

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We must rely on the measure being administered with a little common sense. This will not be the only important Bill administered by the department. The decision as to how grants shall be apportioned rests with the Minister for Works; it will be for him to say in what manner that money shall be distributed.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: A large amount of political patronage.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: According to the interjections of hon. members, they appear to be afraid to trust the Minister in the matter of deciding what is a trunk road and what is not. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. W. Kingsmill, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.3 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 23rd September, 1913.*

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Attorney General: 1, Fifth annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation, 2, Return showing attendance of Supreme Court judges for the twelve months ended 31st August, 1913 (ordered on motion by Mr. Lander).

By the Minister for Works: Regulations, forms, and specimen account books in connection with roads boards.

### QUESTION — TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY ROUTE.

Mr. LEWIS asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed on page 11 of the Railway Commissioner's annual report a statement calling attention to the necessity for determining the route of the 4ft. 8½in. gauge trunk railway in its coastal section? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to settle this question at an early date? 3, Before adopting any route will he give the local and other representative bodies an early opportunity of presenting many weighty and powerful reasons in favour of the adoption of a route on the south side of the river, and thus enable the Commissioner to actively proceed with the works he has in hand?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Premier) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Investigations are proceeding. 3, The Government are ever ready to consider petitions on such matters.

### QUESTION — PERTH TRAMWAYS TIME TABLE.

Mr. MOORE (for Mr. Wisdom) asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Are the Perth tramways run to a time table? 2, Are copies of the time table available to the public? 3, If not, will he consider the advisability of making such copies so available?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (for the Minister for Railways) replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, The time table is being revised, and will be issued to the public at the earliest possible date.

### BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): While agreeing with other hon. members that the departments should be amalga-

mated, I do not admit that the amalgamation which has been brought about by the Minister for Works has so far been satisfactory. Everyone who is familiar with this country knows that one of the most important questions we have to deal with is that of water conservation and the provision of a cheap supply of water, whether it be for the metropolitan area, country towns, such as Bunbury or Northam, or the provision of water for the distant goldfields. We have a high summer temperature over a good deal of our cultivated land, and at the same time we have a fairly light rainfall. Even in the South-West we are aware that the rainfall is limited to the winter months, and that water conservation there is a matter of great importance. We all agree that the best means of bringing about a cheap supply of water should be adopted, but this can only be achieved by the appointment of responsible officers who will give their undivided attention to the work. It is not a question of sinking a well here or a well there, or a dam here or a dam there, but it is a question which must engage the serious attention of those whose business it will be to direct operations in the future. I believe that the Minister was right in bringing about an amalgamation of these offices, and I think he will agree that I can speak with some authority. During the time I was Minister for Lands I saw the need for doing something as quickly as possible, and it was arranged that an officer of the Water Supply Department should be placed at the temporary disposal of the Agricultural Department. For a couple of years great work was done by this officer, Mr. Castilla, but eventually the present Minister for Works, on bringing about the amalgamation, removed the work of constructing dams and wells from the control of the Agricultural Department, and placed it under the control of the Water Supply Department. At a later stage I will endeavour to show that the work which has been done under the Act which was passed last session has not been as satisfactory as that which was carried out by the officer when he was under the control of the Agricultural Department.

I am pleased that we have been given the opportunity of discussing water supplies generally. The Minister for Works, when introducing the Bill, made one of his characteristic attacks upon the previous Administration in connection with the subject matter of the measure, namely, water supplies and sewerage, and he particularly dealt with the goldfields water supply. It is of course my duty to defend the work of the past Administration and, if possible, to show that that work was well done, and that since the amalgamation there has not been any improvement brought about. At the present time the Minister has an under secretary whose duty it is to attend to these matters. He has engineers who have been taken from the Works Department. He has an engineer for irrigation, an engineer for drainage, and an engineer for water supply. All these gentlemen are highly qualified, who could and should do better in the future than it was possible to do in the past. The Minister for Works of course claims that the amalgamation has led to a considerable saving. My opinion, however, is that so far that has not been the case. It may be, of course, that the services of officers have been dispensed with, and the Minister may be able to prove that the office accommodation is costing less than was the case before. However, it is my duty to point out just what has happened in connection with the expenditure to which he referred. One of the serious charges the Minister made against the previous Administration was that that Administration neglected their duty in regard to the goldfields mains. Those mains were a source of trouble to everyone. No one ever anticipated that they would last for ever. The Minister stated that the previous Administration were guilty of neglect. But will the Minister tell us what might have been done? The pipes gradually corroded, and as the days went by they carried less water. It was known that their capacity was becoming less, but there were no means, so far as I know, to prevent that. Will the Minister for Works tell us now what he proposes to do in order to stop the corrosion?

Mr. Taylor: What was the intention of your Government with regard to that matter?

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Let it slide.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We did more than the hon. member who interjected would ever have thought of doing, but it was impossible for any Government to do very much. It might be that the pipes could have been taken up and cleaned and the rust to some extent removed. Then this was not a question which affected any limited distance. The pipes became corroded from one end to the other, and consequently were becoming less useful than they had been. It was impossible for the past Administration, just as it is impossible for the present Administration, in two years of office to prevent this happening. I believe some chemical is now added to the water by which means I hope some good will be done. I want the country to understand that this difficulty was anticipated, but it came sooner than it was ever thought it would by the late Mr. O'Connor and by Sir John Forrest. The Minister for Works also told us that there were no pipes to replace those which failed, and his words in this respect were, "The difficulty was that the Government got down to their last pipe." I do not suppose the Minister for Works expects us to take that literally, because he knows that even he himself has not used the last pipe. In the yards at Northam there is a fairly big supply, and here and there along the line pipes are lying ready for use. It would be futile to keep a big supply on hand, because gradually the pipes are filling up, and when the time comes for renewal, it will be a question of laying down the pipe line again. I will show the House what provision was made by a previous Administration for the renewal of these pipes. It is probably true, of course, that there is no big supply of pipes on hand, but the Minister is wrong in saying that the previous Administration should have ordered a big supply. The Minister has been in office for two years and has not ordered one pipe yet, so I understand. He stated that the pipes ought to have

been ordered earlier, so as to be available when they were required. The member for Murray interjected that the Government get the pipes from Hoskins', and the Minister agreed to that. I suppose that is correct, and that the officers of the department knew all along where they could get the pipes when they wanted them. If they did not know, I would advise the Minister to change his officers. This is a big work that requires the exercise of brains and energy on the part of the responsible officers. It is no use having officers in that department merely as recorders, and if the Minister says that Mr. Trethowan did not know where to turn for pipes, the sooner he gets rid of that officer the better. I would like to point out to members of the House and to the country that when Sir John Forrest instituted that great scheme, a great work that only a great man would have proposed, he provided for a three per cent. sinking fund. That sinking fund has been accumulating year by year, and at the end of June, 1912, amounted to £1,064,000. I suppose that to-day it amounts to something like £1,150,000. The pipes are not going to blow out in a few days, or a few months, or even a few years, and in 12 years the total cost of the scheme, including the reservoir, and pumping stations, will have been repaid by the sinking fund. The position now is that the main cost £1,797,000, and the sinking fund, which is a renewal fund, amounts to £1,150,000, so that there was no want of foresight on the part of those who fixed this sinking fund and who were responsible for the scheme. In the face of those figures is there anything for the country to croak about? If we were going to lose the pipe and require to borrow the money for the renewal, without having a sinking fund available to cover the cost of renewal, there would be cause for alarm, but thanks to the wisdom of a past Administration, this expense has been provided for, and when we do renew the pipe the public indebtedness will not be more in connection with this scheme than when it was first instituted. Could the position be better? Is there anyone foolish enough to

suppose that any pipe that could have been laid down, whether wooden, cast-iron, or steel, would last for ever. Of course it would not, and when the Minister renews this pipe he will provide for a sinking fund sufficient to cover the cost of the new main during its life of usefulness. As the Minister has criticised this work, I should like to know from him if this sinking fund should not be added to by the interest which the sinking fund has earned over a good many years. This is important to the users of the scheme, because they are now told that they must pay for the whole of the scheme. If this £1,150,000 is invested it should be earning £30,000 or £40,000 and it should be credited with that amount, and the users of the water should have that amount allowed off their annual payments. The annual report of the Goldfields Water Scheme for the year 1911-12 is well worth studying. I believe I am right in saying that it is the duty of every member of the House, particularly the members for Collie, Fremantle, and Subiaco, to read this report and study it carefully. If they do, they will see that as a business proposition it is a very good one indeed. General revenue contributes to the sinking fund something like £25,000 a year, but when we remember that that amount is only one-third of the sinking fund, and that at the end of 12 years the scheme will be paid for and belong to the people, it must be admitted that this is a magnificent undertaking in the interests of the people. Of course, the scheme is paid for mainly by those who benefit specially, particularly the people on the goldfields, and along the pipe track. I hope hon. members will study the figures, and then they will see that there is no reason for any pessimism in regard to this great work. The Minister also will do well to point out to the country the true facts in regard to the sinking fund and the provision for the renewal of the pipe line. I know there is a pessimistic impression abroad, one might almost call it funk, and it would be well to allay it. I am often told that the renewal of the pipe line will be a tremendous drain on the State, whereas

Sir John Forrest made provision by which this renewal would never be any drain on the funds of the country. The Minister for Works said that the present Government had spent large sums of money on maintenance. The figures in this report show that in 1909-10 the maintenance was £30,000, and in 1911-12 it was £30,000 again, there being only a difference of £170 more in 1911-12 than in 1909-10. Yet the Minister complains that the previous Administration did not do their duty and that the present Government had to find a lot of money from revenue. I hope that the Minister will continue to find whatever is necessary to keep the scheme in order, and that the people will realise that the scheme has never been neglected and has always been a matter of serious consideration with past Governments. I want now to deal with the question of the rating of agricultural land. The Minister has had some experience of this business of rating on the basis of 5d. per acre. The rate is 2d. to the westward of Northam, 4d. beyond Northam, and 5d. at Goomalling.

The Minister for Works: There is another proposition now running to over 5d.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, I hope it will not wreck the people.

The Minister for Works: If the people sign petitions asking for the water and are willing to pay this rate, they must know more than you do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On a basis of 4d. per acre and 6s. for water it will take at least 20 per cent. of the gross return from wool, sheep and lambs on the very best sheep land to pay for water, and it will take 50 per cent. of the gross returns from the sheep that can be carried on the poorer lands. Now, the Minister must know that is not a business proposition. Where sheep solely are carried this rate could not be faced at all, and it can only be faced now because farming operations are provided for.

Mr. Underwood: How much water will a sheep drink?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I leave that for the hon. member who represents the pastoralists to tell the House, but if it were

a northern sheep it would drink a good lot. I want the people to understand what this water supply means to them. No management of this scheme will be satisfactory unless that management means cheap water. It is not a question of supplying the minimum quantity of water for the revenue needed to cover the cost of the scheme, but rather of giving the people plenty of water, and means of using it. The people of Northam should get thousands of gallons of water supplied at 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons, and, I believe, in South Australia the farmers get the water for not more than 1s. 4d. I can assure the Minister that if water is supplied to the farmer at more than 2s. it will not be profitable. If we multiply the quantity of water supplied by four and charge the farmer 2s., instead of 6s., so that he can use it on a garden, it becomes a business proposition, and the farmer can use it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Why should the farmers have it cheaper than anybody else?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Because the farmer keeps everybody else. Fremantle would be as dead as Julius Caesar but for the farmer. The hon. member could not keep a pile in the Fremantle jetty going without the farmers. It is not a bit of use putting down a scheme for the compulsory supply of water unless the water can be supplied on a commercial basis. I can assure the Minister that if he gets beyond 2s. per thousand he is asking the farmers to pay something beyond their means.

The Minister for Works: Would you suggest that I should give the water to them at 2s. and make the general taxpayer pay 4s.?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I will show in a minute what rates the Minister is charging elsewhere. I do not know that the Minister or his department is capable of managing this scheme, but if they are not they must make way for other people. Water must be cheap to be of any use at all.

The Minister for Works: You supplied water to them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not beyond 2s. 6d. per thousand.

The Minister for Works: And you made the goldfields people pay for it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister went to Doodlakine when the row was on over the rating, and he told the people there that he could not reduce the price of water because it would mean a loss of hundreds of thousands of pounds, although his total receipts were only £77,000, and at the very time when he made that statement he was reducing the price of water to the goldfields people. But that is not the point at all. I do not object to the goldfields people getting the water cheaply; I think that no one can afford to pay a very high price for water. I would like to see Perth have a better and a cheaper supply than it has got, and I would like to see the goldfields with a cheaper supply, because it would mean increased activity and increased output, and more work for everybody; and, just as I believe it would be good for the goldfields, so I believe cheap water will be good for the farmers. It is not a bit of use putting the people's money into a scheme that amounts to the farmer paying 20 per cent. of the gross returns from his stock, and when it comes to paying 50 per cent. it is absurd to face such a scheme at all. I know that men whose requirements are small are willing to face anything rather than put up with the inconvenience of carting water, and no one can say that for a year or two it will not benefit them to pay any charges, but when these schemes are put in they last a long time. I protested before against the rating charge and I protest against this present system of supplying water to the farmers, and I shall protest whenever the opportunity is offered. Do Ministers know what a fourpenny rate plus £5 for each holding means? It means 6d. per acre per annum for water, an amount that many people think too much to pay for the freehold of land, with a limitation of 20 years against their 6d. per annum. If it is too much to pay for land with a limit of 20 years, it is too much to load the people with for all time for water. The trouble is that this tax has to be met and the further trouble is that the rates take away the profit. In Goomalling the rate is 8s. per

thousand gallons. Just fancy paying 4d. per acre and a rate of 8s. per thousand gallons. Water is supplied on the goldfields at a much cheaper rate. At Southern Cross it is down to 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons, where the profit from the mine does not exceed 5 per cent. Where it exceeds  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. the water is 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons at Southern Cross. If it is good to give the mine owner, who has his mine on low-grade ore, cheap water the same system should be adopted in regard to the farmer. Just compare the 2s. 6d. at Southern Cross with the 8s. at Goomalling, with the 5s. at York, the 5s. 6d. at Beverley. At all extensions east of Northam it is 6s., with the exception of Goomalling, where it is 6s. and 8s. per thousand gallons. Compare the goldfields charges with the charges made to the former. True, the mine owners use considerably more water in the one centre, but the pumping cost is just the same whether you use a lot or a little. We want the water to be supplied to the farmers as cheaply as possible, because cheap water means an increase of stock. No one will face the development of the country with water at a high rate. I do not say that the water supplied from the Coolgardie main has not done good. But I say it ought to be made available at a much lower cost than at the present time. I know the Minister will not agree with me in this connection. The idea of the department is that the farmers can stand very heavy taxation. I warn the Minister that before he is many months older he will have trouble in this connection.

The Minister for Works: You are starting another agitation, are you?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister can do very well without me. I had nothing to do with the previous row; it was my friends from York and Toodyay. If I had had anything to do with it the Minister could not have got off so lightly as he did. He did not come off too lightly as it was, for at the conference he had to agree to reduce the price of the water. I hope the Minister will understand that I believe the water should be supplied at

a reasonable rate, but at 6s. per thousand gallons and a tax of 4d. it is iniquitous.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Who are the best judges, the people using it or you?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member will have an opportunity of speaking directly, but I may tell him that if the Minister supplied water at 6s. per thousand gallons to the timber workers there would be great trouble; they would pull down the House. But any tax will do for the farmers, any charge will do for the farmers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The farmer has your measure.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am told the farmer has my measure. The farmer knows me well; he knows I am his friend. He has the measure of the hon. member for Forrest, he turns him down every time.

