

## Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 13th August, 1894.

Casualty Ward, Fremantle—Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Bill: first reading—Celebration of Marriages (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill: first reading—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): first reading—Sewerage and Water Supply for Perth and other towns—Return of Registered Reefing Claims in the Yilgarn and Murchison Districts—Proposed Abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board—Transport of Fat Stock from the Northern Districts—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

### CASUALTY WARD AT FREMANTLE.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier—

1. Is the Casualty Ward at Fremantle open to all persons meeting with accidents, whether belonging to the Government service or otherwise?

2. Is the Colonial Surgeon entitled to charge for patients other than Government employes admitted to the ward?

3. If so, is there any recognised scale of fees chargeable?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied—

1. Yes.

2. The Colonial Surgeon, Fremantle, is not entitled to make any private charge whatever, except in cases where a surgical operation is necessary, when he may charge a fee to those who can pay.

3. There is no recognised scale of fees for surgical operations. The Government charge for casualty ward is 3s. a day, to those who can pay.

### REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

### MARRIAGE BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

### LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved, "That Mr. Speaker leave the chair, and that the House do now resolve itself into a

committee of the whole to consider His Excellency the Governor's Message re Loan Bill."

Question put and passed.

### IN COMMITTEE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, "That it is expedient that an appropriation be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the purposes of a Bill intituled 'An Act to authorise the raising of a sum of One million five hundred thousand pounds by loan, for the construction of certain public works, and other purposes,' and to amend 'The Loan Act, 1893.'"

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and report adopted.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), having introduced the Bill, moved that it be read a first time.

Question put.

THE CHAIRMAN: I should like to call the attention of members to what has just occurred, because it is a sample of what too frequently occurs, as I have often noticed, when questions are put from the chair and decided on the voices. Very often no audible "Ayes" are heard, and, in this instance, the only voice actually heard was from one hon. member who said "No;" though, of course, the intention of the committee is that the question put should be decided in the affirmative. I will put the question again, but I wish it to be understood that, after this occasion, I shall have to rule that a question cannot be put a second time, when the voices are once declared.

Question put and passed.

### SEWERAGE SYSTEM AND WATER SUPPLY FOR PERTH.

MR. TRAYLEN: Mr. Speaker—I must say that I rise with a good deal of trepidation to move "That in the opinion of this House the healthfulness of Perth cannot be preserved unless measures be taken to remove refuse waters from the city; that a sewerage scheme offers the most effectual method for accomplishing this purpose, in combination with the removal of solid refuse; that the control of the water supply should be in the hands of the same authority as that which manages the sewerage system; and

this House hereby requests the Government to introduce a measure, during the present session of Parliament, which shall meet the exigencies of the case, and be generally applicable to other towns as occasion requires." I feel some trepidation, sir, because I realise that there are very grave issues depending upon this motion. If I should fail to put the matter with sufficient force and clearness as not to carry conviction to the minds of the members of this House, I shall be leaving matters in a state which is most undesirable and most dangerous to the public health. Possibly, at the outset, some objection may be taken to the mention of the city of Perth alone, to the exclusion of other towns of the colony, in the resolution; but I merely mentioned Perth as being in my opinion the town which most needs a sewerage scheme, leaving the interests of Fremantle and other towns to be represented here by those who have been elected for that purpose. It might, perhaps, give rise to a slight feeling of resentment were I to speak of the sanitary condition of towns in which I do not reside, and of which I have no clear knowledge. Health, sir, I am sure we must all admit is one of the first considerations? We have more regard for it, perhaps, when we have some aches and pains about us, as most of us have had experience of in the course of our lives, than when we are young and vigorous, and have very few of these aches and pains. Still, anything that affects the health of the community should, I am sure, secure very careful attention on the part of those of us who are here to legislate for the wants and requirements of the country. I do not propose that in this matter we should apply exactly the same kind of legislation to every part of the colony, but to frame such a measure as will enable those places requiring special provisions for this purpose to avail themselves of them. It is a very generally acknowledged principle, in the present day, that there are various kinds of diseases that are known as preventible diseases, because it is within the power of man to prevent them by taking certain sanitary precautions. Amongst the most noticeable of these is that of typhoid fever, and another one almost equally prominent is that of infantile diarrhoea.

Somebody has said about typhoid that it is occasioned by particles of matter discharged from one human being entering the body of another human being, and carrying with them the germs of the disease. I dare say that is not a very scientific definition of typhoid fever, but I believe it is a very true one. We know it is possible to communicate, and to have communicated to us, the germs of typhoid in this way. At the present moment we can scarcely help communicating this disease from one to the other in Perth, because we have no system of drainage by which we can get rid, advantageously and expeditiously, of human and other refuse. The resolution contemplates, in the first place, the removal of waste or refuse waters. It does that, because in Perth we have just accepted a tender by which solid refuse may be removed in a way which, at any rate, will be a little improvement upon the method of removal adopted in the past. But now there is that menace to health and that danger to life which arises from people being obliged to throw into their back yards, along some of our principal streets, the waste water and liquid refuse from their houses, or doing that which is almost as bad, run them into what are called—somewhat facetiously I suppose—dry wells, which very soon become choked and useless, and are themselves, I think, worse than the danger they are intended to remedy. Whatever is done, whether the refuse water is conveyed into a dry well, or thrown upon the surface, the effect is this: our surface soil in Perth is becoming, year by year, very much polluted. If we go on, year after year, attempting to use the soil as a filter for refuse, it will become—like all filters when they are not looked after—clogged. At present the defiling process goes on much more rapidly than the cleansing process, while at the same time we are filling the air with pestilential odours and vapours, and breeding disease; and will continue to do so, so long as we allow our waste water to be disposed of in the way I have indicated. There are several methods of removal that may be adopted, and have been tried in other places. Some are driven to the almost ruinous method of cartage. I believe it would take almost a fortune to remove it from a household of importance by that method. Another practice is that adopted

in some large cities, and which has been advocated for Perth; that is, to make open sewers or drains in the streets (usually called "water tables"), and discharge all refuse waters into them. I do not think I can very well call to my aid at the present moment language sufficiently strong to denounce such a practice as this. I regarded the idea as an old wife's fable when I first heard that this was done in such a city as Melbourne; but, to my surprise, I found it was true. However, if we were to adopt that method of disposal in Perth, the cost of making the necessary water tables would be simply enormous; and, after all, it would only be a temporary expedient. The sewers would have to come afterwards. Were we to adopt this system of removal of our waste waters by means of open drains in the public streets, I think we would render ourselves open to the severest censure. There are places in Perth now where soapsuds and other refuse waters are turned into the streets, and we know from experience that the practice is objectionable in the highest degree. I might refer, as illustrations, to places in William Street and Murray Street. My own conviction is that a system of sewerage is the only practicable and efficient one, especially as it at the same time affords an opportunity of carrying away solid refuse as well. In the reports that were furnished to me in the other colonies, some twelve months ago, amongst other things it is stated that, when this system of sewerage was adopted in the city of Adelaide, typhoid fever practically disappeared. That, in itself, sir, speaks volumes; and it is only one illustration of what has resulted from adopting a sewerage scheme such as I should like to see introduced in Perth. It may now be asked, with some degree of pertinence, whether our present Acts are not sufficient to accomplish all that is necessary in this direction without resorting to fresh legislation? I answer, they are not. There are nominal powers in the Municipalities Bill, where it is mentioned specifically that Municipal Councils may apply certain moneys to sewerage purposes; but I do not hesitate to say that this is wholly impracticable, and I think I can put my case with sufficient clearness to carry the whole House. Let me take the

newly-formed municipality of Coolgardie as an illustration. So soon as a township like that is created into a municipality, sewerage is one of the last considerations the local authorities are likely to have in view. What they will have in view will be the formation of streets, the making of footpaths, and other useful works; and, after a time, when they have borrowed money for these purposes and spent it, possibly the question of sewerage will force itself upon the inhabitants. But by that time it is almost a dead certainty that the Municipal Council has borrowed all the money it is empowered or able to borrow, and expended it in the direction I have indicated. Therefore, I say it is absolutely impracticable for any town existing in Western Australia to-day, under its present circumstances, to use its funds for sewerage purposes, even with the new Municipalities Bill now before us, though nominally the power to do so is there. I will just call attention to the position of Perth in this respect. We have now borrowed within a very few thousand pounds of our utmost limit, and the utmost limit proposed in the new Bill; how then can we find the money to engage in such a costly scheme as a sewerage scheme? It is a wholly impracticable thing, unless further powers are given to the municipality than it at present possesses, or is proposed to give it, in the Bill already before us. I may perhaps be met in this way: may we not so extend the powers which that Bill contemplates as to enable Municipal Councils to deal with this question of sewerage? I cannot advise this; I am strongly opposed to it, and I think I can make my point clear. I do not think there would be any serious difficulty in extending their powers to this extent, if each municipality were going to become an independent and separate individuality of its own, and have no surroundings, nor conflicting interests. But we all know that every municipality in this colony will have, in the course of time, a number of sister municipalities established around it; and it is wholly impossible to devise any good method by which these separate municipalities can carry out their different sewerage schemes without trespassing upon one another. In a very short time Perth will probably have a sister municipality in Leederville, and then questions like these will arise:

how can Leederville accomplish its drainage and sewerage schemes without entering and encroaching upon the Perth municipality; and how can Perth get rid of its waste waters by carrying them beyond its own boundaries—as it will have to do—without trespassing on some locality over which the municipal authorities have no power whatever? Therefore I must uphold that any extension of powers to Municipal Councils, by such a Bill as that now before us, would not really meet the circumstances of the case. Now I come to another phase of the resolution, which contemplates that the water supply of a town should be in the same hands as those which manage and control its sewerage system, because the owners of these sewers must have free access to an abundant supply of water. If they have to come to terms, from time to time, with the water supply authorities, I think some difficulty will arise, and the work of flushing these sewers will be imperfectly done, and the scheme will be more or less a failure, when it should be a great success. I am able to point to a city like Sydney as an illustration of my contention. Sydney has been obliged to come to the conclusion that its sewerage and water supply must be in the hands of a common authority. Some years ago that city undertook its own plan of sewerage, but owing mainly to the cause I have indicated—its inability to go outside its own boundaries—the plan proved a signal failure. The waters of the harbour were so polluted that the law had to step in, and compel the sewerage authorities to make other provisions; and, instead of having municipal control, they have been obliged to have a board of control. Melbourne also found its difficulties very considerable, and there also legislation had to be adopted to create a new authority to deal with these questions, resulting in the establishment of a Metropolitan Board of Works, which proposes to remove the waste waters of the city, by means of sewers, a distance of some seventeen miles out of Melbourne. This somewhat accentuates what I said, that each municipality will, in all probability, have to go outside its own boundaries to dispose of its refuse matter. I do not know that I ought to lay before the House at this stage—I think this is not the proper time for doing so—the

details of a scheme I have myself prepared for dealing with this question, so far as Perth is concerned, because I desire now to adhere to the general proposition embodied in the resolution before the House. I will only say that I hope the House will agree generally to what is expressed in this resolution; and, if that is done this evening, then I can proceed further in the matter, and table another resolution, which will enable me to place my scheme before the House for its criticism. If approved, the Government could take up the matter with confidence as to the issue, knowing what would be the mind of the House. Therefore, without now explaining the scheme in detail, I beg to move the resolution standing in my name, and which, as it states, is not intended alone for Perth, but to apply generally to other towns in the colony, as occasion may arise, either for adopting a system of water supply without sewerage, or sewerage without a water supply, or both in combination.

