

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 12th April, 1918.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3-0 p.m., and read prayers.

[For "Question on Notice" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Angelo, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for Claremont (Mr. Stewart) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS AGREEMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3 of principal Act:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the reason for this amendment?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The reason is to bring within the scope of the principal Act people taking in lodgers, irrespective of the number taken in. At present the number must be more than three in order that the Act may apply. I am not particular about this clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Addition of new section at end of Part I.; Premises of Crown may be declared subject to Act:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the use of inserting a provision of this kind in the Act? During my term of office I consulted the Crown Law Department as to the possibility of taking action against the Commissioner of Railways in respect of certain premises under his control, and I was advised that for the Crown to sue itself was impossible. For some time the Health Department were strongly urging large expenditure in sanitation of Government offices. The Government, however, did not consider it advisable to spend large sums on old buildings when the intention was to provide other offices at an early date. Under this clause, however, the hands of the Government may be forced. Only a certain amount is available for the Government to expend each year on work of this kind. For a considerable period the Government were spending at the rate of £18,000 to £20,000 a year on sewerage connections. The Perth Public Hospital alone cost about £8,000 under this head.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the member for North-East Fremantle as to the clause, and I think the Minister for Railways also agrees with him. I am not supporting the clause.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There may be some misunderstanding as to the Government's intentions regarding proper sanitation on railway premises. Moneys are being provided for immediate necessities, but it is not proposed to carry out the full requirements of the Health Department.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: But for the war, the sewerage connections would already have been carried out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not like the clause. To sewer the Government offices in the barracks, for example, would cost £4,000 or £5,000; and yet these offices can only be regarded as temporary, awaiting an opportunity of removal. The Government could not waste such an amount of money on them.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 12:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What is the meaning of this clause? It contains a great deal of verbiage.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It is merely a legal correction of Section 12 of the principal Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Substitution of new section for Section 30; qualifications of inspectors:

Mr. THOMSON: This clause may inflict hardship on country health boards which cannot afford the salary of a professional man.

The Minister for Works: There is power to exempt.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: We should see that, as far as possible, men appointed health inspectors are capable of fulfilling the duties of the position. Hence this proposed power for the Commissioner, who, however, can exempt. The clause is needed in cases where a board can secure, but will not appoint, a capable inspector. In such a case the Commissioner need not exempt.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is so under the present Act.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The original Act provides that within 12 months of its commencement every health inspector must obtain a qualifying certificate of competency. Section 30, however, made no mention of inspectors then holding office. It has been contended that, no matter what certificates an inspector held, he still had to obtain a certificate of competency under Section 30. I think this clause is all right.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 34:

Mr. PICKERING: Is there any provision for appeal? The Commissioner might frame a by-law not applicable to the particular district; and then, although the by-law might be unnecessary or unsuitable, he would have power to enforce its observance by the district.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The clause should be struck out. I do not think we should restrict the power of the local authorities in this way. Indeed, in my opinion they should be given greater power than they have. Under the clause the Commissioner could insist upon the local authority adopting any by-law he wished. We know that some of the model by-laws introduced several years ago were altogether unsuited to the conditions obtaining in this State. I think the powers already vested in the Commissioner are quite sufficient.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Under existing conditions the Commissioner has power over the local authority. As a matter of fact that should be so. It can easily occur that some special by-law becomes urgently necessary in the area of a local authority, in which case it is only right that the Commissioner should have power to require the local authority to adopt such by-law. Indeed, at present the Commissioner can require the local

authority to adopt a by-law, and the power he now asks is that if the local authority declines to do necessary work he shall be able to do it for them. He wishes to be put in a position to say, "If you won't do this, I will." And it must be remembered that the by-laws have to be laid on the Table of the House, and that if not approved by Parliament they can be disallowed. From time to time this veto is exercised in Parliament. Should the Commissioner attempt to force on a local authority unnecessary or unsuitable by-laws, Parliament would disallow them.

Mr. TEESDALE: I support the clause. I remember that a certain health board in this State for various reasons became indifferent to public health, and members of the board took very little interest in their work. At last an epidemic broke out and several deaths occurred. I personally called the attention of the health authorities in Perth to the position, and in consequence the health authorities very soon had the town in a good sanitary condition and the epidemic stamped out.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The instance quoted by the hon. member is already provided for in the existing Act. If a local authority fail to carry out their work, the Commissioner has power to appoint somebody else to do it. But the clause deals with by-laws and regulations. Many of the by-laws framed by the Commissioner of Public Health, refer to the State as a whole, and it might easily happen that the Commissioner thus forces on a local authority some by-law impossible of being carried out in the district of that local authority.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Parliament could disallow the by-law.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We know the difficulty in regard to that. The local authority should have power to make by-laws suitable to the particular district.

Mr. THOMSON: The health authorities can override the by-laws of the local authority.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes, if necessity arises. The clause aims at reducing the powers of local authorities. I think we should rather increase those powers.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: At present the Commissioner has power to instruct a local authority to make by-laws. What he now desires is power to do it for them if they should refuse.

Clause put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members will notice that clauses 9, 20, 21 and 51, are printed in italics and are new clauses. Consequently we will consider them at the end of the Bill.

Clauses 10 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18, Amendment of Section 122:

Mr. ANGELO: I do not think it would be wise to give the local authority power to say on what area of land every building should stand. This amendment might be used to prevent a person making the best use of his building site. I have known cases of a road board, before passing a plan of subdivision, insisting that no blocks should be of less than an acre in extent.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The clause is to give the local authorities power to provide open spaces around buildings. The amendment has been suggested by several local authorities. I do not know that this question ought to be left to the local authorities at all, for I think every dwelling house should have plenty open space around it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This applies only to localities outside of municipalities.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In a country like this we need not cramp ourselves in regard to space.

Mr. PICKERING: There should be some provision in regard to municipalities, and there is the question of shops. I take it it is not necessary to have shops on a quarter of an acre or half an acre of land.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is already provision under the Municipalities Act. Why appeal to the Minister?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Years ago it was found in Perth that it was dangerous to place weatherboard buildings exactly on the boundary of the allotments. Some disastrous fires had occurred and there was great difficulty in getting the people out of the buildings. The Perth City Council thought, that so far as weatherboard buildings were concerned, the walls should not be put nearer than 4ft. to their boundaries, which would give a space of 8ft. between the buildings, and passed a by-law accordingly. It is quite right that there should be a power to deal with the area of land occupied by a building. I do not know of any municipality, which would allow a shop to be put up unless it was erected in brick. In that case, there is usually an adequate amount of land to enable the building to be decently erected. If a shop is used as a residence also a municipality is not doing its duty unless it sees that there is proper space surrounding it.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will accept this clause. It is appalling to realise the crowded and unhealthy condition of a great many of our people in and around Perth. The local authorities have not gone far enough, and have been lax in their duties. We should have a house planning Bill placed before us so that we can see that people have proper living conditions.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19—New section inserted after Section 122:

Mr. PICKERING: I understand that in municipalities it is customary for the plans of buildings to be erected to be submitted for approval. Is it not unnecessary that plans should be furnished of any buildings that are to be converted into dwelling houses? In my opinion there should be included in this clause provision for the submission of plans of new buildings.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The clause seems to be correct. Shops are built and later on may be used as dwelling houses. In that event, it is right that the local health authority should say whether it is a healthy building to live in.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 22—Insertion of new section after section 156:

Mr. THOMSON: We are placing rather wide powers in the hands of the local authority. The local authority may object to boiling down works being established in an area, but the central board may proclaim it as an area for that purpose. A section of the community may thus be compelled, against its will, to have an offensive trade carried on in the district, and this might also mean a depreciation in the value of property.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: This point has not been thought of at all. The reason for the clause is to prevent these noxious trades being established promiscuously. It will be desirable soon that all noxious trades should be concentrated in one area. The idea is not to force these noxious trade

areas upon any district, but to prevent a noxious trade being started where it is not required. There should be prescribed areas for these trades. I do not think there is any danger of people having these things forced upon them. A protest from any place would prevent such an area being declared. At the same time they may be put there, and in my opinion it is desirable that some restriction should be imposed as to where they should be placed. At present they can be placed anywhere.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They cannot be put anywhere. They have to be placed where the local authorities say they should be placed. The local authority has power to refuse the establishment of any noxious trade, and if a person is going to start one in any portion of a district, which would be detrimental to that district, the local authority can refuse to register such premises. Then there is a way of appeal. Under this system the Governor, which really means the Commissioner, has power to set out a certain area which may appeal to him as a proper area for an offensive trade. I do not think the clause is necessary at all.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 23 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Amendment of Section 175:

Mr. PICKERING: In the dairying districts of my electorate people are being handicapped by the restrictions placed on the industry by the Commissioner. I waited, as a deputation, on the Minister with regard to the restrictions which he is empowered to enforce upon the industry, and the Colonial Secretary promised to go into the question, but nothing has yet been done. I see we are now to give the Commissioner further powers, inasmuch as he is to be allowed to define areas within which it shall not be lawful to establish and open dairies. It would be possible for the Commissioner to object to a dairy inside a town, although the people concerned have gone to the expense of conforming to the conditions imposed under the Health Act. I hope the Minister will be able to show that this measure will not in any way restrict these people in that direction.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The clause is one to give the authorities power to make by-laws. With regard to dairies, most hon. members will agree that it is necessary, at least in the fairly populated areas, to say where dairies should be. In the City and suburban areas the presence of dairies is found to be undesirable from the point of view of the milk supply and the comfort and convenience of the residents. I think the clause is required.

Mr. FOLEY: What the member for Sussex wishes to see brought about is already provided for in Section 175 of the Act, and the Bill before us contains no amendment to that section. It distinctly provides for the licensing of cow-keepers, dairymen, and vendors of milk. If a man has a dairy, no matter where it is, it is only right that there should be strict supervision over it, and I do not want the local authorities to have less power than they possess to-day. Even if a person has one cow and is selling milk to neighbours, it is just as much the duty of the local authority to see that that person keeps his yard and premises clean as the owner of a bigger dairy is compelled to do.

Mr. MONEY: This clause does not go as far as the member for Sussex thinks it does. It simply deals with dairies which are to be opened

and established in the future. The dairies already in existence and already opened are not affected.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Already we have very stringent powers for the purpose of regulating dairies.

Mr. FOLEY: They are none too stringent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: They are far more stringent than in Victoria, and the stringency of these laws has deterred people from keeping cows. There are ample powers now.

Mr. MALEY: Section 175 of the principal Act, I believe, was copied from the Health Act of Victoria, in which State the dairying industry was fully established. The immediate effect of the adoption of that section in the Health Act of this State, in my particular district at any rate, was to close down every dairy in the place. The regulations were extremely stringent and the dairymen were forced to close because they could not comply with them. One regulation provided that the floors should be of concrete or granolithic. The more hindrances we create, the greater will be the difficulty of establishing dairies in country districts. I recognise that it may be necessary for these stringent regulations in the cases of dairies inside municipal areas, but there is no necessity for such drastic provisions in the country districts.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): What the hon. member has stated is perfectly correct, but he must also know that in the days that he speaks of many of the dairies were carried on under the most disgraceful conditions. I was in business myself at the time and I frankly admit that the yard was in such a filthy condition in the depth of winter that we had to drive the cows out of the soft ground by employing a boy on horse-back. The cows were milked under conditions which should not have existed. The laws were then enforced with perhaps too much zeal, and little knowledge of what was required. Many inspectors through over-zeal worried the owners of the dairies to such an extent that those dairymen had to go out of business. We must have sympathetic administration by the Minister, and we must employ inspectors with common sense. Let the laws be as drastic as they can be and we shall then have a pure milk supply for our children.

Mr. PICKERING: There may be some truth in what the Minister stated, but I do not think those conditions exist to-day. The drastic regulations which were applied to the towns were not applied to the country where it was not necessary to enforce such strict regulations. If we make it impossible for farmers to milk profitably then milking will cease. No one objects to cleanliness but we do object to the enforcement of drastic regulations.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to leave this to the common sense of the local authorities. We have a health board at Katanning, and we have two dairies situated about a mile out from the town. In the interests of the public we applied to the central board of health to extend our district so that we could sufficiently control these two dairies, and we have nothing to fear from this clause.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Minister has pointed out that this provision is necessary in closely settled districts. But I think I am safe in saying there are very few townships outside the metropolitan area in which this clause would be put in force. Take Greenough, for instance: there are in that district very few towns with over a

hundred inhabitants. We want to be careful in regard to milk, because it is the food of infants and invalids. They have to depend on it, and we must see that the premises where the milk is kept are clean. But if we make the provision so strong it will be impossible for dairy persons to carry on. In my district there are persons who keep cows and they have places where the cows run, but this provision would not apply to such persons. It applies to places where there are a number of cows run for profit.

Mr. HARRISON: I do not think any power would be too great with regard to the restriction of dirty premises, because we know that milk is the great carrier of disease germs, and if we look after our milk supply we shall control the health of the community. I remember not very many years ago one of the largest dairies in London used to advertise that the cows were kept on the premises. The owner had concrete floors, and the cows were kept and groomed like race horses. This dairy owner commanded the best trade in London, because he guaranteed that the cows were kept on the premises, and well looked after, and he guaranteed that he could deliver a quality of milk all the year round containing a certain amount of butter fat. If we go in for dairying we must give the people the best protection in the world, and we must produce the best milk and butter in the world. We must beat Victoria. Our dairying must be carried on on scientific lines.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The discussion is altogether outside the clause. This has nothing to do with the carrying on of dairies. This clause only provides where we should put dairies.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 30—Amendment of Section 178:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does this clause mean that the Commissioner has power to allow a person to practise who is not a fully qualified analyst? A person might be able to analyse milk but not other articles. That person would not be a fully qualified analyst, but on a part analyst. There is a standard laid down in the present Act. Previously analysts had to go before a board and they had to pass an examination, immediately they could prove their qualifications the Commissioner registered them to work as analysts. But this provision seems to show that a person need not be fully qualified but only partly qualified.

The Minister for Works: The clause evidently provides for special cases.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: An analyst occupies an important position.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: A man may be able to assay gold but not copper and lead. He may be able to analyse milk, but not treacle.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Are we justified in allowing a person to be registered as an analyst when he is not properly qualified? Persons should not be registered to practise a profession for which they are not qualified. A court of law, for example, would not attach much weight to an analysis made by a man not qualified as an analyst. Hon. members should think twice before allowing the Commissioner to register anyone as an analyst without tests. If examination is necessary in the case of a health inspector, it is doubly necessary in the case of an analyst.

Mr. MONEY: We should be acting wrongly in detracting from the qualifications of analysts, and such would be the effect of this clause. I support the contention of the last speaker. If a veterinary surgeon, a physician, and a legal practitioner have to be duly qualified, how much more

necessary is it for an analyst, on whose evidence in prosecutions conviction or acquittal frequently depends.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: There has been a case where a fairly good analyst failed to pass the board's examination on one small point. However, it would perhaps be just as well to omit this clause, because, after all, we cannot make laws for individuals.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 31—agreed to.

Clause 32—Amendment of Section 185:

Mr. PICKERING: I desire an explanation of this clause.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The clause proposes a verbal amendment. "Skim milk" is to include "separated milk."

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 33 to 39—agreed to.