Mr. O'Loughlen: You got a fright last time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I never had a fright in my life. I want to provide a slight shock for the member for Forrest. Let us see what this report says in regard to the water supply in agricultural areas. Some of the officers seem to be fond of pulling the Minister's leg. They tell him in this report that he is a magnificent Minister; there was never a Minister so capable of doing so much; until this heaven-sent Minister came along nothing had been done.

The Minister for Works: They must tell the truth sometimes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, they are not like the Minister, they must tell the truth sometimes, but they do not say all they would like to say. Here is what Mr. Trethowan says—

The report by the Engineer for Water Supply and Sewerage (Mr. Hugh Oldham) and the detailed statements accompanying it are particularly useful and informative. They especially emphasise the extremely valuable results which have attended the policy of the existing Government in vigorously testing the country for well supplies by boring.

I will show members the magnificent results attained in a few minutes. I will show you what Mr. Trethowan says—

Apart from the great value of the public wells which have already been provided over a very wide area, these boring operations provide permanent data for the assistance of settlers in determining as to the best and cheapest methods of developing and conserving water supplies on their holdings.

No settlement in the country can stand the cost of sinking each well under this system. I have some very interesting maps here which I propose to show members before I conclude. There is a lot in the report by Mr. Trethowan that ought to be read. There is one very interesting paragraph, and this the farmers I think should remember. It says that for the farmer there is to be a loan of boring plants, but for the squatter they propose another scheme. This will be found on pages 50 to 52 of the report. They were going to sink for artesian water in the North. They were going to use the funds of the Treasury for this purpose, and if they struck water the pastoralists would pay the cost, but if they failed to strike water the taxpayer of the country was to pay the cost. A very good scheme for the squatter. I wonder the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) has not unearthed it and made it public from one end of the country to the other. I do not know if the scheme is in operation, but this is in the report. If it is so the Minister should consider carefully before entering on the work. It may cost some thousands of pounds to put down bores and if the bore turns out fresh, so much the better for the squatter. If it is salt or the supply is inadequate, so much the worse for the State. If the water struck is fresh the payment is to be extended over a number of years. I believe in assisting the squatter to obtain water, but the same system should be applicable in every part of the State. I want the Government to bore for the farmer, and only charge him when they succeed. Members know that tank sinking was largely availed of by the previous Administration. I want to point out that the State had boring done in Mr. O'Connor's time. The country had been tested time and again. It was known for many years that

there was only a small chance of getting a good water supply, and not much chance of getting stock water. But when the Minister gets into office he says, "The scheme of my predecessors is no good, we will put another scheme into operation and bore for water."

Mr. O'Loughlen: With highly satisfactory results.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Living up to the Minister's desire, Mr. Oldham reported—

Tank sinking which was being carried out, up to the period referred to above, was a failure as a source of supply, the tanks (with few exceptions) being dry, owing to the limited and unsatisfactory nature of the rainfall during the preceding winter.

Further on he says that most of the tanks in August had water in them, some a considerable quantity. Last year we had a very heavy fall in September which filled a good many dams. Mr. Oldham goes on to say—

The departmental records of boring which had been carried out up to some four or five years previously, though the results were very small in relation to the expenditure, showed that the bulk of the boring had been done in the forest country, but the supplies of fresh water had been generally found on or near the edge of sand plain country.

Boring was carried out in all parts of the country previously, in fact the whole country was tested. It is not to be supposed that when the amalgamation of departments was brought about there was much change because the same officials are still carrying out the work. But these reports are simply an attempt on the part of this official, at any rate, to tickle the ear of the Minister. Again he says—

Some thirty boring plants, which at the time were stored at Fremantle, were turned out without a day being lost.

I believe these boring plants were some that I ordered, and which came to hand shortly after we left office. The store was no place for them; they should have been put into use at once, and the Government should be censured for putting these

boring plants into the store. In regard to this boring, Mr. Oldham says—

Results more than justified the brightest hopes entertained, for within two weeks from the commencement of operations, satisfactory results began to come to hand.

I want the people of the country to know what the satisfactory results were. I believe that the wells and dams should be put down. As a matter of fact, they have gone back on the policy of putting down dams and abandoned the policy of putting down wells. I believe that water conservation is the right policy for this country, but the people should get the maximum quantity of water for the expenditure, and not, as under the present Administration, the minimum quantity. We find the average cost of the wells put down is £300. When we include boring we find the total number of feet bored was 71,249, and the cost 6s. 9d. per foot. There is not a farmer in the country who would put down these bores in sand plain and spend 6s. 9d. a foot.

Mr. Heitmann: What a splendid expert you are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did not spend 6s. 9d. on 47 feet; it should not cost 9d. a foot to have jumped these bores down.

Mr. Turvey: Why not be fair and say that the amount includes the whole cost of carting equipment by camels?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not suppose for a moment that the people of this country imagine that these 1,500 bores were put down side by side, but were spread over the whole face of the country, so that the shifting of the plant, of course, is costly.

Mr. Turvey: Compare that price then with the farmer's price.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: When you have a cost of 6s. 9d. for 47ft. holes and the sending of plant too, then I say this country is not getting a fair deal, and that this is not a fair cost.

Mr. Foley: What do you reckon a fair thing for sinking these wells?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As we have put down 1,500 of these bores, the people who put them down should have had con-

siderable experience before they were finished the job, and that experience should have meant very much cheaper working.

Mr. Foley: If miners had been given the work in preference to farmers, it would have been done a lot cheaper.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I daresay miners were employed on this work, and not farmers. In some cases, I believe, they sent for miners. I am protesting against this cost of 6s. 9d. a foot for this work. The total cost of the boring and well-sinking operations has been £57,000. Then Mr. Oldham says—"It is confidently claimed that at least an increased value of like amount has been given to the land in the areas affected by the lasting benefit of the past year's work." That benefit just amounts to this: of these 1,500 bores put down at the cost of £50,000, there were 200 bores fresh, and 130 were stock water. Two hundred out of 1,500 fresh and 130 stock water!

Mr. Foley: You blame the Labour Government for that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If hon. members want to know something about the method that was adopted, they can turn up this report; a circular mark means no result. These red spots, fresh water. Why did they want to put down six holes side by side? Surely when they got fresh water, they got what they needed, but went on boring probably because it was a comfortable camp or something of that kind. Here we have 14 bores. The cockey would have put down his well and got water without that expense of 6s. 9d. a foot. The map is well worth studying. Hon. members will see if they take the trouble to look at the report, where the money goes. Of course, it is not revenue, it is loan money, but it should have done a power of work. It is not only the present Minister who has put down more than one hole in one place; in the Kwollyin area some years ago they put down a bore in a reserve on the right spot, and got magnificent water, but they went on to the road a few hundred yards away and got another supply, and put down the well on the road and not on the reserve.

Mr. Heitmann: The hon. member paid Mr. Phillips of Northam for a shaft that he did not have to sink.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the hon. member for Cue can say his very keen supporter Mr. Phillips of Northam did this, I am sure the Minister will see the amount is recovered.

Mr. Heitmann: He got it from you and laughed up his sleeve.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am sure a man would if he got something for nothing from me. I confess my misdeeds always. There was another work undertaken by the same department in my time; they let a contract for a road, and the day-labour fellows got there first and put the road in. The contractor came after, and put another road a few yards away from the first one.

Mr. Lander: How many times did you twist the Katanning-Kojonup railway?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I would like to twist the hon. member's neck more often. The Minister told us he would present this report, in order that we might be fully informed of all he did. I am now asking hon. members if they will look at the report. Hon. members should study it very closely indeed. It is of considerable interest to them because we are not getting value for our money at a time when it is very necessary that we should do so. If hon. members turn up pages 8 to 20, they will see the results obtained from boring operations. If they turn up the quantity of water in the wells, they will find for the most part there is very little. I want to call the attention of hon. members to the supply of water in the dams. Hon. members know that Mr. Oldham condemned the tank supplies. He points out in his report that in August most of these dams held a considerable quantity of water. The Minister will be well advised in continuing to sink dams. Of course he will need to put down bigger dams than I was able to do before there was any water to use when sinking them. Our trouble was that we took supplies from the farmers, and had to limit our energies to a comparatively small dam in each centre, with the idea

of going back later on and sinking bigger dams here and there throughout the agricultural districts. I have no wish to touch upon the sewerage question very much, but it has just come to my knowledge that a three-roomed cottage in West Perth cost £82 to connect. I suppose the Minister will say that this is perfectly satisfactory, but it does not seem satisfactory to me. There are complaints about the way the work is done and about the cost of the work. The work is done under the day-labour system and I believe it is absolutely unsatisfactory—as unsatisfactory as the Ministerial benches, and just about as empty in result. The leader of the Opposition dealt very extensively with the question as it affects Perth. The Minister said the system of deferring payment should be limited to those who cannot pay. The Minister, however, should remember that when it comes to assisting the people, for instance, in connection with the baby bonus or old age pensions, it is argued that men should not be pauperised. Probably we agree with that. If any extension of time is given to anyone it should be given to all property owners. A man might be very rich in property, but very poor in cash. A man may expect to pay £100 and find the Minister demands £300 for the work, and it is not always convenient to pay. I enter my protest against the rates charged by the department we are now forming in the agricultural districts. I hope the Minister will see that his officers do their duty; they are in charge of millions of expenditure, they are in charge of a department which provides great opportunities. It is not a department which can be controlled by the very best officials; it must be controlled by the best business men in the department.

Mr. Foley: Do you agree with Ministers having the right to sack now? You have been against it for a long while.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have never been against it, and I would have sacked the hon. member if he had been an inspector under me.

Mr. Underwood: The hon. member would have sacked you.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member and his party did. I am always perfectly willing to admit the truth. They put us out and the people are very sorry indeed for it, especially those who are getting their houses connected under the sewerage system, and those who are paying taxes for water; they are very sorry indeed, and they will reverse the decision, and in another year will alter the tune. I want to refer to the drafting of this Bill, and call attention to certain provisions apart from the general effect of the measure. I find so far as book-keeping is concerned, that the Minister desires to set up special authority all for himself. The book-keeping apparently does not come under the Trading Accounts Act. Of course, it might be brought under, despite Clause 11. At any rate there are special provisions made for book-keeping. Then there is a new idea, that is limiting the power of the Auditor General, under this Bill. The Auditor General should have the fullest possible power. The Minister smiles, but he has not read the Bill. The Minister will have to convince members sitting on this side that he does not intend to limit the powers of the Auditor General.

The Minister for Works: As an ex-Minister you ought to be ashamed of making such statements.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As an ex-Minister the present Minister should be ashamed to bring down a Bill drafted like this.

The Minister for Works: As an ex-Minister you should be ashamed to talk such nonsense.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Why does the clause refer to the Auditor General at all if it is not a limit on his powers? The Auditor General has full power now. He need not have been mentioned in the Bill. The Minister tries bluff too often; he has bluffed a bit too much in connection with the Bill. He told us gravely that the whole of the money earned will go into revenue, and that all sums need to be spent from revenue. But we find all sorts of reservations. We find the Minister may set aside money for the purpose of equalising expenses and for

equalising earnings. He may set aside money for renewals or for a sinking fund. The sinking fund is not good enough for the Minister, and he is going to determine himself what shall be set aside. For many other purposes money may be set aside and may be invested by the Treasurer. If money is to be invested this House should be consulted, and if the Minister wants to put a special sinking fund against a work that is not going to last very long, the House should determine what that sinking fund shall be. It would be very dangerous to allow the Minister to use the revenue earned without consulting Parliament. All moneys should go into general revenue, and Parliament should vote all expenditure, even expenditure in connection with renewals or sinking funds. I do not suppose the Minister wishes to have all these powers conferred upon him, which are provided in the clause. At any rate, so far as I am concerned he will not have them. Parliament should be consulted in connection with all these matters. Parliament was consulted when the sinking fund was set up in regard to the Coolgardie Water Scheme. The Minister should know that, for he was in Parliament, I think, at the time; at all events he was in Parliament before the scheme was completed. I point out the extraordinary provisions of the measure in order that members may be ready to deal with them when in Committee. In the meantime I desire to say that the amalgamation is right, even if the administration is not all it ought to be. However, I suppose that in time the administration will be altered, and I hope that when it is altered it will become more sympathetic. To-day we hear loud complaints of the cost of sewerage, of agricultural water supply, of goldfields water supply, and of towns water supplies. I suppose these complaints are not to be avoided, and that whatever charge was set up there would still be complaints; but I think it will be agreed that the enormous imposts made under the present administration should cause even the Minister to pause and consider whether or not people should get value for their money. I have no inten-

tion to object to the second reading, because I believe the amalgamation necessary. I hope the Minister will take some heed of the warning I have offered this afternoon. If he does not it is his own fault. I have done my duty in protesting against the methods of administration, and I hope that other members will take up the cause in the interests of the people.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): I am going to support the Bill because I think it is one of those Bills which this party so often introduces, and which we term honest Bills. The amalgamation of these two departments is a step in the right direction. We must congratulate the Minister on the amalgamation of the two departments, and I trust the Minister will have the backbone to stand by what he has done, and not be like the other party and submit to all those sectional departments. Let us hope the Minister will put the boot into them and insist upon doing the right thing. What we want is a reduction of the cost. If the Minister goes out to East Perth I am of opinion that, if he has not a body-guard with him, the people out there will be inclined to stick his head in the filth of the filter beds. During the whole of the last twelve months the filter beds in East Perth, and also the river, have been a disgrace to the department. I do not blame the present Government for the baby we have to carry in East Perth: I blame the late Government for the scandalous way in which they allowed a sanitary site to be dumped in the heart of East Perth, and allowed a beautiful river to be contaminated. They were just led by the nose by the so-called experts. Fancy calling them experts! They drove piles 90 feet for the Bunbury Bridge, and were still in slush. Yet we find the experts of the last Government going out and putting a filter bed on 90 feet of slush and expecting it to hold. When the present Minister took charge, he found the filter beds floating about like so many corks.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Something that should have been tied down.

Mr. LANDER: This was brought up before your Government when in power.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, the hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. LANDER: This grievance at East Perth was brought before their party by the then member for East Perth when he referred to the filter beds as rising and falling with the tide.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Did he bring them along with him?

Mr. LANDER: No. I must give the Minister a little credit for the advance he has made; he has given us reinforced concrete filter beds. I expect they will be found floating down to Fremantle presently. The conditions over there at East Perth are simply shocking. It is a serious question that this thing should be allowed to exist at Burswood. It will be remembered that when the late Mr. Crowder was alive he threatened to take out an injunction against the city council for contaminating the river. It was going on then.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): That was not the filter beds, it was the drain.

Mr. LANDER: Here is the Honorary Minister in charge of the Health Department. The best thing to do with him would be to run plaster of paris down his neck and stiffen his backbone, so that he would take action against the city council for allowing a nuisance to exist. If it is a nuisance the Minister is cowardly in not causing his inspectors to do their duty and take action on the score of the drain. The drain has been a nuisance, but during the last twelve months it has been overshadowed by the greater nuisance of the septic tank. It is the duty of the Government to face the question as men and admit that the thing is a failure. It is a second Fremantle dock, where £200,000 was sunk. We are going to sink a similar sum in East Perth. Let us put in a pumping station and get it away from Perth at once. We may just as well do it as play with it till we are tired, for we will have to do it just the same. It should never have gone into the river in the first place. There is not the least doubt that the late Government were led, the same as we are often led, by

the nose by a string held by the experts. When these experts lead one into trouble they do the disappearing trick and get away. I hope the Minister will put his foot down before they go too far. A point made by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) was the cost of connections. There is an outcry all over Perth against the excessive cost in connection with the sewerage operations.