MR. WOOD: I rise to second the motion of the hon. member for Greenough, and I do so with very much pleasure, because I think that this question of sewerage is of paramount importance to the city of Perth. I quite agree with the hon. member that sewerage and water supply should be under one control, and I trust that the Government will be able to give this motion their support, and will be prepared to bring in some comprehensive measure, and either undertake to work the scheme themselves or place it in the hands of an independent Board to carry it out. I think the needs of Perth at the present time in this direction are very pressing indeed, and I only trust the House will favourably entertain the motion, and that it will be carried without a dissentient voice. I think we can safely follow the lead of the hon. member for Greenough in this matter of sanitation, because I look upon him as not only a very enthusiastic advocate of reform in this direction, but also one who has taken a great deal of trouble in making himself thoroughly acquainted with the working of various schemes of this kind which have been adopted in other countries. Therefore I think that in this matter we cannot do better than follow his lead, for, if we do so, I do not think we are likely to make much of a mistake. I therefore

have much pleasure in supporting his resolution.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member who has moved this resolution has stated some home truths about the matter, no doubt; and, in a portion of the resolution he has placed before us, possibly many members of the House will be inclined to agree. He invites us first of all to record our opinion "that the healthfulness of Perth cannot be preserved unless measures be taken to remove refuse waters from the city"; and, secondly, "that a sewerage scheme offers the most effectual method for accomplishing this purpose, in combination with the removal of solid refuse." If I understand him correctly he says that the sponge or filter on which we have been camping here in Perth for the last fifty years is full now, and choked. That is the proposition. The hon. member proposes a sewerage scheme to remedy this state of things, but I do not think he told us the cost of it. That is a point the Government will have to consider. What does a sewerage scheme mean? What does it involve? I do not know, myself. I am only an amateur engineer, but my amateur opinion is that if we adopt anything in the shape of an efficient sewerage scheme in Perth—and I defy the hon. member to controvert it—the cost will at least be £200,000. It would cost that much to make a commencement. That is my opinion as an amateur, and I should like someone else to offer his opinion. If we inquire into the matter at all we shall find that my estimate is not far wrong—that to make a start with any comprehensive and efficient scheme would cost at least £200,000. The pumping machinery alone, I am told on good authority, to carry out any scheme of any dimensions at all, would cost from £60,000 to £80,000. Therefore, it will be seen that this question will resolve itself into one of finance, and ways and means; in other words can we afford it? No doubt the most effectual way of dealing with these matters would be by means of a sewerage scheme; and, I suppose, situated as Perth is, it will be acknowledged there must be one or two pumping stations, as we are on a low level, and it would never do—nor is it contemplated—to cast the refuse of the town into the river. Therefore it must be pumped away

a considerable distance. I only hope it is not intended to pump it on the North beach in front of Cottosloe. I think I will carry other members with me in that. Where else can it be pumped, except in that direction? We must empty it into the ocean, I take it. I only mention this fact to invite members to a contemplation of the expense. Any scheme of sewerage, if it is to be an effectual scheme, must necessarily cost a very large amount of money. No doubt it will come to that, sooner or later, and it may be said that the sooner we make a start the better will it be. Well, I do not think that the way to start is to have a Bill. We have too many Bills already. It seems to me that the moment we get into any difficulty in this country, the first thing we want is a short Bill to set us right. Now, I protest against all these Bills, for my part. Why, we are up to the neck in Bills already upon this very subject. The hon. member himself, session after session, has endeavoured to have Bills passed dealing with the public health, and he has been the means of getting some of them placed on the statute book. But I would like to ask him, and those who are associated with him, what proportion of those Acts have been put in operation? I say, without hesitation, little or no proportion. We have already a very big Health Act governing these matters, and one or two amending Acts; and it seems to me that the efforts of the hon. member, and of the City Council too, never go further than getting reports upon this nuisance and that nuisance. I fail to see any action taken by a single soul, either in prosecuting any person who commits an offence within the four corners of the Act, or in removing any nuisances, dead animals or otherwise, that are reported upon. What's the use of making a report, when the fact remains that if you find a dead animal in the water course that supplies Perth with its drinking water you leave it there, and are satisfied with making a report? I believe it is a fact, what I am saying. How many of these dead horses and dead bullocks that have been reported from time to time, and published in the daily papers, have been removed by the Board of Health or by the City Council, or by any person whose duty it is to remove them? What proceedings have been taken to

compel people to remove these nuisances? If it is the duty of anyone to take such proceedings, surely it is the duty of the Local Board of Health, or of the City Council. But do they make it their duty to see that these nuisances are removed? No; they ask for another Bill. But another Bill will not remove these dead animals. Another Bill will not remove the refuse of the city, solid or liquid. I should first like to see the powers which these bodies already possess put in force. If they are not sufficient, let us give them additional powers by all means. But, until the Acts already on the statute book are enforced, I for one cannot agree that if we have another Bill it is likely to accomplish a great deal of good. I am afraid that if the Government this session brought in another Bill, and it passed through this House, it would simply remain a dead letter, like other legislation in the same direction, because it would not be enforced. Of course, as I have said, anything that concerns the city itself, or any town of the colony, as regards sanitation would be well served by the scheme hinted at here—a scheme of deep drainage or sewerage; but there is the expense. If the Government sanctioned this motion they would be agreeing to bring in a Bill dealing with this matter, and which would commit them to an expenditure, in their opinion, of at least many thousands. Now, can we afford at the present time to immediately commit ourselves to an expenditure of say £200,000 upon a sewerage scheme for Perth, and not only for Perth, but the colony generally? Would it not answer every purpose, and would not the hon. member who moved this resolution be quite satisfied with accomplishing something in the shape of obtaining a select committee, or a commission if you prefer, to inquire into this subject, to learn the expense and the best scheme, and to bring that before us? We do not know whether it is feasible, and, if so, at what expense, to give Perth a system of sewerage, and also the other towns of the colony. We have made no inquiry whatever. No engineers have been consulted on this matter that I am aware of; and what scheme may be floating in the hon. member's mind he has not told us, but kept it for a later date. It occurred to me,

and to the Government, that some investigation should be made, and some thought given to this subject, before we commit ourselves to introducing a Bill. Why not first ascertain what is the best scheme for Perth? I have been told by gentlemen who came from some of the other colonies that some very large towns there are served by a system which the hon. member has referred to, and which I believe he advocated for some time—the double pan system. They say it has been successful in some large cities in New Zealand, where it has answered very well. I do not think myself it would be equal to a sewerage scheme; but, at any rate, if it answered at all it might be well for us to inquire what system of drainage we should undertake, and the expense of it, before we commit ourselves to it. At the present moment, to ask us to say that we are prepared or will undertake to introduce a measure during the present session for this purpose, is, I think, asking really too much. The Government are not prepared to introduce a Bill this session dealing with this subject. No doubt the hon. member thinks that the Government are going to pay for this system.

MR. TRAYLEN: No; I am not asking for anything.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I am very glad to hear that. I am glad to think that the hon. member recognises that the municipalities should bear the burden of such undertakings on their own shoulders. The Government may be asked with some reason—I am not saying now whether it would give it—to guarantee a loan for this purpose; but it is distinctly a municipal matter, this question of sanitation. It is a question to which our municipal councils should give their attention, and not ask the Government to do work of this description. It is for the municipalities to elaborate their schemes and decide what is necessary, and bring their information to the Government, and make some request to facilitate the raising of a loan for this purpose by the municipalities themselves. At the present time I have simply to say that the Government are not prepared to introduce a Bill this session, although of course we have much sympathy with the aspirations of the municipalities in this direction, and would

help them with the assistance or advice of our own officers in the matter. We are quite willing to assist in that direction, and to further any application that may be made hereafter to obtain money to carry out any well considered scheme.

MR. JAMES: Will the Attorney General tell me where the City Council has the power to apply to the Government for assistance towards such a scheme as he suggests? While the hon. and learned gentleman was filling the rôle of Mark Twain in the early part of his speech, he was, to some extent, amusing, but not impressive; and most of his speech had as much to do with the resolution before us, as it had with the price of wool. He asks us what is the use of introducing another Bill when there are measures already in existence that are not enforced? Surely he must know that the statute book is full of measures that are never enforced, full of sections that remain inoperative; and when the hon. gentleman says he sees no necessity for another Bill dealing with this subject, he is speaking of a matter of which he knows absolutely nothing. Assuming, for the purpose of argument, that the presence of dead animals in the streams on the Darling Range has anything to do with a sewerage scheme for Perth—I do not know that it has, but assuming it to be the case—I may inform him that the removal of the dead animals has been attended to promptly, and the carcasses destroyed even before the reports were received. Perhaps I do not know much about the matter myself, for I happen to be in this peculiar position: I happen to be a member of the Central Board of Health—of course they know nothing about these things—and also a member of the Local Board of Health, and they know nothing about such things. The hon. gentleman talks about municipalities neglecting to enforce enactments which are already in existence. Municipalities are not singular in this respect. If I remember rightly, last session, or the session before, an Act was passed to amend the Police Act, for the express purpose of striking at the advertising of certain sweeps, and, if I remember rightly, a prosecution was brought against a certain newspaper for publishing these advertisements. The

prosecution was dismissed by the magistrate, and there was loud talk in a certain department of the Government with which the hon. and learned gentleman has something to do, about appealing against the decision of the magistrate. But nothing was done in the matter. The law giving the right of appeal already existed, but it was not enforced, and the fault rested with the department over which the learned Attorney General himself presides. Having got away from the amusing part of his speech, he went on to deal with the question of cost, and said that a sewerage scheme for Perth would cost at least £200,000. The hon. gentleman told us it would not do to pump the refuse waters of the city into the ocean, and this, that, and the other; might I suggest that he overlooked what he himself told us in the early part of his speech that, being only an amateur, he knew nothing about the matter. Might I also suggest, is it not waste of time for an hon. member to speak about what he admittedly knows nothing? The hon. gentleman spoke a great deal about the cost of this scheme, after prefacing his remarks by stating that he is only an amateur engineer, and knows nothing about the matter. Another inconsistency he indulged in was this: that the municipality had no right to come to the Government and ask them to undertake this work. We never asked them to do so. This motion simply asks the Government and this House to give us the power to help ourselves. We have not got the power to help ourselves in this matter now. It is impossible under existing statutes—and no one knows it better than the Attorney General himself—for the municipality to borrow money for carrying out a scheme of sewerage, and we want powers to enable us to grapple with the difficulty of our position. The hon. gentleman cannot dispute the facts mentioned by the mover of the resolution, nor can he be blind to the fact that the adoption of some sewerage scheme for Perth is a most urgent need. Yet when we come forward and ask the Government to introduce a Bill giving us the necessary powers to deal with the matter, the hon. gentleman says we have plenty of Bills already, and that the Government have no time to prepare another