Clause 40—Amendment of Section 242a:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No doubt the Minister has had experience of the working of that section in the principal Act which is very similar to this clause. It is contended that medical practitioners only should prescribe for persons suffering from venereal diseases. At Fremantle, however, sailors suffering from gonorrhoea who may be ashore only for a few hours are now prevented from obtaining prescriptions at the hands of chemists, who are compelled to refer them to physicians for advice. The result has been that sailors so circumstanced have been unable to obtain treatment here. My own opinion is that venereal disease should be treated only by medical practitioners.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The intention of the clause is to prevent as far as possible any but qualified medical practitioners from treating venereal disease. We have not been quite successful in preventing unauthorised treatment. As regards the case of sailors referred to by the member for North-East Fremantle, the best thing for a sailor suffering from venereal disease is to remain ashore. Certainly, he should not proceed on a long voyage. In Scandinavian countries, I understand, no sailor is allowed to leave port unless he has a clean bill of health as regards venereal disease.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 41 to 45—agreed to.

Clause 46—Amendment of Section 242j:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

"That in lines 2 to 5 the following be struck out: (i.) by the deletion of all the words in the first five lines of the section and the substitution of the words, 'whenever the Commissioner has reason to believe that any person is suffering from any venereal disease.'"

The words I have proposed to delete mean that the Government propose to cut out, entirely, signed statements giving the informant's name and address. I do not intend to repeat what I said the other evening. I believe it is the desire of the majority of hon. members to protect innocent persons from false accusations regarding venereal disease. Moreover, I believe it is the desire of the majority of hon. members that innocent persons shall continue to be protected against false charges by the existing right of legal redress. If the words I propose to delete are allowed to remain in the Bill, innocent persons will have no protection. No reasons have been shown why it should be necessary to amend the provision in the existing Act. In New South Wales the principle was adopted of establishing a number of places where sufferers could get free treatment without

any shadow of compulsion. The number of persons taking advantage of those clinics has considerably increased. In Western Australia very little has been done in this direction. In 1912 we agreed, subject to the approval of the hospitals concerned, that each hospital should afford free treatment. No special provision was made for patients of this class. The sufferer had to go along as an ordinary patient. Not until October of last year was any special provision made for dealing with these cases. In view of that, I maintain there is no necessity for amending the existing section. The Commissioner of Public Health would come into personal contact with but a very small number of sufferers from this disease. The majority of cases reported to him will be reported through a third person. That being so, we should be very careful about handing over the suggested power to the Commissioner of Health, power to take any action in cases reported to him through a third person. Recently we have read a Press interview with Mr. McLeod, the late Minister for Health in Victoria. In Victoria they have the signed statement provision; a signed statement must be forthcoming before the Commissioner can take action. Yet Mr. McLeod says that even under those conditions many innocent persons have been charged.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Who said that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Mr. McLeod.

Mr. Teesdale: He has taken it back since.

Hon. T. Walker: No; it is in this morning's paper.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the statement is wrong, the Minister can correct it. Personally, I firmly believe that such things have happened. If those things can happen despite the signed statement, what are we to expect when there is no longer necessity for a signed statement? I know what my feelings would be if anyone belonging to me was wrongfully accused, and therefore I can easily imagine what would be the feelings of others placed in such a position. The Honorary Minister has said that action might not be taken; but he cannot deny that action might be taken, and that an innocent person might be accused.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: An innocent person might be accused of murder.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In such a case he would be tried in open court, and the result would be known to all. But in the case of a malicious report against the condition of his health the harm is done by the passing from mouth to mouth of the news that so-and-so has been called up by the Health Department for examination. To prove to the public that the accusation was wrongfully made, the suspect would have to break the law and thus lay himself open to arrest.

Mr. Foley: How would the public have knowledge that a person was suspected and charged?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Unfortunately the world contains a large proportion of malicious persons. If I broke the law I would be arrested. Then I should have a difficult job to prove it, even if I had broken the law, because, instead of being put into open court, I would be put into some secluded place, and doctors would be brought for the purpose of examining me.

Mr. Thomson: Do you think they would certify that you had the disease if you did not have it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was merely showing the difficulty regarding the two charges which might be made against me. One could be easily

proved, and the other could not be disproved. It could not be disproved publicly.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: The charge would not be made publicly.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It cannot be avoided.

Mr. Foley: Your argument is based on the ground that you are not going to get it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am trying to show that, first, a malicious charge may be made, and, secondly, the person who lodges it may be the means of making it public.

Mr. Mullany: He would not know that the Commissioner had taken any notice of the charge.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I know that, but he could put up such a tale that he would mislead the Commissioner into taking action.

Mr. Mullany: He could not tell anyone else that the Commissioner had taken action.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, but he could say that I had been reported to the Commissioner, who was making inquiries into the matter. This would mean that the Commissioner was so suspicious of my actions that he thought it necessary to inquire.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): What is to stop a man making such a statement now?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is a difference between the present position, and what would happen if we allowed the Commissioner to make any inquiries whatever and allowed him to immediately approach me on the matter. If I could prove by a doctor's certificate that I was innocent of the charge I could go to the Commissioner and say, "Show me the name of your informant." If these words are struck out, and the other portion of the Bill is left as it stands, I would have no opportunity of proving my innocence.

The Minister for Works: Is the Commissioner compelled to give you the name of the informant?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under the Act he is. I would have an opportunity of proving my innocence, and could demand of the Commissioner a verified copy of the information which had been lodged against me. I could then take action in the court against the person who had lodged that information.

Mr. Foley: If it were proved that the charge was a wrong one, do you not think the State would benefit by the fact that in nine other cases the charge had been proved?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is all very well. It was one of the most awful things that one could possibly do. It does not matter much to a man, but any information regarding a young girl being made public would blight her life for ever in the district in which she resided.

Mr. Thomson: Is this not possible to happen under the law to-day?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No.

Mr. Thomson: Suppose you cannot find out who set the rumour going?

Hon. T. Walker: You could get at the person who started the rumour.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I could find out who lodged the information. I would point out that the informant might tell another that he had laid information against a certain person, and that in this way the matter might be made public. I hope hon. members will retain the signed statement, and realise the injury it is possible to do to some innocent person if the signed statement is struck out. I have grave doubts as to whether notification is any good at all.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Before addressing myself to the subject, I desire to make it clear to the Committee that it is not my intention to take part in debates in this Chamber which have any party significance. I would not have entered upon the debate but for my belief that I possess some information and knowledge, which are not possessed so much by other hon. members, by virtue of my having been a member of the board of management of the Perth Public Hospital for over 10 years, and occupied the position of chairman of the board for the last five years. If one listened to the debates in this Chamber during the discussion on this Bill, and also listened to the debates of another place, besides reading the evidence given before the select committee of another place on this measure, one would think that it was only at a quite recent date that this disease was recognised in our midst. I have read most of the statements made from the public platform, and in the Press, by those who claimed to give reasons why this legislation should not be passed, and I have been struck by the poverty of the arguments which have been put forward. The Perth public Hospital first started to treat this disease exactly on the same footing as any other disease, in January, 1912. The remarks I am going to make are borne out by the minutes of the hospital committee and the board, which are still at the Perth Public Hospital. As far back as January 24th, 1912, this matter was brought before the board by the Chief Resident Medical Officer, Dr. Hope, who pointed out the necessity for the board taking some action to make it known to the public that the hospital would treat this disease on common grounds with other diseases. The hospital had not done that previously, only in a promiscuous manner, and when patients came in suffering from some other complaint, together with this disease, they were treated for both complaints. Dr. Hope did not think that was a proper method, and the board agreed to treat this disease in the way desired. We then found that we had to incur expenditure, and went to the Colonial Secretary, I think at the time, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin). We placed the matter before him, and he made the necessary arrangements by which we could treat this disease. Then, in February of that year, we decided to do this, and advertised in the Press for an Honorary Venereal surgeon for the Perth Public Hospital, who would treat only these cases. We appointed an honorary venereal surgeon, but after he had been appointed for a few weeks he made it known to the Chief Resident Medical Officer, and the Chief Resident Medical Officer to the board, that it was not conducive to his practice that he should be styled "Honorary venereal surgeon to the Perth Public Hospital." When these appointments are made they are recommended by the board and approved by Executive Council and gazetted. The honorary surgeon suggested to the board that he would not be able to continue unless we altered his title, and we altered the title to that of honorary surgeon for skin diseases, and that gentleman dealt with this particular skin disease and others until the 1st October of last year. We had some difficulty in arranging in the hospital as to where we should have the night clinics. The arrangements were made by the Works Department, and just when those arrangements were completed we advertised for two honorary surgeons, and we had to advertise for venereal surgeons. What was the result? We needed two, but we received only