Mr. S. Stubbs: So there is.

Mr. LANDER: There is not the least doubt about it. It is costing too much; but it must be borne in mind that if one requires a real good job one must pay a good price for it. The member for Northam stated that it cost £80 to connect a small house in West Perth. The hon. member might have gone further and told us the length of drain or the number of drain pipes required in respect to that place, for these factors make a considerable difference in the cost of sewerage. I have had my own done. Mine was pretty costly, for it ran into £42. Still I have not the least fault to find with what my own cost me.

Mr. Harper: You have got off lightly.

Mr. LANDER: No; I have had a good job made, and no doubt it will be paid for in the fulness of time.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Did you have it done departmentally?

Mr. LANDER: Yes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: They charged you too much.

Mr. LANDER: No; I do not say that. I was in the building trade myself, when I used to follow work, and I say that when you come to see the way the work is done you could not expect it at a lower cost. In some places, of course, as the member for Northam has stated, perhaps in hundreds of places in Perth, there has been an overcharge. Something is radically wrong, either in the supplying of material or in the cost of carrying out the work. If it is in the supplying of material, as I think it is, it most certainly ought to be altered. This morning I heard of an instance. In the train one plumber was talking to another. He said he had been on a job and had had to wait eight days for a bath. If that

is the truth, I say it is a scandal and should be gone into. Eight days for a bath at 13s. a day. That is what the plumber in the train complained of. It is as I got it from a contractor in Perth, outside the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The department does not supply baths.

Mr. LANDER: Oh yes, it does. I had a bath supplied by the department myself, so I know.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You can get one upstairs.

Mr. LANDER: I know I can, but I had one from the department. If it is true that a man had to wait eight days for a bath at 13s. a day, there is £5 4s. extra charge on that job. No doubt there is cause for a lot of complaint. As to the cost of the construction of this sewerage business, I hope the Minister will go into it thoroughly, and if the men are to blame he will be manly, and do as a business man, and tramp on them; and if it is the officers who are to blame he will again be manly and, like a business man, tramp on them. It is time we brought this thing to a head. If we do not we will have a Royal Commission into it at no end of expense. I have seen two houses in course of connection, and the only thing wanted to finish the two houses were two small bends. There was a plumber waiting about at over a pound a day. These bends would cost only about 10d. each. I saw the two houses myself, so I know that this is correct. I say it is time the Minister took a stand and, regardless of whether it is the men or the officers to blame, determine to do his duty. If by doing our duty we are to lose our seats I for one am prepared to lose the East Perth seat at the next election. But I say the Minister has not had a fair cut from some of them. I hope he will find out who it is who has not given him a fair cut, and that he will then deal with those people as a business man would and get rid of them. There is not the least doubt there has been a lot of delay.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You ought to help him.

Mr. LANDER: I will help him at any time. We are loyal in our party. There

is no running back with us. There is no caucus crowd with us in connection with this question. We have a free hand and are not bound down as some hon. members would make the House believe. Before next summer I would like the Minister to put the filter beds on a better footing, or to prevent the nuisance down there. He has promised to send a dredge along to tear the centre of the river out. I hope that will be done. If it is, it will remove much of the nuisance which at present exists. I am glad to see that good work has been done in connection with the Perth water supply. The hon. member for Northam twitted the Minister a little about putting a bore down and about putting wells and dams down. What did the late Government do? They initiated a sanitary system to be worked by the Water Supply Department and supplied them with no water. During the last year they were in office they put £400 on the Estimates in connection with the Perth water supply and there was practically not a bucket of water to flush a single closet in Perth before the present Minister took charge. I understand it has cost £25,000 alone for the reservoir to supply water for this purpose. Another matter in connection with which I support the action of the Minister is that of the water supply for farmers. I have been around amongst the farmers and in many instances they are prepared to pay the rate which is being asked. It is much cheaper for them to pay this rate and to adopt the scheme which the Minister proposes than to have to keep six or eight horses to cart water on different days in the week. It is practically impossible for any farmer to carry on under such conditions. Where the dams and wells are being constructed good work is being done. The hon. member for Northam quoted 6s. 9d. per foot for boring, but when we consider the different classes of material through which the boring has gone, there was no need for the hon. member to speak as he did. As a man who has knocked about the goldfields, do you, Sir, think that the Minister is boring in sandplain which could be done at 9d. a foot? Is it not ridiculous for the hon. member for Northam to throw off that

sort of piffle at us? There was not an hon. member in the House who took the least notice when the member for Northam spoke about boring in sandplain. It is well known that when the bores have gone down a certain number of feet rock is struck. Any man who is boring will tell the hon. member that one cannot bore through that for £1 or £2 a foot. The hon. member's remarks in this connection were neither fair nor consistent.

Mr. Foley: He is consistent all right.

Mr. LANDER: There is not the least doubt that the Minister will have a serious difficulty to face in respect to replacing the pipes for the goldfields water supply. I do not know whether the suggestion is feasible, but I would like to see the Minister introduce the Monier pipe. If that is done the track can be renewed a little at a time. I think it would be workable and that the Monier pipes would last considerably longer than the iron pipes at present in use. I do not think the impurities in the water would be so detrimental to the monier pipes as to the iron pipes. There is another matter to which the Minister referred and that is the question of deferred payments in connection with the extension of the sewerage scheme. I hope the Minister will not interfere too much with this arrangement. He may probably have to increase the interest charge slightly, but there are many men owning two or three houses who have not the capital to pay cash for the work of connecting their properties. The cost of connecting the smallest house is £25 to £35 and a man may own such property and the securities may be all right, but he may not have the hard cash to pay immediately, and to continue the deferred payment system, even if the rate of interest charged is increased by a quarter or a half per cent., would not hurt these people any more than it hurts the Government when they have to pay higher interest on their loans. I hope the Minister will consider these matters and take some action in the direction I have suggested.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): This Bill seeks to perpetuate a measure to which I do not think we can raise very much opposition, other than from the administrative point of view. If we take the past year's work of the Water Supply Department from the point of view of a section of the people in my district, we have serious fault to find. Recently I tabled a motion in this House asking for the production of certain papers referring to the extension of the goldfields water supply to the town of Toodyay. For some reason it was thought fit by the Government to debate that question. I take that as a proof that it is not their intention to place those papers on the Table of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): What do you mean?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I take it, it is not the intention of the Government to furnish these papers; for what reason I do not know other than, possibly, the conditions under which the scheme was extended to the town—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The matter has not been dealt with yet.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: But the adjournment of the debate was secured.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The same as with many of the other motions.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: And I take it that when the adjournment was moved it was not the intention of the Government to furnish the papers, or we would have had them without further comment.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You have no right to make that statement.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I have a very good right to make it and I hope the Honorary Minister will not draw me further. It is fairly safe to say that these papers will not be furnished to the House. The construction I put on the working of the department is that it is conducted too much on business lines and not enough consideration is given to other circumstances. I know of one case in which the maximum penalty for rent has been applied; yet in the case of the goldfields considerable assistance is given to

those people with the full knowledge that ultimately the country will derive greater benefits by reason of the assistance given. As general taxpayers contributing largely to the loss incurred on the extension of the water to the goldfields—as pointed out by the hon. member for Northam, the sinking fund and interest amount to a considerable figure—these old settlers who have paid a fair proportion of such interest and sinking fund and who do not need the water, are penalised under the present administration since the formation of the department for further financial aid.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The goldfields people are paying for some of your unprofitable railways.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: That is unfair.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is absolutely true.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The hon. member will have an opportunity directly. He is something like the saplings in the forests in his district, more bark than substance. I would like to refer once more to the Toodyay extension. We certainly object to the methods of administration because they are too much like the pound of flesh system.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Where did you pick that up?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: When the hon. member has finished, I will proceed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The Minister has told us that he is now receiving petitions for further extensions, but he has not told the House that he has received petitions against the working of this department.

The Minister for Works: You always get petitions against taxation.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It would be fair to mention those against, as well as those for.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are not against the water.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It is a foregone conclusion that if there is opposition and it manifests itself in the form of a petition, that opposition is raised—

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Is there any opposition against the water?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: There is to paying the rate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Oh, yes.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: This water should be supplied at a much cheaper rate than it is being supplied at present. Within 14 miles of the goldfields main it is more profitably used by the farmers than in any other portion. The Minister will find absolute proof that the burden of this rate is almost intolerable. There are a few cases in which the water can be used at a profit but in the majority of instances £25 and £30 is a serious drain on these people. The time has arrived when a little more consideration should be exercised in the administration of this department. Reference has been made to boring parties. We have certainly derived much benefit from the operations of boring parties. Some good wells have been put down but in some instances considerable waste, unfortunately, has occurred in putting down these bores.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: For example, Cookernup.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I do not know about that, but little opportunity was given to farmers in the back portion of my district to work on these bores. As a rule a general staff was employed and that staff worked right through the district. Therefore, no blame is attachable to the farmers for the extra expense. I wish that they had had an opportunity to get some of the money, although the work was expensive. These parties are putting down bores which are to our advantage, but probably too many of them were attempted in a small area. However, we cannot find too much fault with them.

Mr. Foley: Were not all these contracts let in the districts where the wells were to be?

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: I did not catch what the hon. member said. I feel sure that the powers sought under this Bill are reasonable, and I sincerely hope that when the measure becomes law, as I hope it will, due consideration will be given to all the districts, and that where it is not necessary to inflict this acreage rate and

supply water at the high cost it is being supplied at Goomalling, the Government will as speedily as possible reduce it. The charge of 8s. a thousand gallons is an impossible figure. The people agreed to it in a time of drought, and it was a foregone conclusion that as soon as the good times returned there would be a strong opposition to the impost.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I welcome this Bill insofar as I believe that an amalgamation of the offices of the various water supplies must lead to more economical administration, and must also lead to greater efficiency. In order to test whether that efficiency has prevailed since the inauguration of the scheme of amalgamation by the Minister, it is necessary to consider the effect upon the main water supply of the State, the goldfields water supply. I briefly desire to refer to one or two matters in connection with the goldfields water supply scheme. Reference has been made by previous speakers to the amount of corrosion which has taken place in the pipes and to the necessity for renewals, and also to the constantly increasing cost. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) on this subject inferred that because a sinking fund was provided for the main scheme that all that would be necessary on the part of any Minister controlling the Water Supply Department would be practically to go and help himself from that sinking fund for the works being carried out. I would remind the hon. member that most of the work which is being carried on to-day and which is costing so much consists of repairs which, as was rightly pointed out by the Minister in his second reading speech, are largely due to neglect on the part of the past Administration.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What neglect?

Mr. TURVEY: I will refer to that if the hon. member will possess his soul in patience. The leader of the Opposition declared that whenever the engineers in charge of the pumping stations, or the officers supervising the scheme required anything done, the matters were readily attended to by his Administration. I have had the opportunity recently of see-

ing some work which is being carried out. Only a few days ago work was put in hand which was approved by the Daglish Government and one could not help thinking when the member for Northam was speaking, that that hon. member had very little practical knowledge regarding the 30-inch main. He may have some little knowledge regarding agricultural water supply extensions, but even there the hon. member's contention was that the price per thousand gallons to the farmers had a bearing on the subject and he thus showed his ignorance on that matter. My desire at the present time is to refer to some of the matters in connection with the goldfields water supply scheme, but more particularly to the 30-inch main, and the various pumping stations. Take the No. 1 station at the weir. The absolute necessity of having exposed the suction pipes which connect the weir with the No. 1 station has been pointed out for years past.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is a small matter.

Mr. TURVEY: That interjection again shows what a limited knowledge of this subject the hon. member has.

Hon. J. Mitchell: At any rate, it is not a very grave matter.

Mr. TURVEY: It was so grave a matter that it took 50 or 60 men a considerable time to make the necessary excavations to uncover these pipes. Does the hon. member realise that if anything went wrong with the valves in those suction pipes, or with the pipes themselves leading from the weir to the No. 1 station that inside a week the whole of the goldfields would be without water? The necessity for attending to this matter was known to the past Administration when they had control, but nothing was done and it has been left to the present Minister for Works to attend to the matter.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Then the late Mr. O'Connor was wrong?

Mr. George: What has all this to do with the Bill now?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. TURVEY: It is all very well for hon. members to ask what all this has to

do with the Bill. I would advise the member for Murray-Wellington to read the Bill.

Mr. George: I have read it.

Mr. TURVEY: Then the hon. member shows his absolute lack of brains.

Mr. George: Hear, hear. That is the highest compliment you have paid me.

Mr. TURVEY: I am endeavouring to prove that these matters have a great bearing indeed on the upkeep of the 30-inch main, and that they did not receive attention in the past, for the simple reason that the expenditure was regarded as too big to have to meet, and it has been left to the present Government to find all the money necessary in order to carry out the important work.

Mr. George: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in discussing a matter which has nothing to do with the Bill?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr. George: That the hon. member is not dealing with the Bill; he is dealing with the pipe main and the pumping machinery.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Northam and other hon. members have spoken on similar lines and I do not intend, therefore, to stop the hon. member for Swan.

Mr. George: Then they were all out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making that remark; he must withdraw it.

Mr. George: I withdraw.

Mr. TURVEY: I was pointing out the necessity for keeping the 30-inch main in as perfect order as possible, and I was also endeavouring to point out that in the past efforts had not been directed towards maintaining that line as was required, and that owing to the neglect and the failure of past Administrations to give to those controlling the Water Supply Department sufficient money to enable them to attend to repairs, the whole of the work to-day is falling on the present Administration. I would advise the member for Northam and the member for Murray-Wellington to take a run out

some afternoon to the works which are being carried on near the No. 2 pumping station and see for themselves what is being done.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Yes, if you let us have a car.

Mr. TURVEY: The hon. members would then see the effect the corrosion has had upon the main.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. TURVEY: I also want to point out to hon. members that the condition of the main is infinitely worse towards the goldfields than it is nearer the No. 2 pumping station.

Mr. George: Who is to blame for that?

Mr. TURVEY: The earth to a great extent, not the member for Murray-Wellington. I am not blaming past Administrations for the corrosion of the pipes.

Mr. George: They used the wrong material; they were warned against it.

Mr. TURVEY: I will have a little to say about that later on. The pipes at present being unearthed between the No. 1 and the No. 2 pumping stations are not as badly corroded as those taken out further along the line.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How can you prevent the corrosion?