Bill this session. All I can say is, they ought to have time. It wouldn't take long, under the present system of drafting Bills. It is simply a matter of a little use of scissors and paste—articles which are not unknown in the Attorney General's department. I hope that members will distinctly understand that in putting forward this motion no attempt whatever is made to ask the Government to undertake this work themselves, instead of the Municipality undertaking it. All we want is the power ourselves to grapple with the difficulty. It is for the House to say whether we are to have that power, or whether the sanitary condition of the city is to become worse and worse every year, because the Government are too busy with their borrowing and spending policy to prepare a Bill to give the municipality powers to grapple with the evils referred to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The question which is before the House is, to my mind, one of very great importance, and one to which I have given some thought and attention in another place. My desire, however, is simply to call the attention of the House now to one important fact bearing upon the subject, and it is this: according to prepared statistics, it takes £200 to produce a man twenty-one years of age. Perhaps members, or, at any rate, the Government, can hardly see the application of the fact to the question under consideration. I will endeavour to point it out. On an average, I say, it takes about £200 to produce a man twenty-one years of age, or thereabouts. Now, it is a well-known fact that typhoid fever lays hold of young men when they are at their strongest, just at that particular age between 21 and 30; and the mortality in this colony from typhoid fever has been very severe indeed. We had twenty-one deaths from typhoid on the Cue goldfields alone within very few months. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that in this colony we lose 200 able-bodied young men every year from preventable diseases, and each of these young men cost us £200 to replace, the actual money loss—without speaking at all from a humane standpoint—the actual money loss is the small item of £40,000 a year.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about a sinking fund?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I can tell the hon. member it is a very serious sinking fund for the colony when you come to put 200 able-bodied men underground annually, largely through the want of sanitary precautions. As to the proposed sewerage scheme, I do not think that a sewerage scheme is the best system for adoption in Perth—that is, the sewerage scheme which is in the mind of the hon. member for Greenough. I may say that I have given a considerable amount of attention to this question, and when I was in Europe I took the trouble of going to Amsterdam for the purpose of examining the system in operation there, which is very much better than any graded system, and I believe it could be adopted in both Perth and Fremantle for less than £300,000. If we were to borrow that sum at four per cent., and provide a sinking fund of one per cent., £15,000 a year would cover the cost of the whole scheme. It has been said there is no intention to ask the Government for the money to carry out this sewerage scheme, but that the municipality should have the power to borrow the money itself. I cannot see why the Government should object to assist our municipalities in an important matter of this kind, which has to do with the preservation of human life, and which has to do with the most important problem that can be placed before us—the question of how we can best secure healthfulness in our cities and towns, and how we can reduce our rates of mortality. We are fond of talking about inducing people to come here, while at the same time we are allowing the sanitary condition of our towns to become a standing menace to the health of the whole community, and a danger to life. I have said that with an expenditure of £15,000 a year we can secure an effective system of drainage in our two principal towns; and I am prepared to show that the Government have wasted a great deal more than that during the year that has passed, and are likely to waste a great deal more than that in the year that is coming. Seeing, however, that the Government in this instance are not asked for any money at all, I think the very least they can do is to assist the City Council and other municipalities to put themselves in a position in which they can cope with this ques-



tion. I am surprised that the Government should show any opposition to a question of this importance. I hope the Attorney General is not speaking for the Government in this case, and that the Government as a whole will be in favour of the proposition, now that we have had some further explanation as to what is intended by the mover of the motion, and that all the Government are asked to do is to bring in a Bill. In any case I shall give the motion my hearty support.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** If it were only a matter of bringing in a Bill to give the City Council and the other towns of the colony the power to undertake these works, I have no doubt it would be possible to do it; but, can anyone in this House bring himself to believe that, if we passed a Bill to-day, the city of Perth, or the town of Fremantle, or the other large towns of the colony, are in a position to undertake these costly works at the present time? I do not exactly know what the revenue of the city of Perth is at present, but I should say it is not more than £15,000 a year. I do not know that it is as much as that, even with the Government subsidy. If this drainage scheme is to cost £200,000, five per cent. on that would mean £10,000 a year. Will anyone say that the citizens are prepared to put their hands in their pockets to provide such a scheme at the present time? In my opinion Perth is not yet large enough, not populated enough, to undertake this work. I do not believe the people can afford it, nor do I believe that they are willing to undertake it. As to what is said about the unhealthiness of the city, and as to its being altogether an unfit place to live in, I cannot believe it. I think that with ordinary care, and the adoption of something similar to the process now being carried out, or about to be carried out, for the removal of refuse, we may get along for the present. In the city of Melbourne, I understand, with its hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, they have the same system as we have here.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** And murder hundreds and thousands a year.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** At any rate the great colony of Victoria has not been able to introduce into its chief city such a system of drainage as is proposed here.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Because they have not the Bill we are asking for.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** I don't think it is the want of a Bill, but the want of money. Perth is not the only town that will want a drainage scheme; are the Fremantle people, are the Albany people, are the Geraldton people, are the people of Coolgardie—which will soon be as big a town as any of them—prepared to undertake this work? I have no hesitation in saying they are not. They are not in a position to find the money. Even with a Government guarantee, if the Government were to say "We are prepared at once to guarantee your loan," I am quite certain there is not one single town in the colony that would be able at the present time to undertake such a work as this. There are other questions almost as important as this, affecting every town in the colony—the question of water supply, for instance. There is scarcely a town in the colony that is not more anxious for an improved water supply than for a system of sewerage, and they have not been able to devise a scheme yet, and I am afraid they are not likely to, unless the Government provide the funds. None of these towns are able to provide funds in order to pay the interest, even if the Government guaranteed their loans. The resolution goes on to say that we should place the water supply in the hands of the same Board as the sewerage scheme. Perth, at present, is the only town in the colony that has a good water supply, and that is in the hands of a private company. The City Council entered into a contract with this company to supply the city with water; they did not ask the Government for any assistance—perhaps it was out of the question in those days—and, before this undertaking gets into the hands of a Board, we must first get it out of the hands of the private individuals who now hold the concession. I believe that a further sum of £180,000 or £200,000 would be required for that. Are the citizens prepared to borrow that sum, even with the guarantee of the Government, and another £200,000 for this sewerage scheme? I say they are not prepared to do it. At any rate I think we should have some intimation from them that they are prepared to do these things, and to incur this

large liability, before we go into the question of passing a Bill. As to preparing a Bill giving them the power, I think nothing of it; that could be done with very little trouble. It would be very easy to do that, compared with the difficulties of carrying out the provisions of such a Bill. At the same time I think the hon. member for Greenough is to be commended for moving in this direction; he has moved in it for a long time, and keeps at it, and in the end no doubt he will succeed. But I do not believe it is so pressing a matter as the hon. member would make us believe. Let us first take a little more trouble with the system we have got. Let us go in for this double pan system we have heard about, and do things a little more cleanly than now, and I believe we can get on a little longer, until our population increases. We may then be able to adopt some more efficient and expensive scheme. I hope the time is not far distant when not only Perth but other towns of the colony will be in a position to undertake such works, but I do not think there is any necessity for us at present to hurry ourselves over the passing of a Bill for this purpose.

MR. MORAN: With reference to this very pleasant topic that has cropped up, I think it might not be impertinent on my part if I said that in Perth, at the present moment, there are back yards which are a disgrace to any civilised community.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Why doesn't the City Council look after them?

MR. MORAN: These yards are not in the condition they are in for the want of a sewerage scheme, but for the want of a little cleanliness and decency on the part of the owners. I know of premises not a hundred miles from the Town Hall, where people congregate in considerable numbers, and I know from personal experience that the sanitary condition of these premises is a positive disgrace, and a menace to the health of the vicinity. It is not necessary to say any more; but I believe that if the proper authorities of the city were to travel about the town a little more, and their inspectors of nuisances were to make a little more use of their olfactory organs, there would not be so much outcry about the insanitary condition of the city. I think it was rather ridiculous and far fetched for the

hon. member for Nannine to introduce into this debate the fact that there had been several cases of typhoid on the Cue goldfields. I do not see what that has to do with the necessity for a sewerage system for Perth. The surroundings of a new goldfield are necessarily different from the surroundings of a settled town. I can fancy the hon. member bringing forward a sewerage scheme for Cue or Coolgardie, at the present moment, involving a cost of £200,000 for each town. Until such places are created into municipalities, and become invested with executive functions, the question of preserving the sanitary condition of the place becomes largely one of simple duty between man and man. It is impossible to say at once how long a goldfield is going to last; it may be worked out in a few months, and those on the field will clear off to some other rush. It is only when a field becomes thoroughly established, and the residents are invested with corporate powers, that questions of this kind can be dealt with. Even then, as has been pointed out by one hon. member, there are other questions, such as the formation of streets, which must occupy the attention of the municipal authorities before they are likely to undertake costly sanitary measures. There are large towns in some of the other colonies which have not yet been able to face this expenditure. In Brisbane, a city nine or ten-times as large as Perth, and supposed to be in advance of it in other respects, the municipal authorities have been afraid to tackle a sewerage system for that town. Perth, I think, by reason of the conformation of the town and the nature of the soil, presents greater difficulties than any city I know of for carrying out a system of deep drainage. It would probably cost double as much to provide such a system for Perth, with its porous soil, as for Brisbane where the prevailing soil has a rocky foundation. Unless a scheme of this kind is established on a sound basis, and is such as will provide not only for present but also future requirements, it is no use attempting it. Although it is said that the City Council do not propose to ask the Government to provide the funds for such an undertaking, I take it they will want a Government guarantee; and those who lend the money will look to the Government to repay it in the event of the munici-

pality being unable to do so. The Government of the colony would have to come to the rescue if the Municipal Council found itself in difficulties. It would never do to let it go abroad that the capital city of the colony was unable to meet its liabilities; and, I take it, that a loan of this kind would have to be looked upon in the light of a public debt. I agree with the suggestion that has been made that this matter should be referred to a committee or commission, to inquire into the whole question, and see what scheme would be most suitable, what it would cost, and whether the powers already possessed by the municipality, if properly enforced, would not answer every purpose for the present.

