

These provide that if, within two years of the adjustment, his services are terminated for a reason other than resignation or misconduct, he shall be paid a gratuity equivalent to four weeks' remuneration for each year of continuous service as a local authority employee. This gratuity will be calculated on the average weekly salary of his last 52 weeks of employment and the total gratuity must not exceed the salary he has received in his last 52 weeks of service.

If a person who has had at least one year's service prior to the adjustment resigns after a year and within two years of the adjustment and the local authority has not made him an offer in writing of two years' continuous employment for at least the wages he received before the adjustment, he shall also be paid the gratuity I have mentioned.

If a person before the adjustment was employed under a contract of service entitling him to compensation on the termination of his services under the contract, the full amount of compensation shall be paid if he is discharged after the adjustment takes place, even if the amount of gratuity payable under the Bill is exceeded. These protective provisions are based on those adopted in New South Wales following adjustments of local authority boundaries in that State.

It is proposed that the amalgamation shall take place on the 1st July. It just works out that the 30th June is a Saturday, and it is intended that the elections shall be held on that day, so there will be no drag as occurred in another instance when certain local authorities had to be put in, really, as caretakers, for a few weeks. Because of the elections being on a Saturday and the new authority coming into existence on the Monday, there will be nothing of that kind on this occasion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 13th October, 1955.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT SCHEME.

Settlers on Leases, Rocky Gully.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many of the war service settlers at Rocky Gully are now "on lease"?

(2) Of those "on lease" what are the highest and lowest values respectively on which rent is calculated, and how many acres are there in each of such properties?

(3) In determining the values on which in those cases rent has been calculated, has any sum been written off? If so, how much in each case?

(4) What are the actual rentals in each case?

(5) Are any other settlers there not now "on lease" expected to go "on lease" in the near future?

(6) Where can the form of perpetual lease that is to be used be found?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 38.

(2) £20,734—total area, subject to survey, 900 acres approximately, of which 658 acres were under pasture at time of valuation.

£16,697—total area subject to survey, 1100 acres approximately, of which 528 acres were under pasture at time of valuation.

These values are not final and are subject to further adjustment. If necessary they will be subject to the economic test as provided in Clause (5) (5) of the conditions.

(3) Nothing has been written off to date. the question of write-off does not arise until all farms in the project are established and final valuation determined.

(4) Under the assessment policy the lessees are not required to pay rental at present.

(5) Yes.

(6) The printed forms of lease are held at the Department of Lands and Surveys.

HOSPITALS.

Position in Serpentine-Jarrahdale District.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY asked the Minister for Health:

(1) When can it be expected that better hospital facilities will be provided in the Serpentine-Jarrahdale district?

(2) Is it proposed to build a new hospital, or to make improvements to the existing hospital, at Jarrahdale?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) The Armadale-Kelmscott Hospital Board will shortly be calling tenders for additions to the Armadale hospital, which will then provide reasonable general and maternity accommodation for patients from Armadale and districts.

(2) It is proposed to renovate and effect improvements to existing Jarrahdale hospital buildings to provide adequately for the needs of Jarrahdale.

EDUCATION.

(a) Cost of Repairs to Geraldton Primary School.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Education:

What is the contract price for the roofing and repairs at the Geraldton Primary School?

The MINISTER replied:

The contract price is £5,992.

(b) Cost of Repairs to Geraldton High School.

Mr. SEWELL asked the Minister for Education:

What is the contract price for the repairs and renovations to the Geraldton High School?

The MINISTER replied:

The contract price is £9,305.

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION FUND.

Position of Members and Examination of Legislation.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Premier:

(1) In what year will those members who were serving in Parliament when the superannuation legislation was passed become entitled to claim the full benefits of the scheme, assuming that they have still retained their seats in the meantime?

(2) When do those members who initially paid in lump sums after the legislation was first enacted, become entitled to full benefits?

(3) Is the legislation being examined at the present time for any amendments?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

(1) The year is dependent on the amount of voluntary payments made by the member to the repealed members of Parliament fund. The maximum benefit is payable after 14 years membership of the fund, including the period the member was a contributor to the repealed fund. From the records, the earliest date that a member had contributory membership under the voluntary payment plan was the 1st July, 1937. The maximum period was therefore reached on the 1st July, 1951. Four sitting members are entitled to the maximum pension on retirement and several members will be eligible during the next term of Parliament.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Yes.

TRAFFIC.

Report on Extended Period for Drivers' Licences.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has the report on extended periods of motor-vehicle driving licences been received from the Acting Commissioner of Police, following his visit to the Eastern States conference?

(2) If so, is he yet in a position to release it and give the Government's views on such report?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The report is receiving consideration.

DRAINAGE.*Programme for Metropolitan Area.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Works:

(1) At what places in the metropolitan area, if any, is the Public Works Department carrying out drainage work at present?

(2) Is the work open drainage or piped?

(3) In what area is it contemplated major drainage work will be undertaken during the current year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) No construction work is being carried out. Normal operation and maintenance are being done at Herdsman Lake.

(3) Nil.

INQUESTS.*Number Awaiting Hearing.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) What number of inquests and inquiries are awaiting hearing by the coroner?

(2) Is the number, as compared with 12 months ago, increasing or decreasing?

(3) If the number is increasing, can hearings be expedited?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Justice) replied:

(1) Metropolitan area—(a) inquests, 15; (b) other inquiries, 46.

(2) Increasing.

(3) Inquests are heard expeditiously by the coroner following the finalisation of the police inquiries.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. University Medical School, Teaching Hospitals.

Introduced by the Minister for Works (for the Premier).

2. Zoological Gardens Act Amendment. Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (LIBRARIES).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [2.24]: In the debate that took place on the Bill the other evening, I was interested to hear

the views of various members who represent some of the metropolitan constituencies that have been affected by the lack of drainage—a few of them most drastically—as a result of the severe winter we have experienced this year. The member for Middle Swan has experienced such difficulties for many years and I appreciate the problems that confront him in many parts of his electorate which have been aggravated over the past few years, because I have inspected the swampy terrain that lies behind Bayswater, and more particularly in the Bedford Park area.

The member for South Perth mentioned that he, too, had had some experience in the past with the drainage problem in what was then the old Canning electorate, which he represented for some years. However, I doubt whether he has a clear picture of what occurs in any year, let alone in an abnormal winter. It was his opinion that most of the flooding, particularly on the eastern side of the city, was caused by the swelling of the Canning River after the Canning Dam overflowed which, in turn, led to a rise in the water table and resulted in a great deal of flooding in that area. At the time, I interjected by saying that I did not agree, and I repeat now that I most definitely do not agree, with that contention.

In Cannington and thereabouts over recent years, there has been just as much flooding and saturation of the ground as there has been this year. Actually, there has been no great degree of flooding near the Canning River. Those members who are well acquainted with the course of that river will realise that the banks are of a clayey nature, and once they become saturated they form a dam, more or less, and the amount of water that escapes into the sandy ground is kept down to a great degree by the formation of this natural bank preventing it from spreading.

What causes the rise of the water table in the eastern suburbs, particularly in Bayswater and Bassendean, is that many brooks flow from the Darling Ranges, together with a great deal of seepage, which find their level somewhere east of the airport. In the past, this area has been a natural dam and there has been no clearly defined outlet for those streams that run down from the Darling Ranges so that they may flow into either the Canning River or the Swan River. As a result, there is one swamp in that region known as the Five-mile Swamp, and the water that lies there, because it is unable to reach the rivers, flows through various seepage-ways when it reaches a certain height to escape into the natural river outlets.

There are many districts, particularly Welshpool, which the member for South Perth mentioned, that experienced drainage difficulties when he was the member for that area, when little could be done

to alleviate the problem, even taking into consideration the installation of a comprehensive drainage scheme, because in that one location a substantial spur drain will be required. Following the answers that were given to the question I put to the Minister in this regard, I ascertained that the ten properties in the Ellam-st. vicinity would be valued at about £19,000, not allowing for depreciation caused by the swampy nature of the ground, which is now extremely apparent. However, the department said it could not provide an estimate without considerable investigation of what it would cost to run a spur drain through there, but the indication is that it would probably cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds to effectively drain this area.

I would point out, therefore, that the local governing authority has been very remiss in allowing permits to be issued for homes to be erected there. Local authorities, however, are not entirely to blame in this respect, because I feel the Government of the country has a duty to the public to protect it from such circumstances that may become apparent in an abnormal winter, and which did not appear to be abnormal when the land was purchased. When the people concerned sought to erect their homes, probably in the summer months, the land would have appeared sandy and dry.

It would seem, therefore, that a complete survey should be made of these very low spots in order to assist the Government departments, and to prevent demands being made on them for drainage in areas that are very doubtful propositions and not to the advantage of the general public of the State. The local authorities should advise whether or not it was advisable to grant permits for building in these areas.

There are also a number of dwellings in Bishopsgate-st., Carlisle, which have suffered severely from flooding in recent days. To cope with the situation there would also cost a considerable amount of money. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that it would cost not less than £250,000 to put in a main drain for this area. Members who know this particular district will appreciate that a drain in that low-lying area would serve no other purpose than to relieve the properties affected. If we look at the valuation of the properties concerned in this area—there are 10 in all—we find it is estimated at £26,000. Accordingly, from the taxpayer's point of view, it would not be a good proposition nor would it be fair to ask for Government finance to be expended on this when no doubt it could be put to far greater and better use in other regions.

As late as today I received a letter from the Belmont Park Road Board requesting that I introduce a deputation to the Minister in connection with drainage matters

in the Newburn area. I maintain that such areas will never be effectively drained until we make sure that the seepage and stream water from the hills is channelled either into the Swan River or the Canning River. Accordingly, it is essential that some co-ordinated power should be given to a body such as the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department to help it handle progress in these areas, and to assist it to provide drainage and other essential services. That is exactly what this amending Bill intends to do. It would appear that a certain amount of co-ordination has always been possible between the departments, but it seems that to bring them under one jurisdiction would be the best means of achieving a most efficient and satisfactory policy with regard to drainage.

Most people realise, I think, that the Government has only a limited amount of finance at its disposal, and if reticulation systems are required, they must, in the main, come first. The reason is that we rarely have abnormal winters, but we always have an urgent need for a supply of water. Accordingly, there must be some tolerance on the part of the public before a complete and comprehensive drainage scheme can be effectively achieved throughout the metropolitan area.

