

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is perhaps a pity the dentists have representation on the Dental Board. With regard to the doctors it is difficult to determine from the Medical Act who shall be admitted as a practitioner and who not. However, this does not apply to nurses, and I see no good reason why nurses should be given representation on a board the duties of which will be to adjudicate on other nurses applying for admission. I think they will be sufficiently safe-guarded if three medical practitioners have seats on that board. These practitioners would have no desire to get anybody off the register nor, I hope, any desire to place any particular person on it.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about the Pharmaceutical Board?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Personally, I do not agree with the constitution of the Dental Board. I think it would be better if it were an independent board rather than a board of practising dentists to adjudicate on those wanting to enter the ranks of the profession. I do not, of course, refer to the present Dental Board, but I say the principle is not right, because there is always an element of feeling about the thing that a certain person is refused admittance because another certain person who is a practising dentist and happens to have a seat on the board; and the same argument would apply to the nurses.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Have you any objection to the New South Wales Bill?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As far as I can judge from what I read it has not the remotest chance of passing. I think the New South Wales Bill reached only one stage in one House and was withdrawn. I do not think there is anything further I need say in regard to this Bill. There are a number of minor amendments suggested, but they do not materially alter the principle of the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee:

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

Hon. G. RANDELL: In view of remarks that had fallen from hon. members he moved—

That progress be reported.

The Colonial Secretary: The matters referred to do not come until late in the Bill.

Hon. G. RANDELL: Some members dealt with Clause 9. It would be better to have further consideration of the Bill in the light of hon. members' speeches.

Motion passed: progress reported.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Vaccination Act Amendment (received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time on motion by Hon. C. Sommers).

2, Sea Carriage of Goods Bill (received from the Legislative Assembly).

House adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 14th September, 1909.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Mines: (1.), Exemptions granted under "The Mining

Act" for 1908-1909. (2.), Amendments to Form 9 of Regulations under "The Mining Act, 1904."

By the Premier: (1.), Amended By-laws under "The Goldfields Water Supply Act, 1902."

QUESTION—RABBIT PEST, GERALDTON.

Mr. CARSON asked the Minister for Lands (without notice): Has the Minister noticed in this morning's newspaper a paragraph to the effect that rabbits have been discovered at Geraldton, and what steps do the Government intend to take in the matter?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: I have seen the paragraph, and regret that rabbits have been found at Geraldton. I intend to send up a trapper to deal with the matter in the same way as colonies of rabbits found within the rabbit-proof fence have previously been dealt with.

QUESTION—RAILWAY WORK- SHOPS EMPLOYEES, WAGES.

Mr. SWAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What rate of wages is being paid to men employed on carpentry and joinery work in the Midland Junction Workshops according to the interpretation clause of the Arbitration Court award, page 37, vol. 2. 2, If varying rates are paid, what number of men are receiving each rate.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The number of car and wagon builders employed on construction work at the Midland Junction Workshops is 38. Rates of pay—6 at 11s. 6d. per day; 3 at 11s. per day; 4 at 10s. 6d. per day; 25 at 10s. per day; total 38. 2, Of the 25 men at the 10s. rate, 24 are new hands, put on specially for new work. If their engagement does not last for six months, they will be paid at the rate of 10s. 6d. per day for the whole of the time employed. If the service extends beyond six months, they will be granted holidays on full pay or allowed payment in lieu thereof. The rates paid are in accordance with the in-

dustrial agreement with the Coastal Coach Builders' Union.

QUESTION—YACHT CLUBS LICENSES.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: 1, Under what conditions was the license granted to the Royal Perth Yacht Club and the Perth Flying Squadron to occupy the foreshore of Perth water? 2, Are the conditions being carried out fully? 3, Do the said clubs pay any rent or rates? 4, What is the total rent received from persons licensed to occupy the foreshore engaged in the yacht and boat business in Perth water? 5, Is the Minister aware that the R.P.Y.C. and P.F.S. are carrying on or allowing their employees to carry on business in competition with the persons who pay rent for the use of the foreshore in connection with their businesses?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Monthly tenure; rent 1s. per month, if demanded; licensee to observe the Swan River foreshore regulations; not to sublet; not to erect any structure without Minister's approval of the plans; and to remove any structure at termination of the tenancy without compensation. 2, Yes. 3, No rent. The municipal council advise that only sanitary rates are charged. 4, £380. per year. 5, No. Both clubs advise that their employees only undertake work on boats belonging to the club members.

QUESTION—FROZEN MEAT TRADE.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is there an inspection made by Government officers of all frozen meat imported into this State? 2, If not, will the Minister cause such inspection to be made? 3, Is it correct that a large quantity of the frozen meat imported into this State is the meat rejected as not suitable for export to England or elsewhere? 4, Are there any statutory powers providing that all frozen meat offered for sale in this State should be labelled as such for the information of the public? 5, If not is it the intention of the Minister to bring forward at an early date legislation pro-

viding that frozen meat shall be so labelled?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. An officer of the Central Board of Health is permanently on the wharf, and is a qualified meat inspector. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, While the Government have no direct evidence of this, it is believed a proportion of the frozen meat imported is that not considered suitable for export to England. 4, There is no statutory power in force, but the amendment of the Health Bill now before the Legislative Council, in Clause 204, provides for this. 5, Answered by No. 4.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERIES, WAGES.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to reduce the wages of the State battery hands below the standard in the districts where arbitration awards are in existence? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to reduce the battery hands at Lake Darlot, Linden, and Burtville below the present standard, namely, 13s. 4d. per day, where no arbitration awards exist?

The Minister for Mines replied: 1, No. 2, Standard rates will be paid in each district.

QUESTION—LIFE ASSURANCE ACT, I.O.O.F.

Mr. FOULKES asked the Treasurer: 1, Has the Independent Order of Foresters of Canada lodged a sum of £10,000 with the State Treasurer as security under the provisions of the Life Assurance Act? 2, Is he aware that the said Order of Foresters has given notice of its intention of ceasing to carry on business in this State? 3, Will he undertake to hold the said sum of £10,000 until the obligations entered into by the said order with various persons in this State who have entered into insurance contracts with the said order have been fully carried out?

The Treasurer replied: 1, Yes. 2, No, not officially. 3, Yes.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill, £979,045.

MESSENGER FROM THE GOV- ERNOR, PROCEDURE.

Mr. HEITMANN: Mr. Speaker, is it necessary for members of this House to rise when a messenger comes here from Government House?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not necessary; I alone am supposed to rise.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Influx of Criminals Prevention (introduced by the Attorney General).

2. District Fire Brigades (introduced by the Premier).

3. Mining Act Amendment (introduced by Mr. Gourley).

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1. Sea Carriage of Goods, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

2. Vaccination Act Amendment, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

3. Bills of Sale Act Amendment, passed.

MOTION—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES SELECT COMMITTEE.

Change of Member.

On motion by Mr. Daglish, ordered: That the hon. member for Swan be discharged from service upon the select committee appointed to inquire into the administration of the Friendly Societies Act, and that the hon. member for Geraldton be appointed thereto.

BILL—LICENSED SURVEYORS.

On motion by the Premier, further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. James Mitchell) in moving the second

reading said: For the third time I have had the pleasure of introducing a Bill to amend the Agricultural Bank Act. All are aware of the prominent part the bank has played in developing the State. It must be realised that it is only right that the Act should be amended and brought up-to-date from time to time. In the past the bank has been a phenomenal success, a happy circumstance due largely to the abilities of the manager, Mr. Paterson. Mr. Paterson is now assisted by trustees in the management of the institution. These trustees are Mr. Richardson from the South-West, and Mr. Cook of Northam. The one knows the requirements of the South-West, while the other is familiar with the conditions applying to the wheat lands. With Mr. Paterson these trustees have during the last twelve months covered a tremendous amount of work in connection with the development of the State. The first of the Agricultural Bank Bills introduced in the House was presented about 14 years ago, when the capital of the bank was set at £100,000. Mr. Throssell, the then member for Northam was, I believe, responsible for the idea. It will be remembered what was said when Sir John Forrest introduced that Bill. The amount of £100,000 was set apart for the development of the agricultural industry. The advances were limited to, I think, 50 per cent. against the value of the work done, and the interest charged was 6 per cent. The operations of the bank have always been conducted on safe lines. When Sir John Forrest introduced the first Bill a great deal was said against it. It was declared that the money would for a certainty be lost. This, it will be remembered, was some 12 or 14 years ago, yet the dismal prophecy has not been fulfilled. To-day we have a reserve of £24,255; not a very large sum when we remember the figures that appear in the balance sheet, figures approaching £1,500,000. But it is a large sum when you compare it with the trifling loss made by the bank, and the risk incurred. It says a great deal for the management that after 14 years of active work we can come to the House and declare that there are indeed very

few doubtful accounts. The reserve fund is, of course, an insignificant sum when compared with the magnificent work the bank has done. The Government do not desire to make a profit directly, but we do wish to do good work for the State: because we realise that the benefit to be derived from the lending of money to farmers for the development of their holdings is far reaching. The times have changed. The faith that was evinced in the State years ago is much stronger to-day, and so we come to the House with this amending Bill. The measure that was considered exceedingly liberal in 1906 requires amending to-day; because we realise the greater possibilities ahead of us, and we have not only greater faith in the country, but a greater experience and a greater knowledge of it. And so we come with the utmost confidence that this amending Bill will be acceptable to the House. We realise that if we are to fulfil our destiny we must develop the State more rapidly than we have done in the past. We wish to develop our agricultural lands, because we believe we should be at least equal to any other State in the Federation. This expansion can best be achieved by developing our natural resources. We realise, too, that the State will not be developed quickly by rich men, for it is impossible to get sufficient men of capital to come to the State. It is necessary, therefore, that the Government should find the money for the people who come here, and who for the most part are workers. We have to see to it that these people with very limited capital with which to develop our State should be provided with the necessary funds, for we know that this money is advanced for the purpose of effecting improvements. The bank has been a success largely because of that provision. In all cases the money is advanced for something to be added to the security. The banks operating in the East almost without exception have been speculating, but our money has been loaned to effect additional improvements on the security. That means greater safety to the bank. It is because of this that we have improved our security by every penny we

have loaned; and it is because of this that the Bank has been so successful. Also it is because of this that I can say to-day that there are practically no bad debts. Then the experience we have had during the past three years justifies us in saying that we are no longer speculating in regard to the worth of Western Australian lands. We have proved beyond doubt that we can grow wheat and other cereals, and produce lambs and fruit in abundance. We have proved that our lands are capable of producing all that man requires. We desire that this wheat and fruit, and these lambs should be produced in abundance; and we desire that there should be produced not merely sufficient for local requirements, but that we should reach the export stage for the lambs and wheat and wool in large quantities in the shortest possible time. We realise that in this land of many acres and few people, the best possible use should be made of the people that we have. We believe that every man should be given the fullest possible opportunity of using his energies. We realise that if we are to develop the State each man must be given this opportunity, because with our limited population and many acres it is impossible to develop the whole of it unless we find a considerable amount of money for each individual selector. It is because of a desire in the interests of the State to increase the area under cultivation and to bring more land into use—it is with this desire that we seek to amend the existing Act by increasing the limit of advance from £500 to £750. The present limit is used for the purposes of ringbarking, fencing, draining, water conservation, and clearing. We advance, as hon. members know, £300 against the full value of the work done, and £100 for stock, the balance being advanced on a 50 per cent. basis. Under the amending Bill we take power to advance £400 on the full value of the work done in ringbarking, fencing, draining, water conservation, and clearing, and the balance on a 50 per cent. basis, with £100 for stock and £100 for agricultural machinery. I should like to point out to hon. members what this £500

does and what this £750 will do. In the wheat belt this £500 is now largely used for the purposes of ringbarking, say 600 acres, £45; fencing the whole of the 640 acres, £75; conservation of water, £50; clearing 130 acres, £130; thus absorbing the full value of the advance of £300. Half the value of clearing 200 acres amounts to £100, which with £100 for stock completes the advance of £500, and leaves the selector with a farm of 330 acres cleared. The proposal is to increase this limit to £750, of which £400 is to be advanced against the full value of the work done. This £400, expended on a square mile of wheat land, will ringbark 600 acres at a cost of £45; fence the whole at £75; provide water at £50; and clear 230 acres at £230. This absorbs the £400. Then there is provided half the value of clearing 300 acres, £150, in addition to which there is available for the purchase of stock £100, and for the purchase of machinery—which is a new proposal—£100, thus using the limit of £750, and providing for the selector a farm of 530 acres cleared. Hon. members will notice that under the £500 limit half the value of clearing 200 acres, namely, £100 is provided by the selector. Under the new proposal half the value of clearing 300 acres, namely, £150, will be provided by the selector. In the South-West the cost of fencing is much the same as in the wheat belt; the ringbarking is much the same, and the water conservation much the same. The clearing, of course, costs much more and to-day we allow £130 for clearing 13 acres. After that we advance £100 as half the cost of clearing 20 acres, and £100 for stock, leaving the selector with a farm of 33 acres cleared. Under the Bill we propose to pay the full value of clearing 23 acres in addition to the ringbarking and half the cost of clearing 30 acres, namely, £150. There will remain £100 to be used for stock and £100 for machinery, if necessary, thus absorbing £750, and leaving the selector with his place ringbarked and fenced and water provided, and with 530 acres cleared. The desire of the Government is to give the fullest possible opportunity for each man on the land to produce the maximum.

In this wheat area we must realise that a man with a team ought to face the work of farming with the most approved methods on 500 acres of cleared land. He can do more, but he should not do less; and it is much better for the man and for the State generally if he produces wheat from 530 acres than from 330 acres, as would be the case under the present method. So members will agree with me that our proposal is a step in the right direction. I would like to say a word or two in regard to the work of the bank in the past. During the last year 2,915 applications were received for £433,575; there were 74 applications withdrawn, reducing the amount applied for to £423,400. The trustees approved of 2,668 applications for £351,350 and refused 222 applications, representing £23,475. The number of new accounts opened last year was 1,323, and the number of accounts closed was 144. The total number of accounts on the books to-day is 5,281. The total number of farmers who have received assistance from the bank is something over 6,000; that is 6,000 farmers have been accommodated by the institution during the past 14 years. There may be some bad debts but they are very small. The bank has been responsible for clearing 492,067 acres. There are 1,082,117 acres cultivated in the State. Of these, 213,153 acres have been cultivated by money advanced by the bank in the olden days; while this money has also assisted in ringbarking 686,136 acres and in erecting 610,595 chains of fencing. The loans authorised have amounted to £1,365,908; the money advanced has amounted to £1,005,151, and the money repaid to the bank has totalled £169,912, of which £31,000 was returned last year. The loans outstanding amount to £835,238. A good deal of the money is now being paid off. The other banks operating in Western Australia are so satisfied with our securities that they are taking them over fairly extensively. I may say that nearly half the land cleared in the State has been cleared by money advanced from the bank, and a good deal of the clearing has been out of profits earned by the people borrowing

from the bank. This gives us some idea of the value of the assistance given by the bank, and of its value to the State generally; because without the bank we should not have cleared half the area we have now cleared. We must also remember that the bank, for the 14 years of its existence, has operated almost with safety, because our losses are *nil*. Remembering this, we see the magnificent asset the Bank has created. At any rate it does not mean a great deal of work for nothing, because we have made profits on the operations of the bank; we have made working expenses and interest, and have been able to provide the State with all the benefits to be derived from the cultivation of this magnificent area. There are some reasons of course which have operated towards the safety of the bank's financing. Apart from careful administration our lands have an ever-increasing value. If we compare the value of 20-bushel wheat land in this State with 20-bushel wheat land in Eastern Australia, and if we remember that the produce from our lands is called upon to face the world's markets, just as the produce of the Eastern wheat lands has to do, we will see that the margin of security is much better here than it is in the East. They are much nearer the correct value from an interest-producing point of view. Our lands must increase in value, so that we claim that our assets have an increasing value and are safe from that point of view. It is that increasing value that encourages other banks to go out to the farming areas and advance their money. Once they liked Hay-street, now they favour the broad acres. At any rate they are finding their way into my district. Where three of us ran the whole district some years ago, now I think 14 or 15 of these institutions will be found making advances.