Mr. TURVEY: The prevention is already taking place to a great degree by the money expended by the present Administration. In the past it was known that the lime treatment was necessary, but a primitive appliance was used at the No. 2 pumping station and it was proposed to the present Minister controlling the department that, in order to cope with the corrosion and to give a fair opportunity for the lime treatment to operate, it would be necessary to erect a large reservoir at the No. 1 station. This work has been carried out at the cost of many thousands of pounds by the present Administration. While speaking on this matter of the lime treatment I would like to remind the Minister for Works of the necessity, in order to give the treatment a fair chance, to see that the quality of the lime used is the best that can be procured. I am given to understand that

much of the lime that is used contains only about 50 per cent. of lime, and I believe the quantity being used at the present time is about 25 tons a month. I would advise the Minister to take the opportunity of examining some of that lime. I believe it is costing the department something like £3 a ton landed at the lime treatment works at the No. 1 pumping station. If that be so one would expect they would be able to get a good class of lime. The necessity for good lime for that particular work can be borne home to laymen when one considers the effect that the grit in any lime may have on the expensive machinery that is in operation at the No. 1 pumping station. I had the opportunity a few days ago of examining the effect of the lime on the internal coating of the 30-inch main, and I found in one pipe that was only a few days ago removed near the No. 2 station that almost the whole of the inside had been covered over with a very light coating of lime which had adhered to the surface. It has been found that the coating of lime adds considerably to the life of the pipes. A great quantity of sludge has been found inside the pipes, so much so that to-day the diameter of many of them has been considerably reduced.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. TURVEY: I was endeavouring to show the necessity for the amalgamation of these offices as provided for in this Bill, and to show that by the concentration, which must necessarily follow the amalgamation of offices, we would have an increase in efficiency, and I wanted to show the necessity for such concentration owing to the defective state of the 30-inch main of the Goldfields Water Supply. So acute has the position become that to-day some of the pumping stations have found it necessary to make an alteration in the pumps and to go to a considerable amount of expense in reducing what are called the plungers. On No. 2 station they had to reduce the plunger from 15 inches to 13 inches, and I notice in the report of the Chief Engineer he makes reference to this matter. He re-

ports "A change has been made in the plunger on pump at No. 7 pumping station to enable it to force water through the mains, the increased friction due to the corrosion having rendered this necessary." It has been said that these matters are outside the scope of this Bill. I maintain that in order to show the necessity for the concentration of the offices it is necessary to show the defective state of the main to-day. We have what is known as a 30-inch main, and it is proved by the sections of the pipe that have been taken up at various times, and some which are being removed to-day, that the diameter has been reduced from 30 inches to, in some cases, as low as 22 inches, which further goes to prove the Minister's contention that there has been a considerable increase in the cost of the up-keep of the stations and the maintenance of the mains generally. I referred earlier in the evening to the corrosion which was to be seen in some of the pipes at present being removed near No. 2 pumping station, but there is not only the internal corrosion and the collection from the lime treatment, but there is also erosion taking place on the outside of the pipes. This, I believe, from an examination of the pipes, has been found to be due, not only to the effect of minerals in some of the soils, but also to the defective coating of the pipes, and that brings me to another important matter. The Minister pointed out in his second reading speech that there were practically no pipes on hand, or very few. I believe that most of the pipes they are utilising now for the three miles of deviation that is being put in are coming from what are known as the by-pass pipes at various pumping stations. It will be necessary, before many years are passed, judging from the state of the pipes that are being removed, to renew almost the whole of the 300 odd miles of 30-inch main. That being so, I understand that the Government have already seen the necessity for taking action with a view to getting a full supply of pipes. In this connection, I trust that the rumour which is current is not correct, that an order for pipes is being given to a foreign firm.

The Minister for Works: It is true.

Mr. TURVEY: I regret to hear the Minister say that it is true, but I hope he will be able to make his case clear to the House and to the country and show that it is absolutely necessary that this order should have been placed with a foreign firm.

Mr. George: Do you mean somebody outside of Western Australia?

Mr. TURVEY: Outside of Australia.

Mr. George: Oh!

Mr. TURVEY: I regret to hear the Minister say that this is necessary. I believe in all probability it will be found that an order has been placed with a German firm.

Mr. Heitmann: They are not foreign.

Mr. TURVEY: Judging from the hon. member's interjection, that will meet with his approval. I believe that the firm which manufactured the original 30-inch main submitted a price to the Government, and so effective have those pipes and the particular coating which was placed upon them proved, that I hope the Minister will consider very carefully before he does decide on the importation of pipes from Germany, and that he will also carefully weigh the difficulty that may arise owing to the coating of the pipes being injured in transit. It is proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that where the coating has been injured in the present main, erosion from outside has set in, so that if these pipes are imported from Germany, it will be necessary on their arrival here, I take it, for the Government to have a special plant to provide for their proper recoating before they are laid in the ground. I trust that when the Minister is considering the prices of any local pipes and those from the Eastern States, he will take into consideration the increased cost of the imported pipes in the direction I have indicated. Now that the officers are amalgamated, I hope that the officers in charge of the Goldfields Water Supply will concentrate their attention on the necessity for taking some action in connection with the quantity of salt which is constantly increasing in the water in the catchment area. I believe it is estimated

that at the present time in the water at the weir there is some seven thousand tons of salt. It has been said that the constantly increasing quantity of salt in the water is due to the mistake that was originally made in the early days in ring-barking a great part of the catchment area. If that was the case, it will not be many years, judging from the rapid growth of the younger timber on the catchment area, before that defect will be remedied. However, if attention is being directed by the present Government, or if it is the intention of the Minister to direct his attention to the necessity for preserving the green timber on the whole of the catchment area, I trust he will concentrate his attention on the timber mills that are operating in some parts of that area. Another point I think the Minister controlling the Water Supply Department should take into consideration is the unfair manner in which some settlers are being treated in some of the newer catchment areas. For instance, in the Darling Range district, some 12 months ago, a catchment area was declared, and naturally restrictions were placed upon the settlers there, but restrictions to such an extent that they have interfered very much with the development of their lands and have also interfered materially with the living that they were deriving from the lands situated in that recently declared catchment area. Whilst I recognise the tremendous amount of expense involved, still, at the same time, I do think it would be only fair to those settlers when a catchment area is declared to use every possible means to buy the people out and make them a fair offer, and not to place restrictions upon them and impose extra taxes, and, by constantly hampering them in this direction, ultimately force them off their lands. I notice in the ninth report of the Goldfields Water Supply Administration reference is made to the fact that about 82 per cent. of the catchment area is to-day in possession of the Crown. I hope the Government will try to resume the balance, treating those settlers fairly by buying them out, and if they are asking an exorbitant figure, fix some form of arbitration and resume the land. If

that is done I hope the mistake will not be made that was made in the past of buying a settler out and then allowing him with that money to purchase out some poorer settler, so that he, being in a better position, might sit tight and wait until the Government came along to offer him some larger figure for the land.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Has that been done?

Mr. TURVEY: That was in the previous Administration. I have not known a single case to occur during the present Administration. I am just offering a word of warning to the Minister in case he should fall into the errors of the past Administration. The hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), in referring to the report on water supplies in the agricultural areas, pointed out that the cost for boring for water supplies was 6s. 9d. per foot, and he mentioned the fact, too, that this was in sand-plain country. Evidently the hon. gentleman thought the sand-plain went right down. If the hon. member had only been fair and referred to pages 10, 11, 12, and 15 of the report he would have seen there the actual boring that took place and the nature of the country.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I have.

Mr. TURVEY: One needs only to glance at the last column, the remarks, to find there that a preponderance of the country was ironstone and conglomerate granite, hard cement. Yet the hon. member wonders at the cost being anything more than 9d. per foot? I would like to see the hon. member himself delving through some of this conglomerate and endeavouring to carry out the work at a cost of 9d. per foot. One has only need to glance at the map displayed in the precincts of this House for some time to see the amount of work carried out by the present Government in connection with water supplies right throughout the agricultural areas of Western Australia.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Most of it is ours.

Mr. TURVEY: The map shows practically the whole of that country dotted.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We dotted it before their time.

Mr. TURVEY: The hon. member dotted it without a doubt, and one has only to go out to the farming districts to find out.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Find out what?

Mr. TURVEY: I leave it to the hon. gentleman himself to find out. It has been proved that many of the dams that were sunk were sunk in unsuitable places, and that many of them were not holding water.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Very few.

Mr. TURVEY: A fair number of them. It has been proved that such was the case, and the present Ministry rightly carried out the principle of boring to test the water supply. I am not saying that all the dams that were sunk were of the nature I have referred to. I know some of them proved very beneficial to the settlers, but it can well be proved that the present Administration has carried out considerably more work, tenfold the amount so far as the water supply throughout the agricultural areas is concerned. I regret to say that in many cases very little gratitude has been shown for the good work that the Minister for Works has carried out in this respect. The Minister for Works in his second reading speech made reference to the drainage boards, and I am pleased to hear him say the Government were superseding the drainage boards in many cases. They had to do so for the simple reason that some of the drainage boards were not rating themselves at all, and it was absolutely necessary for the Government to step in and do something in this direction. I just want before concluding to make reference also to the necessity for some caution being displayed in connection with the supply of firewood to the pumping stations. I have it on very good authority that in one particular instance explosives were used in getting that firewood from the bush. One needs only to have a very slight acquaintance with the use of explosives to know that if a plug of dynamite or gelignite happens to be left in one of those logs, and it is put into the furnace at the pumping station, up may go a few thousand pounds' worth of machinery. I trust that caution will be displayed in this direction. I believe it is not general for the Water Supply Department to allow the use of explosives in providing firewood. Much depends of

course on the nature of the explosive used.

Mr. George: Gelignite burns, so does dynamite.

Mr. TURVEY: I feel that a word of warning is necessary in this direction. The hon. member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) referred to the Toodyay water supply; and if I may be pardoned for being what may be termed parochial in this matter, I want to refer to the necessity for some places situated very close to the Mundaring Weir itself being given an adequate water supply. Probably the Minister will tell me in reply that this particular desired supply to which I refer is not a paying one at the present time. I refer now to the water supply required to serve Smith's Mill, Darlington, Swan View, and Parkerville, and I believe that if the Minister asked his officers to have an estimate taken to find out what the valuations are, and what rates would be collected, it would be ascertained that that supply would be a paying one almost from the inception. I believe the Minister has proved his case to the hilt, that is the necessity for continuance of the amalgamation which was brought about by the introduction of the Bill some twelve months ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I do not desire to take up much time, but I feel there are just one or two remarks I should like to make in reply, more particularly to some of the comments offered by the leader of the Opposition. Before doing so, I want to say that I was somewhat amused at the remarks of the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell). I do not propose to take them very seriously because the hon. gentleman is getting notorious for putting up impossible propositions, propositions that he could not possibly face when he was Minister himself.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I was never Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is now endeavouring to get the present Government to take on this proposition with a view to increasing the burden upon the people generally, in order that one section should gain an ad-

vantage. Let me say with regard to the rating of agricultural land that that matter had been before the previous Government before the present Government took office, that the farmers throughout the eastern agricultural belt had urged that the rating should be introduced so that they should get some comprehensive scheme of water supply from the Mundaring Weir, and to prove that this was requested I may say a meeting was called at Kellerberrin, a meeting of farmers. These farmers agreed to a 5d. rate if they could only get the mains extended. Consequently we find that the farmers themselves, before ever the Government took action at all, had petitioned for these extensions, and had agreed to a rate of 5d. per acre, not 4d. as the present Government imposed. The people of this State have been carrying a proportion of the sinking fund of the Goldfields Water Supply for a number of years, and this burden will be increased as years roll on, for the very reason that we are going on largely with the extensions in the agricultural areas. The part of the scheme that is paying, in the sense that one can apply the term "paying" to the Goldfields Water Supply, is the goldfields portion, and it is a remarkable fact that since the amalgamation of these departments, or since the present Government took office, that although a number of the goldfields that had previously been supplied have reduced the consumption, still the fact remains that east of Southern Cross the revenue has been maintained, clearly indicating that, although the consumption in a number of goldfields centres has been reduced, still the fact remains that by good administration the revenue has been maintained. If we take the more recent fields or mines that have been opened, the Bullfinch, Marvel Loch, and Weston's, we find they are all payable propositions in the sense that you can apply the term "payable" to the Goldfields Water Supply, because we know none of these is paying the full cost, charging up interest and sinking fund, but it is when we come down in the agricultural districts that losses are apparent, and it is no use for the hon.

member to talk of a reduction so far as the agricultural supplies are concerned, when the State is doing more for the agriculturist now than for any other consumer from the Goldfields Water Supply. I have said repeatedly that if reduction is to be made the goldfields people should get the first consideration. When speaking at Doodlakine I said that if a reduction were made it would mean hundreds and thousands of pounds, because I objected to make a reduction and leave the goldfields people out of consideration. It would be unjust, and I know the present Government would never be a party to injustice of that description. The hon. member goes on to state that if we give the mines water at 2s. 6d. per thousand, why do not we give it to the agricultural districts? Over and over again I have explained the difficulty in that regard. A mine takes the supply and you have no difficulty in getting the full quantity rated at 2s. 6d. per thousand into that mine, but if we are going to assume that the agriculturist will consume all the water he is entitled to in consideration of the rate, it would mean such a large amount as to make the proposition impossible. The only way we can give the agricultural supply is making the main as cheap as we can. It is the main that costs the money. We do not charge the agriculturist anything for the 30 inch main or for the Mundaring Weir, only for the extension itself, and in order to keep it down to the minimum of cost we are making the main as small as we possibly can, and even with these precautions and striking the rate the hon. member takes exception to, they are not a paying proposition to-day as we are not charging up full capital cost in regard to the supply they are receiving. Then the hon. gentleman went on to state that the rate at one place was 2d. and at another 4d. That is in accordance with the promise made by the Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I was not objecting; I merely mentioned it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, we will allow that point to pass. But I want to emphasise again that it is impossible under existing conditions to even

think of bringing about a reduction in regard to the charges for the Goldfields Water Supply administration, and I want to emphasise the fact that the greatest care is necessary in order, not to bring about a reduction, but rather to prevent an increase in the price, because the way the scheme is run the operating costs are going up so extensively that it will be very difficult indeed to keep the burden now placed upon the taxpayer down to normal level. I just state these facts to show that it is impossible; and as a matter of fact, no Government could make any alteration on the existing conditions without doing grave injustice to the people generally. Then the member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) spoke in regard to one or two matters, but as that hon. gentleman has a motion dealing directly with the question I will take the opportunity of speaking when the motion is before the Chamber. There are one or two points I want to explain in regard to the utterances of the member for Swan (Mr. Turvey). More particularly did he mention the fact that we recently let a contract to a German firm for the supply of pipes. We did get one tender for an Australian supply, but the date of supply made it absolutely impossible for us to give it consideration, apart altogether from the question of finance. Time is the essence of the contract. We must get these pipes at the earliest possible moment, and consequently when the delivery was to be within reasonable limits for the imported pipes it was impossible for us to consider the local manufacturer.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are there many tons?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it is a question of a contract for £15,000. Then again, the quality of the imported pipe is superior. In the first place it is one-sixteenth of an inch thicker, which is a consideration. Then the method of manufacture and the jointing is, in the opinion of the expert officers, so superior that the cost of maintenance will be considerably less as compared with that of what we know as the locking bar pipe. Therefore, apart from the special point we had to consider of the time of supply, the pipe is superior, the cost of

maintenance of the pipe will be less, and the amount of the tender was considerably less than that for the Australian manufactured article. Then again, this firm proposed to manufacture in Western Australia. But we know well that if we did encourage these people to establish their works in Western Australia for the sake of the comparatively small contract we have to give them to-day, they would at the end of that contract raise a new question, as other private firms have done, and say "You have encouraged us to establish our works here, induced us to bring men from the Eastern States, men who had to break up their homes to come here, and now you are going to throw them out of work and we are to have our machinery left on our hands." It is an undesirable position. I say it would be done in this case because of the experience we have had in regard to the manufacturers of rolling stock, the manufacturers of pipes, and other manufacturers who have claimed that because we gave them one contract and encouraged them to come to Western Australia, we are in duty bound to keep them going indefinitely.