one application, and one was of little or no value. We then advertised that an honorarium would be paid, and we were successful in getting two. We opened night clinics in October last, a male and a female section. I would like hon. members to visit the hospital. It is remarkable to think that whilst this disease and the Health Bill have caused so much excitement and so much platform speaking, and have been responsible for so many letters in the Press, yet not one person that I know of has thought it worth while to find out what arrangements were made for treating victims of this disease. At the same time these critics are quite satisfied to tell the public not to accept the Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What has that to do with the Bill?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There have been statements made which are wholly untrue. The evidence taken by the select committee will enable me to convince the hon. member that his attack on the hospital board last Wednesday night was wholly unjustified.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I attacked them for intimidating a witness.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I thought the hon. member when he made his statement made it in all good faith, and that because of the interjections which were being freely made he may have become excited and uttered remarks which he would not have made in calmer moments. I will show the hon. member there was no intimidation. So far back as February, 1912, we at the hospital arranged for male and female venereal patients to be treated at the hospital practically as they are being treated now, with the exception that they were treated on all fours with other patients. They were interrogated as to their financial position before being treated and if they could pay something, well and good. Under the 1915 Act no Government practitioner in receipt of a salary from the Government is allowed to make a charge, and the richest man in the land as well as the poorest can be treated at the hospital without payment. To give the Committee an idea as to what the hospital board have done since October last, I might mention that the total number of in-patients, that is, bed patients, confined for treatment numbered 37, of which number 24 were males and 13 females. They have been treated in a period of five months as in-patients. We set apart a special ward for the males, but as there was no special ward for females we treated them in a small ward. In the out-patients department there were treated from October last until the 9th instant, 228 males and 84 females, a total of 312 patients. If that is not overwhelming testimony in favour of legislation of this character I do not know what is.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I should have thought you would have had more.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member must have been attending some of the public meetings I have spoken about. Let us take the evidence given before the select committee on this Bill, evidence which would have influenced hon. members. I intend to quote some of the evidence tendered by a member of the hospital board, Mrs. Riechbieth, who was on the board in 1912, when we began to treat venereal cases, just as I have explained. The Chairman asked her whether she had any remarks to offer with regard to the working of the Act during the 18 months it had been in force, and she replied—

No. It is very difficult to follow the Act, because the proceedings are altogether held in camera according to the provisions of the Act.

Another thing is that we have not as yet the facilities or have only very few facilities for treatment in this State. There has been a night Clinic for men at the Perth Public Hospital for some time past and very recently a woman's clinic, but facilities really are only about to be opened to meet the 1915 measure.

We opened night clinics for both male and females, and I believe the first patient treated was a female. That is the evidence given by a member of the hospital board. In the next question she is asked "You say the clinics are only just opened"? Then she replied—

The new clinics for the purpose are not opened yet, but will be shortly at the Perth Public Hospital, and then there is a detention hospital at Subiaco to be opened soon.

That is a straight answer to a straight question. She states that the new clinics are not opened yet, and up to that time we had treated considerably over 200 patients at the Perth hospital clinics. Then I am criticised in this House, and the board of management are criticised, for endeavouring to place the true facts in connection with the administration of the institution, of which I am the chairman, before the public.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Then it was you who did it?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In case the hon. member does not believe me, I will show him the notice which was sent out convening a meeting. I take full responsibility for it. Whenever I believe there is necessity for calling the board together I summon a meeting. The board meetings are open to the Press, who are invited.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is more than Mrs. Rischbieth was.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In question 174 she was asked—

You mean to say there has been no opportunity for treating patients so far?
and she replied—

Yes, very little until recently, as far as women are concerned. There has been a night clinic for men at the Perth Public Hospital and there have been two beds for women cases at the hospital—extreme cases. That is as far as I know.

The hospital at Subiaco was referred to as a detention hospital. If that be a detention hospital so is the Perth hospital. We cannot detain a patient there if that patient desires to go out. Why, may I ask, did we not detain the 312 out-patients who were treated? We had, as I explained, 37 in-patients, but we could not detain them if they wanted to go away. If they desired to leave the institution they could leave it of their own accord, with this difference, that under the Health Act of 1915 after they had ceased treatment at the institution and after six weeks the Commissioner of Health was notified and the person could be brought to book, but it was after six weeks. All these six weeks they can be spreading the disease far and wide. May I say here speaking on the very best authority—two diseases are spoken of in this Bill, if one of these particular diseases is taken in time in the early stages, there are hardly any bad patients. I do not suppose five per cent. need bed treatment. Because this disease strikes one as being very bad, patients need not go to bed.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What does the Act mean when it says—

When any person is subject to detention under this section he may from time to time

apply in writing to a judge of the Supreme Court or a resident or police magistrate in the district in which he is detained to be examined by two medical practitioners.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: He is detained in a prison.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, the hospital.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Five per cent. do not need bed treatment. They can follow their ordinary avocations. Let me say that in one of these diseases there are three stages, the primary, secondary and tertiary stages, and in the early stages of one of these diseases, if you can catch it in the first stage a person can follow his avocation unless it is a severe attack. To show that some provision has been made to meet this disease, a hospital was built at Subiaco and completed and furnished. It contains 24 beds, 12 for males and 12 for females. It was built at a cost of £3,429 8s. 6d., and furnished at a cost of £900. It is now open, and that is the institution mentioned in the evidence as being the detention hospital. It is a hospital the same as the other institutions, and patients can walk out as they like.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I say they cannot.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: As far as we are concerned patients can go just as they like.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It has nothing to do with you.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Commissioner of Health knows nothing about the patients that come to the Perth Public Hospital. He has to be notified that they are being treated by us and when the doctor discharges them as being cured, he is notified to that effect. If they cease treatment at the Perth Public Hospital after six weeks we notify the Commissioner that so-and-so has ceased treatment and is certified by the surgeon as having been cured. They then try to find the person and he becomes liable in the way in which the hon. member has stated. It is a remote chance whether they can prevent the spread of the disease. If a person walks out of an institution where he has been for a long time, and is still in the infectious stage, there is the chance of spreading the disease far and wide. We have had too many cases and have had to notify the Commissioner and we realise that it is useless to allow a patient to go and then after six weeks to notify the Commissioner.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have altered that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Of course we have not operated since the alteration. Would any intelligent person have stipulated six weeks? It shows how utterly ignorant of the disease people were, but these are the same people who are fighting the Bill to-day, and who fought it in 1914. I am not here to fight to-day, I am here to give plain facts to the Chamber.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are strengthening my hands.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have strengthened the hon. members' hands and his party's hands for many years, and I hope to strengthen the clause in the Bill so that it shall become an Act and let us try and clean up the disease which is so hopeless. If we can deal with the disease as a disease, we shall have done something. It is a desperate disease and requires desperate remedies. I could make members shudder if I told them half the cases which we treat at the hospital; cases of children 14 and 15 years of age. Members do not know these things. They cannot find them out by wandering about the footpaths in Perth. They want to be where the cases are treated. I want to refer to what the member for North-East Fre-

mantle mentioned on Wednesday night in regard to a member of the Board of Management being summoned before the board. This is the notification which I received and a similar notification was sent to the member of the board referred to —

Urgent and Important. Dear Sir, I am directed by the Chairman (Mr. Geo. Taylor, M.L.A.) to inform you that a special meeting of the board of management will take place at the above-named Institution on Thursday next, the 28th instant at 11 a.m., sharp, business sheet for which is enclosed herewith. Yours faithfully, James H. Crabb, Secretary. A special meeting of the board of management will be held on Thursday the 28th March, at 11 a.m. sharp, in accordance with Rule 8. Business: 1. To consider public statements affecting the Hospital made by member of the hospital board with reference to the Health Bill.

