

town as a gift for a morgue. It is not suited for any other purpose.

Progress reported.

### **BILL—BROOKTON RECREATION RESERVE.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

*House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.*

## **Legislative Council,**

*Friday, 4th December, 1925.*

	PAGE
Paper: Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill, Opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C. ....	2435
Bills: Vermin Act Amendment, 3a. ....	2435
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 3a. ....	2435
Roads Closure, Com. ....	2435
Bush Fires Act Amendment, 2a. ....	2435
Parliamentary Allowances Act Amendment, 2a. ....	2435
Reserves, 2a. ....	2445
Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act Amendment, 2a. ....	2445
Motions: Police Force Pension Allowance ....	2443
Railway Dining Cars withdrawn ....	2451

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

### **PAPER—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

*Opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C.*

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, the opinion of Mr. Keenan, K.C., upon Clause 57 of the Arbitration Act Amendment Bill was laid upon the Table of the House.

### **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and passed.

### **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.**

Read a third time and passed.

### **BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.**

*In Committee.*

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1-6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Closure of a way through land of Muresk Agricultural College:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understand this road closure has not been consented to by the local authority. Is this a road in direct communication with Northam and York along the river?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have laid the plans on the Table of the House. The local authority has not been consulted. This Bill will not come into operation until it is proclaimed, and it will not be proclaimed until the local authorities have been consulted.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### **BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [3.12] in moving the second reading said: It has been recognised that a Bill of this kind is necessary to tighten up the laws relating to bush fires. Experience teaches those who have been responsible for the control of these matters that a measure of this kind is absolutely necessary. Great damage has been done by irresponsible people who are not fully seized of the proper methods for handling fires. Consciously or unconsciously they have been the cause of great damage to crops and feed, and in some instances to homesteads. In order to guard against occurrences of this kind or minimise the risks that are run, the Government have decided to introduce this Bill. Instances have been reported to the department of people who have burned off scrub and rubbish with a view to bringing on the grass. The fires have got away from these people and the neighbours have suffered considerably. It has been reported in some cases that even when farmers and

others have offered to assist in the burning off in order to prevent the spread of the fire, advantage has not been taken of the offer and crops, grass and fences have been burnt down. We also must have regard for the natural heritage represented in our forests. Through the carelessness of some persons in causing outbreaks of fire, great havoc has been wrought in some of the forest lands of the South-West. It is difficult to estimate the amount of damage so caused. However, when a fire breaks out, either in the bush or in a house, every man should do his bit. My experience is that such an occasion brings the best out of men. Certainly, no charge would be made unnecessarily. In the opinion of the Government, and particularly in the opinion of the Minister for Lands, it is essential that much stronger legislation should be passed to cope with the danger of bush fires. The Bill is almost self-explanatory. Its principal object is to place the administration of this legislation definitely in the hands of the Minister for Lands. That is done by Clause 2. The provision is essential to the succeeding clauses of the Bill. Under Clause 3 any person is permitted at any period of the year to burn to the extent of providing breaks to save houses and stacks from fires. Such burning must be done by night, and the clause does not relieve the owner of liability to his neighbours. It is usual for people to protect their buildings and other improvements during prohibited periods, but the law does not provide for it. Clause 5, by Subclause 1, provides for the declaration of fire-protected areas with the approval of the Governor. As the measure will be administered by the Minister for Lands, it will not be possible to declare such areas without the prior consideration of his officers and the approval of the Governor on the Minister's recommendation. Subclause 2 of the same clause is essential for the setting-up of safeguards within fire-protected areas for the protection not only of virgin forests, but of other settlers' holdings and improvements. Thousands of pounds are being spent on reforestation, and there should be some power to protect those particular areas. It would be almost criminal if we did not take advantage of every opportunity to safeguard our natural heritage in the shape of forests, particularly from the aspect of reforestation. An

objection has been raised that possibly the Conservator of Forests, who admittedly has large powers—some people complain that his powers are too large—may endeavour so to operate the Bill as to create hardship on certain people. That risk, however, if there be such a risk, is guarded against by the circumstance that no action can be taken except with the consent of the Minister for Lands. The Bill aims at tightening up existing regulations and bringing about a better state of affairs for all concerned. Country residents now complain that sufficient power is not given to deal with the menace of bush fires. If the necessary power is given under this measure, it will be used with judgment. As to forest lands, we have had much experience of the damage caused by bush fires; and it is easy to imagine the result of a fire getting away in a pine plantation. Perhaps it may be difficult to get permission to burn at a particular period. The Minister for Lands agrees that certain times of the year might be appointed for certain districts. The matter could be arranged by a regulation giving various districts set dates. Most people interested in the question have been consulted, and as the result of interchange of ideas with the Minister for Lands, this Bill is brought forward. I feel sure the measure will meet with the approval of most people concerned. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. J. EWING** (South-West) [3.24] : If the Honorary Minister gives an assurance that he will not put the Bill through Committee to-day, I shall have nothing further to say on the second reading. The Bill is designed to safeguard property, and therefore has my support. There should be an opportunity however, to compare this measure with the original Act.

Hon. J. Duffell: What is there in the Bill to hold it up?

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## **BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.25] in moving the second reading said: The question of payment of members—or, to use the more euphonious

phrase, allowances to members of Parliament—has long since advanced beyond the controversial stage. The principle is widely accepted. As regards Western Australia, it was accepted 25 years ago in the Parliament of the then colony, and a motion carried in the Legislative Council was responsible for its introduction at an earlier period than perhaps would otherwise have been the case. I would point out that during the debate on the subject in this Chamber in 1900, not one member spoke against the principle, and that the motion was carried without a division. This House at that time not only approved of payment of members, but went so far as to sanction its being made retrospective. The measure was passed on the 5th December, 1900, the amount being £200 a year, and was made retrospective to the opening of the session, which took place on the 15th August of the same year. The second increase, to £300, was made in 1911, and the third, to £400, in 1919. The present Bill is the result of the motion which was carried in another place by a majority of four to one urging the Government to increase the allowances to members of Parliament. Since then the question has been considered by the Government, and it has been decided that there are good grounds for the request and as a result this Bill is introduced. Since the allowances were increased to £300 in 1910, there has been a considerable increase in the financial responsibilities of members of Parliament. In addition to the increase in the cost of living, which has been substantial, there are greater demands on the incomes of members than ever there were before. The great majority of members represent country districts, and what with attendance at Parliament and visits to headquarters during recess on political business, it can safely be said that they are six months of the year in the metropolis. While here they have to put up at first-class hotels, and the tariff is fully 75 per cent. more than it was 15 years ago. Besides that, they have practically to keep up two homes. Since the war all sorts of money-raising movements, with charitable and other worthy objects, have sprung into being; and the member of Parliament is the first to be approached for help, and if he refuses his assistance he gets the reputation of being mean. There are dozens of such funds to which, by reason of his position, a member of Parliament has to subscribe every year. Never before in the history of