Mr. George: But those people you are thinking of were specifically invited to come here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was wrong.

Mr. George: It was the policy of the time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I say the policy was wrong. It is wrong for the State to encourage those people to come here and to think that because they come we are bound to keep them going with contracts irrespective of their prices. They take up the attitude that once here, irrespective of the prices of the imported article, they must get this consideration. We have had experience of contracts let for commodities really not required. We have given these people contracts simply to keep them going and to keep their works and their men employed. I do not desire to encourage that sort of thing, because we have too many such burdens in Western Australia already. But that was not the main fac-

tor. What I wish to emphasise is the point that we can get the imported pipes within the time we want them, when it is imperative that we should get them. It was that which weighed with the Government principally in regard to the supply of these pipes.

Mr. Turvey: Have you any convincing proof of their superiority?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only convincing proof I have is the attitude of the expert officers, who are very emphatic indeed in regard to that question.

Mr. Monger: Do you always take their advice?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, when they have a definite proposition submitted to them and give a definite reply to that proposition; but when we come to railway routes, where other considerations are submitted, it is a different question altogether.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are you going to try the wooden pipes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are submitting the wooden pipes to special tests in various parts of the State. I regret to say that those put into the Goldfields Water Supply at Coolgardie have not proved a success, and quite recently we had to take them out again. There are special reasons for that, which I do not propose to go into at the present time. In Albany and in the metropolitan area we are trying these wooden pipes to see whether they are the success which they are claimed to be by the manufacturers. Then the member for Swan spoke of timber being conserved on the catchment area. We are extremely anxious to conserve all the green timber we possibly can on that catchment. Unfortunately a mistake was made in ringbarking quite a large area of the catchment. I say a mistake was made, because we find the salt has been increasing of late so extensively that we have had to take special precautions to overcome the difficulty in that regard, and the experts are of opinion that the only way of obviating it permanently is to let the timber grow again and prevent the destruction of any further green timber on the catchment area.

It is difficult to drive everyone off the catchment area who is getting timber, but that will be done as opportunity offers, until, in course of time, we will have the timber properly protected against destruction. In regard to the water supply for Smith's Mill, the hon. member anticipated my reply. It is not a business proposition. The member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) said there was too much business in regard to the Water Supply Department. We are twitted by quite a number of our critics with not being business men, with the taunt that we do not apply business methods in our departments. But immediately we try to run a department on business lines we are told that there is too much business about it, and that we should give some consideration to the indirect benefits. In regard to Smith's Mill, it is not a business proposition. The loss would be greater even than that on the agricultural supplies, and they are a big enough burden to carry. But the hon. member is of opinion that the data on which our estimates were prepared were collected two years ago, and that the increase of population in that particular area has been so extensive during the last two years that it is quite a different proposition to-day. While I am not prepared to altogether contradict the hon. member in that regard, I would point out that our data was collected on the assumption of striking a minimum of £1 per annum per assessment. As the hon. gentleman knows, the minimum rate is £1 per annum, and it would take a fair amount of improvement on a particular block to increase it above the minimum. So, although there may be a house built on a particular block, it does not follow that the erection of that residence would increase the valuation to such an extent as to raise it above the £1 minimum. However, it may be so, and there will be no harm in making investigations when opportunity offers; but at the present time the department is so very busy in other directions that I cannot say it will be done immediately. Still, it will receive attention. Now, in regard to one or two matters raised by the leader of the Oppos.

tion, if the hon. gentleman had been in his place, I would have dealt pretty fully with the different points he raised; in the circumstances I do not propose to go very deeply into them. One of the principal questions raised by him—and it has been raised by others—is what they allege to be the excessive cost of house connections in Perth and Fremantle. I would point out that we do not bind anyone to go to the department and use departmental methods. Everybody is open to go to a private contractor. As a matter of fact we encourage them to go to outside contractors to have their work done. The fact remains that nine-tenths of the people have come to the department for the departmental methods.

Mr. Allen: Is that not because they cannot afford to pay right off?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, that is absolute nonsense. As a matter of fact, they will have to pay in any case. When the Bill was passed it was never intended that all and sundry should take advantage of the deferred payment system with interest at five per cent.

Mr. George: That is no excuse for making exorbitant charges.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not making any excuses. I am replying to the charge levelled by hon. members that the cost is excessive. I say these people are not bound to come to us. No one is bound to use the departmental methods. They can go and use the outside contractor.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The contractor cannot wait for his money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are private contractors doing deferred payment connections.

Mr. Allen: Who is doing it? You ought to make it public.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quite a number of them, and we find by comparison that the departmental work is cheaper than that done by the contractor. We draw comparisons regularly, and that has been proved. What is more, the work is cheaper in Western Australia, all things considered, than it is in Sydney.

Mr. Taylor: What is the comparison? What is meant by "all things considered?"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We pay a little more in wages; the cost generally in Western Australia is at least five per cent. more than in the Eastern States. It is not limited to sewerage connections, but applies generally. There is no need for any one to be limited to departmental work; he can go to the outside contractors and get his work done. But the fact that so many come to the department is evidence that they prefer the departmental system, because, while it may be in some instances a little dearer, yet the property owner gets a guarantee of good work, and he prefers good work even at a little higher cost.

Mr. George: Their coming to the department is no reason why the charges should be exorbitant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have stated definitely that in my opinion the charges are not extravagant. I say they compare favourably with charges made in Sydney and with those of private contractors.

Mr. George: If they were proved to be exorbitant you would be prepared to consider them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman must bear in mind that people are constantly coming along and complaining of the high cost of connection. Weekly, almost daily, we are getting these complaints. A man will come in and say, "I came to your department and you estimated the cost of connection at so much, and the actual cost is so much more." But when one comes to probe the thing one finds that the owner of the property came to the department and said he wanted such and such a bath, that he wanted other connections, and that he wanted the cheapest possible. But when the plumber went on the job, the wife turned round and said, "I do not want those connections; I want something better." Immediately we put in the better connections a complaint is made of the increased cost.

Mr. George: But you would not do that against the order of the owner.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the wife generally controls that sort of thing, and I found in investigating quite a number of cases that

the extra cost is due to the fact that they will get a superior article, and to the very laudable desire to have the home as nice and comfortable as it is possible to get it, so far as the sewerage connection is concerned.

Mr. George: She is not much of a wife to run her husband into an extravagant bill for sewerage connection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very often the husband is a party to it.

Mr. George: Then he is to blame.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Sometimes he does not realise what the extra cost will be.

Mr. Allen: Would you consider £82 excessive for the connections and fittings for a three-roomed jarrah cottage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would all depend on the fittings.

Mr. Allen: The only extra convenience was an enamel bath, which cost £7.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the hon. member must be wrong.

Mr. Allen: No, I am not; I am prepared to show you the place.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will show me that the only extra cost was £7, and that there was no exceptional drainage, I will admit that there is something radically wrong, but I have investigated so many complaints that I am tired of them. None of them will bear investigation, and the department has proved to be right in every instance.

Mr. George: If the people had known that they were to have the business that is going on nowadays they would never have had the sewerage scheme.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The only reply I can give is that the cost here bears favourable comparison with the cost in the Eastern States. There is just one other matter which the leader of the Opposition wanted to have cleared up. He seemed to get somewhat mixed up in his figures. The hon. member wanted an explanation as to why it was that there had been a surplus in the previous years, whilst last year there was a loss. Of course the explanation is purely that previously interest and sinking fund were not charged up against

the Water Supply Department, so far as the metropolitan area was concerned, and this year they were charged up. Previously while the sewerage and drainage was under construction the general revenue was called upon to pay interest and sinking fund in connection with the loan moneys raised for that particular purpose, but having got the department established we charged up against sewerage and drainage the amount of interest on the capital cost, with the result that this year a sum of £40,000 is charged up which had not been charged up previously. That is the whole explanation in regard to the difference in the figures. Then the hon. member proceeded to ask what had become of that £40,000. Although I cannot quite follow his figures, I am inclined to think that what the hon. member desired explaining was what had become of the interest that had been paid from general revenue up to this year; seeing that we had only paid this year the amount of interest and sinking fund. What has become of the amount charged against consolidated revenue previously? What we did in that regard was this: When we were establishing the capital cost of the sewerage and drainage we took the total expenditure up till the 30th June, 1912, and we made that represent the capital expenditure. We did not charge up all the capital expenditure; we wrote off amounts totalling altogether £83,000 odd. I just mention this as an indication that we made the capital expenditure absolutely fair to the citizens of Perth, inasmuch as we did not place on them the burden of the investigations that had taken place during previous years. Then we added to the capital expenditure on the construction of the work the interest or accrued interest that had been paid on the money that had been actually expended. We did not charge up the interest on the cost of raising the money, but only on the money actually expended, which amounted to something over £55,000. That was then added to the capital with the result that interest and sinking fund will be paid on the capital plus £55,000, and gradually maturing, that amount will be paid back to consoli-

dated revenue, and by the increased interest and sinking fund which is being paid on the increased capital it will eventually right itself. By that means we can get the capital cost properly charged up and arrive at a true basis of charging interest and sinking fund. There was another matter raised by the hon. member. He took exception to my remarks in regard to depreciation. The hon. member assumed that I was opposing the depreciation fund that had been charged up against the metropolitan water supply. I was doing nothing of the sort, but I drew attention to the depreciation fund and to the wiping out of the fund to show that we were not desirous of penalising the metropolitan consumers. We are bound by Act of Parliament to bring out a separate balance sheet for every undertaking we operate, and we have to supply a proper commercial statement to show exactly the operations of each trading concern. Now, whilst the supply of water is showing a profit the sewerage and drainage is showing a loss, but by combining the two we make them balance. But for the purposes of the Trading Concerns Act we must separate them in the balance sheets, in order that the people may know exactly how each concern is operating. Therefore, we wiped out the depreciation fund and imposed a sinking fund on a proper basis. By the imposition of a 1 per cent. sinking fund bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent., and earning compound interest, the capital cost of the whole of the water supply will be wiped out in 41 years. Consequently the sinking fund to-day after proper attention being devoted to maintenance, and minor repairs and renewals being paid out of general revenue, will enable the concern to go right on and be almost as good in 41 years as it is to-day, and the sinking fund will have wiped out the total liability. I did not complain of the fact that the depreciation fund had been paid previously, but I said that it was an unnecessary penalty on metropolitan consumers, and that we wiped it out so as to remove that burden, and simply imposed a 1 per cent. sinking fund on the basis I have already outlined. There is

just one more matter in regard to the amount that is being earned by the letting of the metropolitan water supply offices. I stated that they were getting a credit of £700. What I intended to say was that they were getting a direct gain of £700. The hon. member said the amount was too small, but evidently he misunderstood my remarks. We are getting £1,200 for the renting of the metropolitan water supply buildings, but the water supply is paying £500 for the offices used by the department to-day, leaving a net gain to the metropolitan water supply people of £700. The hon. member evidently read my remarks to mean that we were getting only £700 for the whole of the buildings. I think I have dealt with the arguments and requests for information raised by various hon. members.

Mr. Taylor: Are the present water supply offices the property of the Government?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are. The offices were acquired some little time ago by the previous Government for the purpose of housing immigrants, but in the opinion of the present Government the building was too good altogether to be used only occasionally when immigrants arrived. Consequently we used it for the housing of the whole of the amalgamated water supplies, and we established an immigrants' home in a building we had at Fremantle. By this means we save a considerable amount of rent, and are utilising valuable buildings, and the different water supplies have to pay interest to the Government on the capital cost of these buildings. I have now dealt with the various points which have been raised. The Bill is purely an invitation from the Government to hon. members to allow us to continue the amalgamation scheme that has been applied to the whole of the water supplies, not limiting it to any particular time, but allowing it to go on indefinitely until amendments are rendered necessary by experience as time goes on. Hon. members will remember that the Bill of last year was limited in its operation by another place to 12 months, possibly in order to gain information or to see exactly how the scheme would

work. I claim that it has proved successful and of benefit to the State, and consequently we now ask that the scheme be allowed to continue until it is rendered necessary for amendments to be made in due course, as we have often to amend Acts of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

**BILL.—FREMANTLE IMPROVEMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister), in moving the second reading, said: If hon. members will refer to the schedule they will see what is required by this Bill more clearly than any words of mine can explain. The traffic in the principal street of Fremantle is becoming so great that it is dangerous to pedestrians and also to vehicular traffic, and for some considerable time the local authorities at Fremantle have had under consideration the question of widening High-street and the proposal has been that they should first widen High-street from Market-street to the town hall. Hon. members acquainted with Fremantle will know that Market-street leads to the railway station, and High-street is the principal street of the town. There is a tramway service which runs along High-street down Market-street to the railway station. There are three different lines of tramway which lead into High-street, and which make the traffic there very congested. Apart from that, at the corner of Market and High-streets, there is only about two feet of space between the tramline and the kerb, and hon. members will realise that this is not sufficient to enable a person to stand outside the kerb where there is a large telegraph pole also, and that the corner is very dangerous as far as the public are concerned. Under the Muni-

icipalities Act 1906, the local authorities can, under the Public Works Act 1902, resume any land for public purposes. In other words, they have legal powers to-day to enable them to resume land which they require for the extension or the widening of any street. If they exercise the powers they have at present it would mean tearing down all the buildings along this thoroughfare, which is a business locality, and the cost would be very excessive, and the local authorities are of opinion that in the interests of the municipality and the people as a whole, it would be far preferable to resume the total area on which these buildings are erected than to merely resume the small piece of land required for street extension. Consequently this Bill has been introduced to enable them to avail themselves of the whole area on which these buildings are erected, and have it vested in the municipality instead of resuming a small strip for street widening only. If hon. members refer to the Bill, they will find that on the passing of the measure the land will be vested in the municipality by proclamation. All the rights and title to the land once the proclamation is issued, will be vested in the municipality. The valuation of the land as shown in the second schedule or the compensation to be paid for it has to be assessed under the Public Works Act 1902, and hon. members will also note that the value of the land has to be assessed from the 9th September, 1913. That is date on which notice was given asking for leave to introduce this Bill. It is thought advisable that a date should be fixed, so that there should be no dummyping or sale in connection with the land after the intention of the local authority became known. To protect the rights of the persons who own the land, the Bill provides that 6 per cent. interest shall be paid to them from the date of the proclamation being issued. That is the date on which the land shall be vested in the municipality. The 6 per cent. will be paid at once, and there will be no necessity to wait for the award being issued because any difference can be made up after the award is issued. The

Bill also provides that no proclamation can be issued if the ratepayers disapprove of the proposal. Within a month after the passing of the Bill any 20 ratepayers will have the opportunity to demand a poll, to decide whether the proposal of the municipality to acquire this land shall be approved of.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have they time to alter their business premises?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The municipality will resume the whole of the premises.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That will mean shifting back the fronts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It will mean tearing down the whole lot. The value of the land will be fixed, and from the time of the issuing of the proclamation 6 per cent. interest will be paid on the total value. Provision is made whereby in regard to persons who have land on lease or buildings on lease equitable compensation will be paid if they are disturbed in connection with their business.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are the owners willing to sell?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I do not know.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are going to resume the whole lot?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The Bill also provides that the money to be paid for this area shall be raised by loan under the Municipalities Act 1906, but there is to be no limit to the amount. It is almost impossible to limit the amount in such a measure as this. In the first place the award will have to be fixed, and in the second place the municipality will have to take into consideration whether they intend to erect buildings thereon or lease or dispose of the remaining area, so it will be a matter of impossibility to place any amount in the Bill as a limit to the extent the local authority can borrow, but provision is made that before any loan can be raised, the local authority will have to get the consent of the Minister.