MR. LEFROY: I am sure all of us must agree that this motion, in itself, is a most praiseworthy one, and, though it may not receive the approval of a majority of the House, still, I think the hon. member who brought it forward will have the entire sympathy of the House in regard to the importance of this question of sanitation. Although it is not likely that the motion is going to be carried this evening, I think it would be well that the hon. member should be informed by other members—I wish to do so myself at any rate—that we are in entire sympathy with him in the object he has in view. I cannot help thinking that when a question of this kind comes before the House it would be better if it came in the form of a distinct proposal from the chief municipal body of the colony (that is, the City Council), after it had been fully considered and threshed out. This does not seem to be a proposal of that sort, but a proposal that has apparently emanated from the hon. member himself, and not from the City Council. Of course, I have not the slightest doubt but that he has consulted that body, and he may be introducing it at the request of that body; if he is, he has not informed us of the fact. Still, if it can be shown that the health of the colony is in jeopardy, owing to the insanitary condition of its chief city, I think there is not a member in this House who would not come forward to assist the metropolis to improve its sanitary condition. Some members may not think that the sanitation of Perth is a matter which should receive the attention and

consideration of the colony as a whole; still, if disease is bred in the capital city, there is a serious danger of its being disseminated throughout the length and breadth of the country. For that reason the question, no doubt, is one of the very greatest importance, and one deserving of serious consideration. At the same time I think we ought to have some specific and well defined scheme before us, which would probably receive more support than an abstract proposition like this. The hon. member, we know, has taken a great deal of interest in the question of sanitation, and I hope he will continue to hammer away at it; and, if he cannot attain his object in this form, I trust he may yet succeed in ultimately obtaining it in some other form.

MR. RANDELL: There is no doubt that the question introduced to the notice of members to-night is a very important one. The question of drainage has occupied the attention of the citizens for many years, and especially with regard to the disposal of liquid refuse, thrown into back yards. The Attorney General has suggested that the hon. member who brought the present motion forward should move to refer the matter to a select committee or a royal commission. With regard to a select committee, I do not think they would have time to go into a question of this kind while the House is in session, and I think a commission would be better than a select committee. At the same time it must be remembered that we have had a commission already on the sanitary condition of Perth, and I believe the result was *nil*. There can be no question that there are some places in the city which are a menace to public health. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, because they obtrude themselves upon our notice. Even if we had not the sense of smell, they appeal to our sense of sight. But I think, as the Attorney General has said, that considerable powers are already vested in the municipal authorities for dealing with these evils; and I cannot help thinking that if these powers were more freely and more stringently exercised, the evils now complained of would be to a large extent mitigated, if not removed. At any rate I do not see how the mere passing of a Bill of this kind would put us forward one iota. Not only would we

have to acquire possession of the present water works, we should also have to enlarge the present reservoir in order to enable us to carry out an effective system of sewerage. To adopt a drainage system which would enable both solid and liquid refuse to be carried away and emptied into the ocean would require an immense volume of water; and I am quite sure that the present reservoir would not more than supply the wants of 15,000 or 20,000 people; so that we would have to enlarge it very considerably, and at a large expenditure, if this system of sewerage were adopted. I am not prepared at the present moment to say anything as to the merits of the deep drainage system; but I say that at the present moment such a system is utterly beyond the means of Perth. Many people are complaining, even at present, at the amount of municipal taxation, and are contemplating going out of the city to live in order to avoid the present high rates; and I am certain that the people are not in a position to bear additional burdens in that direction. To undertake this great work, even with a Government guarantee, would, with our present small population, place such a burden upon their shoulders as they would not be able to bear. I think the motion is premature to a certain extent. We should devote our attention to a more stringent and fuller exercise of the powers we already possess than we have done in the past. I think that means might be found by the City Council, which is also the health authority of the town, to reduce and to minimise the present evil arising from these slops and liquid refuse. If there is an earnest desire to grapple with the evil, I believe that by having reservoirs and having them constantly cleaned out, the nuisance complained of might be mitigated to a large extent. As to the death rate, I am not prepared to accept the statement that typhoid fever and infant mortality in Perth are altogether attributable to defective drainage, or to insanitary surroundings. I believe there are other causes which have contributed to swell the rate of infant mortality, improper feeding being amongst them. As to the cost of carrying out a system of deep drainage, I am afraid we would have to face an enormous expenditure to ensure a really effective system. I saw it

stated in print some little time ago that the cost need not be more than £40,000; but I think we might dismiss such an estimate as that from our minds at once. I believe the preliminary work, the necessary surveys, plans, etc., and the expenses connected with the floating of the loan would almost amount to that. My own opinion of the matter is that it would cost considerably more than the Attorney General says (£200,000). Are we prepared, and are the Government prepared, at the present moment to adopt a motion in favour of a scheme that would put us to an enormous expenditure like that?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It could be made self-supporting.

MR. RANDELL: I do not think the population of Perth is numerous enough to make it self-supporting; and I am sure if Perth could not afford it, other municipalities could not. I think we should first make the fullest inquiry into the best system, and the most suitable system for our requirements, because it must be remembered there are systems equally worthy of consideration as that of deep drainage. In some parts of the world the irrigation system of utilising the refuse of towns upon sewerage farms has been found to work satisfactorily, and been productive of excellent results, and the work made to a considerable extent reproductive. That, however, is outside the motion at the present moment. While at present opposed to the motion in its entirety, I agree with portions of it; and I desire to express my thanks to the hon. member for the persistent way, and for the earnest and intelligent way, he has gone to work about this question of sanitation. I am quite with him in the suggestion that, whenever we arrive at the stage when we can afford to adopt a sewerage scheme, there should be a central authority. I would have been glad if I could have seen my way to support him in his other proposals, because I am in favour of making Perth and other places as healthy and attractive as we can. I am not prepared, however, to agree with him that Perth is as unhealthy as it has been represented; I believe there are other causes than defective drainage which contribute to the death rate.

MR. JOTON: I should be very glad to support the motion if I could see it was likely to lead to any practical result.

The proposition put forward is that we should have a sewerage scheme for Perth and other towns of the colony, and that the Government should be asked to introduce a Bill for that purpose. I have listened very attentively to the speech of the mover of the resolution, and no doubt he made out a very good case as to the desirability of improving the sanitary condition of Perth and other towns. But I expected that in connection with this motion he would either have told us something about the cost of his scheme, and how it was proposed to pay the interest upon the money, or whether he proposed that the Government should provide the funds. It has come out since that there is no intention to ask the Government to provide funds at all. That being the case, one is naturally led to the conclusion that the inhabitants of Perth, or of any other municipality adopting the scheme, are to provide the necessary funds. If that is so, I think he might have made his motion very much shorter than it is. The case would have been met if he had simply asked the Government to bring in a Bill giving the municipalities power to borrow a certain amount of money for such purposes—in the case of Perth say a quarter of a million of money. Although we are all very desirous to see the sanitary condition of Perth improved, we have to ask ourselves this question: are the ratepayers of this city in a position to encumber themselves with the payment of the interest on such a sum as would suffice to carry out such a scheme of deep drainage, in addition to the present rates? The taxation of Perth at the present time is close upon 14 per cent., and if the inhabitants are to be further taxed to the extent of 5 or 7½ per cent. to pay the interest on the cost of this sewerage system and the purchase of water works, I am afraid that instead of attracting population into Perth, you would be taking steps, and very quick steps too, to remove people out of Perth into the outskirts, where they would have more chance of getting rid of their liquid refuse and less taxation. I do not know that the sympathy of members will assist the hon. member in any way; I take it he wants their practical support. But the difficulty in the way of that is the cost of the scheme. The Attorney

General struck at the root of the matter when he said that the question resolved itself into one of finance, and what we have to consider is, are we in a position to afford it? Unless we are, it seems to me that if this motion were passed unanimously, it would really have no practical effect.

MR. RICHARDSON: Just half-a-dozen words. If Perth is to have a comprehensive and efficient system of drainage, or some other means for the removal and disposal of its refuse, and if it is not at present in a position to embark upon any costly scheme for that purpose, is it not worthy of consideration that, in these days of scientific invention and discovery, the probability is that any scheme that could be adopted now would be out of date a few years hence? There is also the possibility that what would cost £1,000 now might be accomplished for £100 at no distant date. It strikes me, looking at the matter from a practical point of view, that the whole thing is premature.

MR. TRAYLEN: I am afraid that hon. members are not behind the scenes. I say it in all seriousness, I am afraid hon. members are not behind the scenes; if they were, many of them would not have spoken as they have done to-night. Let me take up my good friend the Attorney General first of all, who has a dreadfully red rag before him in this motion, in the shape of a short Bill. How many Bills, short and otherwise, the hon. gentleman has himself introduced I would be afraid to guess, they are so numerous; but if anything is proposed by anyone else, in the shape of a small Bill, it becomes as a red rag to him. The hon. gentleman spoke somewhat dubiously as to the practical value of two or three Bills that I have been successful in passing through the House from time to time. It may then be news to him to learn that prior to the first amendment of the Public Health Act which I carried through the House, filth of every imaginable description was placed in the water course which flows into the Victoria reservoir from whence the city of Perth draws its water supply. When we were first armed with the powers of that Bill we found a manure heap in this water course. That manure heap was removed, as well as other disgusting nuisances that I

cannot even mention here to-night. Such, in fact, was the alarm created by the mere knowledge that the Bill was going through the House, that a large area of trees was cut down to prevent these disgusting practices being observed. Surely it was worth while to pass that Bill, even if it only remedied those things. Some of us belonging to the City Council have also seen a slaughter house, which is only some few feet from the stream that feeds the Victoria reservoir; and it was possible for entrails and offal of every description to be washed by the rain into the reservoir. To get rid of this offal several pigs were kept, only a few feet from the stream, and no words that I can use can convey to members the state of that pigstye—all liable to be washed out into the water we are expected to drink. As a result of that first Bill—that first red rag—it was possible to put an end to that sort of thing; and there is now an agreement to prevent such disgusting material from finding its way into the stream. Take another Bill, the one passed last year, which related mainly to making it possible for the City Council to initiate the double pan system, which has been commended by the Premier this evening. We have been trying to adopt it for months back, and only a few days ago a contract was entered into, which will make a saving of £500 to £600 per annum to the inhabitants of Perth. If a Bill of mine has succeeded, and will succeed, in doing that, I do not think the Attorney General need hold it up and say, "Here is a little Bill of the hon. member for the Greenough, of no use."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Never worked I said; not that it was of no use.