this State has there been such a persistent and extensive drain on the financial resources of public men as there has been during the last few years; and more substantial donations are expected now than was the case before the war, the reason of course being that the purchasing power of the sovereign is not so great as it was prior to 1914. A man who is running a business protects himself against these claims. He estimates at the beginning of each year what his expenditure will be in this direction, and he makes provision for it in the same manner as he provides for advertising and insurance costs. If he is a draper or a manufacturer, or is in any other line of business, he increases the price of his goods to meet the situation. In other words, he "passes it on." But the ordinary member of Parliament, who has no source of income except his allowance, cannot "pass it on." Every guinea he has to donate by reason of his position, is so much off his means of livelihood. It may be said that he should undertake other work so as to supplement his income. How could he do so? He has to attend a long session of Parliament, and when Parliament is prorogued he is at the beck and call of constituents, accompanying deputations to the city, or coming to Perth on his own account to see Ministers about matters that are agitating various sections of his electorate. Not only that, but he has to attend various functions and gatherings in different parts of his electorate, and travel through it from time to time. Before motor cars were in general use, he was expected to visit only towns served by a railway, and he could travel free. Now, when motor cars are on hire almost everywhere, he is required to visit every small centre, and if he does not do so, he is accused of neglecting his constituents. Then he has to face an election when his term of office expires—in the case of the Legislative Assembly, every three years, and for the Legislative Council, every six years. There is heavy expense attached to that. It comes to a member of the Council once in six years only, but the province is so extensive in the majority of instances that he requires a good credit balance at his bank before he commences his campaign. In some of the provinces as many as six Assembly districts are included. And what is often the fate of members of Parliament? I always have sympathy with them, no matter what may be their political colour, when I see them thrown out on a cold world after

years of service, with no business or occupation to fall back upon. Perhaps, too, they have that experience for no other reason except that a swing of the pendulum has been in favour of a change. Some may ask these questions: Why not consent to the increase and make it operate after the next general election? Why should the people not be consulted? Those questions are often asked. It should be needless to point out that it is impracticable to consult the electors. In the first place, there are no general elections that apply to this House, or to both Houses. In the second place, how could the electors be consulted? How would it be possible to get from them a clear expression of opinion, or any expression of opinion on this question? There will be a score of other question before the electors and the battles will be fought on the respective platforms of the different parties. In 1920 the Parliament of New South Wales endeavoured to get over the difficulty by appointing a judge—Judge Edmunds—to fix the salaries of its members. When that course was decided upon, the Leader of the Progressive Party sent to the judge a letter, a copy of which appears in the New South Wales "Hansard," second series, Vol. 82, page 3226, and which reads—

In our opinion the fixing of an allowance to reimburse members of Parliament for expenses incurred by them in the discharge of their parliamentary duties is essentially a function for the Legislature itself, and a function which the Legislature is quite competent to perform.

That letter was signed "W. E. Wearne, Leader, Progressive Party." I agree with the view taken by the Progressive Party of New South Wales. It seems to me that we should not ask a judge to intervene in politics in any shape or form. I remember when the salaries were increased to £400 a year. Some of the newspapers said that several of the members were not worth the money, that they would not get it in any other occupation. That sort of argument is a reflection on the intelligence of the electors, and it has no bearing on the case. No doubt several members of Parliament would not be a success on newspaper work. But if journalists had the all-round practical knowledge of most things that concern the industrial and social life of the country, they would be worth more than even the £14 some of them are now receiving. I can say from experience that I am learning every

day I sit in the House something valuable to me from contact with, and from the opinions expressed by, every member of this Chamber, without exception. There are many members of this House who do not need payment, who are wealthy men. But they should not overlook the necessities of those who are not so fortunate, and should ask themselves whether it is a fair thing that those members of both Houses, who are not well off and can take up no other occupation by reason of their attention to political business, should be compelled to exist on remuneration less than is received by hundreds of public servants in this State who are not weighed down by the financial obligations which it is the lot of a member of Parliament to bear. The proposals in this Bill are that there shall be an all-round increase of £200 a year to every member of Parliament, including Ministers, the Hon. the President of the Legislative Council and his Honour the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. A. LOVEKIN** (Metropolitan)  
[3.37]: It may serve to expedite the business of the House if I give utterance to the few words I desire to say regarding the Bill, rather than to wait for a future occasion. The question of payment of members is by no means a new one. As early as the 10th century, every constituency in Britain was compelled to support its member, and I see no difference between each constituency supporting its own member, and the whole of the constituencies supporting the whole of the members through the channel of the State revenue. Certainly that practice of the payment of members in the early days was discontinued, and I think it was about 1911 that the House of Commons, by resolution, decided to pay its members' salaries, not under the name of allowances, such as we have here. I take it the time has gone by when anyone will contend that members of Parliament ought not to receive salaries, apart from allowances, such as are sufficient to maintain them in the position they occupy as members of the Legislature. I endorse all that has been said by the Minister in respect of the needs of members of Parliament for an allowance or salary adequate to the position they hold. I frankly admit at once, from the experience I have had during my career as a member of Parliament,

that £400 a year cannot cover the expenditure of a member of Parliament even if he acts in a most frugal manner. The point that weighs with me, and explains why I cannot vote for the Bill, is that which was slightly referred to by the Chief Secretary. I do not think that members of Parliament ought to vote themselves public moneys until their constituents have at least had an opportunity to express themselves either directly or indirectly upon the subject. I view it in this way: Here is a community of 360,000 people. Let us call them shareholders in this company of Western Australia. They elect 80 of their number as directors, and have elected them at a salary of £400 each. Let us view it from the standpoint of an ordinary industrial company or a bank. I call to mind your own experience, Mr. President, with the Western Australian Bank. The directors and the chairman thought that the time had arrived when the directors' fees should be increased. They did not take advantage of their position and put their hands into the bank funds; they approached the shareholders with a recommendation that those salaries should be increased. The shareholders recognised the position, endorsed the recommendation, and thus the matter was adjusted fairly and honourably. We, too, are in the position of those directors and it does not seem to be right that, while in charge of the public purse, we should put our hands into that purse and pay ourselves £200 extra a year without broaching the subject in any form to the shareholders. Take the position of some of us who have to pass a vote on the Bill. It simply means that some will vote themselves about £1,000 a piece from the public funds. I cannot cast a vote in that direction. If at the next general election for the Legislative Assembly—that body is the one that represents the popular vote—it were put forward by members who were standing for re-election—I admit that a referendum is impracticable—that if returned they would increase their salaries, I would go on the public platform on their behalf and say that such an increase was just. If those members are returned with some mandate, direct or indirect, from the people, I shall be the first to vote for a Bill of this description. I realise that there are members in this Chamber who need the increase. There are some of us to whom it does not matter whether we get the money or not.