I would suggest, however, that if any funds are available to prevent flooding in areas as close as Victoria Park—one can see from the Carlisle railway station an area that has been affected there, where the water table has risen—that money should be used, as far as possible, for drainage purposes to control effectively those areas, which are quite extensive. Any funds available should first be used to channel water that is unnecessarily running into what are otherwise good building areas, and causing people much distress in their new homes. As a matter of fact, the eight homes in Bishopsgate-st. were erected last summer by a spec builder, and many of the people there are anxious to rid themselves of their premises.

Those householders have a considerable load to carry, inasmuch as they are committed to pay off their homes, which they purchased under contract from the builder some few months ago. To emphasise the fact that this storing of water takes place in the Bishopsgate-st. area after the rains cease, I would point out that the seepage comes down from the hills and overflows through the sub-surface rock bar and the coffee rock and comes to rest in these areas which were previously comparatively dry. So a complete sub-surface survey by the department to locate exactly where these sand and coffee rock bars occur would be most beneficial, and might lead to remedial measures that would prevent the holding of these waters in the area concerned. Until a survey of that nature is carried out, it is doubtful whether

any funds expended on drainage would be wisely spent in those areas. It would not be fair to the people supplying those funds and should not be undertaken.

I would like now to deal briefly with the other amendments which the Bill contains. There is a provision dealing with prosecutions of illegal work that is carried out under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act. As members are aware, the amendment seeks to extend the time in which prosecutions can be launched, from six months to a year. I would be inclined to say that this problem is being tackled from the right end. But if such illegal work is being done, then the person who contracts to have it done, being a party to it, should also be subjected to prosecution. If the department desires to stamp out such illegal work, the best way to do it would be to amend the Act to bring within its scope the person who contracts to have illegal work done, in the same way as it is proposed to cover the person who does the work.

The Minister for Water Supplies: The ordinary householder would not know.

Mr. JAMIESON: They would soon find out if the plumbers were licensed. People do not employ illegal medical practitioners or dentists. They make sure before paying for their service. Under the present set-up any person can claim to be a plumber by merely possessing stock and dies and pipe-cutters, and carry out plumbing work. The department then has the job of tracing and prosecuting them although the householders employing such plumbers are parties to the illegal work that is done. If there is to be a witch-hunt, then the persons employing illegal plumbers should also be penalised.

I feel that the attempt to secure uniform valuations is long overdue. Everyone will agree that one district should not be rated higher than another if it is possible, through departmental action, to have all valuations in a particular area made in the same year. It is very unfair that some districts should be rated on valuations established some years ago while others are rated on present-day values. In general, the amendments are for the good of the community and I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [2.41]: I support the second reading and congratulate the Minister on his endeavour to come to grips with the drainage problem which is raising its ugly head around the metropolitan area. In my electorate it is causing a great amount of concern. Every few weeks I have been approached by individuals or a local governing body, requesting me to take action, and only last week the Bassendean Road Board asked me to call on the Under Secretary

of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department to obtain an idea of what is contemplated in the near future in regard to the Eden Hill area where at present the flood water level is about 6ft. At one spot there, just beyond the school, a fence which normally is 4ft 6in. off the ground is now covered by water 5ft. or 6ft. deep.

That is a bad instance but there are many other parts of my electorate similarly affected, such as Midvale and Hazelmere where flood water is causing a great deal of concern to the residents. Now that it is intended to vest drainage authority in the Metropolitan Water Supply Department, great savings can be effected. Whilst today drainage work is carried out by two departments, it could happen with the authority vested in one department that sewerage as well as drainage work could be undertaken at the same time.

To give an instance, approximately 25 men are engaged on a sewerage undertaking at West Midland and they have been digging down for about 12ft. through a sewerage area. They have been on this work from four to six weeks. I might say they are doing a considerable amount of excavation and placing the sewerage pipes in position. While that is going on, a certain amount of drainage work could with advantage be done at the same time. Ultimately the system introduced by the Minister will bring about a saving of costs, if the engineers and staff of the department appreciate the action of the Minister.

It is most uneconomical for the Public Works Department to own certain plant used for drainage work and leave it idle while the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department is compelled to purchase other plant to do the same work. On the other hand, if staff in the Public Works Department have been trained gradually to do drainage work but are transferred to other work in the department after this Bill is passed, a wastage of training will result. They could, with advantage, be made available to the water supply section of the department.

I mention these points because I believe that the amalgamation of drainage work is very desirable. I would like to see districts which are badly in need of drainage being dealt with first. The member for Canning has stated the very serious problems existing in his district and I have mentioned similar problems in mine. These two electorates should be tackled first. This afternoon I asked a question with regard to drainage and I was told that the department is carrying out such work at Herdsman Lake.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Maintenance work only.

Mr. BRADY: I have felt for a long time that drainage work carried out around the metropolitan area was not as urgent

as the work that is required to be done in outlying districts, such as in the Canning and the Midland-Guildford electorates.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It should be done where the population is most dense.

Mr. BRADY: Not necessarily. If justice had been done, many outlying districts would have been sewered before today. The municipality of Midland Junction was established over 50 years ago, but only today is sewerage work being undertaken, yet suburbs developed less than 25 years ago have had every facility and amenity provided. I suspect that some civil servants and members of Parliament had interests in districts that have been rapidly developed. The Midland Junction municipality and the Bassendean road district were in existence many years before other suburbs had been subdivided. I would like to know why there has been so much neglect in some districts.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is a very unfair remark.

Mr. BRADY: It is not. It is probable that certain people had vested interests in some suburbs and were able to pull political strings to have them developed. As a child I remember going out to Cottesloe with my father. There were only bush tracks. The fact remains that in the intervening years that district has been built up at the expense of others. I do not know if my predecessor, the late Mr. W. D. Johnson, was out of touch with members of Parliament or whether certain people were able to pull strings in the Government, to bring about the development of other suburbs to the detriment of Guildford-Midland.

Can anyone explain to me why the township of Midland Junction is only just getting a sewerage system when other suburbs have had it for over 25 years? Can anyone explain to me why residents in my electorate have to pay £250 to £275 for the installation of a sewerage system, when other areas have been connected for from £60 to £70? I want to see these matters righted when the Minister puts the provisions of the Bill into operation. The same remarks apply to fire brigades. For years the Midland Junction municipality was paying twice as much as other districts, because the metropolitan area was divided into districts instead of being one complete district as at present.

I would ask the Minister to reconsider the question of dividing the metropolitan area into districts for these purposes. I would like to see it come under one authority so that the whole area will be rated on the same basis and everyone will pay an equal amount for drainage work, not one district isolated and having to pay a huge drainage rate while another district more favourably situated pays nothing.

The people of the metropolitan area, to a certain extent, have what I may term a common purpose, and the disabilities suffered by those in the outlying areas should be balanced against the advantages gained by others who enjoyed the amenities of sewerage works and fire brigade protection many years before we did. When this Bill becomes part of the Act, I shall be keen to see that Midland Junction and other districts that have been neglected by Governments for years are given early and urgent consideration.

Next, I should like to refer to some of the disadvantages arising from the flood waters in those districts. Today I have travelled many miles and have noticed where the roads are disintegrating rapidly on account of the water lying around. The water permeates through the gravel into the road and ultimately leads to the occurrence of pot-holes, and gradually the surface itself goes. This sort of thing is taking place throughout the metropolitan area. The damage being done to the roads is causing great concern to the local authorities, and is due to the rise in the watertable or to the surface water that is lying around.

Many of the roads are not properly drained and the water lies there and seeps into the gravel, and thus the condition of the roads is rapidly deteriorating. This is bound to prove a serious problem. I should not be surprised if next year or the year after, the local authorities are found asking the Main Roads Board to take over the whole of the main and feeder roads in the metropolitan area because of their inability to shoulder the cost of the requisite repairs. Much of this trouble, as I have said, is due to storm-water and to bad draining.

The member for Canning referred to the volume of water running down the various rivers. With the passing of the years, the Swan River has begun to silt up in many parts, and this has caused a rise in the level of the watertable in the adjacent districts. The fact is that the water is not able to get away as readily as it could years ago, and this is contributing to the present drainage difficulties and flood disabilities. If the department co-operated with the local authorities, greater use could be made of the natural watercourses. It is not unusual to find these natural watercourses being blocked up by unthinking people, sometimes children, or by drivers of vehicles crossing them. Recently I found occasion to direct the attention of the Minister to some Government employees who had blocked a drain without elsewhere providing an outlet for the stormwater. I believe that much of the water lying about in the outer areas could be more effectively drained if the department co-operated

with the local authorities with a view to making full use of the natural watercourses.

People in the metropolitan area who wish to subdivide land or engage in intense culture have a tendency to block natural watercourses in order to increase the value of their land. This sort of thing has continued for 50 years. I can recall legal action having been taken as long ago as 30 years against people for blocking natural watercourses, but the same sort of thing is happening today. I hope that the department will have regard to this aspect and so enable much of the flood-water to be drained away through the natural watercourses.

Incidental to this matter, I have requested the Minister for Works to introduce legislation to deal with the difficulties associated with the Swan River. I believe that if the board controlling the river were empowered to deepen it, get rid of the debris and prevent the silting up that is occurring, the water in many of the areas at present inundated would drain away.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What do you think of the report?

Mr. BRADY: I take it the hon. member is referring to the pollution of the river. At the moment, all I can say about it is that the report merely puts into book form many of the reports on the departmental files, and is not of great assistance to the people who have been expecting that something would be done. If the board could be empowered to deepen the river, a lot of waste land could be reclaimed—it would be very valuable land—and much of the stormwater could be drained away. This would afford relief in some of the flooded areas close to the river. If the department co-operated with the local authorities in the outlying areas, it should be possible to link up much of the flooded areas with the natural watercourses and run the water into the river. In doing this, in winter, there would be no risk of river pollution occurring.

Insufficient attention has, I think, been paid to the use that might be made of the natural watercourses for the draining of flooded areas. The reason may be, as one speaker mentioned the other night, that neither the Water Supply Department nor those responsible for land drainage have considered the matter. Now that the outlying areas are being built up and people are being flooded out, it is essential that greater attention be given to this matter.