Nearly every member of the board attended the meeting. There is a member present in this House who was present at the meeting and the gist of what I said was printed in the Press. I questioned the member of the board as to making the statements which have been published far and wide. The statement was made by a member of the board at women's meetings and women's guilds, and I say the influence is much greater coming from a member of the board when that member of the board said there has been no treatment and it was stated that the person said that people must be paupers before they receive treatment at the Perth hospital. This night clinic has been open since October and nearly 300 patients have been treated and yet the hon. members are protesting because I called this meeting. The member for Fremantle was supported by the member for North-East Fremantle and said because it was a woman I had done this and that, if it had been a man I would not have done it. Let me tell the member for Fremantle, big and burly as he is, he would have received the same notification.

Mr. Jones: I would have come along and given you nothing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I told the secretary to send out the notice and I dictated the enclosure myself. The secretary did not know what was in the letter. I brought the matter fairly before the board. I knew from my experience that witnesses examined before select committees are allowed to see their evidence and correct it, but that substantial alterations must be made by re-examination. I knew these facts before I called the meeting. The evidence given made a man or a woman suffering from this disease scared to go near the hospital. In the first instance, it was said, there was no place at which to treat patients; it was not quite opened. Then it was said that if patients once got to the hospital, there was a detention hospital somewhere, where they would be put.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: So there is.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member will say anything. I challenge the hon. member to prove that out of the 312 patients treated within the last five months, and the 37 in-patients, even one has been detained.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not say that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In not one of these cases was there the breath of a suspicion of a suggestion of detention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That has nothing to do with the lady.

Mr. Teesdale: The lady said it, though.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is in the Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is not a detention hospital in the sense that the hon. member implied. In view of these statements, I think the hon. member in endeavouring to protect a member of the board, has produced rather the opposite effect.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not make any mistake about that. The lady is respected throughout the State.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is unfair and unmanly of the hon. member to assert that the character of the woman was impugned because it was said that, with regard to this Bill, she had made statements which were not in accord with the facts. Her probity was never questioned by the board, or, so far as I know, by any man or woman in Western Australia.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have known the lady for some years.

Mr. Green: The member for Roebourne said she told a lie.

Mr. Teesdale: I said she had made misstatements.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We know all about you.

Several interjections.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. TROY: On a point of order, the member for Roebourne is becoming notorious for his interjections and interruptions. I insist, Mr. Chairman, that you should keep him in order.

The CHAIRMAN: I take exception to the remarks of the member for Mt. Magnet, and I ask him to keep quiet.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to explain my position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You will give me an opportunity to speak later if I sit down?

Members: Chair!

Mr. Troy: Mr. Chairman, I am on my feet.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for Mt. Magnet be good enough to take his seat for a minute? I would like hon. members of this Chamber to believe that, in the difficult position which the Chairman of Committees holds, he endeavours, as far as he possible can, to give every member of this Chamber fair play.

Mr. Troy: You have done that.

The CHAIRMAN: As long as I am in this Chair I intend to do that, but I must ask hon. members to protect the Chair. If any member rises in his place when he has no right to do so, any other member calling my attention to it will get fair play. But I object to any member standing up and telling me that I should prevent a private member from taking charge of this Chamber. It is a reflection on the Chair, and one that I resent.

Mr. TROY: Since you, Mr. Chairman, have spoken I insist upon my right to rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Mt. Magnet is quite right in rising to a point of order.

Mr. TROY: I submit that you have no right, Sir, to argue with me whilst I am stating a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: I have every right to object to the statement the hon. member made.

Mr. TROY: You have a right to object, Sir, when I say something derogatory to your fairness. I have never questioned that. But I ask you to protect the Chamber from an hon. member who notoriously interrupts debates. I ask you to insist that that hon. member keeps order.

The CHAIRMAN: So I do. But I cannot possibly see every member who rises in his place.

Mr. TROY : When I say, Mr. Chairman, that you have a right to insist upon it, I do not wish to convey that you would not insist. But I say that prompt steps are necessary in a matter of this character. I ask that the member for Roebourne should be called to order because of his uncalled-for interjections.

The CHAIRMAN : The member for Roebourne should not rise in his place as he did, and I ask him to refrain from doing so in future. If he rises to a point of order, he will get the protection of the Chair every time. But he should not rise in his place and pass interjections across the floor of the Chamber, as he did just now. I trust that, after this explanation, the discussion will now cease.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : I am sorry that so much heat has been engendered. An exhibition of temper, in my opinion, is nothing but an indication of the weakness of the case. I am sorry to see hon. members on your left, Mr. Chairman, exhibit that temper on this occasion. I hope that the clause under discussion, No. 46, will be carried. It is indeed necessary, and for hon. members to put up arguments that some malicious person will take advantage of the clause is simply idle. Let me ask hon. members whether in their various associations in this State and elsewhere they have ever known, or come in contact with, a person who would be so malicious as to blast the fair fame of a woman by a baseless accusation ? Have they ever known of a man who would be malicious enough to say, "Because that girl is respectable I will degrade her as much as I can," if it is a degradation to go before a medical practitioner to ascertain whether disease exists or not ? I have never met such a man in the whole of my life. Men do not know the nature of woman as well as they know the nature of man, but I do not think there can be many women malicious enough to lay a charge against an innocent sister for the purpose of damning her by having her brought before a medical practitioner on a charge under this Act. Who are the people that will avail themselves of this clause for malicious purposes ? The purpose of the Bill is to save people from a terrible disease, and people who read this measure will not be actuated by malice but will read it rather in the interests of the nation and in the interests of the children unborn. Those who read this legislation will not be thinking about maligning some respectable girl or some respectable youth. I had the pleasure of listening to the member for North-East Fremantle the other night, and not once during the whole of his three-hours speech did he say one word about the boy. All his arguments were directed to protecting the girl. I believe a mother thinks just as much of her son as she does of her daughter. No mother will stand by and see her son degraded, any more than she will stand by and see her daughter degraded. And the same thing applies to the father. Why should not the boy be protected ? Why should not the man be protected ? This Bill does not know man or woman. It only knows that a person is suffering from venereal disease, and it looks upon that person as a menace to the community, and it desires to remove that menace. I hope that this clause, which is considered so objectionable, will play a most important part in the administration of the measure. If hon. members could see the class of patients being treated under the 1915 Act, they would indeed be surprised. This disease knows no one particularly ; if prince or peasant exposes himself to the disease, the disease will claim him

as a victim. It is idle to say that the measure is directed against the working classes. The working classes are in no more danger of coming under this Bill, than is any other class. The working classes, being greater in number than other classes, possibly will show more victims in point of number to this disease. The Bill, however, does not refer to them as a class any more than it refers to any other class in the community.

Mr. Munsie : What is the failure of the existing Act ?