MR. TRAYLEN: At any rate we have accepted a tender, and we shall enter into a contract, and the hon. gentleman will find that the Bill will work, and go a good way towards making the sanitation of Perth better than it is to-day. But this double pan system will not touch my present motion at all. It has nothing to do with the refuse water from our households. That evil will remain in all its horrors. It is said, "Use the powers that you have." How much better, I ask, would it be to turn this refuse water into the streets? I say it is not safe to do it. I saw quite

enough of that elsewhere, and the reports from where it is allowed are of the most disgusting kind, and show how dangerous it is to the health of the inhabitants. If that were a good system, Melbourne might have been content to remain as she was, instead of spending millions (as she is now doing) over the scheme of sewerage suggested by Mr. Manserg. The hon. member for East Perth has taken the words out of my mouth with reference to the dead animals referred to by the Attorney General. Those dead animals have been attended to by the officers of the City Council, but we want the Government to protect us, by keeping away bullocks and horses from a block of adjacent Crown land which we cannot interfere with. I have been somewhat taken to task for not disclosing the scheme of sewerage which I propose. It is very hard to please everyone. It is the old story of the old man, and the boy, and the donkey. One suggested that the donkey should carry the old man, another suggested it would carry the boy, and it ended in the old man and the boy carrying the donkey. It is difficult to know sometimes what to do. I thought I had stated why I did not enter at present into the details of the scheme, but now I am blamed for not having done so. As I said, I am only asking the House at present to affirm the general principle. After the discussion this evening, perhaps it would be better for me to ask leave to place on the table of the House the draft of a Bill I have prepared, and which will lay the whole scheme before hon. members. It will not commit the Government to anything, if I simply lay the Bill on the table. If the House desires it, a debate may then be raised upon the details of the scheme. But I wished this evening to confine myself to general principles, which are incontrovertible. It has been asked: can we afford this scheme? I should like to know can we afford to do without it? That is just as much of a poser as the other. Can we afford to do without it? I say we cannot. I must twit the Government with inconsistency in this matter. They have placed before us an Employers' Liability Bill, which is designed to save life to some extent. I dare say there are numerous lives lost through the carelessness of employers, but their number is infinitesi-

mal as compared with the number of lives lost through preventible diseases. The Government is prepared to take up this comparatively small subject of saving human life by bringing in an Employers' Liability Bill, but it objects, it appears, to save life by providing means to prevent those diseases known as filth diseases. From my knowledge of municipal life, and my knowledge of the existing Acts, I say there is nothing in these Acts giving any power to municipal councils at present to absolutely save us from the dangers I have tried to depict. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Randell) has said that infantile diarrhoea is caused by bad food. Very likely it may have something to do with it. But so great is the importance of this subject of infant mortality that, on the continent of Europe, someone has thought it worth while to write a large volume upon infantile diarrhoea, and the writer says he has no doubt that surface pollution is the main cause of death. Quite independently of the conclusion of this writer, someone else in England wrote a book on the same subject, and arrived at exactly the same conclusion. I venture to say that, in the face of authorities like these, I am amply justified in averring that much of the infant mortality that is going on in Perth and elsewhere springs from surface pollution. I have been asked, too, about the cost of the scheme, and some estimates have been suggested. £200,000 seems to be the amount taken (as the auctioneers say) to start with, and the bids have gradually risen to a quarter of a million. I may say, in the first place, that my propositions are not affected by the question of cost; the resolution only deals with general principles. Still, as the question of cost has cropped up, I may say this: if the Government can find money for a park on Mt. Eliza, and find money for filling up the river foreshore for purposes of recreation, and find money for twenty-one other things for making the city of Perth more attractive, they can afford, surely, to give us a guarantee (which is all I ask) for raising a sum of money to accomplish this more important work. If some member starts the cost at £200,000, and it goes up at one bid to £250,000, I think I am equally as justified in somewhat varying my own estimate of the cost, and commence with

£80,000. Some members seem to think that I contemplate miles and miles of drains reticulating the whole city; but I never suggested it. All I contemplate, for the present, is the drainage of our two or three main streets, where the population is more concentrated, and where it is utterly impossible to be healthy without some system of sewerage. These, too, are the localities that are best able to bear the necessary rate for such a purpose. Then, as to the interest on the money; we are told it would involve an additional taxation of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., on the top of the 14 per cent. which it is said the ratepayers now pay. But members forget that we now have to pay, in another form, for some of these things. We have to pay nightmen, which we would not have to do if we had a sewerage system; and I ask what the annual difference would be between the cost of the two systems? I am not sure if some of us would not come out with a credit balance, if this sewerage scheme were attempted on a small scale, as I suggest, for the present. A select committee has been suggested. What is the use of a select committee, unless large sums are spent upon engineers' reports, and in obtaining other evidence? Let the cost go once for all, and the proper authority given, and the cost charged to the proper source. Even if £200,000 were required, is the city of Perth not prepared—I do not mean to say that every part of the city is prepared—but I do think that the denser portions are prepared to spend the necessary money to be relieved of their present difficulties. Several other wise things have been said, in connection with the water supply question. It is said that the present company have asked £200,000 as the purchase money. It is true they did ask that sum at one time. But I have found in life that it is no uncommon thing for people who have things to sell to ask more than they expect to get. This Waterworks Company asked for £200,000 at first, but when they saw there was no chance of getting that they came down to £180,000; and I do not think that is by any means the bottom sum. Therefore that argument also falls to the ground. Apart from that, the ratepayers under the present agreement are bound to pay the company a rate of 1s. in the pound for over twenty

years to come. What will all these thousands of pounds paid away in rates to this company amount to in that time? A very great deal more than would be incurred if we now had some means of buying these waterworks for ourselves. Then we would have to pay about four per cent., while under the present arrangement we have to pay up to 10 per cent. before there is any relief. I think I have brought forward a scheme which offers many advantages, both material and sanitary. It is, after all, a permissive scheme. It does not force itself upon any section of the community. It is left to the municipalities themselves to say when they are prepared to come into the scheme. I submit that any slightly excessive rates would be more than made up in the saving of doctors' bills, and the saving of suffering and of human life. If that were brought home to the public, I think they would be quite willing to have a sewerage scheme right off the reel. As to sending the city refuse to the ocean, there are numbers of larger cities than Perth that do so, and I expect there are worse things for us to do. It is said that other cities have waited for years before adopting a sewerage scheme. Is that any reason why we should do so? If other cities chose to go on for years in a foolish and reckless way, why should we tread in their footsteps, in Indian file, like a lot of simpletons? Why should we not take the lead? Most people now look upon Western Australia as taking up a leading position. My good friends who live in their splendid houses, with their pleasant gardens and happy surroundings, and who know nothing about these troubles I have referred to, forget to sympathise with those who haven't such surroundings, and who have troubles enough.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

#### REEFING CLAIMS AND LABOUR CONDITIONS.

MR. WOOD, in accordance with notice, moved that a return be laid upon the table, showing,—

1. The number of reefing claims registered in the Yilgarn and Murchison districts respectively.
2. The number of claims or mines in the Yilgarn and Murchison districts that are fulfilling the labour conditions, and

the total number of men returned as being actually engaged in working the several mines in the above-named districts respectively.

He thought the information asked for would be useful to the House. At an early date they would be called upon to spend large sums of money in the extension of railways to these goldfields; and, as he looked upon the reefing properties upon these fields, rather than the alluvial mining, to support these lines, he thought these returns would be of interest.

Motion put and passed.

#### INCREASE OF FEDERAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES.

The following message was received from His Excellency the Governor:—

"The Governor forwards, herewith, to the Legislative Assembly a copy of correspondence with the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with respect to an address to the Queen from the Parliament of Western Australia, requesting that Her Majesty will be pleased to make an Order in Council increasing the number of representatives in the Federal Council of Australasia.

"Government House, Perth, 13th August, 1894."

Ordered that the foregoing message be taken into consideration on Wednesday, 22nd August.

#### PROPOSED ABOLITION OF THE ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

MR. SIMPSON: I rise, sir, to move the motion standing in my name: "That the further correspondence on the subject of the Aborigines Protection Board, forwarded in His Excellency's Message No. 3, is unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the Secretary of State does not concur in the resolution passed last session by both Houses of the Legislature—'That the Aborigines Protection Board, as at present constituted, should be abolished,' and that in the opinion of this House the Government should at once introduce a Bill to repeal Clause 70 of the Western Australian Constitution Act, 1890." It will be in the memory of the House, and of the public, that this resolution was carried unanimously in this chamber, and in another place by a large majority; and



an address was agreed to, asking His Excellency the Governor to transmit the resolution of Parliament to the Secretary of State. This was done, and since then we are in receipt of some further correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Governor on the subject. Members have had an opportunity of perusing that correspondence; and I have thought it my duty, having brought forward the resolution in this House last year, to bring this matter again before the House and the country. I am happy to have the opportunity of re-introducing it, supported as I am by public feeling, as shown during the late elections. As we are aware, this Aborigines Board is appointed by the Governor, and I am not speaking at all disrespectfully with regard to that high official when I say that it is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution that anyone should have the power to appoint a Board to deal with the revenues of the colony without parliamentary authority or control. I say that not a shilling of the revenue contributed by the people of this colony should be administered, under any circumstances, or in any way, except with the sanction of the country's representatives in Parliament assembled. The expenditure of this Board now amounts to £5,000 a year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): More than that now.