Mr. Taylor: They consider it safer now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What we felt was safe 14 years ago, or three years ago, we feel is safe to do to-day—rather we feel that it is safer to do a good deal more to-day. At any rate I desire to point out that it is necessary, if our people are to be given the fullest possible opportunity, that the limit should be in-

creased from £500 to £750. A new clause is to be found in this Bill for the first time; that is the clause referring to the purchase of agricultural machinery, which must be made in Western Australia. Last year we imported £104,000 worth of agricultural machinery, largely from the East. Now in the olden days a great deal of our agricultural machinery was made in Western Australia, and we believe it could be made here still. I remember that 20 years ago in the Northam district there were workshops busy turning out ploughs and strippers and other agricultural machinery. They are doing some of it to-day but not what they were then—not nearly so much. A hundred pounds does not seem much; but there are over 5,000 farmers who could operate under this clause, and we are opening 1,000 accounts each year; so that we see that there is a grand opportunity for the local manufacturer. On much of this wheat area the farmer will need, to put his land to the best possible use, to use £225 worth of agricultural machinery. It goes without saying that the £100 will not buy that quantity; but it must be evident that if portion of the machinery is made here, the whole of the machinery used will probably be made in this State, and we hope the encouragement given under this clause will enable this to be done. Another fact to be borne in mind is that during the past five years Australia's wheat crop generally has only increased by 10 per cent., whereas the increase for Western Australia alone has been 115 per cent., and we have 20,000,000 acres of land that will grow wheat, so we must realise the opportunity presented by this State to the manufacturer of machinery needed by the farmer. All the machinery needed by the farmer, with the exception perhaps of the reaper and binder, can be made in the State. The Eastern manufacturer at present can compete too favourably with the Western Australian manufacturer. He has his plant and buildings in the East, and all the things needed for turning out all the machinery sufficient for this State, and he will continue to manufacture it in the East so long as the farmer

of Western Australia is willing to pay the freight.

Mr. Heitmann: Why has he not manufactured here?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because my friend has endeavoured to kill enterprise on every opportunity. So long as the farmer is willing to pay the freight from the East the Eastern manufacturer will continue to send stuff over here. There are many reasons for making the machinery here. If we build up an army of manufacturers here they would all be taxpayers, and the increased revenue on them would mean something. A great many men will be required in this manufacture. If we are to be an Australian State of any consequence we must endeavour to foster local industries and make population possible. And there is always the question of what are we to do with our sons; they cannot learn trades because the industries are not here now. However, since the idea of advancing £100 was mentioned, there have been inquiries from Eastern manufacturers desiring to come over here. Of course we realise that we cannot make some of the parts needed in Western Australia to-day, so that power is taken by regulation to allow some small parts to be imported. For instance the knives on the chaff-cutters cannot be made here. We take power by regulation to import these small parts. It will be necessary to see that the machinery is up to standard. We all know that the plough-maker of the East is very expert, and we will expect the plough-maker of Western Australia to be equally expert. The trustees of the bank will personally inspect the specimen of machinery submitted for approval. If they consider that a plough, for instance, is a good one, capable of doing the work required of it, the maker of the plough will be registered as one of those who may supply machinery to the customers of the Agricultural Bank. Under this system of registration of works it will be possible to make a law to deal with transgressors. If a manufacturer does not supply machinery up to the standard his name can be removed from the list.

Mr. Swan: What is wrong with supplying it yourself?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be too dear. My friend might like to establish these works in the metropolitan area, but I am anxious that works should be established throughout the State. Farmers at Northam, York, Katanning, or Bridgetown, should not go to Perth to see their ploughs made, but would prefer to have them made in the districts close to their farms. It is certainly my opinion that the machinery should be made in the country. I do not think we should centralise the manufactures in one place, but turn them out at the larger centres in the country. I hope, too, that it will be arranged that the bank's approval notice will be equal to an order for payment when handed to the maker. That is to say, we will encourage farmers to apply for permission to buy machinery six months before they require it, and so place their orders that the workshops may be continuously occupied. This order will be equal to an order for a plough, and in that way manufacturers will be supplied from week to week with the money necessary for them to pay their men. Under this system a manufacturer will require less capital and, in consequence, he will be able to turn out the machinery more cheaply. Everything that can be done will be done to assist in the development of the industry in this direction. We wish to do everything possible to have the ploughs made here, and regulations will be framed to that end. It will be seen that the Bill provides for an increase in the fee to be paid to the trustees of the bank. The trustees are farmers living away from the city at present, and their fees are two guineas. We propose to increase the amount to three guineas, and make it impossible for them to earn more than 150 guineas, and their work will be added to by the proposed increase in the limit and making agricultural machinery in Western Australia, because they will have to concern themselves with regard to the work, particularly in its early stages. Clause 3 of the Bill provides for an increase in the capital of the bank from

one and a-half to two millions. That is necessary to enable the bank to carry on all the year. The other clauses have been sufficiently explained, particularly the one with regard to the manufacture of agricultural machinery. I think I may submit the Bill to the House with every confidence. I would like to repeat that our lands are equal to the lands of the Eastern States. We have, of course, some bad land, but we have a vast area which is very good, and a great quantity of first-class land. I say, without hesitation, that for the production of grain or fruit, and for sheep-farming and dairying, and intense cultivation, we have land in this State quite equal to the best land of the Eastern States. There was a time when it was said that we could not produce enough wheat and fruit for ourselves, but that day has passed, and the value of our land is now appreciated. I would like to impress upon hon. members that this money advanced by the bank is advanced under adequate supervision. The advances are made by a board of trustees who are all experienced and safe men. I think it is right that the gentlemen should understand that this is the opinion the Government hold of them. The Bill really means, after all, that we are letting many contracts for the development of our broad acres. It is said that we should let contracts for the clearing of wholesale tracts of land, but we do this. Each of our customers have their contract of clearing to carry on, and in doing this they are improving their own land and also the lands of the State. Although we may appear to be exceedingly liberal in this measure, hon. members will agree that under the system that has been set up, the money advanced is extended for the sole purpose of effecting improvements, and they will agree with me that we should be able to advance to the extent of £750 with safety. I may say that the limit was once £1,000, but it was reduced because in those days we were not as active as we are to-day. Now there is increased energy and activity, and we find that more than £500 is required, hence we are asking the House to increase the sum to

£750, knowing that we shall all share in the prosperity that must follow from the cultivation of our broad acres. I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Bath, debate adjourned.

BILL --- METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 9th September.

MR. DRAPER (West Perth): I understand that the Bill embodies, to a large extent, the provisions contained in the Act of 1904, and it is a little disappointing to find that the objectionable provisions of that Act have been continued in this Bill. When this Act was passed it was recognised by all parties that it had been so hurriedly rushed through the House that it was advisable that further discussion should take place thereon before it was proclaimed to be law, and an undertaking was subsequently given by the Government that they would not proclaim the Act until a further opportunity of discussion had been given. I am not going to blame the Government for proclaiming that Act, because, from the circumstances which arose, they were practically forced to introduce some Act, because another place chose to throw out the temporary Act which went through this House. Not only am I saying that the objectionable provisions are continued in the present Bill, but one cannot help thinking that the present Minister for Works forgot that he was acting in that capacity until he arrived at Clause 150 of the present Bill, which deals with the financial portion of it. Up to that point one would imagine that the sole object of the Bill was to protect the public funds, but it is only when we get to Clause 150 that we find there is no necessity for any protection of that kind. When the Act of 1904 came into force they took over all the liabilities of the metropolitan waterworks, which, of

course, included the debentures by which the capital for the waterworks had been provided. When this Bill becomes law all the liabilities of the present board are taken over, and the future board will then have the power to borrow upon its own security for the purpose of extensions, so that as soon as this Act comes into force, from a financial point of view the board will stand entirely upon its own merits, and the security for the moneys borrowed will be the debentures taken over and the debentures which it has the power to issue. Dealing with the constitution of the board I can see no reason, under the conditions I have mentioned, why there should be any Government nominees at all upon that board. If the ratepayers of the metropolitan area have to take over the burden of all the debentures which have been issued, and have to take over the burden of providing the necessary funds for the maintenance of the water supply and sewerage scheme, I can see no reason why, under those circumstances, the Government should wish in any way to interfere. It would be much better if the board to be constituted were a board entirely representative of the various districts which go to make up the metropolitan area. We find here, and quite properly I think, that the mayor of Perth and the mayor of Fremantle are ex-officio members of the board, and we also find that there is a member to be appointed from each of the districts. If it is recognised that the municipalities of Perth and Fremantle are important enough to have ex-officio members on that board, I would go further: I would say that in addition Perth should have another member on that board elected by the City Council. As regards the three members which I would urge should not be appointed, namely, the nominees of the Government, I think one at least of these could, with advantage, be given to the municipality of Perth. The Board as it is proposed to be constituted will certainly not be representative of the ratepayers, and as the ratepayers bear all the expense, then it cannot be regarded as a satisfactory arrange-

ment of the present difficulty. There is another important matter which this Bill disregards. We all know that municipalities have the control of the street traffic within their limits, and if an accident happens in any of the streets by reason of an obstruction to the traffic, then the municipality has to foot the bill for damages, and sometimes costs. Under these circumstances, I submit it is not advisable to give power to the board to open streets or to interfere with the streets without notice to the council. In Clause 47 notice is given as provided for, except in cases of emergency. I do not think there can be many cases where communication could not first be made to the town clerk of the district; but even supposing there were, there is this very objectionable provision, that the board itself is to be the judge of what is an emergency.

Mr. Collier: Supposing a pipe bursts on a Sunday.

Mr. DRAPER: If the board has to be the judge of what is an emergency, and to dispense with notice being given to the council, I venture to think that notice would very seldom be given to the council. At first it may be the practice to give notice to the council, but gradually that practice will disappear.

Mr. Collier: An occasion may arise to open a street in a hurry.

Mr. DRAPER: I admit that occasion may arise, but I object to the board being sole judge of the emergency.

Mr. Daglish: Make the board liable for accidents.

Mr. DRAPER: I would point out that the municipality is responsible for any accidents that may happen, and this Bill, if the board have the right to open streets without notice, ought to make the board liable for the consequences of any accident caused by their own action. Again, there is another matter that seems to me to have escaped the notice of the Minister, or he could hardly have been conversant with the working of municipalities, and it is this: he provides that upon application being made a council should provide the board with the necessary levels. We all know that in many instances, possibly

in Perth at the present time, the levels have not been fixed, and to insist that any municipality shall provide the board with fixed levels will mean that the councils will be put to considerable expense in fixing these levels.

Mr. Collier: It only means levels that are in existence; that evidently is the intention.

Mr. DRAPER: No doubt it may be the intention, but the Bill does not mention it. Clause 50 is, I think, very objectionable. It provides that ventilating shafts and pipes may be taken from drains and attached to any building. At first sight that may not seem very much, but if members will consider this they will see there is no restriction whatever as to the size of the shaft, it may be six inches or eight inches, and probably very unsightly, and apart from that the fact that a ventilating shaft from a drain is attached to a man's house undoubtedly will cause considerable damage to the value of that house. There is no necessity for a provision that this, at any rate, should be done without paying for compensation, or paying for damage that may result. As the Bill states, the board can go to any man's house and attach a ventilating pipe, of an unsightly description, carry it up the wall, and the owner can raise no objection. It must be obvious that the value of the property will be depreciated, and I think compensation should be paid. Again, in Clause 55, we find the old system of meter rents is about to be revived. This House has passed a resolution against imposing meter rents. Notwithstanding that we find the meter rent is again to be imposed, and in addition there is no provision made for testing a meter when it goes wrong. Then we come also to enforcing rates. I refer to Clause 62; it seems to me to be unduly severe. Not only does it provide that if a man does not pay his rates after notice, the board has power to cut off the water from his premises, but it also provides that the board shall have power to cut off water from any other property in which he is interested. The remedies of the board by distress and the ordinary remedies by law for recovering rates are ample. May be it is usual to put in

a power to cut off water for rates owing on certain premises, but there is no justification for cutting off water from other premises in respect of which water rates are not owing. Another important provision relates to the exemption, and we have to bear in mind that throughout the metropolitan area, possibly after this session, at the longest within a session or two, there will be no municipal subsidies whatever. We should bear in mind—

Mr. Bath: But does the Treasurer say that?

Mr. DRAPER: That the Government (the Crown in this Bill) is like an ordinary individual being supplied with water, and also has the necessary sanitary service provided for it. Under these circumstances it appears to me the usual provision that exempts the Crown lands from the ordinary City rates ought not to apply. There are other exemptions in the clause which seem to me to be objectionable, and these can be better dealt with in Committee, but I suggest that it is not reasonable or fair to expect a board to supply water to the Crown unless the board be paid for it. Clauses 111 to 113 deal with the rate, and bring into force a new kind of rate, which is certainly not required and is not recognised at all in the old Act of 1904, except insofar as it was included in the sewerage rate. Formerly it was deemed sufficient that there should be power to rate up to 1s. in the pound for water, and also power to rate up to one shilling in the pound for sewerage. In those times it was contemplated that storm water drainage would be included in the sewerage rate, and as a matter of fact it undoubtedly is. Although I am informed there is no necessity for the imposition of another rate, and although one shilling for sewerage would meet all the requirements of a storm water system and sewerage system, we find the Treasurer not content with raising the present rates imposed by the City council in respect of water and sanitary rates, which amount from 1s. 6d. to 2s., but he proposed to add another one shilling in the pound. The effect of the Bill will be to double the rates charged in Perth for water and sanitary purposes. There is

no justification for it. We all know it may be very pleasant to have a margin by which you can squeeze out the money from the ratepayers, but so long as the board have that power and they are not limited we can take it for granted they will not exhaust all the possible sources of economy before increasing the rates. There are many other objections to the Bill, which perhaps would be better raised on the Committee stage, but I can say this at present, that unless this Bill is substantially altered I hope it will not pass.

Mr. Collier: It cannot be altered until it has passed the second reading.

Mr. BROWN (Perth): It is certainly my intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill unless we get some more attention paid, or further information given by the Minister for Works. The member for West Perth has practically traversed the main objectionable features of the Bill. It now appears as if it was rating run mad. Under this particular Bill provision is made for an increase of rates to 3s. in the pound, one shilling for sewerage, one shilling for storm water, and one shilling for ordinary water rates. I admit that at the present time we are paying 2s. 11d. in the pound and with the water rates 3s. 11d. But with the additional taxes which are imposed by this Bill the rates will amount to 5s. 11d. in the pound. The sanitary rate will exist for the next 10 years, or, at least, portion of that rate. It will not be possible to sewer the city of Perth for some years to come, therefore the sanitary rate, to a certain extent, will always be with us. The Minister for Works knows very well that the burden of the property owner of the city of Perth is as much as the property owner can possibly stand at the present time. I am speaking here with authority, and I say that the values of property in the city of Perth have gone down one-third during the last 18 months or two years.

The Minister for Works: It is only proposed that they shall pay for the actual cost.

Mr. BROWN: We do not want to give power to the Government to have a rate of one shilling, when we know that six-

pence will meet the cost. Moreover, we know that if we give local authorities a maximum it is generally the maximum that is struck. I do not intend, if I get the support of members, to agree to a one shilling rate for storm water, because we know that the storm water drainage can be carried out for a less sum.

The Minister for Works: They cannot impose a shilling if it costs less.

Mr. BROWN: If it is not necessary, we should give the representation to the local bodies and take it away from the Government altogether. I have repeatedly expressed the opinion here that the local authorities of Perth and suburbs are quite prepared and able to take over, construct, and control such works as these themselves. The Minister for Works would not like an outsider to come in, build him a house according to a design contrary to his ideas, and compel him to pay the cost of the work. That is the position the Perth local bodies are placed in. They have to accept work designed by someone else, and pay for them without having anything to say with regard to their control. The sewerage works have been carried out in an extravagant manner, and the citizens of Perth and suburbs are left to pay the interest and sinking fund without having any voice as to the control. With regard to what has been said as to depreciation of property in the City, the Government are suffering the same as every ratepayer of Perth owing to the reduction of values. Recently a Government official came to me to know what I would do if a mortgagee did not pay the interest on his property. I said that if he would not pay we would foreclose, and the reply of the Government official was, "We are afraid to do that as we would not get our money back on the properties advanced upon." The Government, in being careful of the securities of property owners in Perth, will at the same time be looking after their own securities. There have been a number of cases within the last two months of people who had borrowed money to build their homes being unable to pay interest, etc., and so have lost their all. The high rates which are charged by the various bodies, together with interest, have

brought about this unfortunate state of affairs. These owners had improved their properties to the utmost, the same as the large owners have done, but they have been unable to meet the huge expenditure involved. With the imposition of these three extra taxes we have in Perth at the present time no fewer than nine direct taxes on property. Some years ago a certain portion of the storm water branch system was commenced by the City council with money supplied by the Government. It was always understood that this sum was a gift to the City just as other gifts were made at various times to the leading public bodies of the State. Will the Minister for Works now tell us whether this sum is to be debited against the big scheme or not? We have had repeated promises from nearly every Minister of the Crown that this sum would not be charged to the scheme. No intimation has been received from the Minister so far as to what proportion of the storm water drain is to be charged to the City. This matter came under my notice when mayor of Perth some years ago. The catchment area for the drainage extended beyond the City boundaries and up to Wanneroo and, in order to assist the Leederville council, the City council agreed to lower the drain and enable not only the storm waters but also the drainage from the lakes to go through the City. It would be very unfair that the whole cost of this huge storm water drain which passes through the City but is utilised for the benefit of a catchment area extending beyond the City should be a direct charge on Perth. Before the second reading of the Bill is carried I hope the Minister will give us some intimation as to what proportion of this large drain will be charged to the City. I regret exceedingly that a more competent body of engineers was not provided to go through what I will call the whitewashing inquiry. One of the members of the Sewerage Commission knew nothing whatever of sewerage, for he turned out to be a land agent, and after leaving the State abused the country for not having supplied him with certain information about land which he said he was desir-

ous of obtaining. Again, not one of the three Commissioners had any knowledge whatever of the septic system of treating sewage.