Some of us who, fortunately, do not need it, feel as I do that we are in rather an invidious position if we vote against other hon. members receiving that which they really need, but which we do not ourselves require. It is a hard position to take up but in some instances we have to steel our hearts. We are in positions of trust representing the electors and I do not think we have any right to vote ourselves amounts which, as I have already indicated, will represent nearly £1,000 to some of us, from the public funds without consulting, directly or indirectly, those who sent us here. Of course it is impracticable to hold a referendum on the question, because the voice of the people would be against any increase being allowed, merely because they would not really understand the position. I can also conceive that members who were standing for re-election would be at some disadvantage. There would probably be some who would say, "Mr. Jones, who is standing for re-election, wants £600. I will do the job for £400." In such a position Mr. Jones would be handicapped. Even taking that into account, I think we must act up to the trust imposed upon us, and we ought not to take the money ourselves until we have at least referred the question to those who sent us here. In the circumstances, I am sorry I cannot support the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. H. A. STEPHENSON** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.45]: I have listened attentively to the remarks of the Chief Secretary, with most of which I agree. I think £400 is not an adequate allowance for a member of Parliament, particularly if he be representing a country district or if he be in another place and so has to go before his constituents every three years. I have been a business man for 35 years. Some little time ago when applications were called for a person eligible to contest an election for the Metropolitan-Suburban Province, certain qualifications were prescribed. The conditions were that the candidate should hold the seat for six years and that his allowance should be £400 per annum. I nominated and was fortunate enough to be elected. So, as a business man I feel that I have made a contract with my constituents; and I have never yet amended a contract without giving the second party a voice in the matter. In these circumstances I feel I cannot support the Bill.

**HON. J. M. MACFARLANE** (Metropolitan) [3.48]: I am in accord with most of the remarks made by the Chief Secretary. If I were asked whether I thought £400 was an adequate allowance for a member of Parliament, I should say no. I realise of course there are many members in both Houses to whom an adequate allowance is essential. The demands made upon a member are all that the Chief Secretary has said they are. My position is very much the same as that of Mr. Stephenson. I have accepted a seat in the House for a given period at a given remuneration and so I am unable to support the Bill. Moreover, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that we are carrying a deficit of some 6½ million pounds, that we cannot square the ledger. Nor am I able to forget that I came into the House pledged to a policy of economy. Also, I am convinced that the Public Service strike when it occurred was caused by the injudicious way in which members of Parliament raised their own salaries.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Nothing of the sort. I was a Minister at the time.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Well, that is what I believe, and plenty of others believe it also.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is quite wrong.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: In my opposition to the Bill I may be doing an injustice to certain other members and also to future candidates for seats in the House. I could not agree to submit the question to a referendum, for I feel that we should not by that means get a proper reply from the people, who of course cannot know all the facts. Yet, if the proposal could be put before the people at the next Assembly elections, and if the people were not too pronounced in their opposition to it, I should be prepared to support the Bill if it were brought down immediately after those elections. I must say that most of the members seem to feel that an increase in the allowance would be only a fair thing, and I admit I have not yet met anybody opposed to it. Still, I must vote against the Bill, for, as I say, I have made a contract with my electors and I want to honour it.

**HON. J. CORNELL** (South) [3.53]: All the previous speakers seem to be obsessed with the idea that, having been elected on an allowance of £400, the condition must stand so long as they remain members. The reas-

oning is illogical. Mr. Stephenson has said that he considers it to be a contract. If so it is only an ex-parte contract. That is the interpretation Mr. Stephenson himself has placed upon it. I invite members opposing the Bill to bring forward some more definite reasoning. When going up for re-election 18 months ago I was told that I would be handicapped by virtue of the fact that on a previous occasion I had voted for an increase of £100 in the allowance. You, Sir, I remember, were broad-minded enough to support that increase. However, during the whole of my campaign not any elector raised the question of my having voted myself another £100 per annum, nor did any ask whether if I were re-elected and the opportunity occurred I would do it again. Our political history shows that members of Parliament who have been so supersensitive as to refuse to accept an increased allowance voted them by their fellow members have suffered political extinction. We have had that spectacle in the National Parliament. There, one member refused to take the increase until he got the order of the sack, whereupon he made a public appeal for it. The latest instance in the history of Federal politics is supplied by Mr. Angus, of South Australia, who was the only member of the Federal Labour Party opposed to the increase. He refused to take it and, perhaps as the natural consequence, the other day he got notice to quit. One could quote innumerable instances of members of Parliament who, having raised the specious plea that to vote themselves an increased allowance would be to do an injustice to the electors, have been fired by the electors at the first opportunity. I have not heard one elector raise either of the pleas that have been urged in another place and are being urged here, namely, that a referendum should first be taken, or that the Bill should be passed but held in abeyance until after the next Assembly elections. Public opinion may be accepted as a safe guide. In my callow days, probably when I wore a red tie—I have sobered down since then—I believed in the referendum, but my candid opinion of it to-day, formed in the practical school of experience, is that it merely provides an opportunity for members to shelve their rightful responsibilities. That is the best that can be said for the referendum in Australia.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is quite correct.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We all agree with that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I feel sure that a majority of members will not take refuge behind a referendum. Members generally are returned to Parliament with certain definite mandates, but apart from those they are expected to give the best of their intelligence to the interests of the community. In times of crises and when important questions confront them, they are expected to shoulder their responsibilities and submit to the judgment of the electors. When the Parliamentary allowance was increased by £100, a few years ago, it was said that all members who supported the increase would be driven out of political life. Yet many of the members who voted for the proposal on that occasion are still in Parliament. As to passing the Bill but allowing it to remain in abeyance until the infuriated electors can get at the members of another place, such a course would not be in keeping with the dignity or decorum of this Council. We would not be justified in following that line of action. To do so would not be honest, because while the whole of the Assembly members have to go to the country at the next general elections, this Council is a continuous House and only 10 of its 30 members retire every two years. Consequently if the electors endorsed the salary increase, it would be regarded as the verdict of the country, and only one-third of the members of this House would have risked their skins at the hands of the electors. Logically we can adopt only one course, and that is to say that in our opinion the present allowance is adequate and should not be increased. In another place, however, a majority of more than four to one representative of all sections of political thought have declared emphatically that the present allowance is inadequate. To the credit of members who supported that view, be it said, they did not indulge in any specious argument nor did they attempt to sidetrack the issue; they contented themselves with showing that the allowance was insufficient and should be increased. Such an honest process of reasoning must appeal to the commonsense of electors. If we pass the Bill, I am satisfied there will not be an exodus of Assembly members at the next general elections as some speakers here would have us believe. The question is whether the allowance is sufficient. I have no compunction whatever