I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and I hope that the Minister will have some regard to my remarks about drainage rates. I trust that in the course of a few years we shall not find people in Midland Junction and the outer districts being charged a high drainage rate, while the people of Perth are

charged no drainage rate at all. Although their land is drained today—whether as the result of action by the Public Works Department or the foresight of local bodies is immaterial—I can visualise quite a lot of difficulties arising in the northern suburbs if a heavy drainage rate is imposed. I ask the Minister to give immediate attention to the areas in the northern suburbs that are at present seriously flooded.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [3.01: I support the second reading of the Bill and there are a few aspects I wish to touch on. I think today we have reached the time when there is real competition to have about ten things done when only one can be carried out with the available labour and money. I listened to the Minister when he was visualising the future of these enormous drainage schemes which are all wanted, and my thoughts went back to Henry Ford I., when he told the world that the big city was doomed; that it cost too much to run.

The more I listened to the Minister's speech, the more I realised that if we were to do all the things he would like done—roads, deep sewerage, drainage and many other undertakings—nearly half the labour which is now engaged in private industry would be required. On top of that, today we have full employment, so that we are up against competition in that respect. Even if the finance were available, we still could not obtain anything like sufficient men to do all the work that should be carried out to make this city what it ought to be.

I am interested in Claremont, and in one particular portion of it, which, over the years, has recorded the history of this question in its different phases; and that is Butler's Swamp. When Claremont was originally settled, Butler's Swamp was perfectly dry, but later with the building of bitumen roads it has turned into a lake. We had an offer from the Government of those days to drain the lake for £40,000—today it would be £100,000—but that was out of the question for just one little job.

The next move was to obtain an electric motor in order to pump the water up about 50ft. so that it would gravitate into the river. We were prevented in that because we were told the water would pollute the Swan. The third phase is to convert the swamp into botanical gardens—something really superior; perhaps as good as or better than Queen's Gardens in Perth. Then comes the question that if the Minister has his way and it is drained, the lake will in the future be emptied, and that will do away with what we are trying to do by preserving it and turning it into a place of beauty. We are really talking about the impossible.

Let me tell members that about three or four weeks ago we received in Swanbourne, for the first time, some enormous pipes to carry the water from King's Park, so that the residents on the hill in that suburb will have a good pressure. That is a good job, but it was talked about and fought for some ten years ago. I can only think of one way by which the works contemplated in the Bill can be carried out, and that is for the plans to be ready so that if we have another period like we did in the early 1930's—and nobody wants that—we could go ahead with what is suggested here. I presume there would be in the archives of the department, plans which would enable not only these works but others to be tackled.

The other point I wish to raise is that although we hear of inflation, and we know how true it is when we pay our bills, yet the fact remains that the economists are telling us that the real standard is rising, and that there is greater efficiency. This is so in one instance in the Minister's department. When Mundaring Weir was first built the cost, compared with that of Canning Dam, was much greater in the sense that it was constructed in the pick and shovel age and not the modern age, as was the case with Canning Dam, which enables more work to be done with fewer men. That seems to be the only chance we will have in the future of doing a lot of these works which today seem to be impossible.

The fact that these enormous mechanical contraptions will be used more and more than they have been in the past, should surely make the use of our existing labour much more profitable. If that is so, I can visualise this Bill having greater application than it would have, based on present figures or going back to the past. In regard to where the work shall be done, I heard some remarks from the member for Guildford-Midland to the effect that some members were a little greedy and got the work done, but it was carried out, he said, to the neglect of the outer areas.

It is many years since I learned that a metropolitan member, such as the member for Claremont or the member for Cottesloe, would be very greedy if he tried to butt his claim in to the detriment of the country electorates where all the problems are so terrific. Having survived many elections, I am not so worried about them as I used to be, and I confess I have never pressed very hard for some things to be done in Claremont that could have been pressed for, when I knew perfectly well that the money could be used to better purpose outside of Claremont.

Perhaps that is why the enormous pipes are only now going in to Swanbourne. They were asked for, but we did not panic about the question or make speeches or write to the papers in order to have the money diverted from one district to another. It seems to me that the Minister

and the department should have the best viewpoint, and it is futile for some of the more ambitious members to endeavour to grab more than their share of the amount available. The member for Guildford-Midland was not correct in saying that there has been any pressure from the Claremont area to gain more than its share. It is true that on one occasion the Government did spend a lot of money on trolley buses to Claremont, but they were not asked for. That was government policy. Something quite different was requested—the right to be picked up on a bus system—but it was refused. Apart from that, I think I can say we have not had an over-share of public funds.

Some good things have been done in Claremont, and I have referred to one. Butler's Swamp is something else that needs attention. We cannot get rid of the water, so let us have a lake. Of course, we cannot have lakes in the middle of backyards. If we could go back to the early years and again do the surveying with more care, there might then be fewer of these lakes in backyards and more in botanical gardens. When one looks through the district of Cottesloe, which I formerly represented, and sees where the railway goes from Swanbourne station to Cottesloe station, one notices the survey of Grant-st., which even a goat could hardly negotiate. The surveyor must have been half drunk on a day when it was 110° in the shade when he designed the roads there.

In conclusion it seems to me that complete deep sewerage should come before these particular works are completed. If we can do both, yes certainly; but deep sewerage should not be neglected for deep drainage. I know that in the worst parts, some of what is suggested here will have to be carried out, but I point out that the local authorities—Claremont, Cottesloe, Nedlands and others—do a good job with their sumps which are merely dug out of the sand. These authorities have been able to carry on for many years by constructing these sumps and planting clumps of trees or shrubs around them, and they have saved the expenditure of many millions of pounds in a large part of the metropolitan area. In the long run, the works suggested will have to be carried out, but I do not think we shall see what we would like to for many years.

MR. WILD (Dale) [3.9]: I support the second reading of the Bill. This has been overdue for many years in the electorate I represent. This work has been put off by various Governments through lack of finance, but unfortunately, because of increased costs, we are getting further away from having the work done instead of getting closer to it. My mind goes back five or six years when an estimate was made in connection with the northerly portion of what is now the Dale electorate

—an area somewhere between Cannington and Gosnells. At that time it was thought that a scheme could be put in for from £100,000 to £150,000, but the work was not proceeded with. About two or three years ago another estimate was made on the rough survey that had been undertaken some years before, and the latest figure is £250,000.

If we examined the position today, I suppose we would find that the cost had gone up again considerably, and so this problem is one which must be grappled with sooner or later, and the sooner the better. A large proportion of the land in the Northern portion of the Dale electorate is to a considerable degree u.s. owing to lack of drainage. The local authorities—particularly the Gosnells Road Board—have been battling to get the department to make an overall survey so that when at any time they are doing minor drainage works, they may fit them in with what will ultimately be the main scheme. However, that work has always been pushed aside by successive Governments, owing to the lack of finance.

I suggest to the Minister that, although while introducing the measure he said it was impossible to indicate when this scheme could be proceeded with, the basic necessity now, when money becomes available, is firstly to make an overall survey. Then the department could apportion a certain amount of funds, year by year, to do the work progressively. I repeat that that would allow the local authorities to fit in, in a small way, with what will ultimately be the overall scheme.

There is a creek not far from where I live which has been the subject of much badgering between the Railway Department, the Main Roads Department and the local authority. Each has shelved the issue and put the question aside, with the result that nothing has been done. I think I have introduced three deputations—at least two, at all events—in connection with this drain, the Bickley Brook, where it runs under the railway line at Kenwick and goes under the main road and on through Elliott's property, finally finding its way into the Canning River. The Railway Department refused to accept any responsibility for it.

In years gone by, the local authority tried to divert the water, most of which originates in the Darling Ranges. When this water reaches the main road, the drain there is not adequate to take it away, and we have had a fine kettle of fish with the three authorities concerned all saying it is not their responsibility. We have not been able to get them to come together and reach agreement in order to get on with the job. In the immediate vicinity of the drain to which I have referred, there are fairly large tracts of land, portion of which was owned by the State Housing Commission, but about three or four years ago the

Health Department advised the commission that it was impossible to build on that land, and so the commission disposed of it.

Not far from there are other big tracts of land owned by the companies which buy up large areas and subdivide them, but that country will be useless until such time as an appreciable drainage scheme has been undertaken. The question of rating is one which will affect all these local authorities, and I know the Gosnells Road Board feels that somebody else should help to share this burden. No one can say that all the water which falls in this low-lying areas comes from immediately above. It would be more correct to say—as I said about eight years ago in this House, when speaking on the same subject—that the problem goes back many years to the time when the land in the Darling Ranges was being cleared. When people settled there, each did the obvious thing and diverted the water from his block to the next one.

When that adjoining block was settled, the process was repeated until finally, from the Bickley Reservoir down, we have a whole lot of little drains put there by individuals, each endeavouring to divert the water from his own land to anywhere else. I therefore say that the major proportion of the water in the area to which I have referred comes from higher up, and obviously the local authorities that are affected are going to ask why they should have a fairly heavy drainage rate in their districts when most of the water comes from the Darling Ranges. That is a problem which will have to be tackled by the department and, speaking for the Gosnells Road Board, I think the cost of this scheme will have to be spread over a considerable number of local authorities in addition to those whose land is immediately affected.

It has been unfortunate that over the years revaluations have not taken place. I have always been of the opinion—I see no reason to change it now—that had we had revaluations every couple of years, the ratepayers would not have been subjected to the steep increases that have taken place recently. I know that in the districts of the local authorities I represent—not in the whole of the areas, because they have not been able to get around them all yet—in those sections that have been revalued by the department the rates have risen astronomically. The result is that a man who has been working on ratings perhaps from the early 1930's is suddenly faced with a 1954 valuation, and the result is that he is extremely hostile. I realise that it has been impossible, owing to lack of sufficient trained staff, but had we been able to revalue the land every two or three years, the ratepayers would not have taken much notice of the smaller increases from time to time.

I wish now to deal with the proposed increases in the penalties for illegally doing plumbing work. While it is my intention to

support this provision, I wish to state that I do not agree with it in principle. I was not in Parliament when this portion of the legislation was placed in the Act. I am a layman but I believe that, apart from highly specialised work such as the installation of septic tanks and so on, it is ridiculous that the average man is not allowed to do a bit of this work on his own property. This is most frustrating and plumbers know full well what the position has been in the postwar years, and they have ridden it to death. Many plumbers put the gun against one's head and want £5 or £6 per day to do a little bit of work which I, personally, could do in ten minutes. However, this provision has been on the statute book for many years, and I suppose some tightening up may be necessary if, through shortage of staff, the department cannot catch up with the offenders. I support the second reading.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [3.20]: I rise to support the second reading of the Bill because I think that its object, which is to place under one authority all the drainage work in the metropolitan area, will enable the drainage problem to be overcome much more quickly. Generally I do not support moves aimed at centralisation, but in this case, where the control is centralised under one governmental body, it will be an advantage.