Mr. Collier: The member you refer to was a member of the Melbourne board for 16 years, and should know something about sewerage.

Mr. BROWN: Another matter I wish to deal with is that of the cost of connections. The property owners of the City will assuredly not be able to bear the additional burden of repaying the cost of connections in the short term of three years.

The Minister for Works: How long will it take?

Mr. BROWN: In Melbourne the period allowed was ten years.

The Minister for Works: The connections were much more expensive there than they are here.

Mr. BROWN: If the law is to be carried out, many of the property owners will be absolutely ruined. This does not only apply to the large property owners, but to the small ones as well. The majority of the places owned by the small holders are erected with borrowed money, and they will be unable to pay interest, or what is practically rent, on these buildings, in addition to the extra impositions provided for by this Bill. The country may be prosperous enough at the present time, but in Perth matters are at bedrock and as bad as they possibly can be; therefore I should like to see an amendment to this Bill whereby the owners of properties should be called upon to pay interest on the cost of connections at the rate of, say, five or six per cent., which would pay the Government well, and leave the payment of the principal over for five years, and then the repayment to be spread over another five years in half-yearly instalments. By the end of that term of ten years matters generally in the State will, I am sure, be much more prosperous and owners will be able to discharge their obligations. I agree with the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) in objecting entirely to the exemption clauses. For services rendered exemptions should

be done away with altogether. At the present time the City council for services they render to the Government, in connection with offices and other institutions in the City, receive an income of £2,200 a year; that will be interest on a capital of over £40,000, which practically represents one-third of the present scheme. Therefore where such services are rendered either for the Government or the Commonwealth, those in receipt of the benefits should pay something towards the upkeep of the works.

The Minister for Works: They will pay for the water they take.

Mr. BROWN: I am speaking particularly of the sewerage scheme. Members know well that in Roe-street, from Barrack-street right up to Leederville, the Government own practically all the land on one side, while on the other side of the street there is the James-street school. Sewers will be necessary all along that road, and the property will not be able to be rated. Again, in St. George's-terrace from Barrack-street to Hill-street, and on the opposite side from Barrack-street to Pier-street there will be no rating, and all the cost of this long stretch of work will have to be borne by the ratepayers of the City. I hope the Minister will give an explanation as to the huge sums paid in compensation for damage done by the sewerage works. Without rhyme or reason large sums have been given to certain private persons in the City in the shape of compensation. I believe that on one occasion an arbitration was held, and the Government were represented on that board. The Government representative agreed to the payment of over £6,000 to a certain corporation as compensation. The repairs were effected to the building which was damaged, and cost less than £3,000. It is high time a commission was held to inquire into the reason why that official agreed to pay £6,000 for a work which was afterwards carried out for £3,000. Who was the Government representative on the arbitration?

The Minister for Works: The Chief Architect, Mr. Beasley.

Mr. BROWN: Well, that officer should be called upon to give an explanation

why he agreed to vote £6,000 to the Colonial Finance Corporation, whereas the work was done for £3,000.

Mr. Walker: The building could not be restored to its original condition for that sum. Probably it was patched up.

Mr. BROWN: It was restored to its original condition. Seemingly Perth will be saddled with this extra £3,000, whereas the Government might have done the repairing work themselves and so saved the money. Without doubt the local authorities should have representation on the board. I agree entirely with the member for West Perth, that if the people of Perth and suburbs have to pay for this installation they should be the persons to control it. If this were done the Government would be relieved of a considerable amount of worry and work. Why should the Government wish to undertake to control work for which the local authorities are paying? Another matter which works considerable injustice on the local bodies is that they have to supply copies of the rate books at one penny per folio. Those who understand the cost of such work will know that this is a sweating rate, as threepence a folio is as low a price as the work can be done for properly. If any amendment is introduced to give the sole control of the scheme to the local authorities, and allow them to appoint what managers they like, I will heartily support it.

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): It must be very refreshing to hear the hon. member for Perth reminding the Treasurer of the loss made with regard to loans, and, I trust the Treasurer will take the hint and see that they are properly charged to the areas entitled to be charged. The Bill which has been placed before members is really for the express purpose of controlling the water and sewerage scheme in the various districts of the metropolitan area, and it has been brought forward at the present time owing to the failure of certain Bills previously passed by this House to go through another place. I do not think there is any chance whatever of another place agreeing to an important Bill, if this House sends it along at a late period of the ses-

sion. I think the delay in sending the last measure to another place must be charged to the Government. Not only that, but I think we have a certain amount of justice when we complain about the action of the Government in the present instance with regard to the proclamation of the Water and Sewerage Act before a discussion had taken place in this House. Last year the Government stated definitely that the Act would not be proclaimed pending a further discussion by hon. members, so that no excuse can be made in such circumstances for Bills which are brought forward, and are not agreed to. One of the greatest objections I have to the Bill is with regard to control. I do not intend to condemn the action of the Government with regard to the control of the works. Reading carefully the report of the Commission which was appointed to inquire into these works, it is found that the Commission arrived at the conclusion that some errors had been made, but there is a possibility of such errors occurring even if a board had control of the construction of the works. I certainly think that the report is drawn up in such a manner that a certain amount of praise can be attributed to the officers of the department for the manner in which the works have been constructed. We find, though many complaints have been made, regarding the carrying out of the works in the metropolitan area, that previously to the Commission sitting the members advertised for persons to come forward and give evidence if they desired to do so regarding the construction of the works, but with the exception of one or two none came forward. Therefore, the Commissioners had to rely entirely on the statements made in the House previously, and on the cross-examination of the officers who carried out the various works. After due inspection the Commissioners came to the conclusion that the works were well constructed. To quote their own words, "generally speaking, we are of the opinion that the works have been well constructed and supervised, and that the defects which have arisen are insignificant in regard to the magnitude of the work that has been carried out. The

officers, one and all, seem to have the success of the scheme at heart, and have given us every assistance. The difference of opinion between officers as disclosed in the evidence are such as might at any time arise between engineers who are honestly trying to do their best." Realising that this is so, I come to the conclusion that the officers under the control of the Government are carrying out their work in a fairly efficient manner, and for that reason I do not see any necessity for passing the control of these works to a board. We have realised for some time past, for what reason I do not know, that the Government of the day are afraid that the Federal Government intend, if possible, to stop them from borrowing, or at any rate limiting their borrowing powers. We find almost everything as far as the Government is concerned is being passed out of the control of Parliament, and being placed in the hands of members of various boards who are thus given the opportunity of borrowing. If the Federal Government could come down later on and refuse the State Government the right to borrow without the consent of the Federal Parliament, then that is the only reason that I can see to justify the Government in handing over the control of such works as these to boards. We find that the Metropolitan sewerage works in Sydney are controlled by a board almost similar to the board it is intended to appoint in this State, and we also find that according to the report of the engineer who investigated the position in this State in 1905 that dual control which exists in connection with the metropolitan board of Sydney together with the various defects which have taken place in regard to that system is likely to be carried out so far as Western Australia is concerned. I might read a little of this for the information of hon. members, I will not read it all, it is too long. In connection with the board in Sydney we find the chairman stating—

"As the permanent works in connection with the water supply and sewerage of Sydney had been commenced before the board was constituted the diffi-

culties of dual control were of course not felt until the reticulation and minor works were proceeded with. The Minister being the 'constructing authority' under the Acts the State accordingly had to provide and maintain a separate staff (the cost of which has also to be borne by the ratepayers) who are occasionally in conflict with the board's staff as to requirements, design of works, and method of construction. These disagreements and difficulties were very considerable and were calculated to increase the cost of works."

He further went on to say—

"The board's staff also suffers a disadvantage by the operation of this system of carrying out the works, in being deprived of that intimate knowledge of all the details of construction which is so essential for subsequent efficient maintenance. It is well known that while works are in progress deviations and alterations from the plans and specifications occasionally become necessary, difficulties arise frequently and are overcome, and the works are ultimately finished and buried out of sight. Unless very complete records are kept and handed over to the board, their staff will be in ignorance of all these matters, whereas if they had themselves carried out the works they would have had full knowledge of everything, and especially where defects have occurred or weak places exist, they would be in a better position to deal with them."

I maintain that in the system in vogue here, that is, the control by the Minister with a staff of officers carrying out the various works required in connection with the system of drainage and sewerage, the same defect will occur if a board is appointed just as it has been found in Sydney to be detrimental to the scheme, and consequently it will add considerably to the cost of working. The Government have been carrying out the works very efficiently according to the report of the Commission, although some errors have occurred, but we are all liable to errors. If the Commission had failed to notice an error in

connection with the construction of the works, I would have been inclined to think that the members of it had not looked into the matter thoroughly. It is impossible in connection with the construction of works of such magnitude to prevent errors from being made; they are bound to exist, but there has been no error of sufficient importance to justify the Government in passing over the control of the works from those at present in charge of them to a nominative and elective board. In Melbourne the Minister stated there was a board of works, a very large board indeed. This board has control of the road and street traffic; that perhaps might get over a good deal of the difficulty referred to by the member for West Perth. He also pointed out that the Melbourne board would be too cumbersome if applied to works of a similar magnitude such as those in Western Australia. There is one ideal system, however, and that is the South Australian system, and for the information of members I will read them some remarks made by the engineer of the Melbourne board with regard to this system. He stated—

“Coming to the South Australian system we have an organisation controlling works which are comparable in extent with our own works. Our experience has been to some extent similar to that of South Australia in that it has been found desirable to supersede a board after several years of trial. There already exists a body in the public works department established and maintained primarily for the purpose of carrying out the various public works of the State, and it would appear to be an extravagant proposal to create another construction department simply for the purpose of completing the proposed water supply and sewerage works of the State. Further, in respect to the sewerage proposals, it should be remembered that the industries which play such an important part in the supply of material for a sewerage scheme, namely, those of pipe-making, cement manufacture, sanitary fittings, and manufacture, etc., are not yet established in the State, but it is pos-

sible that such may be established by a sympathetic policy on the part of the Government (either departmentally as in the case of the Fremantle pipe-making plant, or privately on the lines adopted regarding the pipe contract recently let to Messrs. Hoskins and Clemenger) and such policy can only be successfully pursued by the Government controlling the construction work.”

The Government have so far had complete control of this work; they have seen that the pipes were manufactured in the State, and there is no doubt, to my mind, that if the work had been handed over to a board, the manufacture of pipes and other requirements in connection with the scheme would have been carried on outside the State. Tenders would have been called for their manufacture outside the State and Western Australia would have been the loser. However, the works have been controlled by the officers of the Government, and so far as that control is concerned everything has been satisfactory.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. ANGWIN: Before tea I was referring to the system, which prevails in South Australia, of management of the Water and Sewerage Department. I note that the department there is termed the hydraulic department; and as a result of reading through the report which I hold in my hand, I wish to point out that the works under the local control are considerably smaller than those of either Melbourne or Sydney, and that for a work of this magnitude the system is more useful and economic than the cumbersome arrangements existing in either of the two larger States. The writer of the report states—

“I was unable to discover any party antagonistic to the existing system, in fact, there seems to be a general feeling of pride regarding the excellence of the present arrangements. In conversation I had with the Commissioner of Public Works—”

The Premier: Whose report is that?

Mr. ANGWIN: An engineer's report of 1904 on the different systems in vogue in various States of Australia in regard to water and sewerage schemes. This report was written before the commencement of the system in this State by Mr. Oldham. The writer continues—

“From conversations I had with the Commissioner for Public Works, and the secretary to the Commissioner, I was led to understand that the South Australian Government had not had a happy experience with boards. Several attempts were made to hand over some of the smaller works in South Australia to board control, but the results were in each case disastrous, and the department resumed maintenance operations. The rates levied by the department, and the cost of administration, compare most favourably with those of the systems in the other States, notwithstanding the insignificance as regards extent and also the excellence as regards provision of the South Australian works.”

Now, seeing that the system of Ministerial control is giving such satisfaction in South Australia, on a scheme which is somewhat similar in size to that which we shall have in Western Australia, it confirms me in the opinion that the provision made in the Bill for the appointment of a board is one that can very well be done away with altogether. If a board does take control that board will have its chairman, at a salary not to exceed £1,000 per annum. Then there are to be ten members of the board, each receiving £100 per annum, which makes another £1,000. Then there are the secretary and other executive officers: all of whom, we might say, are already in existence in the Public Works Department, where they have the men and the plant and everything in order for carrying out the maintenance of the various branches of the work and the control of the whole system. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, said it was a matter of impossibility for any Minister to control the works of this State together with the water and sewerage system; but we want to bear in mind that even if it became necessary that another Minister should be appointed

for the express purpose of controlling the water and sewerage, the adoption of such a course would be cheaper than the appointment of a board. Then we must not forget that it is the people of the State as a whole who are really responsible for the carrying out of this scheme. They are finding the money for the construction of the scheme, and after they have found this money, by the substitution of a board the right of control and the management of this scheme is to be taken entirely out of the hands of the people. For that reason I trust the Minister will reconsider his decision, and support the amendment on the Notice Paper for the placing of the control in the hands of the Minister. We find that after the various systems were dealt with by the writer of this report, a comparison is made in regard to this State and the other States of Australia. The report states:—

“First comes, I think, the object lesson in the experience of the Sydney board in the matter of dual control. The officers of the board complain and, I think, rightly, that they have no opportunity of using their experience (gained in many cases by a long term of service on hydraulic work) in the design and construction of the works they are called upon from time to time to maintain and also to provide interest and sinking fund upon, and that as they have not been consulted in the design they are, therefore, not responsible for any inefficiency that may result. This appears to me to be a very undesirable state of affairs, seeing that real efficiency can only be expected when the position is such that the controlling officers can be weighted with the full responsibility. This seems, therefore, to be a decided flaw in the Sydney system which it would be well to avoid, either by adopting a totally different method of administration or by delaying the creation of a board until the main works are completed, and thereafter handing over with the maintenance the minor construction work.”

The writer then went on to refer to the Melbourne board and its methods, and pointed out that these would be very cum-

bersome and possibly expensive if applied to this State. Coming to the South Australian system the writer states:—

"We have here an organisation controlling works which are comparable in extent with our own works. Our experience has been to some extent similar to that of South Australia in that it has been found desirable to supersede a board after several years' trial. There already exists a body in the Public Works Department established and maintained primarily for the purpose of carrying out the various public works of the State, and it would appear to be an extravagant proposal to create another construction department simply for the purpose of completing the proposed water supply and sewerage works of the State. Further, in respect to the sewerage proposals, it should be remembered that the industries which play such an important part in the supply of material for a sewerage scheme, namely, those of pipe making, cement manufacture, sanitary fittings manufacture, etcetera, are not yet established in the State, but it is possible that such may be established by a sympathetic policy on the part of the Government (either departmentally as in the case of the Fremantle pipe-making plant, or privately on the lines adopted regarding the pipe contract recently let to Messrs. Hoskins and Clemenger), and such policy can only be successfully pursued by the Government controlling the construction work. This appears to be a very strong point in favour of Government construction, seeing the direct and indirect gain to the State which would be likely to accrue by the establishing of any or all of these industries in place of the importation of all materials from outside the borders of the State. The construction could be dealt with in the same manner as the major works are dealt with in South Australia, i.e., carried out by the Public Works Department under the Engineer-in-Chief. With regard to control and maintenance, there appears to be no reason why a system should

not be adopted here similar to that obtaining in South Australia, but modified so far as to fit in with the already established arrangement of the Public Works Department. In this way the fullest possible use of the existing public works organisation could be secured."