Hon. G. TAYLOR : That we cannot reach patients who ought to be reached. I do not want to tell the Committee all I know on that score. My desire is to get as many sufferers treated as possible, and at present there are certain sufferers who cannot be reached. If I were now a member on the floor of the House, I would stand by this Bill, and by this clause, if I forfeited my political reputation by doing so. That is the way I feel about it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : We feel the same way about getting the clause struck out.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : The member for North-East Fremantle did not express himself to that effect on the more drastic Bill of 1915, when he was on the Government side of the House and I sat behind him. I have not changed my views regarding this diabolical disease. I know it better in 1918 than I did in 1915. That is as the result of experience.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : You have not given much evidence of that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : The member for North-East Fremantle supported the Bill of 1915 tooth and nail.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : You are wrong there.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : That measure was infinitely more drastic than the present Bill.

Hon. T. Walker : You are wrong.

Hon. G. TAYLOR : It was a Government measure introduced by an Honorary Minister, and supported by the Government of the day. Not one member of the Government opposed the Bill. If hon. members read "Hansard" they will find that neither on the second reading, nor at any other stage of the Bill, did any member of that Government oppose the measure. I believe the late Lieut. Stubbs, then member for Subiaco, was the only member on the Government side of the House who attacked the Bill of 1915. I do not wish to discuss the clause any further. I think I have contributed as much information to the subject as any member of this Chamber, with the exception, perhaps, of the Honorary Minister who introduced the measure of 1915. I hope hon. members will support the clause.

Mr. FOLEY : In my opinion the clause is the Bill. If we lose the clause, the Bill is lost. It has been said that no justification is shown for the clause. The clause seeks to bring cure to those who require it. I believe that the vast majority of men and women in Western Australia are good men and women, that purity of mind is as strong now as ever it was. The clause will give to the only man who should have the right the opportunity of exercising his specialised knowledge and his official power to cure disease. Naturally every mother wishes to protect her children. But the provision in the present Act does not give a mother full opportunity of doing this. It will be different under the clause. Let me give a specific case, showing the difference. A certain mother went to a doctor and said that her daughter was beyond control, that she was out every night with men and did not return till late. The mother

added, "I am positive from her appearance, and from examinations of her underclothing and bedclothes that she is suffering from a disease, and I as her mother want to protect her." Do hon. members wish to see that daughter remain unprotected? Should we not give that mother a chance to protect her daughter? I want the mother to be able to say to the Commissioner that she "has reason to believe" and not, as under the present Act, have to declare that "she knows" a certain thing.

Mr. Munsie: But she could report that case under the existing Act.

Mr. FOLEY: She could not. Under the present Act she must sign a statement that her daughter is suffering from venereal trouble. But the mother cannot say that positively, although she has every reason to believe it. She could not sign a statement.

Mr. Pilkington: Of course she could sign a statement.

Mr. Munsie: Why should she not?

Mr. FOLEY: Because she must be able to say positively that the daughter is suffering.

Mr. Pilkington: The woman in that case you mentioned could have signed that statement.

Mr. FOLEY: She could not, because she did not examine her daughter, and so she could not say positively "I know." In consequence of this the doctor was prevented from treating that girl.

Hon. T. Walker: If that is your case it is very feeble.

Mr. Munsie: She could have signed a statement if she wanted to do so. I say she did not want to protect her daughter.

Mr. FOLEY: The Act provides that she must be able to state definitely that she knows her daughter is suffering. The clause will give us what is required to meet such a case. Here is another case: A girl was brought before the Children's Court and charged with stealing a small sum of money. The female attendant at the Court had that girl under her charge over night, and from an examination of her underclothing and bed clothes, discovered, to the best of her belief, that the girl was suffering from venereal trouble. But because she did not positively know it, she was not in a position to say definitely that the girl was suffering. She could not report the case, and so the Commissioner was powerless to treat the girl. It is because I want to see the Commissioner given this power that I desire an amendment of the existing law. In 1915 I was of opinion that the law should be even more drastic than it is at present, and I voted for the existing law.

Mr. Munsie: Was that Bill ever before a party meeting?

Mr. FOLEY: I would sooner cut my throat than give away anything that happens at a party meeting.

Mr. Munsie: You are leading the public to believe that this was before the party, which you know to be a deliberate lie.

Mr. FOLEY: I take exception to the remark of the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Leonora takes exception to that remark.

Mr. Munsie: I withdraw.

Mr. FOLEY: I accept the withdrawal. No further proofs are needed that something more drastic is required than is now provided in the Act. The member for North-East Fremantle said that if a girl was had up, but was subsequently

proved to be innocent, she would have no redress. I would point out that under other Acts of Parliament people have little redress.

Hon. T. Walker: In the case of malicious prosecution you have your remedy in a court of law.

Mr. FOLEY: Yes. All the arguments against the amendments to the Act are based on malice. How depraved must be the minds of people when they think that there is malice behind everything that is done? The best of our semi-public men and women in the State do not speak of malice. Those who do harp on the question of malice should not be taken any notice of in this matter. I would point out, too, that there is a place for the treatment of this disease, and further on in the Bill provision is made for detention wards. The member for North-East Fremantle also said that any girl, who was known to have had to report, would be ruined forever in the district in which she lived. My retort is that if a woman who is suffering from the disease is brought under the notice of a doctor, and cured in this way, much more good than harm would result. Then again, there is all this talk about innocence, and it is suggested that it is a crime for anyone to have this disease. I would rather use the word "unfortunate," as applied to those who have the disease. If a girl is not fortunate enough to be free of this disease, I contend that she would be settled to a greater extent if she was not treated, than she would be if malicious statements were made about her. I pin my faith to a greater extent upon Australian authorities who are dealing with the disease, than I do upon medical advice coming from other countries. If a person is affected, I do not regard him as a culprit but as a victim. Our duty should be to see that such a victim is cured. We also want an opportunity of putting the scientific knowledge, that these doctors profess to possess, into practice, and because I believe that by the carrying of the clause this can be done I intend to vote for it. We are only dealing in this Bill with the disease, after it has been found to have been contracted by anyone, and if anything is done to bring forward legislation for the prevention of the disease I shall be glad to support it.

Mr. TROY: I support the amendment. I feel that this clause strikes at the most delicate susceptibilities of any person, who is unfortunate enough to be reported to be a victim of the disease. An ordinary charge laid against a person publicly cannot apply in the same way as a charge made against the purity of women, or even the purity of men. I cannot understand the gross manner in which people can so arrange for the treatment of the subject, as if it was the treatment of an ordinary case, in a criminal court. We are dealing with the subject as if there was no such thing in life as purity, or gentleness, or delicacy. Purity and delicacy are the most necessary things in the whole of our social system. I do not believe that there will be any propaganda of malice, or that men are not chivalrous and manly, or that women are not gentle and good. But I believe that in every community there are certain individuals who are capable of slandering and traducing the characters of other people who may, by that means, been ruined for life. Hon. members discuss this matter in a detached manner, as if they were really dealing with somebody else altogether, whereas everyone in the community is concerned. Let us suppose the case of the daughter of any of us here who might be subjected to degradation under the powers conferred by this Bill, and although she might be ever so guiltless and pure,

and revered by her people, she would still be dragged to this inquiry and her feelings outraged.

The Minister for Works: Do you think there would be an absence of delicacy in dealing with any case?

Mr. TROY: There is something in human nature which is so delicate that no man or woman has a right to intrude. This is not a commonplace matter with thousands in our community, I am glad to say.

The Minister for Works: And the disease is not a commonplace matter.

Mr. TROY: These women are to be called to an investigation and are to be submitted to the utmost degradation.

