

prospecting for coal, there would be something in it.

THE MINISTER: The residents of the district had assured the Government that if a tunnel were struck through a steep bank on the creek to the bore, they would be able to make use of a very good supply of water.

MR. BUTCHER: A bore was, he understood, put down some distance, and water was struck which rose within 15 feet of the surface, but unfortunately the bore was put down on the top of a hill, and this £300 was required to drive a tunnel through at the low level to strike this bore and tap the supply. He was at Mingenew a few days ago, and was informed that the tunnel had already been cut through, and that a supply of something like 30,000 gallons was now flowing and running down the creek. He failed to see why this £300 was required to do the work already carried out.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It was not so when he was there about three months ago.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The work might have been done recently.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:19 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 18th December, 1903.

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THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PETITION—MR. F. L. WEISS.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan) presented a petition from Mr. F. Lyon Weiss, asking the House to consider the advisableness of electoral reform. It was rather late in the session to present a petition; but this one might give members food for reflection during recess.

Petition received and read.

JANDAKOT RAILWAY BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

COLLIE-NARROGIN RAILWAY BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): In moving the second reading I would invite the attention of members to the course pursued in another place when the Bill was considered. Touching lightly on the provisions of the measure, the size of which I hope will not deter members from giving it their consideration, I may say that similar legislation in New South Wales, South Australia and in this State has been duly availed of. The greater part of the Bill consists of purely machinery clauses for the administration of the water supply and sewerage schemes which are rightly thought to be absolutely necessary for the comfort and prosperity of

dwellers within the metropolitan and suburban area, extending from Midland Junction to Fremantle inclusive. The provisions of the Metropolitan Water Supply Acts of Sydney and Adelaide have been availed of in drafting the Bill, and the lines of the Goldfields Water Supply Act which this Legislature passed last session have in some respects been fairly closely followed. I would draw special attention to the fact that the Bill has two objects. The first I would class as constructive; that is, the Bill confers on the Government the right to construct certain works for the purposes of water supply and sewerage. For the present, that aspect of the Bill is the more important. The remainder of the measure is administrative; that is, rules are laid down under which the works when completed shall be administered, and this for the present at all events is the less important part of the measure, for the reason that the constructive part of the work, it is hoped, may be begun almost immediately after the Act comes into force by proclamation, whereas I think at least twelve months must elapse before the works are sufficiently advanced to be administered; hence the administrative clauses of the Act will not, I take it, come into operation for a somewhat prolonged period. This fact has not been lost sight of in another place; and at a conference of the metropolitan and suburban members in that place it was resolved to pass the Bill without amendment, in order that, before the administrative clauses are needed, conferences of the various local authorities throughout the area affected may be held, and any amendments they may suggest forwarded to the Government, by whom they will be considered, and if necessary passed into law during the first session of the new Parliament. I think this a legitimate position to take up, and that I am safe in saying no member in either House of the Legislature believes that this measure is not urgently needed. That being so, it is essential that the Government should as soon as possible be endowed with those constructive powers, those powers to initiate and carry out the work, which the Bill seeks to confer. That the administrative part of the Bill—that which is likely to lead to contentious debate—is important, I do not deny; but the con-

sideration of that part can well be deferred until the local authorities have had an opportunity of expressing their views upon it. This being so, I do not think it necessary to go through the Bill clause by clause. The scheme on which the Bill is constructed is to a great extent that of the Goldfields Water Supply Act. Members will find in Clause 2 the divisions of the Bill, and that the parts which more immediately concern us now are Part I., preliminary; Part II., area and districts; Part IV., water reserves; Part V.—the most important of all—the construction and maintenance of works; and Part VII., drainage. The Bill is particularly required for drainage. We have in the metropolitan and suburban area to which the Bill will apply, several water schemes in operation, and in almost every part of that area the public are fairly well supplied with water; but as yet no attempt has been made at a sewerage system, and this I think is one of the most important questions which so far as Perth and Fremantle are concerned can possibly be raised. Recognising that fact, it is for the construction of the sewerage system especially that the Government ask Parliament to give quick discharge to this measure. Members will perceive that the administrative portion of the Bill consists of Parts III., VI., VIII., IX., X., XI., and XII.; and I can assure them that there is good precedent for all the clauses therein contained. The Bill will be largely a consolidating measure, the whole of six Acts being repealed by its operation. This is a step similar to several others taken this session, and I think we may congratulate ourselves on the number of consolidating Bills brought in and passed. I have not yet made up the list of Acts which will be wiped off the statute book by those put on this session, but on a rough estimate I think it is 40 or 50. In the circumstances I do not think I need give any farther explanation of the measure. No one denies its usefulness and its necessity. I would therefore ask members to be good enough to take the course adopted in another place, and to pass the Bill as quickly as possible through all its stages. I have the honour to move the second reading.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I shall not say much on this measure,