MR. SIMPSON: £5,000 a year has been granted to this irresponsible Board in the past, and as the revenue of the colony increases, the grant to this Board is to be increased proportionately—a Board which is appointed without reference to the responsible Ministers of the country, and over which the country has not the slightest control. It has been suggested by the Secretary of State, in the further correspondence laid before us, that the Government, in order to facilitate matters, should consent that one of their number should accept a seat on this Board; and the Governor was good enough to say that if the Ministry would consent to do so a vacancy would at once be created on the Board, so that a member of the Government might step in. Before I come to that particular paragraph in the correspondence, I wish to refer to another matter. His Excellency, in his memorandum covering the despatch of the Secretary of State, says: "It is not

"quite clear to me whether the inquiry suggested by the Secretary of State should be conducted by a Commission appointed by the Governor, or by a Parliamentary committee. I rather think the wording of the Act is such that a question might arise as to the authority of Parliament to institute any inquiry as to the proceedings of the Board." I should like to read that again, to stamp it deeply on the brain of every member of this House—"a question might arise as to the authority of Parliament to institute any inquiry as to the proceedings of the Board." The Parliament of the country, the highest tribunal in the land, representing the supreme authority of the people, has no authority to inquire into the proceedings of this precious Board, which is entrusted with the expenditure of the people's money! That is the proposition, and that is the situation we have to contemplate. The Governor goes on to say, in his memorandum to the Premier: "You will gather from the Secretary of State's despatch the character of the difficulty in which the Secretary of State is placed, and I confess I think it would be a wise step for the Colonial Government to consent to be represented on the Board, and thus prepare the way for the ultimate cancellation of an arrangement which the Secretary of State admits is not intended to be permanent. I am prepared to create a vacancy on the Board for this purpose, and will appoint to the vacant seat any Minister or other representative of the Government who may be nominated by you." That proposition is seriously put forward in a State document. I know it is one of my weaknesses that I have a keen eye for the ludicrous; and when I think that on this Board, appointed to look after the welfare of our poor blacks, the Governor may at any time create a vacancy, for somebody else to step in, it really does seem to me ludicrous. I hope no member of our present Ministry will allow himself to be made use of to fill up that vacancy. I cannot imagine any member of the present Cabinet lending himself to fill up a gap in this Board. The Secretary of State, in his despatch referring to the resolution passed last session, says: "The resolution states generally the opinion that it is desirable to abolish

"the Board as at present constituted, but "does not indicate any specific reason for "this course, or formulate any definite "charge against the Board." How are you to formulate definite charges against a Board, when there is a high public functionary who can create a vacancy in the Board whenever he likes? It would ill become me to throw ridicule upon the members of this Board; I am not dealing in any way with the *personnel* of the Board. They are all gentlemen of good repute and of high standing in the community, and they are prepared to accept the duties incidental to the position. But I would point out that there are so many reasons against the continued existence of this Board—reasons which have already been mentioned in this House, and which the Secretary of State is good enough to ignore—that I am compelled to adopt a different course from that suggested by the Secretary of State for dealing with the Board. If, sitting here, I had the Secretary of State sitting there, I would ask him, "Can you give us any reason whatever why this Board should continue to exist at all"? I say its existence is a stigma upon the humanity and intelligence of the people, and of the Government of the colony. In the Constitution Act of no other Australian colony was such a condition attached as the price for granting them the right of self-government. Because, I suppose, our population was small, it seemed to dawn upon these brilliant intelligences at home from whom this idea emanated, that we had not the same feelings of humanity and the same instincts that govern the Anglo-Saxon race in other parts of the world in dealing with native races. The Secretary of State asks for a "specific reason" why this Board should be abolished. I will give him two: one is that, of the annual amount granted to the Board—I am speaking from the latest accounts available—16 per cent. of the grant goes in what may be called managerial expenses,—fees, salaries, &c. In other words, out of every £100 voted for the relief and support of the aborigines, £16 does not reach these distressed natives at all, but goes to the members of this Board and its officers for doing, or attempting to do that which the Government of the colony would do for nothing. Further

than that. I say this Board is absolutely impotent to carry out its duties. It is absolutely impotent, of itself, to distribute rations, clothing, and blankets to the natives scattered over this vast colony, without the aid of the machinery of the Government. As soon as it attempts the distribution of relief it has to fall back on the administrative machinery of the Government. They have, it is true, appointed an officer to travel about the Northern portions of the colony to look after natives,—a capable officer, I believe; but, although I have perused his reports, I cannot gather any more valuable information from them than would come to the Government through their ordinary avenues of information, the police and the resident magistrates. There are other reasons which have been over and over again touched upon as to why this Board should be abolished, but I am content for the present with the two I have mentioned: firstly, that 16 per cent. of the grant made by Parliament to this Board for the relief of the natives is absorbed in salaries and fees of office, when there is not the slightest necessity for it; and, secondly, that the Board is absolutely without machinery of its own for the distribution of this relief. To my mind these are two very sound and sufficient reasons for the abolition of the Board. It is suggested by the Secretary of State that "the proper course would be "to institute a formal inquiry into the "case, with the view of clearly ascertaining and placing on record the facts "material to this question." I think that is entirely begging the question. It certainly is not a practical solution of the difficulty. Those who write despatches of this sort are absolutely ignorant of the conditions under which this Board exists, and of the condition of the natives of this colony. The Secretary of State, further on, states: "I am ready to admit "that the advance of settlement, and the "consequent development of the administrative system of Western Australia, "may, at no very distant date, not only "justify, but render desirable, the radical "revision of an arrangement which was "dictated by a different state of things." Mark the proviso: "at no very distant date." Are our humane instincts likely to become more largely developed at no very distant date? Is our sense of jus-

tice likely to become more largely developed at no distant date? Are our feelings and our good intentions towards the native population likely to undergo any radical change at no very distant date? Why "at no very distant date"? Are we now oblivious of the traditions of our race? Are the gentlemen who are now entrusted with the administration of the affairs of the colony, and who are considered capable of looking after the interests of the white population,—are they unfit to be entrusted to look after the interests of the poor blacks? I think I never read, in the whole course of my reading, a more trashy document than this despatch from the Secretary of State—and I do not forget that I was taught in my catechism at school to respect my pastors and masters, and those set in authority over us. This question was very fully discussed in this House during last session, and I need not travel over the same ground again. No distinct charges were made against the Board, but it was pointed out that it was an unnecessary Board, that it was an expensive Board, and that it was incompetent to carry out its duties, because it had not the necessary machinery for doing so. These charges are beyond dispute. They cannot be controverted; and I shall never sit in my seat in this House with any comfort so long as Clause 70 exists in our Constitution Act, for it is a slur and a stigma on the good name and on the humanity of every man in this House, and every man, woman, and child in the country. It is a distinct assertion, printed in black and white in our Constitution Act, that the British House of Commons would not trust us with the charge of the aboriginal natives of the colony, for fear we would treat them with cruelty, and with an utter disregard of those high and humane principles which have ever distinguished our nation in dealing with aboriginal races. Why this clause was inserted in our Constitution Act, any more than in the Constitution Acts of the other colonies, I never could discover. I am told it was a bargain. I had neither part nor lot in the bargain. I say we are paltering with our honour. We pawned our honour when we allowed such a clause to be embodied in the charter of our Constitution. We heard to-night of a despatch from Her Majesty the Queen,

graciously consenting to our being allowed to send an additional number of representatives to the Federal Council. Why, sir, we are not worthy to sit in that Council with the representatives of our sister colonies. In those colonies they have the right to look after their natives; we have not. In the sister colonies their representatives step into that Council free and unfettered. We step in fettered with a limited Constitution, which only gives us the right to look after the white inhabitants, while the British House of Commons looks after our blacks. I have no doubt if this House were to ask the Federal Council to assist us in obliterating this clause, it would readily do so; and there would be such a storm raised about the ears of the Colonial Office that they would not be likely to forget for some time. Our population at the present time is made up largely of people who have lived under the free Constitutions of the other colonies, and they fail to realise this invidious slur and stigma cast upon us. Sir, I will not labour the question. I ask the House to-night to endorse the action of the late Parliament, and strongly insisted upon by the Ministry, that this clause in our Constitution Act should be abolished. The resolution of the House on that occasion was transmitted to the Secretary of State, and we are told, in effect, that the Colonial Office will consider the question at no very distant date. I ask this House to let the Colonial Office realise exactly what our feelings are in this matter, by unanimously passing this resolution, which I now beg to move.

MR. SOLOMON: After the exhaustive manner in which the hon. member for Geraldton has dealt with the resolution, I am afraid that anything that may be said by me in seconding the motion will fall flat. I cannot but think, from the manner in which this matter has been dealt with by the Secretary of State, that the Premier and the Parliament of the colony have not been treated with that respect they are entitled to. The main reason given last session by many members who spoke on the question in this House, and also in another place, was that the existence of this Board, over which Parliament had no control, though entrusted with the expenditure of public funds, was a slur upon the colony.

That point is altogether ignored in this despatch from Lord Ripon. It was stated at the time that there was no intention to make any specific charges against the members of the Board, nor was there any objection to the *personnel* of the Board. Our objections took the higher ground, that neither the Government nor the Parliament of the colony had any control whatever over the actions of this Board, or over the votes expended by the Board out of public funds. I understand this Board is now entitled to expend £7,000 a year, and that this amount is likely to be increased as the revenue of the colony increases. Taking that into consideration, and also the fact that the Board is obliged to resort to the machinery of the Government to carry out its work, it seems to me that a very strong case has been made out for the abolition of the Board. I do not intend to labour the question after what has been already said. I only trust that the resolution, like that of last session, will be agreed to unanimously by this House, and that it will meet with the same support in the other House. I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: When the Constitution Bill was before the old Legislative Council, the clause dealing with the appointment of this Board was taken exception to by many members, and I myself was strongly opposed to it. On that occasion I stated it was a slur upon the Parliament of the country to insinuate that the natives of the colony would not be fairly and humanely treated by the Government and the Legislature of the day. On that occasion many members gave way, and consented to the insertion of the clause simply because they were afraid that the Secretary of State would not otherwise have given his consent to the introduction of the Enabling Bill. I should like to point out that one of the greatest supporters of the clause at that time was the present Commissioner of Crown Lands, who is now a member of the Government which is strongly opposed to the existence of the clause. If members will look up *Hansard* they will see that the hon. gentleman vigorously supported the clause; but I am glad to think that the same hon. gentleman now considers we committed a mistake in having such a clause inserted,

and that it is a slur upon the colony. I agree with the mover of the resolution that it is a slur upon the Government, upon the Parliament, and upon the people of the colony. I think, if the Government of the colony are not fit to look after the interests of a few blacks, they are unfit to occupy their present position, and we in this House are unworthy of our position as representatives of the people. I think the time has come—without wishing to cast any reflection whatever on the members of the Board, or the way they carry out their duties—when this section of the Constitution Act should be wiped out.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member who has just sat down has referred to what took place when this matter was discussed when we were framing the Constitution Act. I have always said that although we accepted, under pressure, Clause 70 of the Constitution Act, it does not prevent us in any way from using all proper and constitutional means for its repeal. It was accepted, I know, at the time, very unwillingly. I think it almost passed in sullen silence. At any rate, everyone was opposed to it. But it was stated that unless we were prepared to accept it we would not get our Constitution Bill, and so we accepted it. I do not think we are acting improperly in trying to do away with this clause now, so long as we use what are proper and constitutional means to attain our object. It may be said, no doubt, that we are doing it rather early in the day. But I do not think that is any argument at all. I think we are perfectly justified in using all proper and legitimate means for doing away with anything in the Constitution which we think is adverse to the interests of the colony, or which is unconstitutional. In reading the despatch of the Secretary of State, dated 10th January last, one would imagine, if he were not behind the scenes, that this was the first despatch that the Secretary of State had written on the subject. It makes no reference to all the correspondence that had passed before during the last three years; and any one reading it would come to the conclusion that the resolution of Parliament passed last session was the first occasion on which the Secretary of State or the Colonial Office had been approached on