in supporting the Bill as it stands, and I would not fear to face my constituents tomorrow on the simple issue whether the allowance was adequate. It has been stated that some members in both Houses find the allowance insufficient if they are to give proper attention to their constituencies, while other members are so fortunately circumstanced that it does not matter whether they receive the allowance or not.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is not so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That was the argument of Mr. Lovekin. If it is not so, I shall not press the point. Still it does not refute my contention that there are members who have little more than what they stand up in. When the previous increase was being discussed, you, Mr. President, advanced valid reasons in its favour. You said that the people in their wisdom had decided it was in the best interests of the State that all shades of political opinion should be represented in Parliament, and that poverty should be no bar. You added that if that reasoning were carried to its logical conclusion the allowance must be adequate so that the man least favourably circumstanced in worldly goods could give his services equally with the members more fortunately situated. That argument holds good to-day. Mr. Dodd, Mr. Kirwan and I represent a very large province that is not easy of access. Our constituents include a few hardy pioneers who have gone into isolation to blaze the track for other people. A member of Parliament does not fulfil his true functions by remaining in the city or in one corner of his own constituency, contenting himself with answering correspondence and attending the meetings of Parliament. During my 13 or 14 years of Parliamentary life, the most pleasing and useful part of my duties has been that of moving amongst my constituents. Situated as I am, however, I cannot do that as I should like. There is also the aspect of members of Parliament augmenting their allowance in some other way. Within the last few years I have had two opportunities of augmenting my income in another way. In one case I took the opportunity for a short period. I discovered that if I was going to augment my present allowance in the course I had embarked upon I would have to decrease the attention I had given to the South Province for 12 years by at least

50 per cent. Whilst I could have continued to augment my allowance, and at the end of my term might have put by a little and would not possibly have cared whether I went up for the next election or not, I considered that my first duty was to those who elected me, and that they had the call upon 100 per cent. of my services. I, therefore, dropped the other course. That is one reason why I claim that the salary is not sufficient. I hope the House will view the question from the only practical angle from which it can be viewed—whether the allowance is adequate? It must be admitted that members of Parliament are vested with the authority to fix the salaries of judges of the Supreme Court and of other Government employees. Although I regard the salary for members representing the South Province as being inadequate, I consider it as even less adequate for those who represent, say, the distant provinces, since they have to devote even more time and energy to the work of those provinces than I have. The province represented by you, Sir, Mr. Miles and Mr. Holmes is probably one of the hardest in the State to represent. It is unfair to ask members of the Legislative Assembly and some members of this place to give full consideration to their constituencies, so remote from the capital and so far-flung, if they are not to be allowed adequate remuneration. If this House considers that its members are sufficiently recompensed, it cannot consider that this is so in the case of members of the Assembly. I would be prepared, if this could not be made general, to see that members of another place had meted out to them the justice that is due to them. The Legislative Assembly should be the indicator of public opinion. It is charged with the prerogative of imposing taxation, and is the custodian of the public purse. It has given an emphatic decision upon this question. The reason advanced by the Premier will commend itself to every right-thinking elector of the State, who would, if this House agrees to what he has asked should be done, not only in the interests of Parliamentarians but in the general interests of the State, think the right thing had been done and that members of Parliament were justified in supporting him. The reason why members of the civil service committed the act they did was not because members of Parliament had increased their salaries, but be-

cause of the breaking of a promise that was made to them.

Hon. J. Duffell: That is the point.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am intimately acquainted with many prominent members of the service. I heard at the time, and I have heard since, that they offered no objection to the increase in the Parliamentary allowance, but they felt that they were long suffering and that the fulfilment of the promises that had been made had been delayed. On the latter ground they took the action they did. I support the second reading, and trust that members will make the increased allowance general, or at all events mete out belated justice to members of another place. If they do this, I am sure they will have no need to fear the electors.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.20]: As one who will have to face the so-called "infuriated electors" in a short time I do not wish to give a silent vote on this question. At one time of my life I looked with suspicion upon the statements of members of Parliament in another State when they tried to impress me with the fact that they found it hard to make ends meet. They were drawing a higher salary than we are getting here. It takes actual experience to find out the value of the salary we receive. I have had a varied experience in business and as an ordinary workman. It was a matter of surprise to me to find after a few months in Parliament how hard a job it was to get along on the allowance I received. Most of us who have any regard for the country, have a desire to do our best to improve its conditions and help it along. When I entered this Chamber I was astonished to find the enormous amount of work that had to be done, apart from the actual duties of a member of Parliament. I refer particularly to social work, in which I have always taken a great interest. I find that the Parliamentary allowance restricts one's activities. Through being financially embarrassed one is not able to do certain work that one is capable of doing and would do were the allowance greater. Money does not appeal to me. If I had £2,000 a year there would not be much of it left at the end of the 12 months.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are not going to move to increase the allowance to that extent, are you?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, I merely wish to show that I do not value money as such

Members should not be placed in this position and so restricted in their activities. I must admit the question has been fairly dealt with by those who have spoken against the Bill. They have treated it generously. Every speaker has admitted that the allowance is inadequate. Mr. Cornell has fully answered the question they have raised against the Bill. Although I am a great stickler for honour and integrity, I do not look at it in the same light as do other members. When I put myself forward as a Labour candidate for the West Province, the question of salary did not trouble me, nor did it trouble my electors. I am not afraid to go before them and tell them what I think about the business, nor am I afraid to explain my reasons for voting for an increased allowance. I support the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. A. J. H. SAW** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.25]: I fully agree with a great deal of what has been said as to the inadequacy of the present allowance of members of Parliament. This applies particularly to those who cannot well continue their avocations whilst they remain in Parliament. Some of us are so fortunately placed that we are able to a certain extent to carry on our professions or businesses whilst we are devoting a large amount of our time to the service of the country, and I hope are justifying the allowance already paid to us. We are thus favourably situated as compared with many other members. It is undoubtedly a great pecuniary sacrifice that one makes when one becomes a member of the Legislative Council. I, therefore, fully sympathise and agree with what has been said as to the inadequacy of the allowance. I am quite prepared to go on the hustings and say I think it is not sufficient. There is, however, another aspect of the question. We are the custodians of the public purse. When most of us sought election we did not indicate that we had any intention of voting for an increase in our Parliamentary allowance. There are two methods whereby it would be justifiable for us to add to that sum. The best way would be that when there is a dissolution of Parliament the candidates who enter the field—this need not be made a party question—could announce that if returned it would be their intention to vote for an increase upon what they might regard as an inadequate salary. No one could then cavil at an increase being made. That would