The drainage problems in the metropolitan area are considerable and, as has been pointed out, there is a distinct difference between getting rid of stormwater and getting rid of ground or soil water. Although they are two different problems, they go hand in hand, particularly in that part of the metropolitan area where the soil is of a light, sandy nature and the water percolates freely through it. Generally speaking, stormwater needs large waterways so that the large quantities of water can be dissipated in a short time. If we have heavy rain—say an inch or two in one day—it usually falls over many thousands of acres and tends to run by gravity to the lower portions of the land and endeavours to make its way into the natural waterways and rivers.

But because much of the land—I refer now particularly to that area east of the Swan River, between the Swan and Canning Rivers and the Darling Ranges—is gently undulating and in the main fairly flat, the water runs off the steeper slopes and accumulates, finally joining the creeks and brooks which have very little natural fall. So, in order to provide stormwater drainage for these areas, it will be necessary to build very large pipe drains or open drains in order to get the water away. Then, of course, we strike another problem because both rivers enter into Perth Water or, as we are pleased to call it, the Swan River, but which in reality is merely a tidal estuary with very little fall to the sea.

In wintertime, with the heavy rains, the flow of large volumes of water often coincide with strong west and north-westerly winds and they tend to push the sea up the estuary and it meets the other water which is endeavouring to get away. As a result, the river level rises by quite a few feet and because the stormwater is unable to get away to the sea the low-lying areas become flooded. Therefore the drainage problems of that part of the metropolitan area to which I have referred, are considerable.

I cannot see how we can entirely overcome the problem of the flooded, low-lying land unless, of course, we go to the trouble and expense of building sea walls as has been done in some of the lower areas of Europe, particularly in Holland and parts of Belgium. There they have built sea walls and use mechanical pumps to pump the water over the walls into the sea. I do not think that our problem would warrant doing anything like that; but in my opinion we will always have a problem where a river is likely to reach flood level because of heavy rain, coupled with high tides.

The soil or ground water problem is closely tied up with the stormwater problem in certain areas. Here again I might refer to that area, part of which is in the Middle Swan electorate, part in the Canning or new Beeloo electorate, part in the Darling Range area and another part in the Dale electorate. In that tract of country, because the waterways coming from the hills meet the lower ground, they spread out and in effect lose their identity as creeks and merely merge into what are, in winter, swamps and lakes and in summer become simply low-lying areas. In that case the stormwater automatically becomes the ground water because it gradually percolates through the sandy soil and raises the water table, sometimes above the level of the land.

The provision of adequate drains to get rid of the stormwater would automatically do away with the soil water problem in that district. The many sections of the metropolitan area which have drainage problems must be treated in a comprehensive way, and here I refer again to that portion of land lying between the Swan and Canning River and the Darling Range escarpment. The local authorities concerned all have their problems, but unless a comprehensive scheme is worked out, and each local body works to that scheme, there will be considerable strife between the several authorities.

Quite a few years ago there was some agitation for the Gosnells, Canning, Belmont Park, Darling Range and Swan Road Boards to get together to see if they could overcome the problem. But at that time some of the local authorities felt that the problem was not acute in their

areas and they refused to go into the scheme. That is analogous to what we often get in some of the small farming areas where one farmer endeavours to drain his land but cannot get an outlet for the water until the farm below provides a drain or waterway. Unless everyone moves together, and to a plan, it is impossible to drain any one portion separately except, of course, the portion nearest to a suitable outlet. The same thing applies to the various road boards. Only the other night there was an attempt on the part of several of the road boards to get together and ask the Government to give them a hand to carry out the comprehensive scheme which was surveyed some years ago. I do not yet know the result of that meeting.

This Bill, which places power in the hands of the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Department, will mean that that department will have the whole problem on its plate and it will work in co-operation with the local governing authorities to provide a plan, and, we hope, some of the finance to do the work.

The method of rating will provide the local authorities with quite a few headaches. If a road board adopts the present system of rating on taxation values, I cannot see how it will be fair and equitable because people in higher parts have their properties rated on enhanced values not only because their land is better drained but also because they have more pleasant views and better roads. However, the people living in the low-lying areas which, in some cases, are subject to flooding are rated on low valuations. Some method should be devised whereby the people living in the low-lying areas who will receive the greater benefit from drainage installation by the enhancement of the values of their properties should pay a greater proportion of the cost of the drainage scheme. There are many low-lying areas which have been left in their natural state although they have been alienated. Many others have been cleared and they provide pastures for various types of stock.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Have you worked out any proportion yourself?

Mr. OWEN: No, I have not gone into that question yet, but I understand that those people who are paying extremely low rates still complain that their valuations are too high. My road board has had many complaints from such people because they claim the water covers the ground for two or three months of the year and it is rendered useless, but, nevertheless, it is valuable from the point of view of providing lush green pastures during the summer months. Therefore, for the people who reside in the low-lying

areas some method of rating should be devised, which can only be done by the department concerned after making an inspection of each property to try to assess the increased value to the property of the drainage that is required.

I do not say that the owners of properties on slightly higher ground should not pay anything, but the people who own properties in the low-lying areas should pay higher rates because they are enjoying the greater advantage from any drainage scheme. Adequate drainage will mean quite a deal for those areas because it will change what is now regarded as waste land into really good residential sites. At present, if the water table approaches the surface, before one is able to build a residence in those low-lying parts it is necessary for the land to be filled in to bring the surface two or three feet above the water level. Such work, of course, adds considerably to the total cost of erecting a home. Nevertheless, when they are adequately drained the watertable will, in most instances, be quite a few feet below the surface, and residences can then be built on the natural soil level. I would like to mention some of the difficulties experienced by residents who have built in flat areas. Because of the nature of the soil—I think the member for Guildford-Midland knows of some cases and certainly the member for Dale knows of some in the Orange Grove-Kenwick area where there is a great deal of clayey soil—it is impossible to get rid of the water unless drains are installed at frequent intervals. I have visited the Midvale district where some of the residents have septic sewerage and where after continued rains the level of the soil water has risen so high that the septic tanks have been unable to function, thus constituting a menace to the health of the residents there and also to those in the surrounding parts.

Therefore, any drainage system must also embrace those areas and again, it will mean complete co-operation between the drainage department and the local governing bodies that are concerned. Over the years we have heard a good deal about the difficulties experienced by the Midland Junction Municipality in trying to drain Midvale. That body claims it cannot carry out the work unless the Mundaring Road Board, which has jurisdiction over the adjoining land which is near the Helena Vale racecourse, drains its area.

Until a comprehensive scheme is devised for each district and co-operation is obtained from all the local authorities affected, we will never get a good drainage system. Even then the cost will be extremely high. Nevertheless, the cost might be kept down to a minimum by the Government department concerned using large units of earth-moving equipment. That is the only way to keep drainage costs down. It will be necessary for the Government to meet the initial cost and for

the local governing bodies and the rate-payers concerned to meet the interest and sinking fund charges. All in all, this Bill will prove to be of benefit to the districts that need proper drainage. I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville—in reply) [3.38]: I am grateful to members for their general acceptance of the principles of the Bill. In the main there have been few criticisms. There have been some queries which I will endeavour to answer, but the general tenor of the debate was of acceptance of the Bill and of encouragement in an indication that the Government ought to be assisted in securing the passage of the measure.

The question which appeared to worry members most was the method of rating. Some members felt that those lands which were not going to benefit very much from drainage might be rated unfairly whereas other lands, which are likely to benefit considerably, would not be carrying their fair share of the cost. The principle upon which rates will be levied is that only those lands which will benefit from the main drains will be rated. It is not intended that all the land in the metropolitan area will be rated when a drainage scheme is installed. No rate will be levied until a main drain is constructed and then the properties which can be drained by that main drain—those that can be connected to it and will benefit by having surplus water removed—will be the properties that will be rated for drainage purposes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Then there will be comparatively few, in many areas.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: There might be, but that will not alter the principles on which the properties will be rated.

Mr. Court: How selective will you be able to be?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It will be a question of fact.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Does the Act provide for that? I thought it provided for districts to be rated.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We will gazette a drainage district, but we will rate only those properties within the district that can be connected to the main drain and will be drained by it.

Mr. Wild: How will you drain the areas I have referred to where water is gravitating down from the higher ground further back?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The hon. member need not worry about that. If they are not to benefit from the drainage system, and they are

not carrying surplus water, they would not be expected to carry a proportion of the rate.

Mr. Wild: The properties lower down are receiving water from outside.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It does not matter where it comes from. All properties receive water from above. If a property is benefited by the drainage system, then that property will be expected to meet a portion of the cost of that drainage system.

Mr. Owen: How will you distinguish between those properties?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The surveys will determine the particular properties that will benefit from the establishment of a drainage system, and those properties that will be connected to the main drain will be rated for the purpose, and other properties that are not being connected to the main drain will not be rated.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You do not anticipate any difficulty in its implementation?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I do not anticipate any difficulty at all. Because of the contours and the position of the drains, surveys will disclose the land that will benefit from the drains, and will also disclose those that will not benefit from the system.

Mr. Owen: Even though there is higher land intervening?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: That does not create any difficulty. It is a simple matter for the surveyors and engineers to determine the fall of land and the land that will be benefited by putting a drain in a certain position.

Mr. Owen: You mentioned those that would be connected. They may be several hundreds of yards away.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: They will be connected indirectly.

Mr. Owen: Only by percolation.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, indirectly. If the drain results in surplus water being removed, then it is obvious that those properties are benefiting from the drainage system, and they will be rated accordingly.