this subject. But we all know that every argument that could be used had been used during the previous three years to induce the Secretary of State and the Colonial Office to agree to the abolition of this Clause 70. I must say I myself am quite surprised, in reading the third paragraph of this despatch from the Secretary of State, to find the Colonial Office making inquiries as to whether this Aborigines Board had performed its duties properly, and as to what was the cause of complaint against it—all giving one the idea that this was the first time the matter had been brought under their notice. Though I have not looked at the correspondence lately, I believe I told the Colonial Office that these people at home who take such a great interest in the aborigines of the colony, and who are so desirous that their welfare should be looked after, have really done nothing, and never will do anything themselves, for the aborigines of this country. These people in England, who are so anxious about the aborigines being well treated, what do they know about it? What have they ever done for the natives? Have they ever spent one shilling in trying to ameliorate the condition of the natives, or will they ever do anything for them, or spend one sixpence for their benefit? One feels inclined to be angry when one reads despatches overflowing with a desire to benefit the aborigines, when we know that the people of Great Britain have never done anything for these aborigines, and never will do anything for them, and when we remember all that has been done for them, and always will be done for them, by the taxpayers of this colony. I have explained, as members are aware from the correspondence that has taken place, all the facts in regard to this matter. I have pointed out everything relating to it, and used all the arguments I thought there was occasion to use, to try and induce the Colonial Office to do away with this clause of the Act. When I had done that, and ineffectually, Parliament came on the scene, and used its efforts to support and assist the Government in the matter. But the same result has come about. We are told that the time will arrive at some not very distant date, but that at present it is too early for us to be entrusted with the care of our aboriginal natives. We

are told by the Secretary of State that our proper course is to institute an inquiry into the proceedings of the Board; and His Excellency the Governor says he does not know whether Parliament has any right to institute such an inquiry. I must dissent from that view of the case, because Parliament is the supreme authority in this country, and it can inquire into anything inside the colony. I do not know of anything to prevent it from doing so. It is supreme over all, and no authority that I know of can interfere with the action of Parliament. If it desires to inquire into the actions of this Board, or into anything else, I know of no reason or law why it should not do so. Then we are asked, as my friend the hon. member for Geraldton said, whether we desire that a vacancy should be created in the Board, in order that a member of the Government could take a seat on it? I may say I have not made any reply to that suggestion, nor have I made any reply to this despatch, but I may say this, on behalf of the Government, we have no intention of being represented on that Board. Our desire is to sweep it away; but we will allow it to remain as it is rather than we would do anything whatever to perpetuate it or to continue its existence. My objections to the Board are numerous. In the first place, I do not believe they expend the funds carefully or with any judgment. They pauperise a great many of the aborigines, especially those about the towns, by giving assistance to natives who loaf about the towns of the colony. In this way they have attracted a number of natives to our towns, and made them paupers. They supply them with relief, whether they are able to work or whether they are not able to work; and the result is we have a lot of loafing natives congregating into our towns who will not work for anyone. That is one of the charges I have against this Board. I say, too, that they have distributed the funds at their disposal without any discrimination; and I do not wonder at it, because they have no knowledge whatever of the aborigines of the country. They have not the means of knowing. Only the other day two instances were brought under my notice where the Board, owing to their funds having become rather exhausted, sent instructions to the Govern-

ment Resident at Geraldton, and to the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries at Sharks Bay, to the effect that as the funds of the Board were not very plentiful these officers of the Government should at once discontinue, to the extent of 25 per cent. (or one fourth) the relief that had previously been granted to the natives. The Government Resident replied, through the Colonial Secretary, that he refused to act upon this suggestion to curtail the relief granted to the natives, that the natives were in want of food, and he was not going—certainly not at the request of the Board—to be guilty of such an inhuman act as to deprive these poor old natives of the food they depended on for their existence. The matter came to me from the Board—they generally come to me in the end—and I told them that I declined to issue such instructions to the Government Resident. The Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries sent me the same information the other day, and appealed to me whether he was, at the dictation of the Board, to reduce the relief he was granting to the few old natives who were unable to earn their livelihood, and who were depending upon him for their food? That is the way this Board manages its business. Another objection I have to the Board is that it is unnecessary. As a matter of fact, the Government have to do the work now. The Board has no machinery of its own, it has no executive power, they have no agencies of their own—I believe they have one officer at the North-West—to distribute relief to the natives all over the colony; and they have no knowledge as to the extent of the relief needed. They have to depend entirely upon the Government, through its officers—resident magistrates, resident medical officers, and the police—for everything they want done. In the correspondence laid on the table of the House last year, it may be remembered that, in view of these facts, I asked the Governor to inform the Secretary of State whether he thought this Board was necessary in the interests of the aborigines, or whether, if the Board were abolished, the natives would suffer in any way? If it was not necessary, and if its abolition would not affect the natives, what was the good of it? I never got any reply to that question. I don't

know that the Secretary of State ever was asked the question; but, all I can say is, if this Board is not necessary, and if the natives would not suffer in any way by its abolition, what is the good of the Board? I cannot see, myself, that it does anything whatever that the Executive Government could not do without it, and do a great deal better, because we have the machinery to do it with, and the Board has none. Members must understand that this Aborigines Board, which was originally granted £5,000 a year out of the public revenue, is now entrusted with £7,000, and the amount will go on increasing as the revenue of the colony increases, so that in a short time there will be £10,000 a year handed over to this irresponsible body of gentlemen. Besides all this, the existence of the Board is altogether foreign to our Constitution. It is unconstitutional for any body of men to be entrusted with the expenditure of the public revenues of the colony, outside the supervision and control of Parliament. That is a point I have always taken. The Secretary of State, in the correspondence that has gone by, has admitted that it is anomalous, and a very singular proceeding that our Constitution should be the only one of that of any other Australian colony which ever had such a clause in it, compelling us to set apart a considerable portion of our revenue to be expended altogether outside the control of Parliament. I think, too, that this Board is a slur, and a decided slur, upon the good name of the colony. Why should we not be entrusted to look after these wretched natives, when we are entrusted with the lives and liberties of the white population of the colony? It is perfectly absurd. The fact of the matter is, as I have already said, the people at home who are dealing with this question know nothing about it, or about our poor natives. I suppose they think these natives are a noble and warlike race, something like the Maories? If they only knew what poor abject creatures we have to deal with, not only would the whole thing look ridiculous, but these people would feel themselves ridiculous in trying to uphold such a position as they take up in regard to these natives. I have said before, I do not wish to say anything about the *personnel* of the

Board. That does not affect the question. Be they ever such good men, and ever such active and energetic men, the arguments I have used against the existence of the Board would equally apply. I do not wish to go into the personal aspect of the question at all. I have tried my best, I admit, to make these unpatriotic gentlemen (as I call them) to resign. I have tried, by soft words and by hard words, to induce them to resign; but it seems perfectly useless. They stick to their seats; and I think we shall find that they will stick to their seats as long as they can.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Why should you ask them to resign?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Because I consider that while they sit on this Board they are casting a slur upon the good name of the colony. It is said that we agreed to have this Board when we got our present Constitution. As I have said, we did so under pressure. I do not know that you can enforce an agreement that was entered into under force?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: You gave it strong support, any way.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did at the time, because we had to do it. Rather than lose the Constitution Act we thought we would accept this clause. I do not wish to use any means which are not proper or constitutional to have it abolished. I saw a statement in one of the papers the other day from this Board which was not correct. They stated the Government owed them £900, but they forgot to say that the Board owed the Government £600 for blankets which they had not paid for.

AN HON. MEMBER: And never will.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Ever since we entered upon our present Constitution I have always been opposed to the existence of this Board; and I thought I might, one way or the other, induce the members of it to resign. I do not believe there are any other gentlemen in the colony who would accept the position.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I would.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): One or two of the members of the Board at one time did resign. I believe they felt their position was not one they could hold with honour and credit, without

reflecting on the good name of the colony; so they resigned. I hoped the others would have followed suit, but such has not been the case. I only hope the Secretary of State will reconsider the decision arrived at, and that he will accede to the almost unanimous feeling that exists in the colony, that this Board, which is not necessary, and not able to do its duties properly, and which so many people consider is a reflection upon the credit of the colony, should be abolished.

Motion put and passed.

#### TRANSPORT OF FAT STOCK TO MARKETS FOR MEAT SUPPLY.

MR. RICHARDSON, in rising to move the motion standing in his name, said he wished to alter the wording of it slightly, so as to include the goldfields within its scope. It would then read: "That in the opinion of this House it is advisable that a select committee should be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, the best means of facilitating the transport of fat stock by land and sea from the Northern areas to the metropolitan and goldfields markets, and the most effective and economical methods of supplying those markets with meat at lowest possible rates to the consumer." He thought members would recognise that this was a very important question, affecting, as it did, not only the interests of our pastoralists and stockowners, but also the interests of consumers, who were anxious to have a cheap supply of meat. They had heard a great deal of grumbling during the late election campaign about the Stock Tax as affecting the price of meat; but, although a very good electioneering cry, he did not think this tax had affected the price of meat. He wished to point out that his idea in moving for this select committee was to arrive at some practical means of regulating and facilitating the supply of meat from our Northern areas to the consumers in our principal markets. Greater facilities were required at some of our Northern ports for shipping cattle; and, by sinking wells and making reservoirs along the overland route, a thoroughly practical stock route, available at all seasons of the year, might be obtained. He thought it was very desirable that this select committee should consist of practical men, and, if he

was not absolutely out of order, he would propose, for the favourable consideration of the House, the following gentlemen: Mr. Burt, Mr. R. F. Sholl, Mr. Loton, Mr. Harper, Mr. A. Forrest, Mr. B. C. Wood (as representing one of the largest consuming electorates in the city), and the mover. He would suggest, if not out of order, that these gentlemen should be appointed *en bloc*.

THE SPEAKER: According to our Standing Orders, all select committees must be elected by ballot.

MR. HARPER said he begged to second the motion. There were very good grounds for the complaints made by the consumers in regard to the high price they were paying for their meat. Looking at the matter superficially, people naturally thought it was due to the Stock Tax, whereas it had nothing to do with it at all. The cause of the high price of meat was rather the difficulty in getting stock to market. If greater facilities were given for this purpose meat would be cheapened. There was a supply sufficient for all requirements in the colony if it could only be got to the market.