Now, that is portion of the report of an officer who investigated the various schemes existing in Australia.

Mr. Walker: Was he an officer of the State?

Mr. ANGWIN: Yes.

Mr. Walker: To whom did he make the report?

Mr. ANGWIN: This is a report to the Engineer-in-Chief, a copy of which I have had for some years. It was written before the commencement of our water and sewerage works, and I certainly think if that report were adopted by the Government, it would be a great saving to the local authorities and to the people in general throughout the metropolitan area. We find that if the board be appointed, the selection of persons for membership of that board is to a very large extent limited. Any person elected to the board—except those nominated by the Government—must in the first place be a member of some local governing body. Now, if anything should arise necessitating the resignation of that member from the local governing body, he must also resign his seat on the board.

Mr. Daglish: He ceases to be a member without resigning.

Mr. ANGWIN: That is so. So it will be seen that the choice is limited, to a very large extent. There should be, in all probability there are, some very good men outside the local governing bodies whose qualifications would, perhaps, commend themselves to the ratepayers if the choice were left in the hands of those finding the money for the construction of these works. While I think there are some very good men in the various councils, at the same time I cannot but admit there are equally as good outside. The only difference is that a large majority of those outside municipal and other local governing bodies stay outside because there is no pay attached to the

positions; and it will be found that when a board such as this is to be appointed, there are a large number of people who will be anxious to obtain seats on it, and who, I have no doubt, would give very good service if elected. I certainly think the choice should be wider than the Bill provides for. Any person who is resident in the area proclaimed in any given district should have the right to nominate as a member of the board if the people are inclined to elect him; but instead of that being allowed, the Minister has even confined the electors to a very narrow portion of the community. In the first place municipal councillors are elected on a property vote—on a vote which exists, I think I am safe in saying, in no other part of the world except in Australia, that is the plural vote. The resident has not necessarily a voice in the election of members of municipal councils or roads boards. He must first have a certain amount of property before he can vote. Then when he has chosen his representatives to the municipal council the Minister says that those representatives are the only people suitable to choose the board proposed under this Bill. I maintain that everyone resident in the area is directly or indirectly a ratepayer. Further, I hope that Parliament will retain in its own hands the right to control the expenditure of public moneys in an efficient manner, as the Royal Commission says has been done. In fact I hope that Parliament will, through its Ministers, be able to control the works in a better manner than they would be controlled under any local board. It was found necessary in 1904 that a previous board should be superseded, and it was found necessary to pass a special Bill to do it; but in the Bill before us now I see no power by which the Minister can supersede the board now proposed when it is once established; and seeing that the country is responsible for the money, it is necessary to have this power of superseding. The Minister should protect the State; and if the work under the board is not managed in a proper manner, as was the case with the previous board, the Minister should be

able to supersede the board without having to bring in a special Bill for the purpose. I notice that the Minister retains in the Bill the right to charge rent for meters. I hope Parliament will not permit this. Some time ago members of the House, by a large majority, decided that meter rents should not be charged. I trust the House will again see that this system, which is put in the Bill contrary to the decision of Parliament, is not continued.

Mr. Scaddan: Unless they make it general.

Mr. ANGWIN: I agree that the system adopted in some instances of not charging meter rents does not apply everywhere, so that the Minister has not carried out the intention of Parliament in that direction.

Mr. Scaddan: It was not the intention, it was an instruction of Parliament.

Mr. ANGWIN: The Minister laid stress in regard to the percentage to be charged on any occupier or owner where works are to be constructed under the Bill, and the Minister pointed out that it was only a fair thing, where premises were let, and where the owner was put to a certain amount of expense, that the occupier should pay to the owner a percentage on the outlay. The Minister considered that eight per cent. was a fair charge on the occupier; but at the same time the Bill provides that five per cent. shall be paid by the owner for moneys advanced to the owner in the nature of carrying out work for the owner, while another clause provides that there shall be a rebate in regard to sanitary fees. No doubt there are many buildings where the sanitary rate now paid is far higher than what the sewerage rate will be when the sewerage works are completed, so that the owner of the property let on lease, with all rates and taxes to be paid by the owner, will be allowed to charge eight per cent. on an outlay that is for the improvement of his property, while the amount he will pay in rates will be less than the existing sanitary rate.

Mr. George: If he can get the eight per cent.

Mr. ANGWIN: If a person has taken the property under lease with the stipulation that the owner is to pay all rates and taxes, then the Bill gives the owner the power to charge eight per cent., and he will get it under the Bill. The Bill gives the owner the right to claim the eight per cent.

Mr. George: He may have the right, but he will never get the money.

Mr. ANGWIN: The owner will get the money under the lease. It is a matter of impossibility to lose the tenant if the tenant holds a lease. If the tenant is worth anything, if he does clear out there is no doubt under the legal authority given in the Bill he can be brought up to the scratch. I agree with the remarks of the member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) in regard to the exemptions. I do not think we should have these exemptions in the manner provided in the Bill. I may take as an example the Fremantle harbour works, which are to be exempt just as public buildings in Perth are. At Fremantle there are wharves and tenements belonging to the Harbour Trust running for about a mile and a-half, and the cost of providing sewerage for the harbour works will be heavy. I do not think they should be exempt any more than private institutions. I do not think that everything in this case should be borne by the local authorities. I trust the Minister, when replying, will refer to the minimum rate clause, on which I am not very clear. By this clause the board has power to levy a minimum rate not exceeding £1. Under some of our Water Supply Acts, more particularly the Fremantle Act, there is a minimum rate of 5s. per annum. Under this Bill there are three rates, the water rate, the sewerage rate and the storm water or drainage rate. With each rate at one shilling it equals 3s. in the pound that the board has power to raise; but if the board has also power to charge a minimum rate not exceeding £1 per annum, it is clear that on an unoccupied block of land in some suburb to which the scheme applies, with, say, only 40 feet of frontage, the board will have the power to rate up to £3 per annum. I would like the Minis-

ter to explain whether it means that it is not to exceed £1 for the whole three rates. The member for West Perth also referred to the system provided in the Bill for levying distress for rates. Some years ago under the old Municipalities Act there was a great deal of difficulty in regard to the recovery of rates, and many occupiers of premises had distress served on them, because, in the first instance, the local authority had to levy on the occupier. Now this Bill also provides that in the first instance the occupier must be levied on in regard to rates, and I would like the Minister to look into that and see if the same thing applies; that is that before the owner can be sued for rates on any property it will be first necessary to levy distress on the occupier. If that be the case then I maintain it will be necessary to have some alteration. A good deal has been said as to the rates proposed to be levied under the Bill; but while the Bill provides that any rate can be struck to a certain amount there is no compulsion that such a rate must be struck. I think that the various local authorities are, to a great extent, retarded in their work, because they have not sufficient power to provide the rates with which to carry on their work. By putting it in the Bill that a shilling rate may be struck, it does not say that it shall be compulsory to strike that rate. No doubt whether these works are controlled by a board or by the Government each party will strike the lowest rate possible necessary to carry on the work in a proper manner. It is not my intention to take up more time in dealing with the Bill, but I certainly think provision should be made whereby the whole of the accounts should be audited by the Government officers, and not by private auditors, seeing that the Government are virtually responsible for all moneys expended under this measure. I trust that the principle I advocate will be adopted, that is, that in the interests of the work itself and in the interests of the State the whole of the work should be kept in the hands of a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I intend to offer but few observations in regard

to the principle of this measure, leaving to be settled in Committee the many subordinate details. The original Bill of 1904 provided for the appointment of a new board to be nominated by the Government, but this Bill represents an important departure from that principle of a nominee board. There are two methods either of which may be adopted of controlling a large undertaking like our water works and sewerage system: either by the election of a board by the ratepayers, or by control, as at present, by a Government department. In my opinion a great deal can be said for both methods, either departmental administration, or control by an elective board; but the present Bill does not adopt either system, but provides a shandygaff which really contains all the vices of the two systems and has none of the virtues of either. The board proposed so far as it is elected is not elected by the ratepayers. It is not to be a true elective board at all. It is to be a board nominated, not it is true by the Government, but by persons of a less representative character than His Majesty's Ministers. It is to be a board nominated, not by a responsible body of Ministers, but by a number of municipal councillors; that is, so far as the elective portion of it is concerned. Another portion of it is to be nominated by the Government; and the third section of it is to consist of two gentlemen who are to hold office for the sole reason that they have been elected to some other municipal position. I object in the first instance to the nominee board system embodied in this Bill, that is, in respect to the three representatives the Government shall appoint; also to the ex officio members of the board being there because they happen for the time being only to be the mayor of Perth and Fremantle respectively. I desire, further, to object to that power of selection for the balance of the board being taken from the ratepayers and handed over to those who happen for the time being to be councillors.

Mr. Bath: It is an all round objection.

Mr. DAGLISH: Yes, an all round objection to the constitution of the board

as proposed in the Bill. The very strange reply, when I urged by an interjection that the board should be made elective by the ratepayers, given by the Minister, was that it would be undesirable that those who were taxed by the board should elect them. So far as my reading goes, it has always been an axiom in regard to political control that representation should accompany taxation. The Minister, in regard to this particular measure, tells us that a man who is taxed is the only individual who should have no right of representation on this board.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. DAGLISH: That is practically the effect of the Minister's reply. To quote his words as nearly as I can remember. I interjected, "Why not have the taxpayers elect them directly." To that he replied, "Because of the expense, and because it would be a cumbersome system." I said, "The other system is a failure in Melbourne," and he replied, "The reason is that board is a small Parliament;" and he added, "I think it would be unwise to have members of boards of this description coming into direct contact with the ratepayers who elected them."

The Minister for Works: Quote the whole of my remarks.

Mr. DAGLISH: I cannot waste time to read over again a speech which was better delivered by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You only select those passages which suit your purpose.

Mr. DAGLISH: I am anxious to suit the Minister's purpose. What he said was, "It must be remembered that they would be carrying out their functions in controlling works and imposing certain charges upon the very men by whom they were elected." That was the gravamen of his objection to the proposal for an elective board. Strangely enough a little later the Minister pleaded that those members of the board selected by councils would be representative of the ratepayers. I plead for direct representation of the ratepayers, if there be any representation at all. My reply to the Minister's statements that such a system would be cumbersome and costly is that the Minis-

ter has evidently given no consideration to the matter or he would know that where there is a combined municipal district, each municipality having its own ratepayers roll, there will be no expense except the mere cost of printing ballot papers, in conducting an election on the day the municipal election is held.

Mr. McDowall: The election could be the same as for auditors.

Mr. DAGLISH: The same returning officers would act for each district, and the whole expense would be to print the ballot papers in order to carry out the election on rolls already in existence, and available for that purpose. I do not know whether the Minister has any further objection than cumbersomeness and costliness, and that the people taxed should not be the people to have the right to elect representatives. The ratepayers of the metropolitan district will not thank the Government or this House if this indirect form of representation is given. I have had personal experience as a ratepayer in the metropolitan district of Victoria in regard to the constitution of the Metropolitan Board, and up to the time I left Victoria there was a continual outcry of ratepayers in all the districts against the system of appointment of members of different municipal councils, and there was a request at every parliamentary election and a direct advocacy at every municipal election that the Government should amend the Act so that the board might directly represent the ratepayers.

The Minister for Works: The system in Victoria still exists.

Mr. DAGLISH: Yes, like many other evils. The mere existence of any particular body does not indicate perfection on the part of that body. I may remind the Minister that we had a water-works board in Western Australia that existed for a great many years, until I came into office and had an opportunity of introducing a bill to abolish it. Yet in spite of the fact that the board existed for a number of years, during all the time I was in Western Australia until it was abolished the people of the Metropolitan district here complained bit-

terly of the way in which it carried on its work. Yet, perhaps, if a member of some Victorian or South Australian Parliament quoted that board as unsatisfactory he might be told by the Minister for Works there that the board existed, and therefore the inference was that it was carrying out its functions satisfactorily. Sometimes the existence of such bodies may represent the apathy or indifference of Ministers and legislators, and nothing more than that. This may be the case in regard to that particular board in Victoria. At all events I can say after close observation of its workings during some years after it was established, and up to the time I left the State

The Minister for Works: How long ago was that?

Mr. DAGLISH: A fair time.

The Minister for Works: 15 years!

Mr. DAGLISH: I will tell the Minister if he desires when I have time to look it up. This indirect control, besides being unsatisfactory, has nothing whatever in its favour. I think I have disposed of the Minister's argument as to cumbersomeness and expensiveness in election. If he wants a reply to the objection that the ratepayers should not elect the board because of the fact that the board will have the right to tax ratepayers, I reply that he should at once abolish all municipal councils and roads boards.

Mr. Collier: And Parliament itself.

Mr. DAGLISH: I would not like to suggest the abolition of Parliament; but while Parliament has certain duties of legislation, these local governing bodies have practically no functions except those of taxation and administration, and are exactly on a par with this particular board. If this system of direct election by ratepayers works well with regard to municipal councils, and none now would argue in favour of the establishment of nominated local governing bodies, it should apply also to this particular body. If this system of establishing an elective board were adopted, the Government might go further and give to that elective body, directly responsible to the ratepayers, the power which the local governing bodies possess of borrowing money, and transfer the capital cost of

the works already constructed, and the duty of constructing new works to the board, thereby relieving our State indebtedness to some extent by the transfer. It would be at the same time a very proper transfer, for these works have been constructed solely for the benefit of the metropolitan area, and it is just as right that the metropolitan area should take over the debt incurred in the construction of their works as it is for the City to carry a debt incurred for the purpose of municipal local improvement. This would be a very proper procedure on the part of the Minister. There is another point and that is one briefly referred to by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) with regard to the fact that, apart altogether from the constituents who should elect these so-called elective members of the board, the men from whom they can be elected comprise a very small number. Only a handful of municipal councillors would be able to be elected to positions on the board. Surely it is desirable that ratepayers should have an opportunity to appoint whom they please and should have the area from which the appointments can be drawn made as wide, instead of as restricted, as possible. Then if there be any value in the work to be done some length of tenure is desirable in regard to the persons appointed or elected. As the member for East Fremantle said, a man who ceases to be a councillor, although he had been elected to the board for three years, will have to retire from office. Supposing a man is elected to the board in September, and is defeated two months later at the municipal elections, he has to resign from the board. The councillor may be compelled to resign from a municipal council for some cause that might perhaps interfere with his performance of municipal work but not with his performance of the work on this board. The mere fact of resigning from the council necessitates the forfeiture of his seat on the board, probably after he has acquired some little knowledge of the work. The mayors of Perth and Fremantle, who are to be members of the board because they are the mayors, are elected merely for one year, and every

year there may be, in consequence, a change of at least two members of the board. The work of the board will be so important that it is undesirable to have any ex officio positions. It is extremely undesirable that any member shall be liable to be retired annually and so soon as he has obtained some degree of knowledge of the work to be carried out. There may be occasions when the personality of either one or other of the mayors will be of a character which will render him not altogether the fittest person to hold a seat on the board, although he may be the fittest person to occupy the mayoral chair. Every member should be appointed for a certain length of time, and during that time should be allowed an opportunity to perform the functions of his position. Does a man cease to hold qualifications for membership of the board because he is no longer a municipal councillor? Is he less useful because he is forced for some reason altogether foreign to anything in this Bill to resign from the municipal council? It is an absolute absurdity to introduce these restrictions in regard first of all to the membership, the persons from whom the members shall be selected, and then as to the condition under which members shall be needed to relinquish office. Then again the board is too large. The Bill of 1904 provided for a board of three nominated members. Now the number has grown to ten. Probably if we take a medium course seven would be the most suitable number to be elected. It it were not desired to provide for three Government appointments seven would be recognised by the Government as an ample number; but I think the Government might well see the wisdom of not unduly swelling the board. If we abolish the three proposed nominated members and the two ex officio members we could reduce the number to five. But I think five would be rather small if we are to get a thoroughly representative body. We might therefore provide straight out for seven members to be elected by the ratepayers of the different municipalities who would come under the operation of the Bill.