Mr. Harrison: All for the protection of the general community.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TROY: I am putting myself in the place of individuals in the community and I am no more entitled by my vote to allow that to be done to anyone else which I would not allow to be done to myself. As the results which have followed the administration of the existing Act have been successful, we might continue the administration of that Act for a further term. I am regarding the matter as if it had been brought to my home and the purity and delicacy of my family had been outraged. I do not know what I would be capable of doing under the circumstances, and therefore I am not going to permit it to be done to anyone else. Our social fabric depends upon the purity of our men and women. We have no right to intrude upon their delicacy of feeling and I am going to deny the right of any individual to do so. It is said that it is highly improbable that any person in the community will lay a charge against a woman. I am not going to say that men are not chivalrous and women are not pure, but there are sections of the community who may be actuated by jealousy or other motives, to lay charges and there is no penalty provided for any person who may lay such a charge. How often do we read in the papers, public apologies by men and women because they have scandalised the name of a neighbour? In my opinion this amendment invades the purity and delicacy of our social life.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: You are going to allow a dirty old strumpet to scatter disease?

Mr. TROY: That dirty old strumpet was not always so.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: But she is disseminating the disease.

Mr. TROY: Her delicacy and purity was violated and outraged and she became common.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: And you give her the right to distribute the disease.

Mr. TROY: Once we invade the delicacy and purity of womenkind we destroy everything that is best and desirable.

The Minister for Works: We want to deal with those who have lost all delicacy.

Mr. TROY: I view this matter in the way in which it would affect my own home, and I realise that other men's homes are as sacred as mine. Mr. Speaker gave us some interesting information regarding the prevalence of this disease and the operation of the clinics, but his speech was a justification of our attitude.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Do not forget that private doctors have also been treating many cases and that the medical officers of the State have also been attending them.

Mr. TROY: Mr. Speaker showed that by free treatment good results had been obtained. Some members have claimed that under the Bill there is no chance of publicity. We cannot secure absolute security under any conditions. I do not suggest that members of the board would wilfully advertise the fact that a certain man or woman was suffering from a disease but in Perth a great many people know one another and some of the leading citizens might be on the committee and they might know the name of the person. There cannot be secrecy at the night clinics because those who are paying a visit to these clinics see one another. I am prepared to go so far as to allow any person who has contracted a disease from another to report that person, but secretly. I do not know how the Commissioner is going to find out how the statement is true unless he makes an examination. The signed statement is a protection and that is as far as I am going.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There seems to be a consensus of opinion that something should be done, because the disease exists, but the signed statement does not convey any safety. If the Commissioner has reason to believe that a person is suffering from a disease and he has satisfied himself that the statement made to him is correct; and if he has reason to believe that something is wrong, in the interests of the community, it is right that he should take the steps intended. So far as the signed statement is concerned, there have been persons who have found themselves infected but they would not sign the statement. A man or a woman who will make a verbal statement as to another person and is not prepared to go the full hog and sign that statement is not worthy of credence in any shape or form, and I have no time for either a man or woman, who, having done harm to another, is not willing to rectify the damage done. This is not only a menace to the individual but to the whole nation. The experience gained since the Act has been in operation shows that there are improvements and amendments necessary, in order to allow the working of the Act to be made complete. This is not a matter to be treated on party lines and any member who desires to treat it on party lines is not worthy of a seat in the House. When there is a national peril the best that is in us should be given to get rid of it. The unfortunate class of women requires from us the largest measure of consideration that we can give. There is a great amount of depravity in the human race, in men as well as in women; and no safeguard will entirely obviate the tittle tattle that destroys reputations. It is the easiest thing in the world to cast a slur upon a person's reputation. But we are faced with the fact that we have a large number of men and women who, unfortunately, by reason of disease, constitute a menace to the community. If the semi-publicity which has been referred to this evening can be prevented, that ought to be done. There is no need to enter into details as to these diseases. We are persuaded that the danger exists, and it is out duty, as trustees for the State, to do the best that is in us to overcome the evil. For my part, I have little faith in the signed statement, because in many cases it will not be brought forward in such bona fide circumstances as might be wished. Further, the requiring of the signed statement will prevent many matters from being dealt with by the Commissioner that ought to be dealt with by him. As regard malicious people, the signed statement will not alter their unhappy nature. If they wish

to do harm to a man or a woman, they will do it, and probably in such a way as to escape detection. I have a wife and a daughter, and I hope—if I may be permitted to say it—that all men respect their wives and daughters as I respect mine. But if we feel that any possible danger to our wives and daughters weighs with us in considering this question, we are taking too narrow a view. The boys at the Front are fighting for our safety; and we have to fight for the safety of the men and women and children of this State. I rejoice that the women are taking such an interest in this matter, although I would rather that they were not present here. I would rather that the women discussed these matters among themselves, and then let us have their concrete suggestions.

Mr. ANGELO: I refrained from taking part in the second reading discussion because I desired to hear the arguments of members for and against the measure. I have carefully read the evidence taken by the select committee of another place, and have followed the discussion in the newspapers. The crux of the measure is the highly controversial clause now before the Committee. I can appreciate the danger from the spread of these foul diseases. The able speech the Honourable the Speaker, who is also Chairman of the Perth Public Hospital and thus has special knowledge of the subject, was absolutely convincing on that aspect. At the same time, this clause does leave a chance, though a remote one, of a malicious person humiliating an innocent man or woman or youth or girl. The member for Perth made a valuable contribution to the general debate, and suggested a certain remedy. That remedy, I consider, should be adopted to the fullest extent. But I can follow the member for Perth no further. He wished the remedy to take the place of this regulation. I consider the remedy should run concurrently with the activities proposed by this Bill. I do not think we need bother about any menace to the men of the community from the Bill. But it is a very different thing in the case of our women folk. They must be considered in this matter, and their views must be carefully weighed. So far as I can gather, about half the women are in favour of this clause, and about half against it. Being unsatisfied with what I have learnt from the various arguments, I considered it my duty to obtain my wife's opinion on this matter. She is an elector, and she has three daughters who, being above school age, would all be subject to any menace which might lie hidden in the wording of this clause. I went thoroughly into the matter with my wife, and pointed out to her the grave danger of the clause. This was her reply: "I am satisfied there is a terrible menace to the community in this disease, and that the menace must be removed as soon as possible. I also realise the danger of the clause and that, perhaps, being the wife of a member of Parliament who has at times to come into conflict of opinion with many others, I and such as I might be in greater danger than other wives. But we have our duty to the State. What are our noble sisters doing in France? To nurse our wounded soldiers they are risking their lives and indeed their honour behind the fighting lines. Surely if our sisters are doing that it is not asking too much of the women of Western Australia to run this risk in order to clear out this terrible scourge from our midst." At the same time we must do what we can to minimise the danger. Later I intend to move an amendment which I trust will have some effect in this direction.

Hon. T. WALKER: The object of the amendment is simply to restore the Bill to its original form in respect of putting responsibility on the maker of an accusation against another. Most of the debate has been beside the point. Nobody desires to see the disease spreading or the risks increased, or that the disease should not be stamped out if possible. The position taken up by the supporters of the amendment is that the proposal in the Bill is not going to stamp it out.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: That position has not been put up yet.

Hon. T. WALKER: It has been conveyed in almost every speech made in support of the amendment. It is the point I am taking. Instead of assisting in the eradicating of the disease the provision is going to create other evils in the community which in their moral effect will be almost equally disastrous. It will create hypocrisy and sneakishness. There is an exaggeration of the number of venereal cases throughout the community. That the disease is wide-spread, virulent and dangerous, must be admitted, but we should be careful that we do not exaggerate the conditions of affairs. This kind of hysterical legislation—

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Was that of 1915 hysterical?

Hon. T. WALKER: In 1915 the hon. member, coming fresh from the doctor who is behind him, as his mouthpiece, practically brought that Bill directly from the doctor to this Chamber; and unfortunately the doctor's view, as expressed by the Minister, was accepted almost without criticism.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: You know that is not correct.