because I do not feel competent to discuss it in detail. We all admit its desirableness and necessity, and particularly may we congratulate the Government on having safeguarded existing rights—a precaution which they have not always taken in other Bills. It is clearly expressed in Clause 3 that the Bill shall not affect any right acquired under any of the Acts to be repealed; and this principle seems to be carefully observed throughout the measure. On that account I congratulate the Government, and hope they will always extend the same consideration to existing interests, thus preventing many complications and much ill-feeling. I think the time has come when all members should stand together in the interests of justice and right, and should approve of such measures only as protect existing interests. I congratulate the Government on the introduction of the Bill. There can be no denying the importance of the works contemplated; and I hope the services of thoroughly competent men will be secured, so as to carry those works to a successful issue.

HON. W. T. LOTON (East): A Bill of this magnitude and importance, if considered in detail, would I suppose occupy the time of the House for about a month; but if anything is to be done at all, it seems to me that the only course now is that advocated by the leader of the House—a similar course to that adopted in another place. If we adopt that course, we empower the Government to take immediate steps to provide water supply and sewerage schemes. I have not seen the Bill before to-day, and have just glanced through it; but, so far as I know, it does not provide for any particular system of sewerage or of water supply; and the schemes adopted will, therefore, entirely depend on the decision of the Government, or of the board, if appointed at once. We know, of course, what the experts recommend—with regard to sewerage a septic tank system, and with regard to water an extended supply from bores. It seems to me that to provide an additional supply of water at an early date, and to have any benefit from it, the system proposed is the only one which will give relief; but I hope that system will not be permanent. The sooner we face the difficulty by conserving a sufficient

supply of water from the hills, the better for all concerned; but the proposed system will give us immediate relief, probably at a fairly low cost; and I do not intend to object to it. As to the system of sewerage I have nothing to say, save that I am a somewhat conservative person, and I know what deep sewerage is. We all know it is perfect and cleanly if properly laid down. What the septic tank system is I am not prepared to say. It is a matter not only for engineering experts but for medical experts to decide. We do not yet know what will be the effect, in the Australian climate, of the fluid discharged from septic tanks. I have seen a doctor drink a little of it; but personally I should rather not take it, even if mixed with a stronger fluid, though it is perfectly clear and apparently unobjectionable. I do not think I need say anything farther on the subject. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill in order that the Government may make as early a start as possible to give a better water supply, and to introduce a system of sewerage.

HON. G. RANDELL (Metropolitan): The course proposed to be taken is one that does not commend itself to any member of the House, but under the circumstances it is the best thing that can be done. No one could undertake to go exhaustively into a Bill of this kind in a short time, although there may be a lot in it that we are familiar with and we may know the working of a great deal. The reasons which have been given are fairly convincing that we should take the course which has been adopted in another place. I should like to congratulate the Government in not having been led away by influences which have been brought to bear, and expressions of opinion which have been given, as to an elective board being appointed to control this matter. I am glad the Government have stuck to the nominee system. I do not at all think that Governments are perfect; they make some mistakes; at the same time they are in the best position to appoint the chairman and members of the board. Beyond that there is strong reason why the Government should appoint the board, for the money has to be found pretty well all by the Government as at the present time. I could never see any