Mr. Monger: Which Minister.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The Minister controlling the Bill.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What will they do with the rest of the land?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The hon. member should read Clause 10. Provision is made for the payment for the land and for compensation, and provision is also made as to what shall be done with the rent and profits, if any, derived from the land. If hon. members peruse the Bill closely they will find that the council will be called upon to take a special poll of ratepayers somewhat similar to what was done by the Perth City Council in connection with the purchase of the gas and electric light plant, with the exception that instead of the persons who desire to vote against the acquisition of the property doing so, those in favour of the proposal will also be required to vote, and a decision will be arrived at by a majority of the citizens who exercise their vote. The Bill provides that every ratepayer shall have a vote whether his rates are paid or not. Under the Municipalities Act only ratepayers who have paid their rates can exercise their vote, but under this Bill provision is made that every ratepayer shall have an opportunity to express an opinion whether the council shall resume this land or otherwise.

Mr. Monger: Whether he has paid his rates or not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Yes. Every owner or occupier will have an opportunity to say whether the council shall resume this land or not.

Mr. Allen: The occupier is not liable.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): That is really the contents of the Bill. As the hon. member for Northam often remarks, the Bill is a small one; at the same time it is a very important one as far as the municipality of Fremantle is concerned.

Mr. Allen: The amount involved is a large one.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): In my opinion this is one of the best propositions that the people of Fremantle have ever brought for-

ward. It is necessary for the safety of the travelling public, it is necessary for the improvement of the town—

Hon. J. Mitchell: To have block 328?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Yes; and it is necessary also to enable the local authority at this time to acquire it before any large buildings are constructed thereon. On this area at the present time there are very small buildings; in fact a very large number of the buildings which exist have had new fronts built in during late years. Some of them are of single story. If the buildings are removed and large premises are erected in their place before the municipality can at any time widen their streets, it will be necessary to incur a very large expenditure. The hon. member for Northam asked what would be done with the land. This Bill gives the local authority power to erect buildings or lease the land if they desire to do so, and, with the consent of the Governor, there will be power to sell the land. The hon. member also raised the question as to what they will do with block 328, and as to whether there is any need to purchase it. Unless this block is purchased the others will be useless. This area will be required to give accommodation to the other business places which are erected surrounding it, and which to-day are used as back yards for the present business places. I am confident that hon. members after perusing the Bill will realise the urgent necessity for giving the Fremantle municipality the power to acquire this land. They will realise its necessity from the point of view that the streets of Fremantle are too narrow. They will realise that it will be necessary at an early date to have a double line of tramways constructed in the main thoroughfare and down to the railway station, and it will be impossible for this to be carried into effect unless this property can be acquired by the municipality in order to widen the streets. The ratepayers are safeguarded in every way under this measure. The council can take no action whatever if the ratepayers desire to tie their hands, and no proclamation can be issued until two months after the

passing of this measure, and no proclamation can be issued after twelve months has expired. That is, the local authority will be allowed twelve months in which to complete the purchase if they are permitted to carry the scheme into effect. This is necessary in fairness to the persons who at the present time own the land situated at this point. I do not know whether I can give any further explanation in regard to the Bill. The provisions are simple, the requirements are necessary and urgent, and will be beneficial as far as Fremantle is concerned, and I am of opinion that hon. members will realise the need for immediately passing the Bill. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

## BILL—PERTH IMPROVEMENT.

*Order postponed.*

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I wish, Mr. Speaker, to move the postponement of this Order of the Day. I was under the impression that a Bill similar to the one on which I have just spoken would be required in this instance. I have found, however, that the measure of which I have just moved the second reading is not liberal enough in its conditions to suit the persons who require the Bill for Perth improvements, although the requirements are almost similar, namely, the purchasing of land through which the streets have to go, but the conditions are not suitable to the Perth City Council. They are tied too much and wish a different Bill to be introduced, and that is a matter I have not had an opportunity of going thoroughly into, to see whether the Government will introduce a Bill giving conditions more liberal than the one previously mentioned. For that reason I move—

*That the Order of the Day be postponed.*

Motion put and passed.

# BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

## *Second Reading.*

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. Walker) in moving the second reading said: It was undertaken by a resolution passed in this Chamber, and also in another place in 1911, under the Act of 1905, that there should be a compilation of the Criminal Code. That Code as compiled is now upon the Table of the House awaiting enactment. It has been considered advisable that before we consolidate all the criminal law in our Criminal Code we should amend what obvious defects in verbiage or consistency have been discovered in the Criminal Code as it stands. I confess it would have been my desire, had time permitted, and opportunities were favourable, and there were any chance of carrying it, to have made some additions to our Code and modifications of it in some material particulars. That is not the purpose of the Bill of which I am now in charge. Its object is really to remove anomalies in our present printed Criminal Code, and to remove a few of the defects that exist in the amendment to the Criminal Code. It is essentially a Bill for Committee. It would be wearisome, and I might almost say unnecessary, to go into details of the measure in my second reading speech, but perhaps it would be judicious, in order that the drift of the measure may be seen, and the second reading carried without too much controversy, or carried in doubt, or upon mere trust, to give a few illustrations of the proposed amendments, some of which are purely verbal. It will be remembered that we have a chapter in the Criminal Code dealing with electoral offences. Now, since the Code was passed, or since these offences were put into the form of an Act, we have passed a number of other Acts taking these offences out of the Criminal Code altogether. The principal offences of an electoral nature, I suppose, should be defined as those relating to parliamentary elections. We now not only have elections, or representation, in regard to this Chamber and another place, but we

have the Commonwealth Electoral Act, all of which embody offences punishable in our courts. We have other Acts that have taken away from the Criminal Code special penalties when there are violations of the Municipal Act, or the Roads Board Act, and, as a matter of fact, there are only now a very few electoral offences that are contained in and are specially punishable by the Criminal Code. We have certain institutions and boards, and the anomaly is this, that the penalties for a breach of the electoral laws, as they were framed and conceived in the Criminal Code, are greater than those that are attached to violations of our parliamentary elections, or to breaches of the Commonwealth Electoral Act. This anomaly, of course, is strange and ought not to be permitted to exist in a Code that we are reprinting to bring it up to date. Therefore, the penalties are put on a par for the breach of the electoral laws relating to these voluntary boards, if I may use the expression; they are brought on a par with the penalties that are to be discovered in reading our Parliamentary Electoral Act, or our Commonwealth Electoral Act. Then again, there are anomalies of this description: I will take only one illustration from the old Code. If hon. members turn to Section 296 they will see it stated—

Any person who wilfully and unlawfully causes by any explosive substance an explosion likely to endanger the life of any person, whether any injury to any person is actually caused or not, is guilty of a crime, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for life.

That we propose to keep as it is, but we desire to alter this portion—

For all purposes of and incidental to arrest, trial, and punishment, the crime when committed out of Western Australia is deemed to have been committed in the place in which the person liable to be punished under this section is apprehended or is in custody.

That arises out of an error when the original Code was compiled. Section 296 was copied from an Imperial Act of 1895. We copied it verbatim and took it as it

stood. The Imperial Act is all right; the Imperial courts have power to deal with these offences committed outside England, but Western Australia has not that power. We cannot deal comprehensively with the dominions of Britain as Britain herself can deal with them. We can deal with the laws in our own State, and we can only limit our legislation as it affects our own State. I do not think it requires any argument to show the absurdity of retaining a subsection like that in our Criminal Code. It not only exists in the section I have quoted, but in numerous sections of the Code, and in the Bill which I am now introducing there are several clauses which repeal similar portions of the Code to that which I have just read, making our power to deal with these offences logical, and not absurd, as arrogating a greater power than this State, although a Sovereign State, can claim to possess. There are a few other inconsistencies of a like character. In one place the conjunctive "and" is used instead of the disjunctive "or." I was going to say it was a printer's error, a sheer mistake. The meaning is obvious, but while it stands as it is upon our statute-book, it is nothing but absurd, but the absurdity is removed by a clause in the Bill. Then there are some other important matters, as, for instance, a clause which will deal with the question of a common nuisance. I would like particularly to draw attention to the fact that in our Criminal Code as it stands we can only consider a nuisance to be that by which injury is caused to some person, or a nuisance that is committed or created upon property over which the offender has control. Now, it is clear that there may be a nuisance created which deserves some kind of punishment that is not particularly upon a property over which the offender has control, and which does not bring injury to any person, that is physical injury, an injury which anyone can gauge and weigh. As an illustration I would say anyone could make a hole in the highway into which a horse could stumble, but which one could avoid. One could not help saying that that hole was a nuisance, even though

one's horse fell into it and the individual escaped being thrown out of his vehicle and breaking his neck. It is a danger, a menace, and one which is liable to cause injury, and therefore might properly be construed as a nuisance. As Dr. Pennefather, who drafted a Criminal Code Bill for South Australia, remarked in reference to the clause dealing with common nuisances—

The Queensland section narrows the law by referring only to acts done with respect to property under a man's control and by adding the words "and by which injury is caused to the person of some person." Sir Samuel Griffith has pointed out that the latter is a limitation of the existing Common Law. I cannot think that those changes are improvements. For instance, if a man wanted to keep a certain road secluded and in order to affect that purpose persistently made loud noises so as to frighten carriage horses, I think it should be regarded as a public nuisance, even though no one was actually thrown out and injured.

That is the view of Dr. Pennefather. Sir Samuel Griffith, in drafting the Queensland Code, which we have copied, admits that his Code is a limitation of the Common Law. The proposed amendment restores us to the old condition and nuisance is defined as under the Common Law. Another obvious defect in our Code is, that as it now stands incest can only take place as between descendants, and there can be no offence on the part of an ascendant. Not only that, but there must be, or at least it is strongly inferred that there must be, marital relationship; illegitimates cannot commit that offence. This proposed amendment restores our law to what it now is in England and makes the offence as between illegitimates an offence punishable at law. There are one or two matters, furthermore, which might meet with controversy. For instance we have introduced in this amending Bill the Commonwealth provisions of the Secret Commissions Act. We, ourselves, passed a Secret Commissions Act in 1905, but we left out certain portions of that measure as it was passed by

the Commonwealth. I say that it is controversial because it involves an apparent intrusion upon the English law that no man can incriminate himself; he must be proved guilty by external evidence. The Commonwealth law permits interrogatories and will not excuse a man refusing to answer questions put to him in regard to the offence on the ground that he may thereby incriminate himself. We have made the omission good and taken over the section which permits of that procedure under the Commonwealth Act, thus putting the Commonwealth law and our own law in harmony. Another illustration I may give is the fact that we have kept level with the effect of conviction in England in regard to prisoners' property. As hon. members will be aware, in 1870 the old practice up to then prevailing in England of forfeiture of a felon's goods was abolished. Up to then, whenever a prisoner was convicted of a crime, all his goods were taken from him; he had no chance whatsoever of preserving anything for himself or his family. They abolished forfeiture in England. We adopted the Act and the abolition of that old law which we took over when we became a colony, but we did not take the steps that were taken in Great Britain to afford provision for protection of the goods of the prisoner by the appointment of a curator. We have in a certain measure restored something of that in our law but not completely. In England they have the power to appoint a curator who shall have charge of the prisoner's goods whilst he is undergoing his sentence. We propose to restore in this Bill that provision and to appoint a curator to properly look after prisoners' goods. We have furthermore in this measure removed certain anomalies which are due to loose wording in regard to the powers of the Crown in challenging a jury. Our law as it is gives to an accused person certain powers to challenge, but does not give those powers, or at least so it may be construed, to the Crown. We have put the law on a level with that in other States and in England in that respect. Then there is power permitted elsewhere which

we failed to introduce into our Criminal Code, on the conviction of a prisoner for an offence, of allowing a judge to make compensation or to order compensation to be paid for the injury done. For a summary offence the compensation provided for is up to £25, and for other offences up to £100. It is inconsistencies of this description that the Bill deals with, and I think these will be best explained when the measure is in Committee, and I had better reserve my further remarks until we deal with the clauses serially; but the House may take it from me that the purpose of the measure is really to bring the Criminal Code up to date and to put into the Code those outstanding separate enactments which are properly in their place in the Code, and to generally consolidate the measure and to correct such inaccuracies as now exist. Some of these are exceedingly simple. I would like to give just one more illustration. In our Criminal Code as it stands now a judge has certain powers to order certain things when he is trying a criminal, but to a chairman of general quarter sessions or a commissioner appointed for the purpose, the existing law would not apply. The Bill proposes to make the word "judge" in that section of the Code include the chairman of the court of quarter sessions or the commissioner. With the assurance to hon. members that I will give the fullest possible explanation of the Bill in Committee, if requested to do so, I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell, debate adjourned.

## BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): This Bill, as the Attorney General has explained, was introduced first at the request of the Chamber of Commerce, who desired a small amendment to be made,

but the Attorney General has presented in the Bill several rather startling innovations which are all of the utmost importance. I notice that it is proposed in the future that the transfer of a bill of sale need not be registered. At the present time that point is in doubt. It is just a question whether an assignment or a transfer need be registered or not. I think it ought to be registered for the reason that the other creditors of a person giving a bill of sale ought to know to whom the bill of sale has been transferred. The Attorney General will realise that a bill of sale in the hands of one man may be one thing, but that in the hands of another person who might be less sympathetic, it may be another. Besides, the transfer of a bill of sale may mean a good deal more than appears on the surface. It may be given for £100 and then for a further advance of £1,000, and the man who made the first advance may transfer to a second person who can make a further advance and who may be already a creditor of the man who gives the bill of sale. The Attorney General will see in that way some difficulty may arise, but in any event I think the creditors of an individual who gives the bill of sale should know by whom the bill of sale is held. Sympathetic treatment which might be expected from one individual might not be given by another. There can be no argument against the registration of a transfer since the bill of sale itself must be registered, and I am surprised that the Attorney General has made provision here that the transfer need not be registered. There is a further clause which will need some explanation in Committee. It appears that it is possible that a hire agreement, with or without the right of purchase, may mean that the property can be seized to satisfy a debt incurred. We will require to be careful, because, of course, the reason for giving a hire agreement is that someone might be helped. It is not altogether to protect the man who lends the money, but it is in order that the man who needs money may be able to go to the man with money, offer security and get an advance. A person may buy a sawing machine or

an implement; he may buy on the time payment system because it is not convenient to pay, and we want that system to continue. We cannot argue against it, but if this Bill becomes law, I think those who have money to lend and things to sell will hesitate to lend that money or to sell those goods.

The Attorney General: Why?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Because they may never be paid.

The Attorney General: They will always be safe if they register.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think they will be safe. As a matter of fact, hire agreements are not registered now. When the Bill is in Committee I propose to move an addition to the clause dealing with this matter. I have already consulted the Parliamentary draftsman about it, but I will submit it to the Attorney General before moving it. It is an important matter. Under the present system a hire agreement provides that a man may purchase from the owner an implement or machine worth, say, a couple of hundred pounds. He may pay 75 per cent. of the purchase money. If the hirer fails to complete the payment the owner may seize the machine and forfeit against the hirer all that has been paid, although it may amount to 75 per cent. of the purchase money. That seems to me to be entirely wrong.