Coming away from the constitution of the board and the tenure of office of its different members, I desire to point out that we have heard nothing from the Minister in regard to the qualification of the proposed chairman. Is the chairman to be a professional man; is he to be an engineer? On this point I contend the House is entitled to information. I am not referring to a political engineer like my friend opposite, the member for Cue, but I am referring to a civil engineer. My friend even if he were qualified to be an engineer could never be civil, but I think the House is entitled to know whether a professional man is to be chairman or not, and it is one of the most important points that the House should consider, and a matter that should be considered, when the Bill is in Committee. For my own part I believe we do not as a rule get as good administration from professional men as we do from those who might be described as practical men. I recognise, too, this fact, that if there be a professional man as chairman of the board—that is what is provided with regard to the Goldfields Water Supply board—then if there be a conflict between his opinion as an engineer and the opinion of the administrative officer—the engineer in charge of the works—it will be likely that the board will be overawed by the chairman's opinion. He would by virtue of his position carry greater weight than his professional qualifications might entitle him to. If, on the other hand, the resident engineer and he agree, then again there is absolute danger. If they are both wrong there is a certainty that this wrong will be endorsed by the board because of the unanimity of the chairman with the consulting engineer or administrative officer. I think for these reasons it is better there should be a non-professional man in the position of chairman, and if that be the case it seems that the salary of £1,000 per annum is unduly high. It would be absurd for us to pay a higher salary than most paid in the public service at the present time to the gentleman who fills the position of chairman of the Metropolitan Waterworks Board. His functions would be

not nearly so important as the functions of a public service officer who controlled a larger department at a lower remuneration. In this connection I think that perhaps the Minister has been unduly liberal with regard to the fees to be paid. I do not think the work will be sufficient to warrant the annual remuneration of £100. Probably the meetings will not exceed one per week, and if they do amount to one per week they are not likely to take up more than an hour in all probability at each sitting. For this the fee of two guineas is somewhat large, and if the salaries and the fees be too large, it only places a further burden on the ratepayers of the metropolis. Coming to the powers of the board, they seem indefinite, except on one particular point. With regard to the officers of the board, I think that those persons who are transferred from the Public Works Department to the service of the board should take with them any rights and privileges that already may have accrued to them. If we are to retain the system of control of the public service by a Commissioner there is no reason why these gentlemen should be removed from the public service. They should, I think, be kept under the same control, enjoy the same privileges and rights, and work under exactly the same conditions as any other public servants.

Mr. Angwin: The board would be given control over them.

Mr. DAGLISH: The board would then exercise the same control as the different heads of the departments do at the present time, but while complete control is given to the board over the public servants employed in the offices of that board, its powers are ended when that has been provided. The board has power to administer and it is supposed under this Bill to get certain powers of construction. But the Minister also can construct works, and here is another of the serious anomalies that the Bill contains. The Minister, immediately he has constituted the board, can carry on works in connection with water supply and sewerage, and the board at the same time has definite powers, that at first look

conclusive, under this Bill to construct works, but subsequently we find that there are such limitations that all powers of construction are taken away from them, and I do not know to what extent their powers of maintenance are not affected by some of these limitations. For instance, in Clause 39 we find that "Subject to the provision of this Act the board shall have power to maintain, alter and repair, and with the approval of the Governor to construct and extend works, and for such purposes may exercise in addition to the powers conferred by this Act, the powers of a local authority under the Public Works Act, 1902." At the same time, "The Minister may before or after the constitution of the board exercise all or any of the powers conferred by this Act on the board in and for the construction of works, and for such purposes may exercise, in addition to such powers, the powers of a local authority under the Public Works Act, 1902." That is, the Minister may alter, maintain and repair as well as construct.

Mr. Collier: He may do anything at all; that is dual control.

Mr. DAGLISH: According to the temperament of the Minister, if he be an active and energetic Minister, or a busy-body in that office, we do not know how far his energies would carry him, or in what direction, or he might be a Minister who suffered from the tired feeling, which, I believe sometimes affects Ministers. But the powers as given to the board are very doubtful, while the powers given to the Minister are undoubted. We find in Clause 37 that, "Before authorising any expenditure in the construction of such works, the Minister shall cause the board to be advised of his intention, and of the estimated cost of the works, and shall give the board such other information and particulars as he may deem necessary. The board upon receipt of such notice shall report upon the matter and make such recommendations to the Minister as the circumstances may require. The Minister shall, after consideration of such recommendations, decide thereon, and his decision shall be final." Pre-

sumably, there are to be two advisory bodies of engineers dealing with the one subject. The board is to employ certain engineers and a certain staff to advise and carry on works, and the Minister will have his own engineers to advise and carry out works. When the Minister's staff recommend certain works to be done, the Minister notifies the board that he proposes to do these works. The board then makes a recommendation; in other words, it says, "Either do or do not do them." The Minister considers this recommendation, but his decision is final. Therefore, the board is to be merely a plaything, in that respect, of the Minister. If he wants to carry out a work, he tells the board, and the board says, "Do it or do not do it," and the Minister then says, "I will," or "I will not," just as he pleases, but he is to have his own staff to recommend this work, and there are to be officers engaged in precisely the same work under the board's control. Coming later we find an elaborate provision in regard to the methods the board must adopt if it wants to carry out a public work. Clause 40 states—

"The board shall, before undertaking the construction of such works, except such reticulation works that the Governor may exempt from the operation of this section and the next four following sections:—(a.) Cause to be prepared plans, sections, specifications, and an estimate of the cost of the proposed works, together with a statement showing the net earnings estimated to be derived from them, and a statement showing the value of the rateable property to be benefited by them, and cause the same, or certified copies thereof, to be deposited in the office of the Minister, and also in the office of the Board; and (b.) Cause an advertisement to be published in the *Government Gazette*, and in one or more newspapers generally circulating in the area (newspapers by the way usually come in) specifying:—A description of the proposed works. . . ."

Then it is provided that the plans, sections, specifications, and estimates so deposited shall be open to inspection by any person interested at all reasonable

times, on payment of the prescribed fee. The ratepayer by the way is to have the right to look at these plans if he pays, and presumably the board will determine the prescribed fee, "on the deposit of the plans, sections, specifications and estimates, in the office of the Minister, the Minister may cause them to be examined and reported on by an engineer." Now it is very probable that an engineer may be chairman of the board and an engineer may be in charge of the works generally. One of these officers will prepare plans for the board and another will adjudicate on them; and the third engineer may be called on by the Minister to report on the plans that have been submitted by the board. After this elaborate course has been adopted it is provided that—

"Any local authority or persons interested may object in writing to the construction of the proposed works. Every such objection shall be lodged with the Minister within one month from the date of the publication of the advertisement. If at the expiration of one month after such publication the Minister is satisfied—that the provisions of this Act have been complied with; that the revenue estimated to be derived from the proposed works is sufficient to justify the undertaking; that the works if carried out in the manner designed will be for the public benefit; and that the objections, if any, lodged are not sufficient to require the approval of the Governor to be withheld from the proposed scheme, he shall submit the plans, sections, and estimates to the Governor for approval."

Mr. Angwin: They are virtually taking the responsibility.

Mr. DAGLISH: The hon. member is wrong, if that be his interpretation. Mine is that there will be no one responsible; that the board will not be responsible because it is to go to the Minister and the Minister will not be responsible because he has the recommendation on the board. In any case, it is only this House that will have an opportunity of casting the responsibility on the Minister, and the ratepayers will have no chance of bringing responsibility home to anybody. These

elaborate precautions simply mean that in effect this expensive board will, after all, be a mere appanage of the Public Works Department. We will have little better than, or little more than, I will not say better than, departmental administration, carried out in a far more cumbersome and costly fashion than it is at the present moment.

Mr. Collier: With the addition of another staff of officers.

Mr. DAGLISH: Yes; we will have a duplicate staff of officers. And if the Minister objects to cumbersome methods he could not go a better way about getting them than by introducing some of the clauses that are in this measure. Now, I do not intend to go into any of the details of the Bill, but I do say at the present time there is a strong justification for the House to consider whether it is desirable to embody in the Bill the power of differential rating. I do not know whether the Minister has altogether given up the idea of obtaining a complete water supply system for the metropolitan area, but I am satisfied it will be more difficult to get the local governing bodies to agree to it while this differential power exists. As it is some of them have been able to bring pressure to bear upon Ministers to keep back the scheme up to the present, and in some localities they apparently desire a water that is cheap and nasty rather than something which is better but, at the same time, more costly. Fremantle, for instance, is paying only 6d. in the pound, and we hear it said that it would be hard to ask Fremantle to pay more. Well, I think Fremantle is not getting sixpennyworth at the present moment, and I am quite sure it is paying dearly for all it does get. Moreover, I am surprised that the people should be satisfied to have water taken into their district by train, and taken down, I believe by river also for the shipping.

Mr. Angwin: That has been done away with long ago.

Mr. DAGLISH: That is scarcely so, for the locomotive department is conveying water at the present time to Fre-

mantle for the use of its boilers. At the same time Claremont is paying 9d. in the pound, and is getting the cheapest water in the metropolis. The residents of Claremont are getting their water scalding hot in summer at a cheaper rate than that at which the people of Perth are getting it. There is no knowing what saving in fuel is enjoyed by the people of Claremont in consequence. I think also that at Claremont there is that same desire for cheapness which prevails at Fremantle. Claremont, therefore, is an obstacle to a large scheme of good water from the hills. But the cost of pumping the Claremont supply apparently does not justify the cheapness with which the water is supplied to some of the residents, for I find there are two charges for water supplied in that suburb. Within the favoured area in which my friend, the member for Murray, resides, the charge is 9d. in the pound; but I know other streets not very far away where there is a minimum charge of £2 per annum, regardless of consumption, a charge of 10s. for meter rent, and a charge for installing the meter. Now, I happen to represent some of the electors, not in Claremont proper, not within the municipality, but living within the roads board district of Claremont, and who are separated by only a small ribbon of macadam from the people of the Claremont municipality. And on one side of this ribbon of macadam the charge is 9d. in the pound on low annual valuations, while on the other side, for small houses, very small houses of only two rooms, the charge is £2 per annum, plus 10s. for rent of meter, and plus the cost of installing the meter.

Mr. Angwin: They have the same differential rating at Fremantle.

Mr. DAGLISH: However, I do not know any other place where, apart from the charge of meter rent, a charge is made for the putting in of the meter. It seems that the individual who wants water and does not want a meter has not only to pay for the meter, but has to pay also the cost of putting it in. I say these differential rates are a serious obstacle to the adoption of a large

scheme. I think the department will find itself in a very awkward position when the sewerage system comes into operation, if before that time our present supply of water has not been very materially augmented. I know that the estimates of the department indicate that the adoption of the sewerage system will not very materially increase the consumption of water, but I am afraid that the actual figures, when the system is installed in private houses, will be very different indeed from the estimates the officers have made up to the present. And I believe, if we are going to proceed with this sewerage system, the earlier we set about enormously increasing our supply of water in the metropolis the better it will be for us all. I am afraid the Government will soon be threatened with a shortage of water, and will find it impossible sufficiently to increase the supply from existing bores or by the early construction of new ones. I have to apologise for having taken up the time of the House at some considerable length on this question; but it is of vital importance, and I appeal to the House to give very serious consideration to the question of whether, if a board be established, any cause has been shown why it should not be elective; and if there be not cause shown why it should not be elective, then the House is justified in demanding that the rate-payers shall have the right of electing those upon whom will be cast the duty of taxing them.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): In connection with this Bill I think many of the remarks that have fallen from the member for Subiaco must appeal to members on both sides of the House. I also hope that they will appeal to the Minister in charge of the Bill. This is one of those measures which can be, and should be, approached without any exhibition of party feeling or wrangling. The people desire that every member of the House should make an important Bill of this sort not only workable, but workable in every respect, and impossible of becoming unduly oppressive to those who have to contribute to the cost of the work. In going through

the Bill I am afraid I have been getting back into the old bad habit of interjecting and, perhaps, I may have said something to which hon. members, or some of them, may feel inclined to take exception. If it be so, I hope I may be pardoned. Now, although the Bill has necessitated a considerable amount of thought and care on the part of those who have framed it, there are in its details a number of items which the House can and, I think, will ask the Government to amend. With regard to the question of management, it is not clear to me from the Bill what is the intention of the Government. We are to have a board of ten members, one of whom may be chairman, at a salary not exceeding £1,000 per annum. Well, if it were made quite clear in the Bill that the chairman of the board is to be practically the man responsible to the rate-payers and the people of the State for the proper designing, proper carrying out and working of this scheme, then I would say at once that the question of salary is, after all, only a very small item.

Mr. Scaddan: What is he going to design?

Mr. GEORGE: I know what it is possible he may have to design. Assuming that the officer who is to be chairman of this board is to be responsible for the design, construction, maintenance, and carrying out of the whole of the work of this gigantic scheme—I say gigantic advisedly, because there is only one other scheme in the State that can compare with it at all, and that is the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme; and this new scheme has an expenditure totalling, up to the present, close on £800,000, and which may increase to a million or even more—I say it matters little what his salary may be. From observations which during my career I have been able to make on works of this sort, I feel quite satisfied that in less than 10 years the total cost of the scheme is more likely to be three millions of money than one million; that is, unless Western Australia retrogresses. Now, if the officer is to undertake the work, as I have said, and we are to

get a man of experience, a man whose career shows he has been able to do these works and has made his mistakes, and has corrected them, then the question of paying him £1,000, £2,000, or £3,000 per annum is a mere bagatelle. If he has gone through his work on the practical side, and has clearly demonstrated his ability to cope with the work, surely the question of £1,000 or £2,000 per annum is a mere bagatelle. We have heard of a Royal Commission appointed to go into the question of alleged defects in connection with the sewers. Whatever the idea may be in connection with that Commission's report—I am not desirous of going into it at this present stage, but I want to point this out: assuming there are some defects which have been admitted and repaired; in the initiation of a scheme of this sort, totalling already £800,000, would it have been outside the realm of practical politics to have sought for those gentlemen who had already gone through similar experiences in other parts of the world and to have secured them, with their invaluable experience, right from the jump? I know it may be urged that the officers of the Works Department are men with experience, upon which we could rely; but I may make bold, perhaps, to say, without wishing to detract from the qualifications of those gentlemen, that the variety of work they are called upon to do in the Works Department of this State, or in that of any other State from which they come, has been such that they have not been able to devote their time and experience to the one particular class of work which this Bill lays down, that is sewerage, storm water drainage, and water supply. Each member of the House is a practical man in some shape or other, and we know perfectly well that in any ordinary walk of life we seek to get the practical advice of those who have gone through the mill; and in a big work of this nature that we are undertaking, which may eventually reach an expenditure of three millions, we should not do anything unbusinesslike if we got the services of a man who has gone through the mill in some part of the world. I

am not sure that this is not contemplated in the Bill; because the powers of the Minister may be in conflict with the powers of the man who may be manager and the responsible man. At any rate in connection with a big scheme of this sort it would be right and prudent if we appointed one who would be permanent and who could be called to account for any defects in the system. We have Ministers to-day. They are not often gone to-morrow, but frequently they are; and those who have watched politics in the State know that there are many chickens coming home to roost for things done in days gone by. I am not referring to the present Ministers, but where are some of our Ministers now? Some are in London, some are in other parts, and others are goodness-knows-where. Having taken part in the game of politics in the important matter of constructing works and spending money, which they took up in a haphazard style, when the time comes for the chickens to come home to roost they are not to be found in the henhouse. I hope the Minister will not take it that I am criticising this Bill with a desire to destroy it, or any thing of that sort, because I take it that anything we do in the direction of altering and improving details will be done in Committee; but there are matters which it is well to refer to and which may give members something to think about when we reach the Committee stage. The member for Subiaco spoke about the matter of control. It is a point on which I cannot altogether agree with. Power is given to the Minister to construct works without asking the board whether he shall do so. I suppose it is right if a man occupies the high and exalted position of Minister of the Crown that he should be able to do things in something like an autocratic manner; but while he can do that, the board can also construct, but not without first asking the Minister whether they shall do so. The board can borrow money; and they can also pay the interest on the works the Minister may construct but to which they may not agree or may not have been asked to

agree. Of course the answer will be that the Minister is hardly likely to construct works without consulting the board; but I would like to point out, from the experience I have had for the last few years, that it is quite possible for the Minister to construct works without consulting those who may have to bear the burden. It is hardly right for the Minister to undertake things without consulting the board, but the Minister usually finds a scapegoat. I do not say this of the present Minister. The hon. member's back is broad and he has a good heart and a lofty mind, and he would always bear the burden when he could not shift his responsibility on to anyone else. A point to which I would like to draw the attention of the Minister is Clause 40. We shall discuss it fully when we get into Committee, but the principle of it is that the board, before undertaking the construction of any works, must cause plans, sections, specifications, and estimates to be prepared, and then they must advertise; and then by Clause 41 the plans and specifications are to be open to the inspection of any person on the payment of the prescribed fee. That is all right. Then they have to be examined by an engineer, and after that the Governor-in-Council may give an order authorising the board to construct the works. Then, presumably, the board will call for tenders, but the whole of their plans, specifications, sections and estimates are open to the public, including those gentlemen who probably go in for the contracts. This does not seem to me to be all as it should be, and in Committee I intend to make a few remarks in this regard. I notice also in Clause 22 that the board may enter into contracts for various things, and to my mind the power given to the chairman and the board is incompatible with the conditions under which the chairman and board are to work with the Minister. I think these things should be made to harmonise; they do not at the present. I see that the board shall appoint officers and servants. The member for Subiaco made a statement about the Public Service Act. I think the whole

of the officers should come under the Public Service Act, and I think there should be provision by which the employees of the board should certainly come into the operation of the Arbitration Act.

Mr. Angwin: How can the board have control when the officers are under the Public Service Act?

Mr. GEORGE: That is the funny part of the thing. We have a board which apparently is to be an independent board, and one that is able to work independently, but at the same time it is cribbed and cabined in one respect. If it is to be controlled in one way let us go the whole hog. But why I would not care to have it under the Minister is this: I would like to see the Bill altered. This is a question outside the ordinary work done by the public offices. It is a huge concern affecting principally the metropolitan area, and one in which continuity of management is above all desirable, and it is not desirable that there should be chopping and changing about. The member for Subiaco referred to the Ministers being busybodies. I hope all Ministers are busy; we know they are bodies; and if the hon. member means that the Minister will be there to interfere with the men who have control of the scheme, God forbid that we should have an Act. There is some talk about the chairman of this board being the Engineer-in-Chief in addition to his duties. Anyone who has had to do with large concerns will admit that it is ridiculous to suppose that a scheme commencing with an expenditure of half a million and eventually likely to cost over two millions could be controlled by one who could not devote the whole of his time to it.

Mr. Bolton: It is more likely to be a member of Parliament who is chairman.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not suppose they would be so foolish as to appoint a member of Parliament. Of course there are members of Parliament and members of Parliament, and I suppose there will be some members of Parliament willing to get the happy despatch even in that direction. That is not the particular point at which I wish to get. I come now to Clause 93, in connection with exemp-

tions. I do not agree with the matter of exemptions, particularly in regard to Sub-clause (a.) which exempts land the property of the Crown, and used for public purposes, or unoccupied. Of course it may be said that whatever the Crown has to pay would come out of the general rates of the State. Then let it; and let us know what it costs us to be governed. When I was in control of the Railway Department some years ago I charged the Government for every train they used. Some of the Ministers did not like it; they said it swelled their expenses; but I said it did not matter; and they had to pay. My reason for charging them was that they would have had to pay if they had been private individuals, and it would show what I had to pay, and at the same time it would let the State know what these functions cost, so that the State might judge as to their desirability or not.

The Premier: Even for legal advice for the Railway Department.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, I wanted my own solicitor, and I would have paid him, but the Government would not let me have him. I think it is a right thing to charge the Railway Department for legal advice given. At any rate I charged the Ministers, and the Premier knows that for every special train they had to pay. I think there should be no exemptions. I think that even the Houses of Parliament should pay the rates, to let the country know exactly the cost of government. There are many avenues of expenditure the cost of which is hidden but which the country should know. There are other exemptions which members may discuss, such as "religious bodies." I certainly would not tax cemeteries, though they get a very fair revenue. There is also Clause 27 to which I want to draw attention. Officers exacting or accepting fees, or in other words officers guilty of bribery, are to be liable to a penalty not exceeding £100 and may be dismissed. I hold that if any officer of the State—I do not care what position he holds—takes a fee or reward other than his salary for his work, it should not be a question of a penalty and "may be dismissed," but it should be "shall be dismissed," and I think there should be a

further penalty. I shall not go so far as to say that that he may not take a drink, though there is one firm from which I refused to take even a glass of cold water, but I say that the chairman and the board should be included also. If this thing can be levelled at officers of the board I think it should be levelled at the chairman and every member of the board also. Then there is the question of rates—water 1s., sewerage 1s., and storm water 1s. The rates may be 3s. altogether. I shall oppose that all I possibly can because the ratepayers of Perth, Claremont, and Fremantle have quite as much burden as they can bear at the present time. I know of properties that have been sacrificed by people who used to get a living from them to avoid warrants being served for payment of rates.

Mr. Johnson: Then who is going to pay?

Mr. GEORGE: Have you not heard in the Old Book of where the people rose against the tax gatherers? Are we going to make the people a lot of paupers because they cannot pay their rates? I am not speaking about myself personally. I will do so if members like, but I can give evidence of my facts. There are people to-day in Perth, Claremont, and Fremantle whose properties have been sacrificed as they cannot pay the rates and taxes. Their houses are not tenanted, and they are getting no return for their money.

Mr. Johnson: Who do you propose should pay?

Mr. GEORGE: Instead of providing for a rate as high as this, we might be a little less ambitious, and perhaps not go so far as this Bill provides.

Mr. Johnson: If there is a deficiency?

Mr. GEORGE: There is a deficiency on the Goldfields Water Scheme. Who pays it?

Mr. Johnson: Do you contend that the general taxpayer should pay any deficiency on this scheme?

Mr. GEORGE: To give power for a tax of 3s. in the pound, which this proposal practically amounts to, is more than we have the right to do at the present time. If the taxpayers can pay it well

and good none would object, but the position now is that they cannot do it.

Mr. Bath: If some of the local governing bodies were amalgamated there would not be such heavy rates.

Mr. GEORGE: I am quite prepared to go as far as to advocate amalgamation of some of the municipalities but I am unwilling to give power to a board like this to make such a high charge. The maximum is a shilling for cash service, but we know well that they will charge right up to this sum. I know that in connection with the Perth waterworks 14 years ago we had the right given us to charge a shilling, and we made the people pay the full amount. It did not pay us at that, for we lost money, and those who constructed the works alone made money out of them when the sale to the Government took place. The new board are sure to ask the maximum of one shilling for service which is more than the ratepayers can afford to pay. The board are also given power to issue distress warrants. The member for Guildford asks who is going to carry the work on if the money received is not sufficient to pay for it. There will be no people left to utilise the works, if things go on at the present rate. The mayor of Perth, speaking last week, said that land valuations would have to be decreased this year twenty-five per cent.

Mr. Underwood: There is an example of the poor down-trodden landlord.

Mr. GEORGE: I refer to the mayor of Perth in his official capacity, not to T. G. Molloy, a large property owner. He has received his position from the people of Perth, and no one knows better than he the exact position of the small property owner in Perth to-day. I know of many people in the City who are badly pushed for money, and although they have a good deal of property they cannot get rid of it.

Mr. Scaddan: They can give it away.

Mr. GEORGE: Does the hon. member suggest they should give away what they have spent half their lives in toiling for. Would the member give away his gigantic salary as a member of Parliament? I have nothing more to say at this stage but in Committee I will endeavour to

interest members in some of the points I desire to see carried through. I should like to see Perth as well equipped as any other city in the Southern hemisphere, but there are some things that the people cannot stand now, and in consequence I will try and resist giving power to the board to raise 3s. in the pound—a sum people now cannot possibly pay.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): In an important measure like this, we do not want to rush the subject through in one night. This is a deliberative Assembly, and I hope the Minister will agree to the debate being adjourned.

The Minister for Works: Let us finish the second reading to-night.

Mr. WALKER: We have had very little time to discuss the Bill so far.

The Minister for Works: We have had three nights.

Mr. WALKER: One whole night was spent by the Minister in introducing the measure. Enormous changes will be effected by this Bill, and the greatest attention should be paid to it. As I have said the Minister spoke on the first night: there were a few nights of adjournment and now the Minister wishes to rush the Bill into Committee. This is exhibiting indecent haste, and it is through such a course being followed in the past that measures have been inflicted upon this country instead of benefiting it. This measure should not be only studied in itself. Various speeches should be studied and considered in detail: for the Bill affects not only the citizens but also the people of the State. I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. WALKER: The Bill is undoubtedly a requisite one. There is an undoubted necessity for a bill dealing with this important matter of the supply of pure water for our citizens and for due provision for sanitary purposes. I am however, at a loss to understand the character of the measure before us. Whilst we undoubtedly want a bill, I submit that this measure is of such—if I may use the expression without being of-

fensive—a mongrel character, that when it is amended and some definite principle is adhered to in connection with it we shall not know the Bill at all. It is a bill which in the first place in its proposition for a board neither gives us a board that is entirely dependent nor gives as one that is, realisable, under responsibility to this House or to any other central power. It is a board too, as proposed, that departs from all principles of popular election, of justified election. It is a nominee board, and an elective board; it is neither and both. There is no consistency in the proposal as laid down in this measure. It does not give us to understand, nor does the speech of the Minister who introduced it, that it proposes to take over the officers we have already, the men who have been dealing with this work, partly constructing it, going on with the scheme already outlined and with everything in working order, or whether it is a form of dismissing the officers we have and taking in new officers; it does not explain whether the Government will have a say in the officers to be appointed or taken over, or whether the board will have complete control of all its staff. It gives us no idea whether this board is to come under the cognisance of the Act we have for the regulation of all civil servants, or whether we are to have in this instance the anomaly of a body of servants, strictly speaking civil servants, servants of the State, who are in no wise related to the State but entirely independent of it, who do not come under the supervision of Mr. Jull, the Commissioner, or who in any wise are to be brought to task or, as it were, called to account by the Government. Not one of these things is made clear, and nothing more indefinite in the way of legislation in this respect, introducing as it does a new principle, has ever been before this House. I might imagine from what has been said that the officers already in charge, and in working order, will continue in the same work, excepting that they will have their headship changed, that, instead of being under the Works Department, they will come under the board. Yet if that be the supposition

the board's power is entirely nullified. If the board itself cannot say to those now working, "here is your walking ticket; we want new men;" where are its powers? What can this board accomplish when it is created? It cannot construct works. It has no power of making a drain here or there; it can draw plans it is true, or it can have plans drawn for it.

Mr. HEITMANN: Members can fight among themselves.

Mr. WALKER: Exactly. They can have maps prepared; they can realise the urgent necessity of particular work to be done, but there the power of the board ceases. The board then has to go to those to whom those maps have to be carried, deposit them with some Minister of the Crown, the Premier I presume, and then he calls in his friend from the Colonial Secretary's or some other office.

The Premier: What clause is that under?

Mr. WALKER: Construction.

The Premier: A very good guess.

Mr. WALKER: I will show the Premier the clause if he desires to see it. Here it is in Clause 40—

"The board shall, before undertaking the construction of such works, except such reticulation works as the Governor may exempt from the operation of this section and the next four following sections:—(a.) Cause to be prepared plans, sections, specifications, and an estimate of the cost of the proposed works, together with a statement showing the net earnings estimated to be derived from them, and a statement showing the value of the rateable property to be benefited by them, and cause the same, or certified copies thereof, to be deposited in the office of the Minister, and also in the office of the board."

Then it is provided in Clause 41: "The plans, sections, specifications, and estimates so deposited shall be open to inspection by any person interested at all reasonable times, on payment of the prescribed fee." Then "if at the expiration of one month after such publication the Minister is satisfied that the provisions have been complied with he shall submit

the plans, sections, and estimates to the Governor for approval and if they are approved the Governor may forthwith make an order empowering the board to undertake the construction of the works and such order shall be notified in the *Government Gazette*." Does not that bear out everything?

The Premier: What are we to deduct from that?

Mr. WALKER: That after all it is not left to the discretion of the board as to what works should be done. That they can recommend it is true, but first of all the Minister himself must be satisfied; he becomes under the Bill the sole judge as to what is requisite and what wants doing. He has to judge not only on the plans, but he has to judge even after he has got an examination made by an engineer, and may be an independent engineer, and who ought to be an independent engineer in that case. He then has to judge of the merits or value of that engineer's report. If he receives any information from outside sources, he again is the sole judge, and when he alone has made up his mind, then he will take it to the Governor-in-Council, recommend it, and if the rest of the Ministers who form the Executive Council approve, then the works may go on. I submit that fully bears out what I have said that the board has not the power that is requisite for it if it has to be an independent responsible board. What I am objecting to is the constant tendency that we see in modern legislation to shift the responsibility from everywhere. We have no point upon which we can say, "you are responsible for this." The board can say that the Minister is at fault and the Minister can say the board is at fault, and so we play this game of perpetual shuttlecock. There can be no question that we are whittling away the very essence of responsible Government in this State. We have done it in the very report referred to the other night by the Minister for Works when introducing the Bill. What happened? We had certain complaints as to the manner in which this very scheme was being carried out. The reports were startling. They affected the capacity of those who are in-

interested in the scheme as engineers. That concerned the Minister for Works who was then in power and the administration of the Works Department. What happened? Did the Minister for Works, or did the Government perform the necessary duties of Government and those in their offices by virtue of the functions allotted to them by their portfolios, attend to the matter? No; they wired over to the East, "Send over anybody, the responsibility must be shifted from us, there must be no faulty administration in the Works Department; the Minister must suffer no blame, the Government must have no responsibility thrown upon it; send over somebody to wipe the thing off the slate." That is absolutely what occurred, and I submit with all due deference to those who constituted that board or Commission—another sort of board; anything to get away from responsibility and control, and the responsibility of Ministerial administration—that Commission, that sort of board, was nothing short of a white-washing Commission. In my humble opinion it is a scandal that an honest, honourable and upright Government should have such a report as we have here.

The Premier: Do you not think it was a question for engineers to inquire into?

Mr. WALKER: I am not denying that engineers should have a voice in the matter, but I submit we are governing the State, we have men paid salaries by the Government, and to get over the difficulty the Government send to the uttermost parts of the earth to bring someone here to take the blame off their own shoulders. That is not government. Those who look upon government in that light cannot conceive what the functions of government are. The Minister for Works told us the other night that this Commission of engineers gave a clean sheet to these works, and pronounced them absolutely satisfactory.

Mr. Scaddan: Al at Lloyd's.

Mr. WALKER: Exactly. Really I am provoked to quote some extracts from this report by the positively domineering dogmatic way in which the Minister for Works tried to force upon the House the statement that the Commission had found everything perfectly satisfactory. I shall

read a little from the evidence given before that Commission. I shall read page 13; the witness under examination was Mr. Hickson, who was asked by Mr. Fowler, "There was a trench dredged?" The answer was, "Yes, right across." Then he was asked, "Do you know that 241 feet on the map, where the distances are in accord with that section; is the starting point on the measurement the same as the starting point on that section?" Mr. Hickson replied, "I could not say, I have not seen this report before, I think it was the T piece on the 15 and 22-inch syphon. If I saw the plan I might be able to say." Then the chairman said, "Perhaps Mr. Oldham would know. Can you fix that, Mr. Oldham?" Mr. Oldham replied, "I think Mr. Lawson could tell you." Then Mr. Fowler remarked, "I would like to have this actually fixed before we go further; we might swear Mr. Lawson and ask him the question." There is a specimen of the men in charge of the work; they have to go to the underling to ask him about an important matter affecting the security and well-being of the scheme. They do not know; they never saw the plan before, and do not know anything about it. That is not the only part of the evident ignorance displayed on that occasion. Turn to page 14, and we find a question, "Where were these pipes made?" Mr. Hickson replied, "At Martin's, in Gawler, South Australia." Then he was asked, "Was the construction supervised by your department?" The answer was, "It was supervised by the South Australian Government at the request of the Western Australian Government." The next question is, "Have you any reports as to the character of the metal?" And the answer "No, I have not." He was next asked, "Have you seen any reports?" And he replied, "No." Then, "Have you any reason to doubt the quality of the metal used?" The answer, "There was no reason for doubt from the only inspection we could make on the work. The castings came to us, having passed the South Australian Government tester, with a coating of tar on them, and apparently they were very good." Another question, "Have

you seen this report on file P.W. 3155/09? Would you mind reading it so that it may appear on the evidence?" The answer, "No, I have not seen the report before. It reads—"Chief Mechanical Engineer's Office, Midland Junction, 31st March, 1909. *Re* test of cast-iron for Public Works Department. Memorandum for Chief Mechanical Engineer. Result of test herewith. Material submitted for test was portion of cast-iron pipe somewhat irregular in shape, which appeared to be a portion of 'Spring Bend.' After sketching and micrometrically gauging at eight different points, compression and shearing specimens were got out (see sketch). After deducting the compression and shearing tests I deemed it advisable to make tensional tests, and specimens were prepared accordingly. The detail and average figures of the final tests are shown on schedule A. The figures speak for themselves. The iron is very low grade, and I should class it as first-class with very little scrap. It is rich in graphite and open in the grain. Under the microscope the graphite is very pronounced, and appears to completely destroy the continuity of the metal. The character of the compression fraction also bears out the microscopic observations. In turning the specimen for test, the material simply crumbled off before the tool, and I think after considering all tests and observations, the correct designation is 'Rotten short.' Signed J. S. Shaw for Chief Draftsman." Question 351 reads—"Could it have been discovered before the pipe was coated?" and the witness answered "I think it could by careful hammering over. I would not like to say definitely that it could, but I think it could. I might say this is quite a new thing to me. I heard that the test of the iron was very bad, but I had not seen the result of the test before." That is the kind of officer we have in charge; using these pipes, putting them down, fractures occurring, knows nothing of any test taking place while this work was on, who takes things for granted, who admits he could have tested those pipes if he had gone to the trouble. Is that satisfactory? Is that the kind of satis-

factory work that this State is to be favoured with, either under a board or without a board? Then again we have similar evidence on page 23. The chairman says—

"What about reports on the Norfolk Street drain? Mr. Hickson: Oh! that is a bad job."