apply only to a certain section of the Legislative Council, because under our Constitution only one-third of our members retire every two years. If that method were not adopted, there is another which might minimise any slur that might be cast upon us on account of our increasing the Parliamentary allowance. This was a proposal suggested in another place that such increase should only take place after the next election. If either of these courses was followed, it would remove some of the objections and criticisms that have been levelled at Parliament by the reason of this suggested increase in the allowance. Another method has been mooted, a method I regard as ridiculous—that of a referendum. Personally I have very little regard for a referendum on any but the most extremely important questions. I think that to take a referendum on the question of the parliamentary allowances would be absurd. In the first place, it is not likely that the proposal would meet with approval; and that I regard as a serious objection. Nobody willingly votes an increase of pay to the other fellow. I oppose the suggestion of a referendum on that ground, and also on the more serious ground that this would be a ridiculous question to put to people by way of referendum. I consider that members are fully justified in voting for an increase of salary, but I personally prefer to cast my vote against the proposal. As for any fear of the electors, I have no fear whatever as to how they will regard this question. Knowing what I do of the electors, I am perfectly sure that in six months they will have forgotten all about the subject. Most assuredly they will have forgotten all about it in 15 months, which period terminates the life of the present Parliament.

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

#### **MOTION—POLICE FORCE, PENSION ALLOWANCE.**

Debate resumed from the 25th November on the motion by Hon. J. Duffell—

That in the opinion of this House it will be conducive to the best interests of the State if provision be made for the payment of reasonable pension allowances to members of the police force who may be injured, wounded, or

maimed in the execution of their duty, and for adequate allowances to their dependants in the case of death.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.33]: I do not know where Mr. Duffell obtained the information on which he based his motion, but I do know that even if the Government put his proposal into operation, it would not meet with the approval of the Police Association. What the police ask is not a pension scheme for members of the force injured in the execution of their duty and allowances for their dependants in case of death. The Police Benefit Fund already provides for an allowance being granted to dependants by way of lump sum in the circumstances referred to by Mr. Duffell. What the police ask for is a scheme for pensions to men on reaching a certain age, or on retirement or for disability. It will be realised, therefore, that no good purpose would be served by carrying the motion. The scheme would not be acceptable to the police, for the simple reason that it would provide no remedy for the grievance under which they consider they labour. The motion asks that the Government should establish and build up a separate fund for a purpose already served by the Police Benefit Fund. Admittedly the police have greater claims to recognition in the way of pensions than numbers of other public servants, but the question of finance governs the whole situation. Moreover, for the last 20 years the policy of successive Governments has not been favourable to the granting of pensions to public servants. The opinion of the Government Actuary has been sought in reference to the estimated cost of a pension scheme such as the police desire. According to his calculations, made early last year, it would involve the State in an annual expenditure of £11,000, and the force itself would have to raise a similar sum, provided that the present system of pound for pound subsidy were continued. The Government Actuary's report, which is dated the 5th February, 1924, reads—

In Western Australia there are about 500 police officers with an annual pay roll of about £120,000. In the last financial year about £8,240 was contributed by the Government and the men, quite apart from interest on investments. To put the Western Australian force in the same position as the Victorian, the same of £8,240 would require to be increased to £22,200. This assumes that the age distribution, salaries, and other con-

ditions are practically similar in the two forces. This, of course, is unlikely; but I do not think any very wide divergence will be found to exist.

There have been material developments since that report was written. The total payment to the force has been increased from £120,000 to £145,000 per annum, and instead of £11,000 per annum being contributed by the Government and the men, such contributions would have to be increased to approximately £13,000 per annum each. The present annual contribution of the Government to the Police Benefit Fund is £4,400, plus a special Parliamentary grant of £300. To establish a pension scheme would mean an increased annual expenditure of £9,000. When interviewing the Minister for Police in August of 1924 on other matters, the representatives of the Police Association brought up the question of pensions, and were informed that an opportunity would be given to discuss the matter at a later date. At the interview a request was made for increased pay and improved conditions; but the Minister pointed out that the association had agreed, when the last increases were granted some nine years previously, not to request further increases unless the cost of living increased. The cost of living being about the same as when the previous increases were granted, the Minister said that improved conditions would not be conceded; but he promised to look into the question of a pension scheme. Before that question was dealt with, the Police Association revived the request for increased pay, and subsequently a board was appointed, which granted increases amounting to an annual charge of approximately £25,000 spread over 500 men. That was only a few months ago. In the circumstances the Minister considered that it was not possible to give further consideration to the police, on account of the extra expense that would be incurred by the adoption of a pension scheme. The Government are of opinion that, taking into consideration the money required for the expenses of other departments, it would not be possible to agree to such a large expenditure on a police pension scheme, especially in view of the consideration which only recently has been given to the force in the way of increased remuneration. I hope Mr. Duffell will withdraw the motion.

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

**BILL—RESERVES.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

**HON. H. A. STEPHENSON** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.41]: The Bill deals with various reserves, only one of which I want to refer to. It is that mentioned in Clause 7, Subclauses (3) and (4). Instead of taking up the time of the House now, I shall move amendments in Committee.

**HON. J. DUFFELL** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.42]: Regarding the reserve mentioned by the previous speaker, it would be just as well to adjourn the debate, instead of passing the second reading now. I understand that a petition is being largely signed by residents of the district affected. Until that petition is laid before the Chamber, members will not be sufficiently seized of the facts to permit them to record an intelligent vote on Clause 7. The matter is of vital importance to the people in the locality. I support the Bill generally.

**HON. A. J. H. SAW** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.43]: The last clause of the Bill is one vitally affecting my constituents, as it does those of my colleagues Mr. Duffell and Mr. Stephenson. Undoubtedly there is in South Perth strong objection to the alienation contemplated by the Bill. I have no intention of opposing the second reading as the Bill affects several other parts of the State. My objection will be much better made in Committee. If the Leader of the House will take the Committee stage at the next sitting, we might pass the second reading now.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

*Second Reading—Amendment, six months.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd December on motion by the Chief Secretary that the Bill be now read a second time, and on amendment by Hon. H. Seddon, to strike out "now" and insert "this day six months" in lieu.