MR. MORAN said he looked upon the opening of a stock route from the Northern areas to our Eastern goldfields as one of the most important questions of the day. The present high price of meat in this colony was a reflection upon us, and was a very sore point with the large number of people who were coming here from the other colonies. He believed that, with a reasonable amount of expenditure, a good stock route could be found from Kimberley right down to Coolgardie, and that the supply of meat that could be brought down by this route would supply four times the present population of the colony. He had before him a chart, prepared by a Mr. Cowan, a surveyor, showing a good and well-watered stock route from Cue to Coolgardie. He hoped the select committee would discover some means for improving the present supply of meat, and, at the same time, reduce its price to the consumer.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought it was very desirable that efforts should be made to provide the consumers in this part of the colony with meat at a lower rate than they paid for it now. It would be a good thing for both the producer and the consumer. There were large numbers of

fat cattle and sheep in our Northern districts, but the difficulty was to bring them down to market, especially at certain seasons of the year. He did not know that the Murchison would supply much cattle, but the districts farther North could supply the whole colony. As to the Stock Tax, he did not think that tax was responsible for the present high price of meat.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (HON. H. W. VENN): The mover's remarks would almost lead hon. members to suppose that the Government are not disposed to take those steps that are necessary for shipping stock from the North, or for travelling them overland to the metropolitan markets. The present Government have provided improved shipping facilities at the Northern ports—starting at Wyndham and coming along the coast—the like of which are not to be seen in any other part of Australia. I have been all over Australia, and I say, without fear of contradiction, that at Wyndham the Government have provided facilities for shipping stock which are not equalled in Australia. Yet the hon. member says he has brought the motion forward with a view to obtaining better facilities for shipping stock. At the port of Derby, where there is a large background for stock, the same facilities have been provided. Can the proposed committee recommend some better scheme? If the mover says the shipping facilities at Northern ports are not sufficient, I ask the hon. member for East Kimberley to say what he thinks about them, and whether a committee is likely to recommend better facilities, when, in fact, there are not better facilities in the whole of Australia? Having dealt with Wyndham and Derby, the next port would probably be Broome. I do not suppose the hon. member would recommend that, within 100 miles of the port of Derby, greater facilities should be given at the port of Broome, because the stock at the back of that district can easily be shipped from Derby, and to provide greater facilities at Broome would require £30,000 or £40,000. The next place would be Roebourne, but that is certainly not a cattle district. The majority of the cattle come either from the Murchison or the Upper Gascoyne, or from those Northern districts where facilities already



exist; and that being so, I take it that the proposed committee, whoever they may be, will not do much in the way of recommending better facilities for shipping at Northern ports. With regard to the stock route along the coast southward, the hon. member (Mr. Richardson) has, at different times, asked questions upon it. I have travelled over that country and know it thoroughly well; and, with the exception of the Premier himself, I do not think there is a member here who has travelled over it with stock more than I have, or knows it more thoroughly. As Director of Public Works, I have taken every action that I thought was practicable for finding a good stock route. The first step taken was to write to the whole of the settlers along that coast, asking for their opinions as to the best stock route; and I can assure the House that the settlers along that route were most tardy in forwarding their replies, and when received they were hardly worth having. A few of them did condescend to write to us; but failing to get the necessary information from the settlers, I put myself in communication with the Roads Boards. There are Roads Boards from Kimberley down to Champion Bay, and the members live along the line the whole way. They, when requested, undertook to expend the public money in providing a practicable stock route. They settled the route, which was afterwards proclaimed, or if it has not been entirely proclaimed it is because many of those settlers who have paddocks along the line object to the stock route going through their runs. Some hon. members in this House object to have the stock route through their paddocks, and, naturally, they wish it to go away round. The result is that the utilising of the wells, constructed by the Roads Boards along the stock route, has not been taken advantage of to the extent it might have been. If the members of Roads Boards living along the stock route, and who have expended the public money in providing wells, will not take an interest in seeing that they are kept in proper condition so as to be always available, then I say any organisation we may have at the Southern end of the route will fall very much short of what those members could do who are on the spot. The Government have entrusted

those members with the expending of money to rig up wells and troughs along the stock route; and, so far as I know at present, there ought to be a good and trafficable road open for stock. What, I think, ought to be done is that we should have one or two inspectors, whose duty it should be to look after these wells from one end of the route to the other; but what other object there is in proposing the appointment of this committee I fail to see. I do think that the hon. member, in moving his motion, might have recognised, in some way, the action the present Government have taken. I feel that I am personally responsible for that action, for my colleagues have relied entirely upon me in this matter; and I venture to say that if the facilities, which have been provided through the different Roads Boards, are allowed to be used by the runholders along the route from Kimberley to Champion Bay, there is a good and practicable road for travelling stock from the North right into Perth. I think the hon. member, in forming the proposed committee, should leave out the members of the Government altogether. On the part of the Government, I have no objection to any committee taking up this matter; but I do think the committee will fall short, if they intend to undo the work which the Government have performed, and which has been recognised as satisfactory by those persons who are engaged in the shipping of stock from the Northern ports. The Government have made a viaduct at Owen's Anchorage for stock getting ashore. I cannot see how, by appointing a select committee, the object we have in view can be effected. The hon. member for the Gascoyne says that such a large quantity of stock has been sent to Perth lately that the low price realised will not pay the growers. Well, if the price is so low that it cannot pay the growers, and at the same time you say the price is so high to the consumers, the fault must lie, not in the want of facilities for shipping, and not in the defects of the stock route, but in some other direction. I only hope the effect of this committee will be to make some recommendations which we shall be able to carry out.

MR. RICHARDSON: It is true, as the Director of Public Works has said, that I did forget, in my opening remarks,

to compliment the Government for what they have already done. I apologise for that omission. But what has chiefly been done is the erection of those magnificent cattle yards at Wyndham, and also at Derby, and perhaps some facilities at Owen's Anchorage. But these facilities, though valuable in their way, do not remove all the difficulties we labour under, as is shown by the fact that a large quantity of stock are forced on the metropolitan market during three or four months in the year, the climate in the Northern districts forbidding the shipping of stock in other portions of the year. It is in order to equalise the supply and the price, that we want to overcome the difficulties of the overland stock route. The hon. gentleman has just said, in effect, that the present glut of stock in the market proves the facilities afforded by the Government are sufficient, and that the overland stock route is practicable. But, to my mind, this glut proves exactly the opposite. It proves there is only one season of the year in which stock can be brought down, and then they cause a glut in the supply; whereas, if the overland route were made practicable all the year round, there would be a more equal supply; there would not be so much dearth at one season and glut at another. In describing the facilities for shipping stock at the North, the hon. gentleman mentioned Wyndham, Derby, and Broome, but glided over all the rest. He said the Cos-sack district has no cattle to ship. But that district and Roebourne are large suppliers of mutton, and it is there and at Carnarvon that we wish to have facilities for shipping fat mutton. The recent glut of stock in the metropolitan market also proves that whatever has been done for improving the overland stock route is not sufficient to meet the requirements. I know, from my own experience in having sheep down, that not two months ago stages of 25 and 30 miles without water had to be pushed through, and that sheep starting from their runs in fat condition landed in Perth in a condition hardly saleable, because the road is not in a practicable state for travelling fat stock. We want a road that is practicable at all seasons, so far as the water supply is concerned. Of course we do not expect the feed all the year round. As to slaughtering establish-

ments and abattoirs, we hope the committee will take them also into consideration. At present, nobody seems to be making any money out of the job, and yet the consumer has to pay very highly for meat. We only hope to be able to make some small suggestions for obviating and removing some of the difficulties surrounding this question.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I should be happy to serve on this committee. After hearing what the last speaker has said, and the names he suggested, I feel that the hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) might be said to more fitly represent the Northern District from which these fat stock started, and the full condition they were in at starting, whereas I should better represent the reduced condition they were in on arriving in Perth. Now the Government have done a great deal for facilitating the shipment of cattle from the North; but, representing a Northern district as I do, I say we ought not to be satisfied that we have done all that is necessary for the overland stock route, because it has not been a success. When stock have to travel distances of close on a hundred miles without a drop of water at the present time of the year, it cannot be said the stock route is provided with water, although we know this House has voted plenty of money for providing water on that road. The Director of Public Works, in proceeding with the best intentions and the best means available, and utilising the services of the Roads Boards, has not had that efficient assistance which he had a right to expect. But I say, for myself, that the Roads Boards have been a mistake. All down that route, of which I have a most minute map showing every waterhole and claypan, I say where the Roads Boards have spent the public money in digging a well, they have simply dug it and left it. In many cases they have not attempted to put up an apparatus for hauling water, or, if an attempt has been made, they have not provided a bucket; or, if they have provided a bucket, they have not provided troughing. The fact remains that, after this expenditure of money through the Roads Boards, the stock route is utterly useless at present for droving stock. I know that, two months ago, sheep and cattle had to

go nearly a hundred miles without any chance of getting fresh water. That route should be put in a better condition. I think we must not rely on the Roads Boards to do this for the Government. If I am to be one of the committee, I should like now to express my opinion that we should not employ the Roads Boards any more to do the necessary work on the stock route. The members do not live on the line of route, but nearly every member lives forty or fifty miles from it. I think you will have to fall back on the Government in this matter; and, as the Director of Public Works has suggested, inspectors might be appointed, whose duty it should be to travel the route and see that the wells are protected, and that proper apparatus for each well is provided, in order that water may be obtainable when the stock arrives there, because it is tantalising to know there is water 70 or 80 feet down, and yet it cannot be got up to water the stock.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): This question of water supply on the stock route is one of those matters that has had an interest for me during many years past, as having been concerned somewhat in the supply of fat stock from the Northern parts of the colony, and I may say that a fresh feature has established itself in the minds of some people that the coastal route, which some persons have been in the habit of regarding as the best for travelling stock, is not really the best. Indeed, that old idea is superseded by later experience. I believe myself that fat stock from Kimberley and the North-West districts will be brought Southward along the interior, and not along the coast route; and I think that possibly this committee—if the mover of this motion will not be above taking the advice of people who know, perhaps, a little more about the question than even he does—will find that a stock route can be established from Kimberley and the North-West districts by which all our goldfields can be supplied with sheep and with cattle. If that is so, I suppose it will be a good thing for my friend the mover, and a good thing for me. People are in the habit of complaining about the high price of meat, and that the consumers on the goldfields are charged too much.

All I can say is that I think they have no great reason to complain at the present time. I have been trying to produce cattle and sheep a good many years, but have not yet succeeded in making money out of them. I have tried my level best to bring stock down here to sell as dear as I possibly could, and I have not succeeded yet in doing it profitably. If the hon. member for Roebourne (Mr. H. W. Sholl) can do it, I wish him success.

Motion put and passed.

MR. RICHARDSON moved that the number of members to serve upon the committee be seven instead of five, as provided for by the Standing Orders of the House.

Question put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover, were elected to serve upon the Committee:—Mr. Burt, Mr. Harper, Mr. Loton, Mr. Wood, Mr. R. F. Sholl, and Mr. A. Forrest.

Ordered—That the committee have power to call for persons and papers; and report on Monday, 27th August.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:17 o'clock p.m.

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## Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 14th August, 1894.

Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Bill: first reading—  
Thanks and Wells on Coolgardie Routes—Employers' Liability Bill: in committee—Telegram from Dr. Monteith re Cue Hospital Accommodation—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS.