual practice would be followed—that the report would be printed and taken into consideration next day. Instead of that, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, so to speak, sought to force the House. He said in reply to a question, "I am going straight on."

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Hon. members will have this report in print in their hands before this bill is through!

The Hon. A. W. MEEKS: The Vice-President of the Executive Council immediately proposed the second reading. Is that a fair thing to the members of this House? I am just as favourable to the bill as the hon. member, Mr. Ashton, is, and thoroughly indorse the greater portion of his remarks. I have studied the bill as carefully as I possibly could under the circumstances, but is it fair for us to be told to-night that the House is to break up to-morrow, and we are expected to get through a bill of eighty-six clauses, involving enormous principles, and representing an enormous expenditure? If we sat up all to-night and to-morrow night we could not get through a bill like that with proper discussion. It is not a question of our trying to shelve the bill. No member of this House, so far as I have heard, and I have inquired of most of them, is opposed to superannuation.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Why make it next Tuesday?

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: The Government do not understand it now!

The Hon. A. W. MEEKS: I think the House is not only in favour of superannuation, but also of the extended principles, because those extended principles have been introduced into other institutions. But, in the first place, we had this bill presented to us at our offices or

homes at 10 o'clock one morning last week; we heard the same afternoon a very feeble second-reading speech—not equal to the hon. member's usual speech on such an occasion; then the matter was postponed until a select committee sat; and so the bill has only had one night's discussion, and only three or four members have had a chance of speaking. The report of the committee has been brought up to-night and read, and, as the hon. member, Mr. Ashton, has said, we have heard millions hurled at us. But the figures are so enormous that it is impossible for this House to give an intelligent vote on the bill until they have before them copies of the committee's report, and very much will depend, as regards the future of the bill, on how members read that report. If it is going to cost so much more than was at first contemplated, then this House is justified in hesitating, at the last stage of the session, and almost on the last day, to pass a bill which, at the very least, involves a quarter of a million of money per annum. Is it right that this House at two or three days' notice should be asked to pass a huge bill of this nature, taxing the community to the tune of £250,000? We are not opposed to superannuation, as far as I am aware; and I indorse most of what the hon. member, Mr. Ashton, said; but I do hope that this House will hesitate in attempting to go further with this bill until we have that committee's report, and have an opportunity of considering the bill in conjunction therewith. Therefore, I shall certainly support the hon. member in his amendment to adjourn this debate until next Tuesday, by which time we shall have had an opportunity of considering the bill in detail.

The Hon. J. ASHTON: I would like to ask the hon. member in charge of the bill whether some way could not be found out of this difficulty, in the nature of a compromise?

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I am willing to adjourn for a reasonable period!

The Hon. J. ASHTON: I do not want to give a vote that will take the control of the business out of the hands of the Government if it can be avoided, and I think no hon. member does; but I think—and the opinion has been expressed several times in connection with this bill

—that it is making too big a demand on hon. members to ask them to consider a bill of all this complexity and vast importance under the circumstances under which we are now considering it. I think the hon. member might make a suggestion which would get over the difficulty which has been created.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: The contention is that the adjournment shall be made for the purpose of getting the report.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: And information!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I do not know what information the hon. member wants. We have on the table a very valuable report, which contains practically all the information that was gathered by the actuarial committee. If the hon. member has not seen it, I would recommend it to his perusal. It has been on the table of the House for the last six months.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: I have not seen it!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: Then I would certainly advise the hon. member to read it. I do not know what other information I can give. That committee certainly did all they possibly could to get all information that was procurable. When it is necessary to enable the House to deal with a bill I have no objection to a reasonable adjournment; but to put it off till next Tuesday certainly looks as if it is done for the purpose of preventing the bill being gone on with. If the hon. gentleman will withdraw his resolution I shall be very pleased to go on with the discussion to-morrow. By that time every hon. member will have, in a most concise form, the whole of the figures that were placed before the select committee.

The Hon. F. E. WINCHCOMBE: You do not propose to finish this bill off to-morrow in any case, do you?

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I do not; but to-morrow will be Wednesday, and I shall still have Thursday and Friday to go on. Why should we send it over until next Tuesday?

The Hon. A. W. MEEKS: I thought you were going to close up to-morrow?

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I am willing to postpone the matter until to-morrow.

[*The Hon. J. Ashton.*]

If hon. members like we will take it after tea, so that a full opportunity will be given.

The Hon. J. ASHTON: Make it Thursday!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: If I can get through I have no objection to making it Thursday; but I would like to point out this fact—that when I agreed to the select committee being appointed it was on the clear understanding that there would be no attempt to place me in a false position as regards finality one way or the other. It was on that understanding that I agreed to the appointment of the committee. I do not say there has been a breach of faith on the part of the House, as we have not had a vote yet; but the resolution of the hon. gentleman, if carried, would certainly be a breach of confidence. I do not think I have ever broken faith with this House since I have occupied this position, and I should be very sorry indeed if during the last few days, as far as this Government is concerned, I were to feel that the House had done something in the shape of not keeping an arrangement that was made.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: No arrangement was made!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: An arrangement was made. There is no doubt that a tacit arrangement was made with the House.

The Hon. Dr. NASH: I know nothing about it!

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I do not know or care what the hon. member knows about it. The attitude of the hon. gentleman has continually been one of unprovoked assault on this bill, and on the Government too. I do not know the reason, and care less. Probably it is because he did not get his question answered, or something of that kind. I do say that the House is not playing the game—if I may use such an expression—in trying to force me into the position that insufficient time will be given to deal with this matter; and I think that if it were understood this matter should be taken up after tea to-morrow, in the meantime hon. members to have the advantage of the select committee's report, that is as far as I reasonably can go.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat spoke of a breach of faith on the part of the House.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I said there was a tacit understanding!

The Hon. H. E. KATER: He spoke of a breach of faith on the part of the House and an understanding that was entered into when I moved that this question be referred to a select committee. The hon. member agreed to the appointment of a select committee after some little time, but said that he hoped the committee would not put him in a false position by declining to report at the hour mentioned. The hour mentioned was, I think, 5 or 6 o'clock, and the hon. member was assured that the select committee would not take advantage of their position by refusing to report, but would report at the hour mentioned if it were possible. The select committee have carried that out to the letter. They reported at the very first moment they were able to, and when the hon. member speaks of a breach of faith in connection with the select committee which was appointed, he is saying what really is not the case. No breach of faith has been committed. No compact was entered into by this House, except the one compact with the select committee that they would report at the appointed hour. I do not think the hon. member in saying that is fair to this House. Of course the House is only doing what it would do at any time, quite irrespective of a select committee. Whether the hon. member likes it or not is quite another matter, but there has been no breach of faith. The select committee have carried out their duties, and carried them out to the letter.

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: I should be willing to withdraw the motion in favour of another if anything in reasonable substitution for my motion were made. The Vice-President of the Executive Council charges the Committee with a breach of faith. Does he think that the committee are chargeable with that? On the question of a breach of faith, if the Government produces a bill which may entail very heavy expenditure on the members of the community who do not come within its purview, that unmistakably is a breach of faith, unless in

the interests of the public they can give solid reasons for it. So far we have had a committee appointed and heard a number of figures read from its report. They cannot fathom this question. Is it unreasonable that this debate should be adjourned, in order that we may have an opportunity of having the question answered—"What is to be the cost to the public?" That is a very big question, because the people who have to make up half the contributions, and the deficit in connection with those at reduced rates, are the public generally. If we do not represent the public we ought not to be here, although we are not elected by them; and we have a right to demand, before we pass this bill, a statement which bears truth on the face of it, and can be scrutinised so as to see whether it is reliable or not. If we were to vote blindfold for a bill involving enormous sums of money which would mean increased taxation, we should be discrediting ourselves and quickly bringing about the time when there would be no Council, and if we did that sort of thing the Council would probably cease to exist. We have the right to demand from any Government a reliable statement, reasonably intelligible, that the bill does not involve a large public expenditure. There are other matters in the bill which I do not propose to speak about now, but unless some reason is given for a variation in my amendment I shall adhere to it. To-morrow would be absurd. We have men amongst us who are well acquainted with figures, and they have said twice, why does not the Government come boldly forward and explain matters to the committee, and show them approximately what the cost will be? If it is to be a reasonable cost, no doubt the bill will be carried without delay. If it is to be a cost involving large taxation probably the House, as in other cases, will say "No." Another very remarkable thing is that at this late stage of the session, when Parliament is probably about to adjourn, a bill of this sort is introduced. I do not know why such a course has been taken, although the Vice-President probably knows the reason. If some more reasonable proposition is put for-

ward by the Vice-President I will withdraw my resolution. Otherwise I think the House should accept my proposal.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: If the hon. member will alter his resolution to Thursday next I will accept it!

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: If Thursday next meets with the approval of hon. members I will agree to that day.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: Yes, it meets with our approval!

The Hon. C. E. PILCHER: Very well, I will substitute Thursday next for Tuesday.

The Hon. F. FLOWERS: I will not agree to any further adjournment after that!

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Motion (by the Hon. C. E. PILCHER) agreed to:

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday next.

SAVINGS BANKS AMALGAMATION BILL.

Message received from the Legislative Assembly stating they agreed to some and disagreed with other of the amendments made by the Council in this bill.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 7 October, 1913.

Printed Answers—Death of the Hon. Member for Armidale—Petition—Oral Answers—Eight Hours Bill—City Railway Bill (second reading)—Proposed Public Works (Suspension of Standing Orders)—Ballina to Booyong Railway—Canowindra—Eugowra Railway—Roslyn to Taralga Railway—Grafton to South Grafton Railway—Sydenham to Botany Railway—Newcastle Floating Dock—Tamworth Water Supply—Ballina to Booyong Railway Bill—Canowindra—Eugowra Railway Bill—Roslyn to Taralga Railway Bill—Sydenham to Botany Railway Bill—Grafton to South Grafton Railway Bill—Newcastle Floating Dock Bill—Barmedman to Rankin's Springs Railway Bill—Seat of Government Surrender Bill—Auctioneers Interstate Licensing Bill—Servants' Registry Offices Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

PRINTED ANSWERS.

NORTH COAST RAILWAY.

Mr. BRINER asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) What is the total number of men now employed on each section of the North Coast railway, and

[*The Hon. C. E. Pilcher.*

the total number employed on the whole line on the work of construction? (2) When is it anticipated that the section from South Grafton to Glenreagh, and from Coff's Harbour to Repton, will be completed?

Answer,—(1) Section 4, Taree to Wauchope, 937; section 7, Coff's Harbour to Repton, 279; section 9, Grafton to Glenreagh, 138; total, 1,354. The above is the total employed on work of construction, but does not include men engaged cutting sleepers and timber. (2) The section from South Grafton to Glenreagh should be completed in about nine months, and from Coff's Harbour to Repton in the same time.

RAILWAY, MOREE-GARAH.

Mr. FITZPATRICK asked the MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1) What was the departmental estimate of cost of railway from Moree to Garah? (2) What was the lowest tender for the work, who was the tenderer, and what was the period he proposed to occupy in carrying it out? (3) What sum has now been expended on the line to Garah, and has it been completed?

Answer,—(1) The estimated cost of that portion of the work for which tenders were invited is £92,536 16s. The estimate for the section for all work is £173,860. (2) C. McLure—amount of tender, £97,775 19s. 4d.; time for completion, fifty-two weeks. (3) The work has been completed, and the net expenditure to end of June is £158,445, which sum includes all expenditure on station buildings, bridges, construction of line, and all other works not included in the tender.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS (GROUP No. 4).

Mr. HOLLIS asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1) Has his attention been drawn to the remarks of Mr. Justice Heydon, when delivering judgment on the appeal against the wages board award (Government Railways Group No. 4), in which he stated in reference to one of the clauses appealed against "that the Chief Commissioner for Railways actually suggested the clause"; and referring to another clause appealed against said "that the Chief Commissioner, who