**HON. J. E. DODD** (South) [4.44]: The Bill provides for an increase in water rates, and is being opposed on account of what is stated to be incapacity on the part of the engineering staff. Another reason advanced for objecting to the Bill is that the present provisions for increasing our water supplies are said to be conceived hurriedly and with no co-ordination whatever. Further than that it is also said that the Bill is unwarranted by reason of the fact that we can get all the water we require from the hills. I admire Mr. Lovekin's energy and the way he endeavours to get at the bottom of all questions he discusses, but I am not convinced by his reasoning on this occasion. I will admit regarding the Mundaring supply that to me as a layman, and I believe to 90 per cent. of the people who know anything about it, it would appear that we could get enough water from that source for the metropolitan supply. It seems almost inconceivable that the immense body of water running to waste from Mundaring every year could not be impounded in some way or other and made use of for the purposes of the metropolis, rather than that we should go in for the scheme that is now before us. If that were feasible it would lessen the cost to the consumer and to others above Mundaring, including the mining and agricultural communities. I look forward to the time when we may have reticulation throughout the agricultural areas as they have in South Australia and some of the other States. Then I am faced with the fact that not one expert who has reported upon the water supply question has been in favour of water being drawn from Mundaring for use in the metropolitan area. I do not know of one expert who has been called upon to furnish an opinion, and which opinion has been favourable; each one seems to have been against the Mundaring scheme. It would be a very bold department and a very bold Government that would go against the advice of experts who were called upon to furnish those opinions. Therefore, I feel that to defeat the Bill on the arguments used against it would be absolutely wrong. I would also put this point before those who oppose any increase in rates and prices. If we were getting water from Mundaring, could any hon. member say that the Government would not be justified in asking for an increase in the rates? Has not the

price of every commodity increased considerably since the war?

Hon. J. Nicholson: There has been an increase in the assessments.

Hon. J. E. DODD: The Government are justified in asking for an increase in rates and prices. When Sir James Mitchell foreshadowed this scheme he made it clear that the charges would have to be increased. There is one other point to be considered in connection with the hills water supply. I refer to the resumption of land for catchment purposes. It has always amazed me to think that with our small population it is necessary for so much land to be resumed and held out of cultivation. I cannot conceive where we would end if Perth were a city like Sydney or any other large city in the world. If their catchment areas were based on the same system as we have, we would probably find that half the agricultural areas would be withdrawn from cultivation and included within a catchment area. I have been astonished when going through the hills to see the area of land resumed and orchards put out of use merely for water catchment purposes. Mr. Hamersley stated that a pipe line had been laid from Mundaring to the Mt. Victoria Reservoir. That statement is wrong. No such line has ever been laid from Mundaring.

Hon. A. Lovekin: He meant Mt. Hawthorn.

Hon. J. E. DODD: That is all I wish to say. It seems to me decidedly unfair to deny the department or the Government the right to recoup themselves to some extent in view of the great increase in prices of commodities, of wages and everything else in connection with the water scheme. I oppose the amendment and support of the Bill.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—on amendment) [4.51]: Mr. Seddon has moved an amendment: "That the Bill be read this day six months." I congratulate those who are behind Mr. Seddon on their strategy which aims at the defeat of the measure. First, Mr. Lovekin, the chairman of the select committee that inquired into the metropolitan water supply, made a fierce onslaught on the administration of the Water Supply Department. He levelled charges that could easily have been refuted or explained. Then this amendment was sprung on the House. What is

the effect of it? Mr. Lovekin's allegations remain unanswered. They cannot be answered, because my mouth has been closed by the amendment which is now the only question before the House. It is hard to conceive that Mr. Lovekin did not know what was coming. It is difficult to realise that he was not aware that Mr. Seddon, another member of the select committee, contemplated this attempt to wreck the Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: I did not know of it, and I was a member of the select committee.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: No, it is not true.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** The much fairer course would have been for Mr. Lovekin to reserve his charges until Mr. Seddon's amendment had been launched. He did not choose to do so, but made the attack and then spiked my guns. That a country member like Mr. Seddon should have moved such an amendment is an unfathomable mystery to me. No metropolitan member would have had the hardihood to move it. It is the most astounding development I have witnessed during the whole course of my Parliamentary life. What is the position? Here we have a wealthy city, the capital of Western Australia, throbbing with commercial activity, and the Government spending, or about to spend, millions of the people's money in order to provide an ample water supply. It is proposed to fix a rate to cover the cost of administration, maintenance, interest and sinking fund. The amendment is an effort to tie the hands of the Government and hinder them from making the scheme self-supporting. Since 1896, nearly 30 years ago, the rate has been only 1s. in the pound on the annual rateable value. The war has come and gone. The capital expenditure has increased by £710,200 since 1918-19. That does not include the hills scheme. The expenditure on account of wages, salaries, and material of every kind has increased, but the rate remains the same.

Hon. J. Duffell: You forget the assessments.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, what about the assessments?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** The scheme is not paying. There have been deficits for six years, and the accumulated shortage is now £72,919.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Due to waste.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** It is not due to wages entirely. No doubt wages have in-

creased, but so also have salaries and the cost of material.

Hon. H. Seddon: Mr. Lovekin said "waste," not "wages."

Member: What is the difference?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The deficiency last year amounted to £28,200 and there will be a deficiency of £35,000 this year. The deficiency grows like a snowball as the years roll on.

Hon. J. Ewing: And that is without the hills water scheme.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Every local authority in Western Australia has had to increase its rates, but the metropolitan area continues to get water at the old rates and the general taxpayers of Western Australia have to meet the losses. The first count in Mr. Seddon's indictment is that the Water Supply Department has not put its house in order in accordance with the select committee's report. What is the position regarding that report? It has not yet been adopted by this House. It is still on the Notice Paper and has been there for months, but no attempt has been made to finalise it.

Hon. J. Duffell: We have not been able to get an opportunity to speak.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have put no obstacles in the way. No hon. member will say that I have prevented a discussion upon the motion.

Hon. J. Ewing: Quite right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not been approached by any hon. member regarding the matter and repeatedly there have been opportunities for the discussion to take place. In some instances I was asked not to bring the motion forward for debate. Last September there was little or no business on the Notice Paper for over a fortnight. I approached several members and asked them to keep the debates going in order that the House might continue transacting business. Several times we reached the motion in question, but for some mysterious reason it was not touched for months. How can any Government consider recommendations of a select committee until they are before them officially? The House may not adopt the select committee's report. What is the use of considering a report that may be rejected by the House? Then again, the select committee has shown remarkable inconsistency. In the interim report presented in November of last year, the committee recommended to the Govern-