The other aspect of rating is in connection with valuations. At present the Act provides that if the Minister adopts the annual value of the local authority, it shall be the current annual value. I pointed out in my second reading speech that this presented a difficulty; that even though the department might be content to levy rates on the annual value of last year, and the year before, in certain districts, in order to attain some degree of uniformity, the Act did not allow that, unless we went in and did our own valuation in such district. That is, if we were

going to adopt the local authority figures, then they had to be the current figures. The alternative to adopting the current figures was to carry out our own valuations, and in the Perth City Council area that is an extensive job and could be expensive.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.8 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I was dealing with the aspect of the valuations to be adopted by the Metropolitan Water Supply Department in connection with the rating, and was endeavouring to show that, as the Act stands, if the department adopted the annual value of the local authority, it had to be the current annual value. Some of the local authorities—the City of Perth in particular—revise their valuations each year and therefore keep them up to date. With the rise in valuations, it invariably means that the water rates in those areas also rise each year, and they may not rise in other districts where the valuations are not made annually. This, we felt, was against the principles of equity and was quite unfair inasmuch as we should endeavour to include some method whereby the burden would be fairly borne by all who benefit from the water supply undertaking.

At the present time the department carries out the valuations for all local authorities except Fremantle, North Fremantle, and the Perth City Council. Recently I had a deputation from the Fremantle City Council, the members of which were anxious to do something to prevent the inequality that exists, and to overcome what is arising because that local authority, last year, brought its valuations up to date, resulting in increased rates being levied in that area.

The municipal councils are able to get over the difficulty by reducing the rate in the £. If they increase their valuations and the rate previously levied gives them more revenue than they wish to get, they adjust the position by reducing the rate in the £, but the Metropolitan Water Supply Department cannot do that. If it endeavoured to do it, the reduced rates would apply in areas where the valuations had been brought up to date, and so we would still have an inequitable position.

When the deputation saw me I discussed the various angles of the problem and suggested that we might overcome the difficulty if we could agree upon a central valuing authority, which would be acceptable to all local authorities, as well as the Government, to carry out the valuations in all districts on the same principle. Fremantle readily agreed, so there will be no difficulty there. It only remains to reach agreement with the Perth City Council, when it will be possible to put the scheme into operation.

I had a discussion with the Lord Mayor and the Town Clerk, and they both expressed themselves as being favourable to the proposition, but asked to have more time to consider it as they wished to go into certain aspects of it with their officers. They promised to get in touch with me later. I am now awaiting word from them. I am hopeful that it will be possible to establish this central valuing authority which will be in the nature of a panel of valuers set up, probably, by taking the valuers of the Fremantle local authority, the Perth local authority and our own. If they agree upon principles of valuation, so that there will be complete uniformity, the valuations of all the districts can be carried out regularly so that they will be kept up to date.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Would it not be better to utilise the Taxation Department land tax values?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We do not think so because, to start with the department would not agree to do it for us. It would not keep the valuations up to date by carrying out an on-the-spot valuation each year.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is under our control because it is only a State matter nowadays.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It is not under our control at all, really. It is being paid by us for the work it does.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There is no Commonwealth land tax now, is there?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: No, but we pay the Commonwealth Taxation Department for collecting the tax for us, and the officers concerned belong to that department. We feel that the method I have indicated is the best way in which a uniform method of valuation can be achieved, and I am anxious, if possible, to have it put into operation. In the meantime, these difficulties persist and the Bill is aimed at overcoming them. The provision in the Bill in regard to rating is to ensure that we can rate separate portions of the same property when occupied by different individuals. In practice we have been doing that up to now, but without proper authority, so I am advised.

Mr. Court: Do I take it, from what you have said, that you have reached agreement with the Perth City Council?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: No, we have had one discussion with the Lord Mayor and the Town Clerk, and they viewed the proposition favourably. They raised certain points which we discussed, and they were satisfied regarding them, but they asked to have further time in which to consider the matter as they wished to discuss it with their officers and members of the council, or sub-committees, I take it,

after which the Lord Mayor undertook to get in touch with me again when we could have further discussions or he could advise me of their decision.

I mentioned specially that I hoped that if after consideration they were not disposed to agree with the proposition, they would not turn it down finally until we had had another discussion at which, if they considered there would be certain difficulties, I would do my best to meet them, because I was most anxious to bring this new system into operation. The Lord Mayor assured me he would give me that opportunity if it so happened that they felt they were not able to agree.

Mr. Court: Will you be dealing with the problem regarding the Municipal Corporations Act which makes it mandatory for them to fix a valuation of not less than 4 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We can get over this question quite well. If we set up a central valuing authority which is acceptable to all, we will accept the valuations arrived at by it. They will be our valuations and the local authority valuations as well, and we will take the necessary steps to be able to put them into operation. Having done that, we can impose what rate we like to suit our convenience and requirements. It seems to me that the proposal offers the best chance of getting all round satisfaction, because now it is extremely difficult to overcome the dissatisfaction which exists in some districts.

Take, for example, Wembley, where water rates have gone up very steeply because of the sharp rises in property values. We are bound to adopt the current valuation of the local authority, and the valuation of the Perth City Council in this area has been steadily rising, but the council itself meets the position by reducing the rate in the £. If it desires to obtain approximately the same amount of revenue this year as it did last year, and the valuations have gone up 20 per cent., it simply adjusts the position by effecting a corresponding reduction in the rate in the £.

But we cannot do that. If I adopt the annual value of the local authority then it must be the current annual value. The member for Leederville pointed out, quite rightly, that for a district which is using the annual value, I cannot use the unimproved value, and so, if I said the annual values in the Perth City Council area were somewhat higher than I wanted to adopt and that I would use the unimproved values in that area, I could not do it, because the Act would not permit it.

Mr. Court: You could use your own valuations—

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, but to put the values through in the area of the Perth City Council

would be a pretty big job and I have not the staff to do it. I might be forced to do it if I cannot reach agreement on the proposal to have a central valuing authority, because I will not be content to accept a position which contains inequality that I cannot remedy in some way.

If it transpires—I hope it will not—that we cannot set up the central valuing authority, I will have to take steps to increase the valuing staff of the department and carry out the valuations in the Perth City Council area; but it will raise problems if I do that because if our valuing system is different from that adopted by the local authority, there will be arguments between the ratepayers and between the council and ourselves as to which is the correct valuation. That would create a most unsatisfactory position which I wish to avoid if possible. After all, there can be only one proper value.

The member for Nedlands appeared to be a little disturbed at the possibility that this provision in the Bill might be the thin end of the wedge to get rid of the local authority valuers, but I assure him that there is no such intention. We want full co-operation. Already, at the request of a number of local authorities, we have carried out the valuations and they have adopted our values. Fremantle has further indicated its willingness to adopt the values of a central valuing authority. There only remains the Perth City Council to co-operate and then we will have achieved an arrangement which ought to result in uniformity in valuation, which I think would be of decided benefit.

Mr. Court: It could result in the present water rates in the Perth City Council area coming down.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It probably would, and most certainly would in some districts. The only other point is in connection with illegal plumbing and I hope the House will agree to the provision in the Bill, not in the interests of the department—because it makes no difference to the department whether persons who carry out illegal plumbing can keep the job covered up for six months and so escape the penalty—but because the legislature previously believed that a man who carried out illegal plumbing should, if detected, be punished, and so we think adequate time should be provided to enable that work to be detected.

In practice the unlicensed plumber obtains a permit from a licensed plumber—somebody who has been trafficking in permits—and that is a difficulty which I think we have corrected with some success. He does the work without any proper supervision at all and, if the facts become known, we can in that case hold the licensed plumber responsible, as the man in whose name the permit was taken out. If faulty work is subsequently discovered

we can take redress against the licensed plumber who allowed his name to be used by somebody else who had his permit.

If a person who has not the permit of a licensed plumber carries out the work for an unsuspecting householder and the householder pays for it, the job may hold together for five or six months until such time as the period provided in the Act has expired. If the job then breaks down, the first thing the owner of the property usually does is to get in touch with the Metropolitan Water Supply Department and say that the sewerage work that he had done has ceased to function. We then send an inspector out to look at it. When the work is uncovered he finds that it is a very poor job which has been done by a man who did not know anything about the work. The inspector makes inquiries and eventually discovers that the work was done by an unlicensed plumber but, owing to the time factor, nothing can be done about it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What would be the position if the work had been done by a licensed plumber?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: If he did not put it right, we would withdraw his licence. We would say he was not a fit person to hold a licence if that was the class of work he did and he failed to put it right. Over the unlicensed man we have no control. We cannot withdraw his licence because he has not one and if the six-month period has expired we cannot prosecute.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There is civil action.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: But that throws it back on to the householder and in some cases where these unlicensed people operate they work for people without much money or experience. The member for Canning suggested that we should throw the responsibility on the householder just as much as on the unlicensed plumber and prosecute both of them, but I am afraid that is not the way to tackle the problem because the man who knows his way about town and has plenty of money to pay for the work he wants done seeks out a reputable firm. He probably knows the name of such a firm to start with and so he is in little danger of having work done by an unlicensed plumber.

It is only the people who are scratching to obtain the money with which to carry out the necessary work and who endeavour to get it done as cheaply as possible who accept in good faith the representations of a tradesman who tells them he is able to do the job and is authorised to do it. In such an instance, it is very little remedy to suggest to the person concerned, if the job is faulty, that he can get redress by taking civil action in the court.

Mr. Court: Are there many of these unlicensed plumbers operating, to the department's knowledge?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Not a great number but we get a few each year. Surely the number does not matter! The point I am dealing with is whether we should extend the six-months period. The legislature has already given consideration to the question of whether action should be taken against an illegal plumber. The fact that such action should be taken has been established for many years and I am trying to point out that as the Act stands at present, the opportunity for taking action against illegal plumbing is more often than not lost, because the work does not come under notice until the six months period has in most cases expired. Probably the worst of jobs will hang together for a month or two before it starts to give trouble. The work is new and it will function for two or three months and by the time the householder finds it is faulty, thinks about it for a while and then gets in touch with the department, six months have expired.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Nearly all the work is actually performed by licensed plumbers and one pays plenty for the supervision of any work by a licensed man.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: If the work is done by a licensed plumber the department can take action against him.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But the actual work is not performed by a licensed plumber.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: In those jobs that are faulty, of course it is not.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The licensed plumber simply signs the certificate and that is that. Few licensed plumbers are implicated.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: That is not the angle.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I know, but it is an important point.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: This is the problem: Having made up our minds that illegal plumbing should be prevented if possible and the persons engaging in it should be punished, should we provide an additional period during which the department can take action against them? If we do not, in effect we say this: "If you are an illegal plumber and you do a bad job but can keep it covered up for six months, good luck to you; you can get away with it." That is what we are saying at present and what we will continue to say if we do not extend the time during which the department can take action.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Does not that apply to all offences?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: No, it does not.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Of course it does! Nearly every offence can be covered up.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: For how long? Anyhow, I am not trying to cover this up; I am trying to uncover it. It is possible to cover up a faulty job for six months but it is unlikely it can be covered up for twelve months. An unlicensed man might be disposed to take a risk on faulty work for six months, but if we are able to take action against him over a period of twelve months, he has that worry over twelve months and not six months and therefore is less likely to take the risk.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Ninety per cent. of the work can be done by a competent man, but because he cannot work with lead he is unable to get a licence.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The department will not be running around looking for plumbers who do not use the right quantity of lead. These cases will only be brought to notice when some unfortunate person who has paid a great deal of money for plumbing finds that the job is of no value and that it has to be done again. As the Act stands now, if more than six months have elapsed and a faulty job comes under notice, the man responsible can get away with it unless the house owner is in a position to take civil action, and in most cases he is not.

These cases come to the department's notice when the person for whom the job has been done discovers that the work is unsatisfactory. The department does not send inspectors round to seek faulty sewerage jobs and to make inquiries to find out whether they were done by a man operating illegally. It is far too busy for that. These jobs come under departmental notice because of faulty work. When discovered, we have to say to the house-owner, "That work has to be ripped out and done again. It does not comply with the by-laws; it is dangerous and unhealthy."

So such an unfortunate person has to get another plumber and pay for the work to be done a second time and the man responsible for the faulty job gets away with it because six months have elapsed. I am telling the House that there is every likelihood of a job hanging together for six months, but it is far less likely to hang together for twelve months. I do not think that that period is an inordinate length of time in which the department can take action against a man who performs faulty work and takes a person down to that extent.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think you have established your case.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I hope so. I have tried hard enough. I only wanted one additional vote and it seems that I have got it.

Mr. Cornell: There is no need to talk any more.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I have now completely covered the three points that were raised and I trust the House will agree to the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Section VIIA added:

Mr. COURT: Paragraph (f) of Subsection (3) of proposed new Section 71D refers to the provision of the building line. I want to make certain that the period of one month provided for a person to give notice has no bearing on the compensation provision which states that one must give two years' notice.

The Minister for Water Supplies: No, no bearing at all.

Mr. COURT: Thank you.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—Section 74A added:

Mr. JOHNSON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Act" in line 29, page 13, the words "and deleting the remainder of the subsection" be inserted.

Under the present set-up the Minister is compelled to adopt the annual value rating system in an area where such a system is used by the local authority. The intention of the amendment is to give the Minister a discretion to adopt the unimproved rating system in an area where the local authority has adopted the annual value rating system. It does not mean that the Minister is obliged to adopt either system. From the remarks of the Minister it is evident that he has no objection to the amendment.

Members are aware that the desire for this amendment arose out of the differences in the rating of properties in Wembley under the Perth City Council valuation system, which is the annual method. Rate-payers in Wembley have asked the Water Supply Department to adopt a different system, but they were informed that this was impossible under the existing Act. If the amendment is agreed to, a discretion will lie with the Minister. It is appreciated that on occasions there might be physical difficulties in adopting a different system

of rating from that availed of by the local authority concerned, but at least the Minister will have the discretion.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I have no objection to the amendment. It will have the effect of deleting a proviso which now prevents the Minister from adopting an unimproved value of rating in the district of a local authority using the annual value rating system. If the amendment is carried, the Minister will be given a discretion.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Would it not make the law different in regard to rating by a local authority?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We are not concerned with local authorities in this Act. It is for the guidance and control of the Metropolitan Water Supply Department. At present, if that department desires to adopt the unimproved value rating which is provided for under certain conditions, it cannot do so in districts where the local authorities are using the annual rating system. The discretion will not be used if it creates difficulties. If the amendment is agreed to the position will not be altered because it merely gives the Minister a discretion to use the unimproved value of rating where that is desirable.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I question the wisdom of this amendment. I realise that the Minister has an overriding authority in this respect. In matters like these it is rare for the Minister to act against the recommendations of his departmental head. It is a good idea to have a similar system of rating in one district. Might it not cause confusion to have one system of rating by the local authority and a different system of rating for stormwater drainage? This provision will not only apply to drainage, but also to water and sewerage rates. Personally, I consider it is wiser to adopt the same system of rating for one area. As the local authority rate is the main one, it would be wise if all other rates were based under the same system. I realise the Minister has a discretion.

The Minister for Water Supplies: I did not want it. If it was desired, it would have been included in the Bill. But I do not mind having it.

Mr. Lapham: It is handy to have the discretion.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not like to see discretion being allowed in legislation. I am looking at this from a legal point of view. It is best to be consistent. It is difficult for the average householder to understand the system of rating, appeals and so forth, and it is not desirable to confuse him with a different system of rating for water drainage and sewerage.

The Minister for Water Supplies: That happens now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Not for the same area or the same houses.

The Minister for Water Supplies: There could be different systems in the same area, but not in this manner.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That might be correct, but I cannot think of any which apply to one house.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I would agree with the member for Mt. Lawley if under the present arrangement we could not have different systems operating, but it is possible to do so. The Act provides that at the option of the Minister the rates shall be levied upon one of three values—the current value of the local authority, the rental value, or an amount not exceeding 6 per cent, on the capital value of the rent in fee simple. Thus I could take from 3 to 6 per cent, and that could be my valuation in the district of a local authority. As the Act stands, I could adopt any one of those three methods of value and rate upon it, but I could not adopt the unimproved value—and this is the only restriction—in the area of a local authority that was using the annual value.

When the amendment first appeared, I endeavoured to find out why this provision was inserted in the Act, but my officers cannot tell me what the original purpose was. As we cannot find any specific reason for keeping it there, and as I cannot see any harm in deleting it, I am disposed to accept the amendment. The premises of the member for Mt. Lawley were wrong, but if he can show me that this will be disadvantageous to anyone, I might alter my attitude. As I cannot ascertain the value of the provision in the Act, I can see no objection to giving the Minister a fourth option, which he may adopt at his discretion.

Mr. COURT: I do not favour the amendment though I can appreciate the Minister's line of argument. The proviso has a definite value for the Minister administering the Act because otherwise he could be subject to serious political pressures—I can see one being generated at the moment—regarding this provision.

If a local authority has accepted the principle of working on annual values, it automatically follows that there is a certain burden of rating spread through the district. The burden could be varied if the local authority, for its own purposes, rated on the unimproved value. If the ratepayers continued to favour this system—a municipality may, with the permission of the Minister, change its system of valuing—it follows that they would be in general agreement with the local authority. If we imposed water rates in the same area, using a different basis of valuation, which would be the unimproved value, the incidence of the water rates throughout the district would change as compared with

the incidence of the local authority's rates. If the Water Supply Department used the annual value system, whether based on 2, 3 or 4 per cent., the incidence of water rating would be approximately the same throughout the district as the rates being imposed by the local authority.

A local resident regards his rates as being a combination of water rates and local authority rates. Therefore I submit to the Minister that this proviso has a definite value and ensures that there will be the same burden, as it were, spread over the local authority in respect of the two lots of rates. That in itself is sufficient reason for retaining the provision.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The valuation may be based on the improved value or the unimproved value, except where the improved value is accepted by the local authority.

The Minister for Water Supplies: What about the rental value?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is the same thing. The Government does not necessarily want to be bound by the system adopted by the local authority, so the Act gives an alternative. The valuation may be based on the annual value with certain deductions, or up to 6 per cent. of the capital value. The valuation thus would still be based on the improved value.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Are you arguing that the current value of a local authority must necessarily be exactly the same as the rental value?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No.

The Minister for Water Supplies: I thought you were.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Whatever the value is under Section 74, it is based on the improved value of the land.

The Minister for Water Supplies: That might be so, but you could get a different final figure.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so; an amount up to 6 per cent. might be different from the actual annual value. In Perth, the annual rental value is not necessarily taken. In a particular case, the capital value may be taken. The improvements might be such that a very small rental could be obtained, whereas the value of the land might be such that, if it carried a better building, the valuation would be very high. That is why the provision was included. It is to give a municipality an opportunity to collect a greater amount because the land is not being used to the best purpose.

The Minister for Water Supplies: This does not give the municipality anything.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is similar. I am speaking of the municipality because this is copied from it. It says that in a road district the Minister may avail himself of the unimproved value. It

says that where a municipality takes the other value the department must do so, without option—

The Minister for Water Supplies: What would be wrong with the Minister deciding to adopt the unimproved value where the local authority worked on the annual value?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It would cause confusion.

The Minister for Water Supplies: You want the department to drag at the heels of the local authority because, if it rates on the annual value, the department must do likewise.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, on the improved value.

The Minister for Water Supplies: No. If the local authority changes its mind and adopts the unimproved value, we are expected to follow.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Where is the sense in that?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Most of the collection of rates is done by local authorities at the moment—

The Minister for Water Supplies: What about a district which adopts differential rating? What do we do then?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister can do either.

The Minister for Water Supplies: There would be no uniformity.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. It would cause tremendous confusion if the City of Perth suddenly adopted the unimproved value.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Would it cause more confusion than if I decided to take 2 per cent.?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think so. That would be 2 per cent. of the capital value, which is on the same basis as the City of Perth uses. I submit that this authority is not necessary. Why seek something which would enforce what it would not be wise to do?

The Minister for Water Supplies: I have said I did not seek it. It is being thrust upon me.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I oppose the amendment.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Why reject a gift?

Mr. JOHNSON: The arguments of the member for Nedlands appear to be accurate, but his conclusions are not those that I draw. The arguments of the member for Mt. Lawley are inconsistent. Under the Act at present, if the local authority uses the annual value and it is such that the Water Supply Department advises the

Minister that the valuations are faulty, he can revalue for his own purposes, but must revalue on the annual value basis.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The same system!

Mr. JOHNSON: Under the Act, a property might be valued by the local authority at £1,000 capital value and a rental value related thereto, and it might be valued by the department at £3,000, with a rental value deducted therefrom. I do not say that happens but there is nothing to prevent it. If under those circumstances, the Minister decided that instead of revaluing at an annual value different from that of the local authority he would use the other method, why should he not do that?

As regards differential valuations of the same property, it is interesting to note that where the property is valued in relation to the annual value for water and municipal rates, the same property is valued on the unimproved value for taxation. In Selby-st., the boundary of Floreat Park, properties on one side of the street are rated on the capital value and on the other side, on the unimproved value, as provided by Act of Parliament. The result is considerable acrimonious discussion in that area as people on opposite sides of the street, drawing water from the same main, pay varying amounts for it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They pay different rates.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. I am not trying to force anything on the Minister.

The Minister for Water Supplies: I did not suggest that.

Mr. JOHNSON: No, but the member for Mt. Lawley did. He seemed to think I was protecting the Minister. When we started protesting in my area, we tried to persuade the department to use a valuation different from that of the Perth City Council, and the Minister and the department were considerably protected by it. We have been in the position that when anyone complained that his water rates were too high we have had to say, "Your only remedy is to appeal against the City Council rates, and the best way of doing that is to change the councillors for the district and the Lord Mayor."

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is not quite correct.

Mr. JOHNSON: It is what happened. An appeal against the City Council rating seems fatuous as it is so difficult to succeed, but in the next 25 years we will obtain some justice. If this deletion is made, the department will be harder put than it is a present to adopt the City of Perth valuations without query. I object strongly to the lesser binding the greater—a local authority binding the Government—because the choice should lie with the greater authority. As a Parliament, we should not be subservient to local government. The

difficulty will be overcome if the central valuing body comes into being, as I hope it will.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	....	....	....	17
Noes	....	....	....	....	15

Majority for 2

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Steeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
Mr. McCulloch	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Owen
Mr. Court	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Yates
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Bovell
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Manning
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Brand
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Graham	Mr. Hill
Mr. Hawke	Dame F. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Moir	Mr. Cornell
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Mann

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 16—Section 75A. added:

Mr. COURT: In his reply to the second reading debate, the Minister dealt fairly fully with the queries I raised, but there is one point about which I would like clarification. He explained to us that he is in process of negotiating with the Perth City Council to arrive at a system whereby there will be the equivalent of a panel of valuers. If he is not successful in achieving an amicable working arrangement with the council, he will have to make a decision as to whether he will enter into the council's area with his own valuing staff or accept the council's valuation.

The Perth City Council, being a municipality, is bound by the Municipal Corporations Act to impose a value of not less than 4 per cent. on the capital value of a property, whereas, the department, under its system of valuing has a latitude up to 6 per cent. and I understand that in practice the percentage varies between 2 and 6 per cent. Do I take it from the Minister's remarks that if he fails to reach some amicable working arrangement with the Perth City Council, he will have no alternative but to instal his own valuers in its area so that he can arrive at a valuing system comparable with that used throughout the metropolitan area?

I take it that having worked out a value which can reasonably be said to be today's value throughout the metropolitan area, the department will work on a valuation of 2, 3 or 4 per cent. or will it vary that percentage according to the districts and types of districts? The Minister can readily appreciate that it would be grossly inequitable if the Perth City Council were to use 4 per cent. while the rest of the areas were valued at 3 per cent. I want to know whether, if he does not reach agreement with the Perth City Council, he will have to enlarge his valuing staff and go into the council's area and carry out valuations.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: If I fail to reach agreement with the Perth City Council I shall have to give serious consideration to one of two methods of getting a valuation which will more nearly suit my purpose. One way would be to take a percentage, yet to be decided, on the valuation fixed by the Perth City Council and the percentage which we would adopt would be one which in our view would give us a comparable value with other districts which we had ourselves valued.

To arrive at that figure we would make a check valuation of some properties in the Perth City Council area; as a matter of fact, we have already done that. The other method would be for me completely to value the area with my own valuers; that would mean increasing the valuing staff of the department and I may even do that. It has not been determined and will not be until the result of my approach to the council is known conclusively.

All the clause does is to incorporate the provision of Sections 299 and 230 of the Road Districts Act relating to the appointment of valuers for the purpose of making valuations of rateable property for rating purposes. The clause is introduced in order to give effect to Clauses 3, 4 and 5 which contain the reasons for the proposed amendment and gives power to the valuers to do certain things as apart from other officers. In other words it will give us the legal authority to do the things which our valuers now do as a matter of practice and on which, if challenged, it might be difficult to establish their right to do.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 17—Section 92 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Again I want to point out to the Minister my suggested system of rating land in the district for the supply of water, stormwater drainage and land drainage. Section 72 of the Act says that all land shall be rateable and the following section says that ratebooks shall be kept to record valuations, etc. Then we reach Section 92 which is being amended by this clause. That section provides that the Minister shall levy stormwater rates in respect of rateable land

within a district in which a stormwater drain is laid. This clause now proposes to delete the provision that relates to stormwater.

The Minister for Water Supplies: To prevent the very thing that you are afraid of.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister is now changing it to metropolitan main drainage which includes stormwater drainage and drainage of land, because the rates will be combined.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Once the Minister has declared a district and he intends to rate land within it, I suggest he will be required to rate the whole of the land although much of it will not require drainage. The district will probably require assistance in respect of stormwater which arises from house roofs even on higher land and will cause damage to neighbours' property if there is not a proper method of disposing of that water. Therefore, all land in that district will be rated for that purpose, but for drainage, only a small portion of the district will benefit from any system that is installed. It would seem that the whole district, if it is to be rated for stormwater drainage will have to be rated for land drainage and so the high land will pay for the low land. However, it will be impossible for the owners of the land to pay all the expense of any drainage system, and a good deal of the cost will have to be met from general funds. The Minister was probably under a misapprehension because I have explained the correct system and I wanted to hear his views so that the public may be acquainted with the facts.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Under the Land Drainage Act rates are levied either on an area basis or in accordance with the benefits, assessed by visual inspection, to be obtained from the drainage system, or on the unimproved capital valuation basis. On the other hand, the stormwater drainage rate is levied under the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act and that is based on the net annual value of all the land and the improvements thereon within the gazetted area. There is the difference.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is so.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We want to take out the word, "stormwater," which would mean that we would have to rate on all the land.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Well, the Crown Law Department advised me that it is necessary to do that. That is the purpose of the amendment as contained in paragraph (a). The Act will then operate in its altered form.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But it will not operate.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The hon. member is telling me that the alteration will have no effect.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Not on the principle.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Well, why change the word?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I accept your assurance, but I suggest that you confirm it.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I always do that if a point is raised and there is any doubt about it. I have to act on the advice that is tendered to me. The Bill is drawn to give effect to a certain intention.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: May I suggest that when the point is raised during the third reading stage, the Minister might be in a position to give some further advice?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, I will have it looked into. There is no doubt it will be possible to declare the drainage area—take the boundaries where we like—to include land that will be served by the drain. Only that land which will benefit by the drain will be included in the boundaries of the drainage area.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then you will not get stormwater rates from the other area?

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: No, and we will impose a drainage rate on that area which we can find, from a visual inspection, will benefit from the drainage.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree that is the position.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Well, that is the intention.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 18 to 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Section 146A added:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is the clause that deals with the plumber. I admit there is a good deal in what the Minister has said.

The Minister for Water Supplies: The member for Stirling stated that I had established my case on this clause.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is the majority, but there is the minority also. The Minister's argument was quite sound, but I am objecting to the clause because we are trying to get uniformity in any time limit specified in our Acts and the Government saw fit to pass legislation only last session, in which this uniformity was provided for. Now we are trying to break away from that principle again. Under that Act there are various times in which action could be taken, against the Crown, for instance. The Justices Act provides one period in which action can be taken and I think that is a good

thing. We do not want a period of 12 months under this Act, six months under another Act and perhaps two years under yet another Act.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Is there a period of two years under some?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is a suggestion that there should be.

The Minister for Water Supplies: So I am not asking for much when I ask for one year.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister has the provisions under the Health Act at his disposal.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Six months may be long enough in some cases but this type of work is covered underground.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister admitted that he gets three or four cases.

The Minister for Water Supplies: I did not say three or four. I said seven.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: We should have uniformity. Instead of legislating for seven cases, let us be uniform, so that everyone will know where he stands when prosecutions are launched. If that is not done, and a mistake is made, people will say that they thought they had 12 months under the Health Act, or six months under this Act, or some other period under another Act.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Would you put a limit on the time in the case of a robbery?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is a limit.

The Minister for Water Supplies: What is the limit?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Six months.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Is that the limit for gold stealing?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, I think it is; the Justices Act provides for six months.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Yes, I know; but you would not take action under the Justices Act for gold stealing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: For offences which are sufficiently serious, action can be taken by indictment. I like uniformity, and I propose to vote against the clause.

Mr. COURT: I think I foreshadowed my opposition to this clause during my second reading speech. I cannot see the reason for wanting to vary the situation. The Minister did not give us any evidence to the effect that there were a number of these people.

The Minister for Water Supplies: You see the difference! The member for Stirling was convinced long before I sat down.

Mr. COURT: That does not mean that I am convinced or that everybody else is convinced.

The Minister for Water Supply: He is a hard man to convince.

Mr. COURT: We do not quarrel with the proposition that action should be taken against these people, but why not leave it at six months? This would make the Government departments get off their tails and do something about it. Why should we make the period 12 months? If we do that, the departments will come back later and want two years.

The Minister for Water Supplies: I will let you into a secret. The department wanted two years, but I said one year was sufficient.

Mr. COURT: The sky is the limit with the Government departments; it enables them to take their time over these things. I would suggest that most of the illegal plumbing in this State, or in any other part of the world, is done by the owners of properties themselves, and we can never catch up with it. They do not confess their errors because they would be subject to prosecution.

The Minister for Water Supplies: If somebody stole your motorcar and you could not take action because you had not found out about it within six months, what would you say?

Mr. COURT: I do not think the position is comparable.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am not sure that that is not the law.

The Minister for Water Supplies: You could proceed under the Justices Act.

Mr. COURT: If I may be permitted to interject, I doubt whether I could proceed under the Justices Act. But I should imagine that the police would be on the job.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Of course you could. That is the whole point.

Mr. COURT: I can only imagine a few cases where a man poses as a licensed plumber to some unsuspecting person and installs a sewerage system or alters the water main. The department is making a mountain out of a molehill. We should allow the uniformity in the Justices Act to continue.

The Minister for Water Supplies: You are not logical. You say that because there are so few cases we should not take action against them.

Mr. COURT: That is not so. We say that the period of six months is long enough and the interests of justice can be served during that period.

The Minister for Water Supplies: If he gets away with it for six months, it is fair enough.

Mr. COURT: That is his luck.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Mt. Lawley and the member for Nedlands have overlooked an important point. The time period runs from the creation of the offence, not from its discovery. It is comparable to a position in which the member for Mt. Lawley or the member for Nedlands may have five cars in his garage. They may only use one and, from the cars that are stored away, one is stolen. In seven months' time, when the mother-in-law comes on a visit, they decide to get that car out for her use and discover it has been stolen. Because it was discovered six months afterwards, they would be precluded from taking action. A sensible amendment would be to extend the period to six months from the date of discovery. That would satisfy the member for Nedlands and would ensure that the Government departments got off their tails, as he put it. When the offence was discovered, it would be proceeded with within six months.

The Minister for Water Supplies: The member for Nedlands would not agree with that.

Mr. Court: No, I certainly would not.

Mr. JOHNSON: The attitude of the member for Nedlands seems to be that everyone must be protected from the Government; the Government is the witch of his dreams.

Mr. Court: You are not far wrong, either.

Mr. JOHNSON: I cannot understand why the hon. member came into Parliament. The time should run from the discovery of the offence. If members opposite would like to keep the time to six months, I shall support them.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Discovered by whom?

Mr. JOHNSON: By the department. If members opposite are not prepared to agree to a longer period for offences to be discovered, I suggest that they donate a crystal ball to the department so that it can gaze at it to discover the illegal persons doing plumbing work.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 27—Section 148 repealed:

Mr. JOHNSON: There is an amendment on the notice paper to delete this clause. The object was to have a short discussion. The purpose of the amendment initially was to make it possible to get away with amendments to regulations without publication, but on a closer study of the Interpretation Act the net effect of the clause is to reduce the period of publication from fourteen to six days. If that is the intention, I shall not proceed with my amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: All this clause does is to ensure uniformity in regard to regulations, to take

out of the Act special provisions with regard to regulations, and to substitute the Interpretation Act which has more general application. There is no other purpose. It is purely a machinery clause to make for uniformity.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES, UNIVER- SITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA MEDICAL SCHOOL APPEAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS AUTHORISATION.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [5.47]: As the Minister in charge of the Bill said, this is a small Bill. The clause dealing with the amendment merely substitutes for the word "seven" the word "five". The object is to reduce the period of service required to be given by regional and auxiliary doctors from seven years to five years. I use the term "regional and auxiliary doctors" because they are stated as such under the relevant section of the principal Act. On looking at that section, regarding the services given by such doctors, I find that they may be appointed in this manner—

Any person who satisfies the board that he is a person of good fame and character and who has held a certificate of regional registration under Section 11A of this Act for a period or periods aggregating seven years or more shall be entitled to be registered as a medical practitioner under this Act if in the opinion of the Minister and at the absolute discretion of the Minister it is desirable in the interests of the general community of the State to grant such registration.

It is proposed to reduce the period to five years. I do not oppose the amendment. It is a concession to men who have served the State well under the terms of the Medical Act.

In 1932 a concession was granted by the previous Government to enable medical practitioners who had been appointed under the Act to be relieved of their regional or auxiliary service after three years if they were able to satisfy a board

of examiners that they were qualified under the laws of the association to serve as medical practitioners. They could be relieved of their regional and auxiliary service requirements.

There remains little else to say about the Bill. Some members might feel that the proposed concession is not generous enough, but, speaking as a layman, I think it is sufficient for the day. The member for Roe, speaking on a somewhat similar Bill several years ago, said he thought that more generous concessions could have been granted to medical men who were not qualified under the Act to serve as regional or auxiliary doctors. However, I am content to support the second reading of this measure.

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—CEMETERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th October.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [5.53]: This Bill has come to us from the Legislative Council and is a very short measure dealing with only one point. The trustees of the Karrakatta Cemetery have found that they have no power to take action against persons who damage, or attempt to damage, things in the cemetery that are not absolute fixtures. There is already power for them to take action against anyone who damages or attempts to damage fixtures such as trees, tombs and so on. This Bill will empower them to take action against persons who damage things that are not absolute fixtures. That is all the Bill contains, and I support the second reading.

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—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th September.

MR. MAY (Collie) [5.56]: In supporting the second reading, I should say that there are not many Acts of Parliament

that do not in the course of time need amending, and this one dealing with coal-mine workers' pensions is certainly no exception. The Bill proposes to amend certain sections of the Act that have, as it were, become the victim of circumstances or require amendment through the passing of time.

When the original legislation was introduced, long service leave for coalminers was not thought of. Later on, the employees were granted long service leave, which covers a period of three months, and now we find that the Act contains no provision to cover employees during the time they are absent on this leave. The Bill proposes to remedy this defect so that the miners absent on long service leave will still preserve the continuity of their employment.

When the Act was passed, national service was not in vogue, and now we find that young fellows of 18 years and upwards are being called upon to attend camps to do a certain amount of training, and what applies to the long service leave of miners applies to these trainees. Consequently, the Act needs to be revised in order to cover these young men while they are doing their service training.

Another section of the Act deals with the permissible income over and above the pension granted to a retired miner. This provision needs to be adjusted. At present, the permissible income of a retired miner is restricted to 50s. a week. Under the Commonwealth social service scheme, a pensioner is now entitled to have an income of £5 a week, and it is proposed to bring this legislation into conformity with that provision.

The income that a retired miner may receive from any business he is conducting is dealt with in another section. Since the Act came into operation in July, 1944, it has been found that such income has really been negligible and has not warranted the work entailed to police it. Some of the miners during their earlier years in the industry took up 5-acre holdings in the vicinity of Collie, and some of those holdings do return small amounts of income but not in excess of the income permitted over and above the pension.

The income of a retired miner is governed by the means test because a miner at the age of 65 is, under the Act, forced to apply for the old-age pension. His wife at 60 is also forced to apply for the age pension. The object of this is to relieve the State scheme, as far as possible, by putting the men and their wives on the social service pension. This saves the funds of the State coal mine workers pension scheme.

Another proposal in the Bill concerns miners who have been blinded. Fortunately in this State we have had very few instances of blind people, but there is one

man who, through an accident in a mine—a blow back when shooting down the face of coal—became permanently and almost completely blinded. Under the Commonwealth social services pension scheme an aged blind pensioner suffers no restriction in the income he can earn—if he can earn an income in spite of his disability—but under the Coal Mine Worker's (Pensions) Act, he is restricted to £2 10s. a week.

Under the Commonwealth social services scheme it has been found that on occasions a blind man is able to earn quite a respectable amount, and it is felt by the unions in this industry that the same concession should be granted here. Therefore the Bill proposes to do that.

Mr. O'Brien: It is little enough.

Mr. MAY: As my friend says, it is little enough. If a man loses his eyesight in the industry and then makes himself proficient in some other calling we think he should be allowed to earn as much as he can. The remaining clauses are purely machinery ones and will not cause any alteration in the payment of the pensions. They merely deal with administration; consequently I feel that no comment from me is required. I support the Bill.

MR. WILD (Dale) [6.4]: I support the second reading of the measure which has been explained in detail by the member for Collie. I think he must have been reading my notes or thinking with my mind. I do not think anyone in the House can object to the five small amending clauses or the machinery ones. It seems to me that this is merely a matter of amending an Act to bring it into line with changing conditions.

Who, a few years ago would have envisaged that we would have national service training as a result of which men would be away from their normal occupations for three months? Long service leave is also something that has come into industry in more recent years. In connection with these two instances, what is proposed here is simply the bringing of the Act into line with present-day practice.

The other three provisions, which are affected in some way by social service benefits, seek to tidy up inconsistencies that appear in the Act. These inconsistencies arise out of alterations in the benefits paid to pensioners by the Commonwealth Government. I think all of us will agree that there is nothing too much that we can do for a man who, unfortunately, has lost his sight.

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—SOIL CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th October.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [6.71: When introducing the Bill the Minister explained to the House that its chief aim was to make the Act more workable. Section 5 is at present top-heavy and hinders the smooth administration of the Act. The Minister pointed out that since the legislation was passed in 1945 it has remained unaltered. That has enabled the Commissioner of Soil Conservation to do valuable work in saving our soils from wind and water erosion. The work done is greatly appreciated by those who have already benefited from it.

Much of our land has been subjected to soil erosion although the problem in this State is by no means as serious as in the longer settled States of the Commonwealth or in other parts of the world that have been settled for long periods. Experience of the Act has shown that it is too cumbersome to work properly. The Minister mentioned an instance in the Roe electorate where a lady objected to the work intended to be carried out on her property by the Soil Conservation Committee. By the time the machinery under the Act could be brought into operation to overcome her objection so much of the season had passed that the work could not be carried out till the following year.

Members can realise that a sequence of similar objections by landowners could make it possible for vitally necessary work to be held up, thus rendering the Act farcical. It is desired, under this measure, that the provisions of Section 5, which were taken from the New South Wales Act, be replaced by the provision in the South Australian Act, under which, on appeal to the Minister, he can have the case investigated and give judgment within a very short time.

Members may think that would place too much power in the hands of the Minister, but I think it has been demonstrated up to date that the Soil Conservation Committee is not a body likely to do anything rash. Its members have shown their genuine interest in the work they have undertaken and members need have no fear that the committee will arrive at rash decisions. Members can also rest assured that appeals that may be made to the Minister will not result in decisions detrimental either to the individual or the farming community as a whole. I do not think there is any serious objection to the measure and so I support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Sewell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 18th October, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Associations Incorporation Act Amendment.
2. Electoral Districts Act Amendment.
3. University of Western Australia Act Amendment.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th October.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [4.35]: I arranged with Mr. Thomson to adjourn the third reading on this measure until to-day in order to give him an explanation in regard to one portion of the Bill. In the course of his speech he said—

I cannot for the life of me understand what is intended by the words—
and whether gear or scaffolding of any height is or is not used in connection with the building or structure.

On examining that part, in conjunction with the earlier portion of the clause, I cannot understand what the hon. member cannot comprehend. I think the wording is quite clear, because it deals with the protection that must be given if an asbestos roof is being put on to premises.