The Attorney General: It will be no longer possible under the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But I want to move an addition to the clause, making it imperative that the machine be submitted to auction, and that any surplus which it may bring over and above the balance due shall be returned to the hirer. This provision refers to a hire agreement and it should be possible to make the proposed amendment here. It is proper that we should introduce it here, and I believe that the House will agree that the owner should not be able to take the machine from the hirer without providing opportunity for the hirer to get something back again. There are many cases in which more than 75 per cent. of the purchase money has been paid to the owner by the hirer, and the article has been seized,

and all the money paid on it has been lost to the hirer. The most important clause in the Bill and the one that will provide the greatest amount of controversy is that prescribing protection of wages. On the face of it it would appear that wages should always be protected. But it sometimes happens that we have to consider more than is on the surface, and this is one of those occasions. The clause provides, not that wages shall be protected for one month, but that all wages shall be protected against a bill of sale. In other words it means that a bill of sale will no longer be a good security, because wages may have accumulated to an extent equal to the value of the articles under the bill of sale.

The Attorney General: What about the landlord's rent; is that not protected?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The landlord's rent is protected in order that the poor man shall not be turned out of his home at a moment's notice; in order that a man may easily secure a house. The law is, not to protect the landlord only, but to protect those who occupy houses. The Attorney General knows that that is the case. He knows that if a workman gets out of work he is left undisturbed in his house, because the landlord knows that his money is safe. If it were not so a great hardship would be worked, because the tenant would probably be turned out at a moment's notice. Again, a landlord will put a man into his house practically without inquiry, because he knows that the rent is protected. If it were not so we would be working a hardship, not against the owner, because he would then insist upon his rent being prepaid, but against the occupier who is unable for the moment to pay his rent.

The Attorney General: Do you mean to say that if he were not protected the landlord would turn out the occupier at a moment's notice?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not say that a landlord would be so cruel, but every one has to live, and the landlord, if he is to pay his taxes, must have his rent.

The Attorney General: If everyone has to live, should not the worker get his wages?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the landlord has to pay rates and taxes and wages he must have his rent. If he were not protected by law he would insist on having his rent in advance. We do not make laws to protect the man who has something; we make laws to protect the man who wants something, who wants a house, and who does not wish to sleep in the park. Is it not a good law which lets a man into a house practically without inquiry? However, I do not want the question of rent to be confused with the question of wages. In the one case, to enable a worker to get a home over his head and to pay rent, not before, but after he has used the place for a week, we pass a law protecting rent. That is a totally different matter. The rent may be 10s. a week or £10 a week, but it will not be one hundred times 10s. or £10, and so one knows where he is. But under the clause the man who makes an advance will never know where he is. The clause provides that wages shall be protected indefinitely. They may be two years overdue. It provides that if the owner desires to sell, and the man from whom he has got an advance agrees to the sale of an article, and that article is sold and removed, and an assignment is made within 30 days thereafter, the worker can follow the article, and the man who has bought and paid for it and handed over his money, even if he had the permission of the owner and the man who made the advance, will have to disgorge, will have to send back the property and lose his money. It provides, too, that for 30 days or a month after goods are seized and sold the proceeds must be held to satisfy any wages claims which may come in. It will be seen that it may be very far-reaching in its effect. It may lead to the setting up of bogus claims. Take the case of a brick works or a timber works, or any other works employing a large number of men. Bogus claims may be set up to frighten the man who is making an advance. Does the Attorney General say that this is right? There is a great deal that can be said in regard to this matter. It is a matter which ought to be seriously considered by every member of the House. I want to be fair to

the worker, and I want the worker to have work. I want it to be possible for the men of energy to give a bill of sale to someone with money to lend, and receive from him money to pay wages. I want enterprise to be encouraged in order that men may have work. While it does seem right to protect the wages earned, it is perfectly right and proper that we should see that the enterprising man providing work should be enabled to borrow money to carry on his operations. If it is right to say that wages shall come before a bill of sale, it is right to say that wages shall come before a mortgage over the land. Is any hon. member prepared to say this? There are some, perhaps, rash enough to say so, but I doubt if even they would subscribe to such a proposition if they first gave it a moment's thought. Work would be very slack indeed if it were not for borrowed money. Capital we must have. Capital is invested in broad acres, in timber mills, in factories, or in something else of the sort. Capital is of no use in cash. It is necessary to have your money invested, and so a man of enterprise goes to a man of capital and gets money wherewith to carry on his undertaking. Under the clause it will be quite possible for an advance to be made, say, against a timber mill to the extent of £1,000, and the whole of that £1,000 to go in wages, and then for the wage-earner to seize the plant against the man who made the advance.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Has not the worker got the greater claim?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course the wage earner has a claim. He has the right to work, and the claim to his wages. I want him to have the right to work.

Mr. Gill: And to deprive him of his claim to be paid.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, but under the clause there will be no work, no enterprise; we will be afraid to do anything. On the face of it it seems good, and my friends opposite only look at the face of a thing. If the clause is passed it will practically make it impossible to raise money by bill of sale.

The Attorney General: Nonsense.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I assure the hon. member that it will make it quite impos-

sible. It will be necessary to find a fool with money before you get it. Of course, according to members opposite it is only a fool or worse who has money. I am not arguing against the working man, but I say we have not yet come to a time when all the people can be employed by the State. We have not yet nationalised everything, and so we must give a man a chance.

The Attorney General: Does the hon. member not know that wages have a preference in bankruptcy?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Beyond outside secured creditors, yes.

The Attorney General: And why not in a bill of sale?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General is hopeless. I have been trying to explain that we can only get enterprise going when we give people with enterprise and energy the right to go with their securities to the man who has money, to get that money to put it into wages and work. Will the Attorney General say that wages should come before mortgage over land?

The Attorney General: Yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But will he dare to put it into operation? If it became the law of the land to-morrow, would it not jeopardise the opportunity to work?

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course it would. Under the clause no one would understand where he stood. Wages might be owing to a thousand men for three months or for twelve months, and the man who held the bill of sale would stand down until the full wages were satisfied; although the wage-earners had an opportunity of knowing that the bill of sale was in existence, while the man with the bill of sale would have no opportunity of knowing that the wages were owing. The wage-earners can protect themselves with weekly or fortnightly payments; but to say that wages must be protected to any time and any extent and at the expense of the security held by the man who finds the money to keep enterprise going, is wrong. I have no objection to wages being a first claim against the assets of the employer, so long as the re-

gistered advances are protected, and I can say this without endeavouring in any way to unduly protect the man who makes the advances. The Attorney General will see that he must allow this protection to banking institutions and others who finance undertakings against securities. It is surely patent to everyone that a man cannot earn wages unless he can get work, and he is not likely to get work unless we have enterprises going.

The Attorney General: The worker has as much right to his wages as the landlord to his rent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The first right of the worker is to work?

The Attorney General: He has worked and the money is owing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But he must get work first. The duty of this House is to see that men are given an opportunity to work. Of course it is useless to labour the question, because we cannot knock it into hon. members that the man who has money to lend or who gives work is worth anything. If we are to base legislation on fallacies of that sort, we must expect to have men thrown out of work. Hon. members will argue with great eloquence in favour of this clause, but without any reason or sound judgment, and their eloquence will go down. The public will be satisfied, and the working men will say, "Look at the people who desire to save us." I am saying that we are the people who desire to save them from the folly of their actions in putting hon. members opposite on the Treasury benches. That is entirely the position, and the sooner hon. members realise it the better. I hope that it will be no use endeavouring to have this Bill made law, or even to pass this House, and that there will be found sufficient reason in this Chamber to alter the law as proposed by the Attorney General.

The Attorney General: Because of that justice to the worker you would knock kite-high the Chamber of Commerce?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General is the friend of the Chamber of Commerce. They go to him and say, "Bring forward a Bill," and he says "Certainly, we always desire to help you."

It is to the Attorney General they go, and not to me. The hon. member stated that wages are protected for a month, but this clause does not say so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can have a Committee discussion on that clause.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause is really the Bill. There are a few other clauses, but they are not of material importance. However, I have said all I have to say. It is futile to talk to empty benches, and one cannot expect to convert the hon. members who are in the Chamber to even a reasonable way of thinking.

Mr. Gill: You have a few empty benches on your side also.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not complaining of the empty benches, but of the futility of trying to convince hon. members. There are some small amendments proposed, and I see that the old Act is to be reverted to in regard to the definition of "stock." A few years ago the term "stock" meant only sheep, horses, and cattle. My friends the goat, the pig, poultry, and camels were omitted, but the Attorney General by his amendment will include all stock, and the definition will not be limited as it is now. I do not know what prompted the Attorney General to make this definition, but I suppose there is some good reason.

The Attorney General: We have two separate definitions of stock on our statute-book now, and we want to restore the original one.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The old definition covers the stock generally used for purposes of trade. Sheep, cattle, and horses are sold from time to time on terms, and the Attorney General knows that this exemption means that notice need not be given when registering a bill of sale. We do not want to interfere with the right of stock growers to sell on terms; we want them to continue that system, but under this amendment stock in future will include all forms of stock. It was because the other classes of stock were not dealt in very extensively that they were omitted from the amending Act of 1906.

The Attorney General: There is a definition of stock in the 1899 Act and in the amending Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Stock are exempt from notice because they are subject to fairly frequent sale, and having advised the public that stock are exempt there can be no reason why notice should be given before registration. The limitation is desirable and it should apply to stock that changes hands frequently. If the Attorney General seeks to extend the variety of stock brought within the scope of the Act, I think he is making a mistake.

The Attorney General: I do not extend anything. I restore the definition of stock as given in the principal Bills of Sale Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But it should not be restored without reason.

The Attorney General: The reason is that we do not want two definitions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The definition means nothing; it is a question of notice. For horses, sheep, and stock there need be no notice, but for goats, poultry, etc., there must be notice. I see that the Attorney General is anxious to improve the measure, and we have heard him assert that he wants to protect the worker. I have already said that he does not protect anybody. However, whilst I am going to agree to the second reading, I shall oppose some of the clauses in Committee. If it were not that I know the Attorney General is a reasonable man I would oppose the second reading, but I know he is reasonable, and I know that some of the clauses in the Bill are good, and when the amendments on the Notice Paper and others which I intend to move are inserted, we will make a good Bill, and alter the measure to such an extent that the Attorney General will be proud of it. I support the second reading with the reservation I have mentioned in regard to several clauses which I think will work more harm than good.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): I rise to support the second reading of this Bill as a measure which seeks to amend, improve, and bring up to date existing legislation in regard to bills of sale. My only regret is that the Bill is not made a

consolidating measure, so that the five Acts which at the present time grace the statute-book might be done away with, and one comprehensive measure embodying all the provisions of those Acts and of the present Bill might be submitted to the consideration of the House. There are a few innovations in the Bill, which I think are very necessary; particularly is that the case as regards the schedule. The schedule will lead to a shortening of the very long forms hitherto employed, and necessarily employed, in drafting bills of sale, and as such lead, of course, to a clearer understanding of the words in the document and to conciseness and brevity in the bill of sale itself. I listened attentively to the member for Northam when stating his objections to certain portions of the Bill, and making suggestions as regards amendments. First of all, as regards the suggested amendments, I am quite at one with him when he says that it would be very advisable to introduce a provision whereby any person who holds any chattel under a hire-purchase agreement, after he has paid a certain proportion of the purchase money he has agreed to pay, should have the right to put that chattel up for auction and have returned to him an amount which would represent the difference between the agreed price of the article and the price which he had already paid, plus the price fetched at the auction. If a person sells under a hire-purchase agreement an article the original price of which was, say, £100, of which the hirer had already paid £50, and the article at auction realises £80, making a total of £130, surely the person who has hired the chattel in the first instance and had already paid £50 is entitled to the £30 over and above the original price. It would be wise to lay it down as a positive legislative enactment that this procedure should be adopted. Then there could be no doubt whatsoever as to the rights of hirers under these agreements. Then, as regards the condemnation by the hon. member for Northam of Clause 7 giving certain priority to wages, if there is one clause which justifies the introduction of this Bill it is that

particular one, and I can give some concrete illustrations of its absolute and convincing necessity. There were recently auctioned all the goods, stock-in-trade, chattels, and effects of a certain place in Hay-street, and all those goods were subject to a bill of sale to a money lender, but the nature of the transaction was such that the holder of the bill of sale was to all intents and purposes the owner and manager of the business in which the stock and stock-in-trade were used. He was ostensibly only a bill of sale holder, but in reality he was the owner of this business, and at the time this holder of the bill of sale seized under his powers there was an amount of £50 or £60 due as wages to the staff. When he seized, the staff were left lamenting. The real position of affairs was that the person who, to all intents and purposes, employed the staff and should have paid their wages, was nothing more than the servant of the mortgagee of the premises, but this man, by holding the mortgage, was able to defeat the rights of the wage-earners to their wages. That illustration will suffice to prove the necessity for the clause, because it shows that the bills of sale, as heretofore existing, can be made instruments of hardship, and if anything requires protecting it is wages. If any man requires protection it is the wage-earner in respect to his wages, and no man requires more protection from the courts or from Parliament than the man who is working for a weekly or daily wage. His rights should be superior, notwithstanding the opinion of the hon. member for Northam, to those of any bill of sale holder, because, after all, without his work and without his efforts, which he gives towards making good that security, the stock over which the bill of sale is held would be valueless, and this is only giving him a small consideration for his work. I may point out, in respect to the illustration I gave, that it was impossible to prove that the bill of sale holder was the real owner of this business, and therefore there was no redress. Another illustration recently came under my notice in connection with a seizure under another bill of sale in connection

with business premises in town. One of the staff mentioned to me that in Germany, ruled by a kaiser, it was enacted that the wages should have preference over any bill of sale, and surely if that is good enough in a country like Germany, which we look upon as being rather conservative in its ideas and notions, it is also good enough for a country like this where the bulk of the people are earning hourly, daily or weekly wages. This clause is an absolute necessity to protect the wage-earner against unscrupulous holders of bills of sale, and while we have bills of sale we shall have unscrupulous holders of them, and have them made the means of secret arrangements. They are a necessary evil, but while the evil does exist, let us minimise it as much as possible in this respect. I do not know that I have very much else to say in my endorsement of this measure, introduced by the Attorney General, except, perhaps, to point out to the Minister that he is altering the meaning of the definition "contemporaneous advance" in Section 5 of the principal Act. When the principal Act was passed "contemporaneous advance" meant something different from what it does at present, owing to the 1906 amending Act. At the time the original Act was passed it was possible to register practically straight away, and the money could be handed over, but at the present time the money expressed as the consideration in the bill of sale cannot really be handed over until the time for the entry of it has expired. Until that time has expired the grantee of a bill of sale does not know but that the grantor's creditors may step in and destroy the effect of the bill of sale, and if he has handed over the money before it might be gone. I ask the Attorney General whether it would not be wise to extend the meaning of "contemporaneous advance" so as to include any advance made from the time of the execution of the bill of sale until the time fixed for the registration thereof, or even three days afterwards.

The Attorney General: Contemporaneous and future advance?