This also is satisfactory. And here is the witness himself—

"Oh! that is a bad job. There is no excuse about that. It is the smallest job and the worst that we have."

Meaning thereby that they have others that are bad. He also says—

"I have very little defence to make in reference to that. It is all on the files; I can say no more."

I might weary the Committee all night reading from this evidence. How can we say that it was satisfactory? But now, as to this Commission and the report they gave, I submit that it is a reflection on their character as Commissioners to give a report of this character. They tell us this—

"So that all criticising these officers might have full opportunity of submitting their views and giving evidence on oath in support thereof, we had advertisements inserted in the *Daily News* on the evenings of the 29th and 30th June, and 1st July; and in the *West Australian* of 30th June and 1st and 2nd July, requesting all persons who desired to assist the Commission to hand in their names to the secretary as early as possible, but not later than noon on 2nd July."

Imagine it. Is there an hon. member in the House who, in response to an advertisement, would become a voluntary witness in any case that was being heard in any of our courts, whether a Parliamentary court or a Commission court, or any other. What is everybody's business is nobody's business. What did they come here for? To advertise for everybody to come in and meet their convenience and give their evidence? How many in a civil case would be likely, voluntarily, to come up in answer to an advertisement in the papers and give evidence, submitting themselves to cross-examina-

tion in a court? Why, we have to subpoena them. Men have to be brought to do common justice by a subpoena, with penalties attached in case they fail to obey. That is necessary in the organisation of the administration of law in our country. And in a matter of this vast importance, where it is everybody's business and nobody's business, to accept an advertisement in the *Daily News* to bring up the necessary evidence—

Mr. Scaddan: They got a leader on it.

Mr. WALKER: It is suggestive of making a farce of the whole thing. No witnesses would be likely to come in those circumstances and leave their names with the secretary. That indefinite sort of form is not the way men go about things, to find out the truth and the facts. Those who want to find out the facts secure their witnesses; compel them to attend, if necessary. And in the matter of an inquiry of this kind that course ought to have been taken. But let us see how they dealt with other witnesses when one or two wanted to come along. We find that in respect to Mrs. Janny Cohny, who asked the Commission to inquire into the question of damages to her property in Beaufort-street, the Commission said—

"As the time set out in the advertisements had expired before the evidence of these witnesses was completed, and no other persons had offered to supply information, the Commission then proceeded with the examination of the departmental officers whose work had been attacked."

Later on the report states—

"Mr William Nicholson expressed a desire to give evidence. The Commission was of opinion, however, that this would be equivalent to permitting a prosecuting party to bring fresh evidence after the accused had commenced his defence."

I want hon. members to remember that in the case of Mrs. Cohny they refused to deal with her matter, simply because they said her case had been tried in the Supreme Court and they were not going to review a Judge's decision; which, by the way, had nothing at all

to do with this question. I ask the Attorney General if that is a fair treatment of an honest investigation, first of all to put a brief advertisement in a paper, to say "Up to a certain day"—it really meant only a few hours—"if you leave your names there is a chance of your being examined on the Commission;" and then when, afterwards, some come along and say, "We are willing to give evidence in spite of the odium this may create," the Commission say, "Oh! no; you are too late. A Judge has decided it." They refuse to take the evidence. What reliance can be placed on a Commission of that kind? Because everybody had not rushed to leave their names, with whom did they start? With the departmental officers, with whom they lived and communed, and almost slept, from the time they arrived until they went away. These were the only witnesses they cared about. Can you place any reliance on evidence of that kind? We have evidence showing that the Commission refused to take evidence; and they admit that the whole of the evidence is from those very people who had been accused. The only evidence taken was from their very friends, the friends who took them around Perth, and who treated them with such kindness that they mention it in their report.

Mr. Scaddan: A fellow feeling.

Mr. WALKER: A fellow feeling; that is what it is. It is like the doctors; they never go against each other.

Mr. Collier: Or the lawyers.

Mr. WALKER: Yes; or the lawyers. There is an esprit de corps among all these people. The visiting Commissioners were well treated, and in their report they state—

"In concluding our labours we feel that our work was greatly facilitated by the Government's action in forwarding to us in Melbourne so much data, including plans, tracings, contracts, and specifications."

That, of course, was a very proper thing to do.

"These enabled us to become familiar with the character of the works before our arrival. . . . We desire to

mention that the Public Works Department and its officers have given us every facility in connection with our investigation. All departmental papers have been freely placed at our disposal and no attempt was made to conceal defects. We also wish to place on record our appreciation of the zeal displayed by our secretary."

Now, there was a happy little family—the Government, the Public Works Department, and the secretary. This was the little clique who made the examination and who furnished the report. Now, can any reliance be placed on a report of that kind? And yet, after all that, the report is condemnatory. For instance—

"We are aware of cases where it has done so to a much greater extent without in any way reducing the effectiveness of the drains, which are, and have been for many years, working satisfactorily under such conditions. Similar remarks apply to small transverse cracks which we noticed in various places. During the construction of the drains and sewers, various buildings were damaged through settlement of the ground, due to unwatering. Such damage frequently occurs in connection with the construction of sewerage works, and in our opinion is inevitable. We further consider that the improvement in the general health of the community resulting from the lowering of sub-soil water far more than counterbalances any damage done to property by such lowering."

There is condemnation with a sort of faint praise. But to go further—

"Grave exception must, however, be taken to the manner in which the Norfolk-street sewer at Fremantle has been carried out. The fall available is very slight, and it should have been constructed strictly to line and level."

A gross neglect of duty. They did not do it as they should have done it, according to these engineers.

"The evidence given by the departmental witnesses, and the various reports in the department show clearly that serious defects exist, and by personal examination we verified this fact."

Is it is satisfactory to have serious defects? That is not altogether up to the mark as expressed by the Minister for Works when he said "perfectly satisfactory." Grave defects, serious defects, verified by examination.

"This work was carried out by the department and cost £620 7s. In view of the defects it will require extra maintenance. . . ."

And so the whole cost has not been reached yet. True, the Minister will say it is but a small work, but if they cannot be trusted with small works what about bigger ones?

"We made a very careful examination of the Fremantle septic tanks and found that on the whole the work is good; but the floor is rough in character and might have been better finished."

This is the report, the friendly report of those who were the companions of the people accused all the time they were here.

"We found that a number of small cracks had appeared, but considering the nature of the country as disclosed by preliminary examinations and boring records, we think that the whole work may be—"

We can see here how they are stretching the point.

"—considered satisfactory. In connection with the tanks a bad joint was found in the scour pipe."

And so they go on. Later on, in the same report—

"We noted that the syphon was broken at a ball-joint, and has been repaired at a cost of £215."

Mr. Gourley: Only a small thing.

Mr. WALKER: Yes. If the hon. member's brains were taken out it would be only a small thing. All through come these small things—it is the mickles that make the muckles.

"We are of the opinion that both the Claisebrook septic tanks and the C. I. syphon should have been subjected to water tests before they were taken over from the contractor."

Failure to do their work, work that ought to have been done and had not been done.

That is satisfactory! How complacent the Government are when they wish to escape responsibility—getting members to see things kindly; to put the gloves on before touching the sore. There are a thousand things to which exception could be taken if the whole of the evidence be read and if this report be read. Afterwards it will be seen that the object was to smooth over defects, to conceal as much as possible, and yet to admit what could not be avoided.

“We are of the opinion, however, that a serious error of judgment——”

Not a little error of judgment but a serious error of judgment. All satisfactory, however. That is what satisfies Ministers—

“That a serious error of judgment was displayed with reference to the tests made to determine the supporting power of the surface soil and understrata on Burswood Island, which tests were quite insufficient.”

I cannot help repeating—is that satisfactory? Does not the report justify the interruption I made when the Minister was speaking the other night? I have referred to the matter of the Commission's refusing to investigate Mrs. Cohney's case because the Supreme Court had dealt with the matter; but was that the position that should be taken up by independent Commissioners who came over knowing no person, or who should have known no person, and should have looked at the actual facts of the work carried on? Because Mrs. Cohney had a complaint, and she could give living evidence of it, and there was a house in ruins to justify as to what had been done; yet because the Supreme Court had had a case over it the Commissioners would not look at the evidence. Could anyone rely on such a Commission as that? And when we recollect the way they discharged their duties in examining one side only, then I say no reliance whatever can be placed on their report. The whole thing brings me to this, as said by the member for Murray: What are required in this State and in the management of this work are officers who know their business and their work. I doubt

not that the officers we have in many of our departments are capable of the work they have hitherto been doing, but when great works are on the *tapis* they are not in each instance the men capable of filling the positions, and there is a clanishness among them which keeps out good men. Try to get a good man who knows his business into the service of the State, and we will find that those in it will combine to keep him out. What is the result? The State is bound to spend thousands and thousands in repairing the work that incompetent State officers have performed in days gone by. We have had it in the Coolgardie Water Scheme, which is going to cost the State some millions to make reparation for the lack of foresight of those engaged on the work. The sewerage scheme we are dealing with is costing the State thousands that the people have not heard about. I have known something of it; the Attorney General knows something of it; he knows that through his department vast sums of money, comparatively vast, have been paid already, not only to that financial institution mentioned, but to others; and the end is not yet reached. In the circumstances, can we call it satisfactory? How do the Commissioners explain houses crumbling, split from roof to ceiling, rendered uninhabitable, some having to be rebuilt? How do they explain it? “It will be healthier to live in. It does not matter. Pull all Perth down so long as you get a good drain.” That seems to be their doctrine, their spirit. “Never mind Mrs. Cohney and the others; never mind the places in Parry-street as far as William-street; never mind them; you will have a lower water level and the people ought to be satisfied.” That is not the way private people would regard it. The State has had to pay for these blunders; and although they say that these accidents occur in other parts of the world, it is no excuse, because similar neglect may exist in other parts of the world; and that there was neglect in the construction of the drain along Parry-street, past Mrs. Cohney's house, can be testified to by engineers as well qualified as those engaged

in the supervision of the work. The fact is there was no supervision, and the necessary precautions were not taken to protect people's property. With recklessness the work was carried on, and now with recklessness it is considered after it is done. "Let them be satisfied, they will have a lower water level!" It sickens me to think that this method of Government can obtain. We want capable men. Never mind about the salary of a thousand pounds! It is not too much for a capable man. Pay men who are capable and make them responsible. It is knowing what is happening in connection with this Bill, and it is knowing the way defects have been covered by failures hidden from sight that makes me hesitate even in voting for the second reading; but as we want the measure, as a measure must come, we must trust to do our best with it when we get into Committee, because we do require the changes that have been indicated for sanitary and health reasons. In the meantime I shall not vote for relegating into obscurity or uselessness Ministerial responsibility. If it must be a board we must reserve the element of Parliamentary control, and we must have no man fixed in a position for seven long years, although continuity is a necessity in the work. We must have him so that we may tap him on the shoulders at the proper time without having to pay compensation and say, "You have failed, you have not done your duty": that is, if such a man were to be placed in the position. We must have the best service the State can secure, especially in her growing condition. We want no more monuments of incapacity, such as the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court furnish, and such as some portions of the drainage scheme are. We want to have the best work that can be obtained to help the country onward: and we cannot get it unless we engage brains and experience. Therefore, we must retain the right in Parliament to be able to put our thumb on the wrongdoer at any moment, and to substitute for him another who is capable and more amenable to the needs of the country. I shall not detain

the House any further to-night, but in Committee on these matters of the constitution of the proposed board, the method of rating and the method of capitalising or transferring the fund, I shall have something to say. In the meantime I protest altogether against that false security the speech the Minister for Works gave to the country in reference to the works already completed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I should like to say at once that it is refreshing to hear the member for Kanowna posing as an engineering expert, and with considerable skill, which he no doubt enjoys in debate, condemning practically every officer connected with this great undertaking in the city of Perth and in Fremantle. I think, perhaps, he might have thought for a moment that he was practically taking advantage of his position here to-night, and, to some extent, was rather more severe than he need have been on men giving their best efforts to the State in controlling this class of work—men whose reputation is every bit as dear to them, and as necessary to their existence and to the existence of those dependent upon them, as it is to the hon. member himself.

Mr. Walker: It is all there in the report.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not, and the hon. member knows it. I am surprised at his making such a statement. He takes the report, and time after time he selects short paragraphs to suit his purpose. Is that a fair way of dealing with professional men, men who have in every walk of life to look to their reputation as engineers? I say it is manifestly unfair the way the hon. member has treated these officers to-night. Let me take the report for a moment, and follow out the bad example the hon. member set in endeavouring to condemn these officers: and let me for a moment take a few extracts from the report which put another complexion upon their efforts. I will take the last first. What do the Commissioners say in conclusion in regard to these works? They say—

"Generally speaking, we are of the opinion that the works have been well

constructed and supervised, and that the defects which have arisen are insignificant in regard to the magnitude of the work that has been carried out. The officers, one and all, seem to have the success of the scheme at heart, and they gave us every assistance."

Mr. Bolton: That may be so; nobody questions that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Have I not pointed out that generally speaking they say that in their opinion the works have been well constructed and supervised? What more does the hon. member want? They say—

"The foundations on Burswood Island are very inferior to those obtainable nearer the treatment works."

Everyone knows that, but listen to what they continue to say—

"But in spite of this we (these gentlemen, as practical engineers) consider the alteration in site to have been desirable."

Yet the hon. member condemns them on that score. Let me give another illustration which does not endorse the hon. member's conclusions. The hon. member referred to the lack of supervision of contracts and to the bad supervision by these officers. But here is what the Commissioners say in regard to contracts—

"It will be noted that the contract amounts generally are well within the estimates, and that in nearly every case the amount of the final payment differs but slightly from the original contract amount. These figures clearly show that proper provision was made when preparing the specifications, schedules and contract drawings, and that the work during execution was prudent and careful, as otherwise considerable claims for extras would no doubt, have arisen."

Yet the hon. member tries to prove that there has been lack of supervision, and that the State has lost immense sums of money and is going to lose tens of thousands of pounds in the future over this work. Another thing which the Commission of practical men said, and which bears out my contention that the hon.

member has dealt harshly with the engineers, is—

"We were greatly impressed with the good quality of the drain and sewer work generally, which is very different from what we had anticipated in view of the criticisms levelled at it. We consider that the main drains have been soundly and carefully constructed."

Do members want anything more?

Mr. Walker: Yes, read on a little.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member forgot to read on. He took good care to pass over these paragraphs which go to show that his conclusions are absolutely wrong, and I say that the treatment of these officers is manifestly unfair.

Mr. Scaddan: Can you tell us why the Commissioners made no reference to the fact that the filter beds at Burswood Island are not according to specification?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot tell why the Commission made no reference to certain facts. I do not know that they are facts. I can tell the hon. member from personal inspection that the filter beds are all right. They have not the depth of metal originally specified, because the whole surface has gone down somewhat. And I can tell the hon. member that the Commissioners, as practical men, were satisfied that the site, even with a little sinking of the surface, was suitable for the purpose and was the best obtainable. They say so here; I have just read the words.