reason in the argument for an elective system, when all the money for the purchase and control of the waterworks is found by the Government of the day. Notwithstanding all the evils of Governments I am disposed to think, after all, they are the best body to arrange and fix the members of the board. I am pleased to see the Government have adhered to that system. Mr. Loton did not tell us if he had tasted the fluid to which he referred and which he said was pure and perfect. I take it, from the remarks he made, he was quite content to take the statement of the doctor or medical man. We have seen statements at different times in the public prints to the same effect, that the water is perfectly pure; of course we cannot say whether it is so or not. At any rate this new principle seems to be coming into vogue in various parts of the world, and it is therefore well worthy of a trial here. There is no doubt that a better water supply for the city and surrounding localities is quite necessary. I agree with Mr. Loton that the general feeling is against the bore water. I confess I would not like to drink the bore water unless mixed with other water and aerated. [Hon. J. W. HACKETT: And whisky.] Not even with whisky, although I believe that is a good preservative. Although we have the opinions and analyses from Melbourne stating that bore water is purer than that which comes from the hills, yet I prefer the water that comes from the hills, and which is gathered from the clouds. I think the time cannot arrive too soon when we should have a large and sufficient catchment area for the supply of water to Perth and the suburbs for many years to come, so that we may have ample and sufficient potable water for the inhabitants to drink. I never in my own home, if I can avoid it, drink the water from the metropolitan supply. I prefer—and I think I go against some opinions expressed pretty freely by professional men and others—to take rain water which I can gather on my house roof, to the bore water that may be supplied by the Metropolitan Water Supply Board. Under the circumstances I think there is no other method for the House to adopt than that already adopted in another place—that we

should take the Bill as presented to us and pass it, I think it was mentioned, as *pro formâ*, to enable the Government to go on with some of the works for the adoption of the system of drainage. I do not want to make a comparison, but I think under ordinary circumstances the House would not consent to this course unless ample time were given for a matter of this importance, touching the interests of all individuals, being carefully considered, and without having sufficient time to carefully go into the question and the clauses of the Bill. I support the second reading.

Hon. J. W. WRIGHT (Metropolitan): It is not my intention to detain the House at any length, but an important Bill like this, on which the Government are to be congratulated, coming in now, although in a late portion of the session, demands our support, for it is urgently wanted. There are many things in the Bill which I would like to refer to if there were time. I have not had time to go through the measure carefully, but on casually looking through it there are a few things that I object to; but as the Minister has told us the Bill contains machinery clauses principally, and they are not likely to come into force for six or 12 months, I do not think it would do much good by going into the measure clause by clause. At any rate the time of the House will not permit that at present. In regard to the constitution of the board I would like to have seen five members instead of three, and I would like to have seen the term of office extended beyond 12 months. With a board of this importance it takes six or eight months to get into the work, and if the members have to go out at the end of 12 months they would only just know what the work was like when they had to retire. Again in reference to the salary of the chairman, and I take it the Government will appoint a thoroughly practical engineer, I do not think it is too much to give him £750 a year. The present Engineer-in-Chief has engineers working under him at £800 a year, therefore the gentleman appointed as chairman of the board should be one whom we could fully trust, and who is thoroughly up to his work, and would not be influenced at all by political reasons or anybody outside. We should

have a thoroughly competent man. I should like the Minister to have told us the system of sewerage that has been adopted. I have not seen the reports that have come in.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They have been published in the Press.

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: As it is said, they have not come before us officially. I have given some attention to the question of sewerage and above all the systems I think the septic tank system is the best. I gave some months of my time to inquiring into sewerage systems in England and personally I am thoroughly convinced, if competent men carry out the septic tank system, it cannot be improved on. In reference to the water supply I agree with what fell from Mr. Loton and Mr. Randell as to the bore water. I cannot say that the bore water meets with my approval at all and I think there is some doubt as to the supply, for permission has to be given by the Minister to put down bores. In many instances the bores I have seen at work I should not call artesian. For that reason I would sooner see a gravitation scheme for the supply of Perth and the bores done away with. I am not going into the Bill at length. I shall not oppose any measure of this kind that the senior members for Perth and the suburbs agree with. I shall give them my assistance and see that this matter is pushed forward as quickly as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—The Board:

HON. J. W. WRIGHT: It would be advisable to have a board consisting of five members instead of three.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Bill was to tide the Government over a probationary period. The member objected to the number of members of the board provided by the Bill, and in the second place to the shortness of the term. These particulars could be altered within a reasonable time if found not acceptable. The only function of the board for the next year would be the administration of the water supply of Perth. The other water supplies were within the control of the Government now.

Clause passed.

Clauses 9 to end—agreed to.

Schedules (twelve), Preamble—agreed to.

Title:

HON. G. RANDELL: Was there any provision for wells in addition to artesian bores?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 25 minutes to 6 o'clock, until the next Monday.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 18th December, 1903.

[ALL-NIGHT SITTING.]

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THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE CYCLONE, RELIEF OF DISTRESS.

MR. JOHNSON, without notice, asked the Premier: Whether the Government will take immediate steps to relieve the distress in Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and district, occasioned by the recent storm.

THE PREMIER replied: I thank the hon. member for drawing my attention to the matter. I shall have great pleasure in moving in that direction.