Mr. DWYER: At the present time the principal Act reads that contemporaneous advance means an advance of money by the grantee, etcetera, contemporaneously with the granting or within three days of the registration thereof. If we strike out the words "or within three days of the registration" it means contemporaneously granted, which implies at the moment of the execution. I should think it ought to mean money given up to the time of the registration, because our more recent legislation has altered the principal Act as regards what a contemporaneous advance really is, and the man who gives his money not at the time of the execution of the bill of sale but at the time of the registration is surely giving a contemporaneous advance. This is only a minor detail which I wish the Attorney General to consider. I have pleasure in endorsing the Bill and in supporting the second reading.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill, though reserving to myself the right to oppose any clause I might think fit in Committee. I notice that this measure is brought forward with a view, to use the Attorney General's words, to remedying some of the weaknesses of the existing Act, and I think every hon. member will agree with the aims and objects of the Attorney General in his desire to bring this about. At the present time, unfortunately—it is a misfortune in many cases—so many of our people have to come under the operations of bills of sale, and so long as the world lasts, I suppose, it will be impossible to do without this means of trading. I cannot altogether agree with some of the provisions of this amending measure. With the hon. member for Northam, I think the transfer or assignment of a registered bill of sale should be registered.

The Attorney General: Is it done anywhere else?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I am not aware that it is, but I think it is only right that the trading community should know what operations are taking place in connection with such a security. It is not

necessary for me to go into details as to the ill-effects of its non-registration, or of keeping the transfer a secret. I do not see why there is any necessity to keep it a secret. It should be made known by the ordinary process such as is done in the first instance by the registration of the bill of sale.

Mr. Dwyer: A man knows a bill of sale exists; what does it matter who is the holder?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: That has a lot to do with it, because the question of further advances comes in.

Mr. Dwyer: You can see the original one.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The transfer may take place without the knowledge of the person making a further advance. A further advance might be made by an unsecured creditor who may have absolute faith in the grantor of the bill of sale.

The Attorney General: If I give a promissory note, must necessarily every person know who granted it?

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is no analogy. When a bill of sale is given and registered the trading public know of it and are to some extent guided in their future operations by the standing of the person who holds the bill of sale.

The Attorney General: They are guided more by who is the grantor.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I have had a very long experience in connection with bills of sale and it would weigh heavily with me if I were going to make a further advance to a man who had already given a bill of sale to some other person, if I knew that the bill of sale had been transferred to a person of whom I did not approve. I think it is absolutely necessary that these transfers should be registered. In regard to secret bills of sale or unregistered bills of sale that have been in existence in the past, the amendment proposing to make them void, unless under certain conditions, is a very wise one. Quite recently unregistered bills of sale have been held by certain people and have been known to exist only when the person who had given the bill of sale found it necessary to call a meeting of his creditors. It is manifestly un-

fair for any person to have what is commonly known as a holding order over stock or implements, who will, just on the eve of the bankruptcy of a person, step in and take possession of chattels or stock, very often to the detriment of other creditors who have in good faith been financing that person. The proposal to do away with the limitation of the amount for which a bill of sale may be given is a very good one and the schedule contained in this measure also indicates a step in the right direction. As pointed out by the Attorney General, there will be a great saving in expense by adopting a set form. It will save many pounds expense which people are often put to when they find themselves under an obligation to resort to obtaining money under a bill of sale, or an advance even for a very small amount. The clause dealing with preferential treatment in respect to the wages of workmen has a great deal to commend it. At the same time the Attorney General, when moving the second reading, stated that he considered it was one of the most controversial portions of the bill and that it was adopting a new principle, and he even went further by stating that it would upset the general security of a bill of sale. That is a question which this House should take seriously into consideration before it passes this clause; I believe that a workman should be protected in the matter of his wages for a limited period. I was not in the Chamber during the speech delivered by the Attorney General upon the second reading of this measure, but from the reports I gather that the Attorney General led the House to believe there would be a limitation of four weeks.

The Attorney General: I gave the draftsman instructions to limit it, but he has not done it in the Bill.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I would be glad to have an assurance from the Attorney General that there would be a limitation of four weeks.

The Attorney General: I will keep it as it is, and the House can do as it likes.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: I think the Attorney General should make an explana-

tion to the House as early as possible on this matter, because the Bill as drafted makes no limitation.

The Attorney General: I know; the Bill came into my hands as I was delivering my speech. My instruction at the last moment was to limit, but there is no limitation in the Bill as it now stands.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Presumably the Attorney General would not oppose an amendment limiting the amount to four weeks' wages. I take it that was the intention of the Attorney General when he introduced the measure, and I think this side of the House will agree to an amendment in that respect. I hope, whatever his decision in regard to this clause may be, that very close consideration will be given to the effect it will have upon the general security of a bill of sale, as I think it will also be admitted that there may be very little security to the worker if we are going to interfere with the value or security of a bill of sale. It may mean, in many cases, throwing men out of work; therefore, I say it is necessary for this House to guard against any probability that may arise in the direction I have indicated. I think a certain amount of responsibility should be thrown on the worker to see he gets his payments made at reasonable periods, and not allow an accumulation of wages. I would like to point out to the Attorney General that this clause, if passed as it stands in the amending Bill, lays itself open to fraud. I know in several instances where a person has had the misfortune, perhaps, to meet his creditors and at the last moment, in filing a statement of assets and liabilities, has put in wages for his children, and this would have to be guarded against if the clause is passed as printed. I do not wish to deal with all the proposed amendments, but there are several which I look upon as beneficial. Hon. members will see I have already given notice of several to which I am going to ask the Attorney General and the House to agree when we are in Committee, that is dealing more particularly with bills of sale over growing crops. For some time past it has been the custom to take bills of sale over growing crops, and no doubt

it will be the custom for many years to come to do the same. In my experience, I have found a great deal of difficulty is created, both to the disadvantage of the producer and the person who is helping him, in the fact that our present Acts provide that no bill of sale can be given over a crop until that crop is actually growing. I want this House and the Minister in charge of the Bill to endeavour to overcome the difficulty in the way I am going to suggest to the House. As I said before, it is at present impossible to take a bill of sale over a crop until it is actually growing, and the disability which we labour under in this provision is that a person who may be already financially involved with other creditors, and may wish to obtain seed wheat and fertiliser to carry him on for the coming season, is very often prevented from obtaining the necessary advance, for although he may have someone who is willing and ready to assist him, that person cannot safely do so because notice of intention to register must first be given, and as soon as that is done, we find other creditors coming in and asking to share *pro rata* in the security. I know of several instances, and I could give the Attorney General names, where settlers and farmers who were desirous to avail themselves of these offers were unable to do so simply because other creditors objected. I know of several instances where the person willing to make the advance has had to obtain at considerable trouble, expense, and delay, the consent of all the other creditors to the advance, and their agreement not to caveat the bill of sale when given. This often brings about trouble, as some little creditor may have been left out of the first arrangement and the person who has made the advance has to pay that individual out in order to save any trouble. I wish to go further than that, for the purposes of certain specified advances, specified only so far as seed, fertiliser and bags are concerned. The expense of putting in and taking off a crop should be the first charge upon that crop, and should be secured by registered bill of sale without notice; it should be put in the same category as

wool and station stock. I see no objection to this being agreed to, particularly as we have already provided in the existing measure that no notice shall be given so far as a bill of sale over wool is concerned, therefore, I think there is no necessity to give notice so far as the specified items of seed, fertiliser, and bags are concerned. It will be a very great help to those who wish to avail themselves of the chance of getting assistance in this direction, and it will not interfere or act detrimentally to the other creditors. The Attorney General or some other hon. member may say "What about the storekeeper or the other creditors?" It will not affect them in the slightest degree, because they would be only too pleased, no doubt, for someone to come along and supply seed wheat, fertiliser and bags in a case of that kind, as the advance is limited only to the specified items, and the amount of those items which should be specified. I hope, therefore, that the House will agree to these amendments. We should do all in our power to make it easy for our people to obtain such advances, and also to give a reasonable amount of protection to those who, in all earnestness and all good faith, are prepared to make them, and who. I think the House will agree, by doing so are often assisting the settler, especially in the early stages of settlement, to get in a crop, and often a very much larger crop than he could otherwise put in. I trust, therefore, that these amendments, when brought forward in Committee, will be agreed to. I might by way of explanation say I notice on reading the amendments under my name that there is some slight mistake; they are not exactly as I gave them into the Crown Law Department, but I will take the opportunity of putting them in order before the House gets in Committee. I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply): I do not think it is necessary to detain the House much longer; in fact, I am rather pleased at the reception this measure has met. I quite agree with the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Dwyer) that it

would have been well if a consolidating measure could have been provided to deal with the whole question in detailed and complete fashion. Unfortunately the time at our disposal this session compels us to get such reforms as time will permit. The only really hostile criticism the Bill has received was from the hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), and I was under the impression at one stage of his address that he was going to advise the House to reject the measure *holus bolus*. The hon. member appeared to see no good thing in it from beginning to end, and I was wondering what had stirred up his spleen, but I recognised afterwards the one great blemish that filled the horizon of his vision was the clause which gives some security to the man who is working, and yet it is no new principle that is introduced in this measure. In our bankruptcy law we give a preferential claim to the workman; we recognise that a man up to a certain time who has been working for wages and has not been paid has a right to be paid out of the assets the bankrupt possesses, and I was glad to see the recognition which that principle received from the Opposition benches. If it is good in that case, why is it not good in this case also? The hon. member apparently can see no analogy between the landlord and the worker. In one sense work is the only capital the worker possesses. He has nothing to fall back upon if he is not paid for the time and industry he puts in for the profit making of the employer. The landlord, however, if he has not been paid his rent, still has his house and his land left to him; he is simply being deprived of his profits. The worker, on the other hand, is deprived of both his capital and his profit, all that he has whereby to live, and therefore in my opinion, if there be anyone who should have a preferential claim under a bill of sale, it should be the worker, and I am simply putting him in this measure on a par with the landlord.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You throw him out of work; that is the point.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is the old cry always.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But it is a true one.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That was the cry from the earliest stage when serfdom merged into a low paid wage, and it has been the cry from that day right up to to-night. The Bill will make the grantee more careful, and just as now the grantee of a bill of sale insists on the grantor obtaining and producing receipt for rent, so the grantee must on the production of evidence that wages have been paid regularly. I owe a slight apology for a statement I made when I introduced the second reading of the Bill. I stated that a worker to whom wages had been owing for the space of one month prior to the realisation on a bill of sale was to have a preferential claim. I gave instructions to the draftsman who should have inserted that provision in the Bill, but I did not see a copy of the Bill as it was printed until a minute before I made my second reading speech, and I did not detect that what I instructed the draftsman to do had not been done, and that the matter was left open entirely. That is to say, wages stand in preference to any amount, as the Bill is now. If a man owes 12 months' wages he must pay that before he satisfies the grantee of the bill of sale. That, however, may be too drastic and I am prepared to accept an amendment limiting that. I will not deal any further with the Bill. I am proud that some of its good features have been acknowledged, and I shall not, I hope be unreasonable when we get into Committee. I may inform my friends opposite that I shall be compelled to oppose some of their amendments because I do not believe they will improve the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Holman in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 5:

Mr. A. E. PIESSE moved an amendment—

*That the following words be added:—“and by omitting the word ‘growing’ in the second and sixth lines of the interpretation of the term ‘chattels.’”*

The Attorney General knew what the effect of the amendment would be. It would be necessary to take out the word "growing," because at the present time growing crops were included in the interpretation of "chattels." Further on he would move to add other words, but it would first of all be necessary to take out the word "growing" from lines 2 and 6.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The object was to permit it to be lawful to give a bill of sale over crops *in futuro*, that was to say, crops that had no existence at all. As that was a debatable matter progress might be reported. He moved—

*That progress be reported.*

Motion passed.

Progress reported.

## BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN** (Honorary Minister) in moving the second reading said: I wish to explain to hon. members that the object of this Bill is to allow friendly societies to have the opportunity of using a greater portion of the interest obtained from money on mortgage, etcetera, for their management and medical funds. For some considerable time the friendly societies have been heavily handicapped in regard to their management fund. As a matter of fact in respect to many of the societies the management fund has been short, and the registrar has repeatedly had to call their attention to its condition. I am pleased to say that during the last two years, owing to the action of the registrar, the management fund has been brought into a far better condition than previously obtained. The present Friendly Societies Act provides that the interest received from funds loaned on mortgage, etcetera, if over five per cent., can be used for the management fund. Various friendly societies have requested that this amount should be reduced. A deputation waited on the Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister) in regard to this matter, and after some dis-

cussion it was arranged, with the sanction of the actuary and the registrar, that permission should be given to reduce the amount to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That is giving them another half per cent. of interest earned towards the management fund. It has appeared to many persons not having that professional knowledge which the registrar has, that the amounts paid into friendly societies are continually building up a large fund. As a matter of fact, the amount to the credit of friendly societies in Western Australia has increased considerably during the past ten years.

**Mr. Heitmann:** That is the sick fund.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN** (Honorary Minister): The sick and funeral funds together. In some large societies the management fund has a substantial credit. In the last report of the friendly societies it was shown that the total capital of the societies amounted to £174,514. Of this amount they have out on mortgage £132,434. The balance is kept in the bank for the purpose of meeting calls in the case of sick or death benefits. It shows clearly that the various friendly societies are compelled to loan their money out on mortgages which sometimes are very doubtful, and to sometimes lend on properties for a very small return. These loans are not considered as safe as they would be if invested in local government or West Australian stock. But they have to do this because the amount of interest, which is fixed at five per cent., gives them no opportunity of paying anything towards the management fund in controlling their own affairs.

**Hon. J. Mitchell:** But you will not pay them more than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

**Hon. W. C. ANGWIN** (Honorary Minister): The hon. member realises that provision is made in the Bill that any money loaned to the Government or local authority at 4 per cent. shall be deemed to be earning  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In other words, no deduction is to be made in regard to other interest earned, and which would affect that amount loaned on Government securities or the securities of a local authority. These are deemed to be earning  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. There is no doubt

this small measure will assist the friendly societies greatly. I know that some hon. members connected with friendly societies consider that this amount should be reduced. But the registrar is very strong in opposition, and we must allow a professional man of his ability to express an opinion in regard to this. It is necessary that the House should be guided by such an officer, and he is strongly of opinion that it would not be safe to allow the friendly societies to draw any sum of a lesser amount than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Consequently the Bill has been introduced with a view to allowing the friendly societies to have one-half per cent. more than they previously had towards the management fund for the amount of interest earned.

Mr. Gill: Will they be content with that much?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It has been already explained to them, and the Bill has been accepted by a large majority of the friendly societies.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: I suppose they know they cannot get anything better.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It is the duty of the Government, on the advice of their officers, to see that the funds of the friendly societies are maintained in a thoroughly safe condition, and that no money more than is necessary should be used to keep those funds in a safe condition. The registrar of the friendly societies is of opinion that it would not be safe to reduce the amount below  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and I believe that on his advice the friendly societies have approved of the Bill as introduced and passed in another place. I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 24th September, 1913.

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

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Amended food standards and regulations under the Health Act, 1912. 2, Amended regulations under the Jetties Regulation Act, 1878. 3, By-laws of Geraldton local board of health. 4, Port Regulation 46A.

### QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS PURCHASE MONEY.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (without notice) asked: When does the Colonial Secretary expect to receive a reply to the cable forwarded to the Agent General on the 30th July asking for particulars as to the purchase money for the Perth tramways?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I will endeavour to get the information for the next sitting of the House.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. C. SOMMERS, leave of absence for the next six sittings of the House granted to the Hon. A. G. Jenkins on account of ill-health.

### WEST PROVINCE ELECTION SELECT COMMITTEE.

*Attendance of Member of Assembly.*

On motion by Hon. R. D. McKENZIE resolved: That a message be sent to the Legislative Assembly asking that House to authorise Mr. W. Price to attend to give evidence before the select committee on the West Province election, 1912.