Mr. Scaddan: Where do they say it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They say, "the foundations on Burswood Island are very inferior to those obtainable near the treatment works, but in spite of this we consider the alteration in site to have been desirable."

Mr. Scaddan: What has that to do with the question of not completing according to specifications?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot explain if the hon. member cannot understand clear English. Let him read the report and he will find it. He professes to be a practical man, so let him exercise his knowledge and go and inspect the works. If he does so, I am

satisfied he will come to the conclusion that there is a good job there.

Mr. Scaddan: They will not let me. Will you give me an order?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; I should like nothing better than for the hon. member, and all members, to go and inspect the works themselves, with the very men whom the member for Kanowna has condemned, and I am sure if they do so they will be satisfied those officers are capable and have turned out a faithful job notwithstanding minor defects. The member for Kanowna also complained that the Government selected a commission for whitewashing purposes. The Government do not descend to such tactics. They selected the best expert advice obtainable in the Eastern States to come here and make an inquiry as to certain allegations levelled against the department in connection with the construction of these works. My colleague the Premier and I were in Melbourne at the time attending a conference. Wires were sent to us, and we endeavoured first of all to get certain engineers from New South Wales; they were unobtainable. In passing through South Australia we endeavoured to get engineers there. They also were unobtainable. Eventually we accepted three gentlemen well known for their expert knowledge in the construction of works of this description. Let me at once say I deprecate very strongly the remarks which have fallen from one member, if not more, in connection with the personnel of the Commission. I would not think for one moment that the gentlemen who gave their time at the request of the Government to inquire into the charges were biased in any shape or form. They came here with an open mind to inquire into charges, and I maintain that they took what was a reasonable course in order to get at the evidence they expected to be placed before them. The hon. member complains that advertisements were put in the papers calling for evidence. What was more natural? The Commission could not sit here indefinitely until those who had levelled the charges could muster up courage or make up their

minds to appear. Therefore the Commission put a limit, giving three days' notice. Surely it was the duty of those who had been attacking the officers and the department in the Press for weeks and months, and who were known to be in Perth to appear in order to substantiate the charges. This they should have done if they were acting in the public interest. It was known that the Commission were coming over for the news was published in the papers. It was known that the Ministry were negotiating and endeavouring to get engineers to sit on the Commission and make an inquiry. It was a matter of public knowledge when the members of the Commission were appointed, and it was a matter of public knowledge when they arrived in Fremantle and Perth. Then appeared the advertisements. Surely it was no part of the Government's duty to go into the highways and byways and compel people to come in and substantiate charges made in the Press and elsewhere against officers of the department. And apart from that how could the Government control the actions of the Royal Commission? The Commissioners were appointed for a special purpose, and they adopted the best course according to their judgment to get at the bottom of the whole question.

Mr. Taylor: Should they not have subpoenaed the persons who made the charges?

Mr. Walker: A select committee would have done that.

Mr. Taylor: If the charges called for a commission the makers of the charges should have been called before the Commission.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think so. Here are practical men well qualified of themselves to inquire into the charges on the evidence. They gave every opportunity to those who wished to level charges to substantiate them, but those people would not face the music. What did the Commission do? They set to work as practical men, first to examine the officers of the department in order to get at the evidence from their point of view, and having taken it all, they proceeded to examine

the work as practical men, and I venture to think that even the examination alone of these practical men was quite sufficient to ascertain whether the allegations were true or otherwise. They went all over the works, through the main sewers, examined practically every inch of the works, and then came to their conclusions, portions of which I have read. Yet I have to sit to-night and listen to charges such as the member for Kanowna has thought fit to bring against the officers of the department. The Commission, after an exhaustive inquiry and inspection, have practically exonerated the Government officers from blame, except as regards those minor defects which have been referred to. Let me refer to some of those minor defects now. They say, "the foundations on Burswood Island are very inferior to those obtainable near the treatment works," and in the same breath they go on to say "but in spite of this we consider the alteration in site to have been desirable." Then they refer to the breaking of the syphon across the river. The total cost of that repair was £325. I would like to point out that no work of the magnitude of these works is carried out without some minor defect becoming apparent in the process of construction.

Mr. Collier: Should they not have been discovered at the time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: How could they?

Mr. Collier: By putting a water test through.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member knew anything about it, he would realise that such a test could not have been applied at the time, as there is a ball joint in the centre of the pipe which required time for the pipe to be settled before it could be tested by water pressure.

Mr. Walker: The Commission say that test should have been made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member would like to go through the plans, to hear the engineers' explanations and examine the workings on the ground, he can do so and take as long as

he wishes over it. If he does I am satisfied he will be content that the job is a good one notwithstanding that there was a fracture in the first instance. The hon. member says the pipes should have been tested before being shipped from South Australia, and that they should have been inspected by some one specially appointed, I presume, by the present Government.

Mr. Scaddan: Who said that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Kanowna.

Mr. Scaddan: He took exception to the fact that the engineers of the South Australian Government had been engaged.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To look after these pipes.

Mr. Scaddan: He complained that the men supervising had no knowledge of the material used in the pipes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I am misrepresenting the member for Kanowna he will stop me; he is well able to do that. He found fault with the fact that one of our engineers did not inspect and pass the pipes in South Australia. It is a very common occurrence, the natural course of events, when the Government are procuring material from an adjoining State to appeal to the Government of that State to permit their experts to pass the material being used. It is done here. We are shipping our timbers by thousands of loads every year to foreign and other countries, and every load that goes from here is passed by a Government inspector, by a man belonging to the Western Australian Government, and his certificate is accepted by the purchasers. The same here. The department took the ordinary course to secure a good job being produced in South Australia for they had the pipes and connections examined by an engineer of the South Australian Government. When the pipes came here, as members know, they were so coated with tar that it was absolutely impossible when overlooking them to see any defects, even if such existed.

Mr. Walker: I blame the Government for being satisfied with the tests made in South Australia and with having no tests made here. I explained that. as

shown by the evidence, Hickson said they could have discovered the faults if tests were made. Hickson also said that a hammering test could have been applied, but was not; if it had been he knew nothing about it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We were bound to take delivery on the certificates of the engineers in South Australia. The contract was fulfilled; the goods were passed. Supposing they had discovered anything by hammering, and I doubt if they could have—I have had a little experience as to castings—there is no evidence to show that the fracture was there before the pipe was put down. A very strong supposition is that the fracture occurred in the laying of the main, in putting it into position. I remember when a fracture of this kind occurred in laying a similar main across the Brisbane river, a very much bigger job. Members need not be reminded of the terrible catastrophe that occurred in carrying a similar pipe under the River Yarra, when the water came in and not only destroyed the works, but was also the means of depriving men of their lives. Presuming, however, that everything is as the member concluded, still he is in no wise justified in the wholesale condemnation he used in connection with these officers. As to the Norfolk-street drain at Fremantle—I do not for a moment wish to gloss over any work found to be inferior—that drain was admitted to be inferior, but the explanation I get is that it is a small drain made from stoneware pipes and half a mile in length. It was the first drain put in there, and was made from imported drain pipes. We were not manufacturing here at that time. Those drain pipes were inferior, but the best obtainable at the time. The work was rushed on, as the department were being pressed by the municipal authorities to push on with the drain as rapidly as possible. In laying the stoneware pipes when there are defects or excrescences on the one hand, or a deflection in the moulding, these defective portions are brought to the side so that they may not interfere with the flow of water or material which passes through

the drain. Naturally these faults throw the drain out of alignment.

Mr. Scaddan: Mr. Hickson says not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am explaining what occurs. The hon. member can have his opportunity of proving what Mr. Hickson does or does not say at a later stage. These pipes are laid with the defects, if there are any, on the sides instead of the top or on the bottom, and it naturally throws the drain somewhat out of alignment, so that you cannot get a clear sight; nevertheless the drain is doing its work. To that extent it is not first-class engineering, yet the drain is perfectly free and is doing its work satisfactorily. I do not think that even the member for Kanowna wishes to injure the reputation of the engineers of the department by wholesale condemnation because of a job of this description which is admitted to be inferior in the laying. The total cost of that drain was something like £600 including the man-holes. When it was laid the man-holes were not constructed—another obstacle in the way of the engineer or foreman discovering that it was somewhat out of alignment. However, to close this part of my remarks with regard to these defects and the unfortunate charges the hon. member has levelled against these officers—

Mr. Walker: I have levelled nothing but the report.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: When we consider the total value of work which is alleged to be defective, and that the sum expended does not exceed more than £3,000 or £4,000 out of an expenditure of something like a quarter of a million of money, then I think we might be satisfied that the department, at any rate, so far as it has gone, has got through its work very economically, and has turned out a good job for the State. I want to say I have been spending the last two week-ends in examining the detail of the works so far as it could be examined in both Perth and Fremantle. I have nothing but admiration generally to offer with regard to the class of work which has been constructed and has been carried out. The septic tanks at Owen's Anchorage which the hon. member referred

to, reading from a portion of the Commission's report, as having floors which were rough, I venture to say would even come up to and satisfy his fastidious taste in that respect. We do not want any ball-room floor, or a skating rink floor in a septic tank. I have been through those tanks; I have examined the floors and I can assure the hon. member that the floors are all that are necessary for the work, and if they like to come and inspect them themselves they will endorse what I am stating to-night. I do not wish to weary hon. members by going through all the criticism that has fallen in connection with this measure. I only want to say that I expected there would be opposition to some of the proposals as set forth in the Bill. I am thankful to the hon. member for Kanowna for his frank admission at the commencement of his remarks that the Bill was necessary; that is all I want at the present juncture. The main provisions in the Bill are necessary to my mind. As to whether the board shall have 10 or 7 members or shall be elected or nominated, is a matter for the House to decide. My views are here embodied in the draft of the Bill submitted for the approval of hon. members. If hon. members do not like the clauses as they are drafted, all I ask them to do is to table amendments in order that in Committee we may decide which is the proper and best method to follow. The opposition of the member for Subiaco, who is always so facetious when he addresses this House, was amusing. He is opposed to differential rating, but I venture to think that the members representing the port of Fremantle and East and North Fremantle, and probably those who have an interest in and represent the important district of Claremont shown upon the map behind me, will have something to say on the other side of that admittedly very debatable proposal. I say again as I said when introducing the measure that until we have a uniform supply of water for the whole of the districts constituting the metropolitan area, I think we are justified, and the House, I think would be justified in levying differential rates for the supply of water. Of course, as the hon. member pointed out, if we can ulti-

mately get the big hill scheme of supply, which I hope it will be my privilege to inaugurate if I do not carry it out—

Mr. Bolton: You will require to hurry up.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then the time will be ripe, and a short amending Bill can be carried to do away with the differential rates, but as long as there is a varied supply—a much better supply in Perth than exists in Claremont or Fremantle, then I think we would be acting unfairly if we asked those districts to bear a uniform charge with the area of the district of Perth which has a better supply.

Mr. Daglish: What about the transfer of the indebtedness of the board; are you prepared to deal with that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is power in the Bill, if the hon. member has read it—I do not suppose the hon. member has—to transfer existing works to the board and the capital cost as ascertained by the Minister shall be a debt from the board to the Treasurer for the time being, carrying interest.

Mr. Daglish: Why not give the power to raise money by debentures?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why cannot the hon. member deal with that clause in Committee, and why cannot he table an amendment to give the board power to raise money on debentures if he wishes? As far as I am concerned I do not want to give the board the power to raise money on debentures outside of the Government, and I want to see the Government fairly represented on that board notwithstanding all the criticism of the hon. member. I venture to think this House will approve of the Government having direct representation on the board. The State is pledged to find money to carry out those works and it is idle for the hon. member to suggest for one moment that any board of this description in Western Australia could, to-day at any rate, raise money at anything like the price that the Government could. On the grounds of economy and expedition in getting the works successfully pushed on and completed, as I set forth in this House some three years ago in connection with the proposal of the then administra-

tion, the Works Department should control the construction and completion of works and then hand them over to a board to manage and control.

Mr. Collier: And that is a good policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That policy is being carried out in this measure. The hon. member may disagree with that, but he will have the opportunity of convincing the Committee and having an amendment carried according to his views. The Bill as submitted embodies the views the Government have always held in broad principles with regard to control and construction. It gives no dual power as the hon. member for East Fremantle stated; it gives the Minister the controlling power, the same as the board, so long as he does control it, that is, in the interim between the time the measure passes, and the period the board is appointed. There must necessarily be an interval between the coming into operation of the measure and the appointment of the board and the Minister must have power of control during that time. After that time it is intended that the Minister shall have full power of construction. It is intended that the Works Department shall carry out to completion this gigantic scheme, which, I venture to think, is better in their hands than in the hands of an untried board, and the untried officers controlling the management of the Water works.

Mr. Angwin: That is a good argument in favour of Ministerial control.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am asking for Ministerial control for construction. I put that forward three years ago.

Mr. George: Do you propose to have a staff of officers for the board and a staff of officers for the Government all doing the same work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows it is necessary to have two sets of officers. There must be one engineer to control the mass of detail with regard to the house connections. That engineer when the board is appointed will be on the staff of the board but the construction of the main works, the main sewers and reticulation to which the

house connections are coupled up, will be carried out by the Works Department and under the supervision of the very capable body of officers already attached to that department, and who notwithstanding anything to the contrary, have manfully and well carried out their duty. I venture to think that even the hon. member for Kanowna will be satisfied, ultimately, that he has been wrong and harsh in his strictures upon those gentlemen to-night. There are other matters one might touch upon were the hour not so late. The question of rates I want to point out, notwithstanding the loud complaint of the hon. member for Murray—

Mr. George: I speak very quietly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member thinks he speaks quietly, but he makes a great noise, especially when he is opposed to any taxation or the levying of rates. In Committee we will thrash out that question. I want hon. members to remember that the rates already exist, that a 1s. water rate in Perth is already imposed and that the maximum of 1s. water rate exists in Fremantle and Claremont; and that there is no other water rate in existence. We are not asking more than we have already got. The 1s. water rate is being paid in Perth to-day and the sewerage rate we propose to enforce will take the place of the sanitary rate. This sewerage rate will not be more than about 6d. in Perth, and it may be a little more, about 8d., in Fremantle and the other districts. Hon. members can see at once that from 6d. to 8d. will be the sewerage rate charge, and that it will not be greater than the existing charges which are paid for sanitary services.

Mr. Bath: What about the storm water channel?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The storm water rate is estimated to be from 3d. to 4½d.

Mr. Draper: Why ask for 1s.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because the works may be extended from time to time, and it may be necessary to get more than 4½d. or even 6d. You cannot state your minimum charge as a

maximum charge. But, as I pointed out when introducing the measure, and again by interjection, the only rate the board can impose is one sufficient to cover all the expenditure in connection with these works. So there is no danger, as the board has to make an estimate of its cost and subsequently impose its rate, just the same as a municipality. There is no danger in connection with this matter. However, that also can be thoroughly thrashed out in Committee. In conclusion, let me say I am gratified at the speeches that have been made in connection with this undoubtedly very big measure, a measure which affects the health of the whole of the metropolitan community, and I feel sure that hon. members on both sides of the House will endeavour to sink any feeling of personal or party opposition. I am not wedded to the clauses of the Bill. I want to get the best measure we can. And it is not because I have framed these clauses, or some of them—my predecessor did most of the work—it is not because I have introduced these clauses as being the mature opinion of the department, and of the Government, that we shall necessarily feel wedded to them if a majority of hon. members think they could be amended or profitably altered. I commend this Bill to the House, and I hope the result will be that we will speedily have as workable and as perfect a measure as possible.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 15th September, 1909.

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

BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Colonial Secretary, and read a first time.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS. Report adopted. after recommitment.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act of 1906. It is introduced more to amend some anomalies than to introduce any new features into the Act governing municipal corporations. What will, I presume, be considered by hon. members the principal feature of the measure is a clause that will be added to the Bill in another place, dealing with the increased rating powers. Clause 2 is simply a verbal amendment to avoid ambiguity as to the definition of "land." In the Act it is not at all clear what "land" really means. This is to make the definition quite clear. Clause 3 is inserted in anticipation of the rating powers of municipalities being increased from 1s. 6d. to a maximum of 2s. At present a town can be proclaimed a municipality should the rating power extend to £750; that amount is raised by this clause to £1,250, so as to have an increase proportionate to the increased rating powers proposed to be given to municipalities. At present the Act provides that an