ment that the work at Churchman's Brook should be stopped. In its final report in December, only one month later, it recommended that the work should proceed. In Mr. Lovekin's latest speech he indicated that he would stop the work.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I said I would do so if it were my business.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Which advice is the Government to follow? How can we find our way out of the meshes of such impenetrable entanglements? Mr. Seddon referred to the large quantity of water unaccounted for annually. Information received from the Eastern States—refer to reports from Sydney and Adelaide—now in the possession of the Water Supply Department—indicates that the losses there are just as great as they are here. The Engineer-in-Chief, who has had considerable experience of these matters, regards the wastage as not abnormal considering the present percentage of metered service. The department is well aware of the benefits that would accrue from a higher percentage of metered service, and is now obtaining further supplies of meters. In the next place the department is attacked by Mr. Seddon for not introducing a system of garden fees such as is in operation in Sydney. What a paltry ground on which to seek to defeat the Bill. The question was considered by the department in 1918 and again in 1921, and the conclusion arrived at was that the system was unsuited to Perth owing to the sandy soil, the limited supplies of water available and the probability of water being used excessively on non-metered services. Under the Sydney system water is not supplied through meters, but on an area basis. Here in one breath we have Mr. Seddon condemning the department for not using meters, and in the next breath for using them. Next comes the condemnation because Mundaring Weir has not been tapped. Let me give members some information in respect of this: In February, 1904, Mr. Palmer, who was engineer-in-chief of the department, reported on the comparative merits of artesian bores and the Canning scheme, and recommended artesian bores as a temporary measure. In July, 1903, Mr. Davis, Under Secretary for Works, Sydney, recommended further bores and a supply from the Canning River. In 1907 a board

was appointed to report on the hills scheme, and recommended a reservoir on the Upper Canning River. From 1907 to 1920 no action was taken to provide augmented supplies from the hills, owing to financial difficulties and the war. But in 1920 Mr. E. J. Ritchie, engineer, Metropolitan Water Works, Melbourne, endorsed the recommendation of the hills board for a gravitation supply from the Canning River and its tributaries. None of the reports referred to recommended Mundaring, and in dealing with the question of augmented supplies no Government could ignore the recommendations of professional officers appointed to make investigations. Mr. Leslie, an engineer of Perth, and who was resident engineer at the Mundaring reservoir, has been frequently referred to in connection with the select committee's report. It is interesting to note that Mr. Leslie, who was a member of the Hills Water Board appointed in 1907 to consider the question of augmenting supplies from the hills, was opposed to the proposal to increase the storage of Mundaring Reservoir. Let me quote from the water board's report of 1907 as follows:—

Mr. Leslie moved and Mr. Hargraves seconded, "That it has been proposed to increase the storage of the Mundaring Reservoir by permanently raising the crest level of the dam without increasing its thickness; and alternatively by means of flood gates across the stillway. The additional quantity of water that could be made available by either of these methods is comparatively small and does not, in our opinion, compensate for the risk involved." The resolution was carried, Mr. Haynes dissenting. . . . Mr. Leslie said that as a business man he would take the Upper Canning scheme . . . Mr. Haynes moved "That in view of the fact that the elevation of the Helena wall by 5ft. will conserve sufficient water to give a daily output of 7,000,000 gallons, and that where as the estimated quantity required in the metropolitan area for the next 10 years will not exceed 5.6 million gallons per day, of which 1.4 million can be obtained from Victoria Reservoir, leaving 4.2 millions to be provided, that forms a suitable place for immediate supply." He did not consider the raising would in any way injuriously affect the stability of the wall. The motion was lost for want of a seconder. Mr. Leslie was present.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Have you adopted the Upper Canning scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am dealing with Mundaring. I have referred to Mr. Leslie's action in that respect. It would be pertinent to ask why the select

committee did not obtain the views of Mr. T. C. Hodgson, who was the engineer in charge of the Mundaring scheme and who is still in this State. It will be seen, Sir, what Mr. Leslie's attitude was, and it will be seen also from my previous remarks that Mr. Ritchie, whom Mr. Seddon quotes as favouring connection with Mundaring, actually endorsed the recommendation of the hills board for a gravitation supply from the Canning River and its tributaries.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You did not adopt that, you know.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: These are the grounds on which Mr. Seddon has built his attack on the Bill, these are the grounds on which he asks the House to throw on the taxpayers of Western Australia the burden of financing the water supply of the metropolitan area, on which there is at present an accumulated deficit of no less than £72,000. If he succeed in carrying his amendment it must mean that the deficiency will have to be met and shared by miners, farmers, timber workers, and pastoralists. The community generally is asked to find £35,000 more at the end of this year in order to provide Perth with cheap water. That is the position.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not the position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In order to provide Perth with cheap water.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The public are doing the same for the farmer and the miner.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government are spending enormous sums in financing this water supply. The interest bill is rapidly increasing. Who will have to pay the piper? The men working in the mines, on the farms, in the timber mills and on the pastoral stations outback.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Get rid of the waste before asking for more money.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is not the first effort that has been made to relieve the metropolitan area of its financial obligations in respect of water supply. Three years ago the Government put up a regulation prescribing the prices to be charged for water used for domestic and industrial purposes. Mr. Lovekin moved the disallowance of the regulation and succeeded in convincing members of this House, with the result that the department lost £5,000 per

annum. At that time there was a deficit on the metropolitan scheme.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Stop the waste.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If this amendment be carried a loud protest will go up from country districts. They have borne with great patience a large expenditure in respect of the water supply for the metropolitan area, and no doubt they would also tolerate the huge contemplated expenditure of the future. It is felt that the metropolis is in need of an adequate water supply, and in reasonable circumstances the country people would offer no objection. But they will strongly object if they are taxed to provide Perth with water for its lawns and gardens at a price below cost. This amendment is most unfair. We have a newly appointed Engineer-in-Chief, a man with the highest qualifications, and before he has warmed the saddle of office an attempt is made to prevent him giving proof of his attainments. Figuratively he has not been 24 hours in the country when an effort is made to thwart him. No wonder it is difficult to get any number of men to take these positions. The Government experienced great difficulty in getting a successor to Mr. Thompson because it was realised that he would have to face the criticism of a section of the Press and a section of our public men.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How can you say that more money is required if he has not yet inquired into the question?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot conceive that the amendment will be carried. I do not know how even metropolitan members could bring themselves to support it, for from my experience of them I know that they have a sense of fairness. They can have no desire to transfer their financial obligations to the general taxpayer. I confidently expect that the Bill will not be rejected, and that it will not be said of the flourishing city of Perth that it is not prepared to pay for the water it consumes, but seeks to shunt its financial responsibilities on to the public Treasury.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [5.12]: I can well imagine that the desire for finality on this question has actuated the Minister in making his vigorous speech. The Government, no doubt, are seriously considering this water scheme and are endeavouring to do what will be in the interests

of the people of the metropolitan area. The Minister has told us that the total deficit on the ordinary scheme, exclusive of the hill scheme, is £72,000, and that it will be added to by £28,000 this year and by another £35,000 next year.

Hon. A. Lovekin: In 1936 it will reach £247,000.

Hon. J. EWING: To meet the increased expenditure that has built up the deficit the Minister in charge of the department desires to increase the rate. I can readily understand Mr. Lovekin and those associated with him in this question being somewhat alarmed at the position. At the same time they must realise that, if the ordinary scheme is costing so much, when the hill scheme is started there will be a necessity for the Government procuring authority to increase the rate. The present rate is 1s. and it is proposed to increase it to 2s. Probably sewerage and storm water will double the present rate.

Hon. A. Lovekin: More than that, because the assessments are going up also.

Hon. J. EWING: The select committee that inquired into this question arrived at the conclusion that there is waste of money involved in the work being carried on at the present time. That was emphasised by Mr. Lovekin only a few days ago. That is not sufficient reason for stopping this work. The trouble really hinges on the vexed question of day labour versus contract. About 450 men are engaged on the new scheme under the day labour system. The hon. member gave a graphic description of what was taking place at Churchman Brook, and in that was supported by other members of the select committee. It appears that there is some waste, but how can we cure it? Not by stopping the works. It is the policy of the present Government to carry out work on the day labour system.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That should be stopped.

Hon. J. EWING: We have not the power to stop it. The Government have a majority in another place.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do you say it is the policy of the Government to indulge in waste?

Hon. J. EWING: No. If what the hon. member says is correct, a better system should be adopted. I ask Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Nicholson how it can be stopped.

Hon. J. Nicholson: By giving the new Engineer-in-Chief an opportunity.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Hon. J. EWING: I wished briefly to cover the whole ground without speaking a second time. If the Government place the matter in the hands of the new Engineer-in-Chief and let him carry out the work, I suppose there will be considerable saving.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would not you wait until he asks for more money?

Hon. J. EWING: The money is necessary in order that the work may proceed. The Minister has stated that unless Parliament agrees to increase the rating power and place the burden on the people who should bear it, the people of the State generally will have to bear the increased cost.

Hon. A. Lovekin: What authority have you for saying that?

Hon. J. EWING: The Minister made that statement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The Minister says the Engineer-in-Chief has not yet looked into the matter.

Hon. J. EWING: Unless an increased rate is granted, the cost of the scheme will have to be borne by the whole of the people of the State.

Hon. H. Seddon: We say, "Save that money."

Hon. J. EWING: The position as explained by the Minister is correct. Therefore we have to take the responsibility of deciding whether we shall give the Government authority to increase the rates as the work proceeds.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would not you wait until the new Engineer-in-Chief has reported?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not believe in delay. The Minister carried our minds back three years when certain rates were increased by regulation, and exception was taken to the regulation by Mr. Lovekin. If we give the Government power to increase the rates from 1s. to 2s., members will have an opportunity to criticise their proposals when the regulations are tabled. We are not justified in saying to the Government that, as they proceed with the hills scheme, they shall not be authorised to impose additional taxation on the users of the water. I shall support the second reading because it will be incumbent on the Government to table the

regulations when increased rates are imposed, and thus members will be given an opportunity to veto them.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do not you know that all the extra interest is being added to the capital?

Hon. J. EWING: Yes. The community realise the necessity for the new scheme. I have not seen any evidence to convince me that the additional quantities of water required could be obtained from Mundaring. Mr. Hamersley quoted some interesting figures and members of the select committee have urged that greater use should be made of the Mundaring scheme, but Governments since 1903 have considered that question and have concluded that the scheme was not practicable.

Hon. H. Seddon: Have you read the Hills Board report?

Hon. A. Lovekin: He has not read it.

Hon. J. EWING: The Minister has assured us that the Mundaring proposal was not as good as the Canning scheme.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That has been abandoned. It is not the proposal we put up.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Ritchie reported against the Mundaring proposal.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And the Government turned down Mr. Ritchie's scheme.

Hon. J. EWING: The Government are proceeding with the work at Churchman's Brook and next year they propose to start the Wongong scheme. It will be a good many years before the Canning reservoir is begun. Let the Government proceed with the Churchman's Brook and Wongong scheme, which will enable them to supplement the water supply of Perth, and then the new Engineer-in-Chief will have time to make an exhaustive inquiry into the Mundaring proposal and finality can be reached long before it is necessary to start the Canning scheme. Then, if the Government think fit let them appoint a board, as suggested by the select committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not leave it to the Engineer-in-Chief now? It may not be necessary to have the increased taxation.

Hon. J. EWING: It would be highly improper to stop the work at this stage. All the engineers who have had anything to do with the department have recommended this work to the various Governments, but I have no doubt the Government will have an exhaustive inquiry made into the Mundaring proposal. To deny the Government the

right to increase the rating and thus place the burden of the interest charges for capital expenditure on the general taxpayers instead of on the users of the water, is not a reasonable proposition.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But they are adding the interest charges to capital.

Hon. J. EWING: The other day the consumption of water in Perth went up to 16,000,000 gallons. Each year witnesses a substantial increase in the consumption during the heat of the summer. The city of Perth is going ahead by leaps and bounds and the whole of the metropolitan area is improving, reflecting the general progress of the country. What will be the position of Perth in a few years' time? The Government contemplate spending  $4\frac{3}{4}$  millions of loan money this year, which must redound to the advantage of the city. Members will not deny that water must be supplied, and the only question is whether we are justified in denying the additional rating powers that the Government desire to impose upon the users of the water. For many years the bore water has given rise to considerable vexation and trouble. We want to abandon the bore supplies and provide the pure hills water for the people.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Read the engineers' evidence and you will see that that is in the distant future.

Hon. J. EWING: The bores will be abandoned as soon as we have the hills supply. At present 13 bores and five pumping stations are in use. We should face the position fairly and give the Government an opportunity to proceed with the work. If the Government's programme of work is interfered with, it must prove inimical to the metropolitan area. I am not prepared to adopt an attitude of that kind.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You do not understand the position.

Hon. J. EWING: The new scheme entails an expenditure of about £3,000,000.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: The capital cost will be £6,000,000.

Hon. J. EWING: I am referring to only one of the schemes. The work must be done gradually, and it will probably be 12 years before the whole of the capital is required.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is a pity you did not read the reports of the department before you spoke.

Hon. J. EWING: One or two of the recommendations of the select committee have already been carried out. A highly efficient engineer has been secured by the Government and he, no doubt, will be instructed to inquire into the Mundaring proposal. The Churchman's Brook scheme should be completed as early as possible. I do not wish to discredit the work of the select committee who presented a wonderfully good report, but I consider there is nothing to justify the rejection of this Bill.

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

#### MOTION—RAILWAY DINING CARS.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 19th November on the following motion by Hon. A. Lovekin:—

That the present system of leasing the dining cars on the railways, especially on the goldfields line, is detrimental to the best interests of the State, and should be immediately altered or revised.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [5.30]: I have no desire to proceed further with this motion and, with the permission of the House, I shall withdraw it.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

*House adjourned at 5.32 p.m.*