Hon. T. WALKER: Much was taken for granted. The attitude of the Chamber was seen in the striking fact that when the danger was pointed out by a doctor in another place of giving to informants power without responsibility, this Chamber immediately fell into line and adopted that recommendation from another place. One would think we were in the days of Matthew Hopkins once more, hunting witches. We are inviting accusations and information about the vices and the diseases of others. We are inviting all our citizens to become secret spies upon each other. It is going to degenerate the moral character of the whole of the community. I can conceive nothing more immoral. There are in the lives of some men and some women stages when they cannot help becoming false accusers of others. The Committee is beginning at the end, and is putting a blister on the wound instead of getting down to its foundation, and stopping and checking the disease by rational, intelligent, and scientific methods. Provision should be made for educating the whole public upon sex matters, and upon these diseases. The danger that exists would then be known to all, and we should arm ourselves with the means of meeting it and preparing for it. If there are people who, through the perversity of their moral natures, are determined to make accusations against their fellows, if they do make such false accusations, they should take the responsibility for so doing. That is the sole object of the amendment. Is that not consistent with an honest desire to get rid of the disease? No person should be allowed to take a secret and malicious advantage of a fellow citizen. I am surprised to hear the contradiction in mood, on the part of the Minister for Works, when speaking on this subject. At first he endorsed the amendment, but before he had finished, he was com-

pletely over on the other side of the fence. Apparently we have not a sufficient number of informers to enable us to get all the cases, but, I submit, we never will have them even if we pass this measure. There is to be a sort of police over the life of every woman, girl, boy and man in the community and there is to be a feeling generated in the community that everyone is liable at any moment to receive a letter from the Commissioner commanding him or her to come up for examination. No one can feel safe that there will not be someone in the community who will not convey false information to the Commissioner.

The Minister for Works: The Commissioner has to be convinced.

Hon. T. WALKER: I expected that. That is harped upon by everyone. I want to show the chikishness of the provisions that are made for getting these notifications issued. They are not worthy of an intelligent Assembly such as this.

The Minister for Works: The Commissioner must have reason to believe.

Hon. T. WALKER: First of all he was to be convinced, and now he is have "reason to believe."

Hon. R. H. Underwood: He never was to be convinced.

Hon. T. WALKER: I was simply quoting the Minister for Works. If this great principle for the salvation of the people of Australia is to be represented by the vulgarity of the Honorary Minister, who has introduced it, then it should be sufficient to deter us from accepting it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: If it approached the indelicacy of your last speech, I would leave.

Hon. T. WALKER: There was no indelicacy. It is an alleged indelicacy which has kept us from frankly and fully discussing this subject for years past, and has led to this frenzied hysteria upon the subject.

The Minister for Works: Take it as "reason to believe."

Hon. T. WALKER: What means has he to procure that reason to believe?

The Minister for Works: Information must come to him in some way.

Hon. T. WALKER: From people who have not the courage to back it up by signing their names. It is hearsay evidence when it reaches the Commissioner.

The Minister for Works: It may be hearsay evidence from a signed statement.

Hon. T. WALKER: But in a signed statement there is some redress, and the wrongdoer can be brought to justice.

The Minister for Works: If you catch him.

Hon. T. WALKER: This gives us no chance of getting him. It is secrecy from the beginning. Without having any more evidence, if the Commissioner has reason to believe he can carry this secret information to a committee. If the Commissioner has reason to believe that should be the end of it, for he is the policeman and the head inquisitor. The committee consists of two ladies and a gentleman. There is no one really interested in the matter there. The Commissioner has simply to submit the same sheet of paper, which may or which may not be false, to the committee, and they go through the farce of reading that paper and listening to his story. If they like, they can then go to the vote on what has already given the Commissioner reason to believe that so and so has or has not got the disease. They then come to a conclusion, but the Commissioner must not vote. When the committee have come to their conclusion, the

Commissioner goes back, and the notice is sent to the party to be examined. Could there be anything more nonsensical or stupid? The committee is no safeguard to the public and does not protect anyone. It leaves everything open to the false accuser, who cannot be reached by any means. There is a sort of megalomania possessing our young medical authority in this State. He wants more and more kudos, more and more of the limelight, and more and more power, and if we give him the power proposed in the Act that very thing will in itself be a danger to the stamping out of the disease. He is becoming ubiquitous in his functions and labours. Only the other day we found that other duties were given to him to perform. It is interesting to know that when Dr. Hope was Commissioner of Health, Principal Medical Officer, and Superintendent of Vaccination, Dr. Atkinson carried out the duties of Medical Officer of Health, and Dr. Shearman those of pathologist and bacteriologist. With the retirement of Dr. Hope Dr. Atkinson was placed in charge and he became Commissioner of Health, Principal Medical Officer, Superintendent of Vaccination, and Medical Officer of Health. Dr. Shearman has now resigned and that department adds further variety to Dr. Atkinson's hours in the sphere of pathology and bacteriology. With regard to the clause, there are some women who would rather go to their grave than disclose the fact that they were diseased in the manner suggested. Failing that, they would change the locality of their homes and seek other friends and go amongst strangers, so that they might hide the possibility of discovered shame. We are running the risk of driving the disease further into new places in the effort to give more authority to one department in the State. We have it from the Speaker that what can be done in the way of cure and prevention is not known. We have only learnt in this House since the debate commenced, that Dr. Atkinson himself has been delivering lectures on the subject of venereal diseases and has been making known those facts to the few who have had the privilege of hearing him.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Look on your desk and turn up his report.

Hon. T. WALKER: Some of us have learnt that, only since the debate has taken place here. I trust we shall not be carried away with a sort of witch-hunting, heresy-hunting, or disease-hunting desire, for they all belong to the same kind of mania which has taken possession of a certain section of the community.

Mr. PILKINGTON: I support the amendment. In view of some of the observations from the Minister for Works to-night and on a former occasion I should like to say that we ought to be gratified that members of the other sex should attend in this Chamber and take an interest in the question before us. So long as they are here, as I know they are, because they take a serious and earnest interest in the matter, and in the rooting out of this evil and I think we may be assured that any woman who exhibits the tendency and interest necessary to listen to the debate in this House must indeed be in earnest. It was suggested by the member for Leonora that there was a legal difficulty in getting the signed statement provided for in the Act of 1915, and he instanced the case of a mother who had strong reasons for supposing her daughter to be suffering from one of these diseases, and he alleged that it was impossible for that mother to sign such a statement. The law has often been called an ass, but I have

never yet heard it called a "blithering" idiot, and when the member for Leonora suggests that the person who signs such a statement must be in a position to say, "I myself of my own knowledge allege that so and so is suffering from a disease," he makes the Act perfectly futile. The Act provides that the statement must be "is suffering from disease." The hon. member knows that every criminal charge commences by a similar statement. The prosecutor says so and so has committed a crime, and we all know what is meant by such a statement. We know that it means that a person who makes the statement has proper grounds for being convinced of the truth of what he says. If the member were correct in his interpretation which he puts on the Act, then that mother under no circumstances could sign such a statement. It would mean this that no person could sign such a statement except a medical man who had examined the patient. A signed statement is a statement that can be made by any person who has a moral certainty which is sufficient to warrant the laying of a criminal charge. It is no good wasting time proving there is an evil. There is an evil and it is hardly conceivable that there is anybody who is not in favour of doing anything that will get rid of it. The question is what is the remedy? The member for Kanowna pointed out that the remedy proposed would not be effectual. I was surprised that the Minister said that it had never been suggested before. It has been suggested many times and once by myself. The point is, is this going to be effectual. If I believed that the remedy proposed was going to root this evil out and put an end to venereal disease, I would be in favour of it, but what is going to happen? We want to get the patients to the medical men but this form of legislation will not do it. The effect on the ordinary man is this, he knows there is a public department looking out for him to grab him and to try and cure him. This man is afraid of this malady being made public and the more drastic we make the Act the more we drive the man away. We shall drive these people into the hands of the quacks. The Minister for Works says we ought to do something. That is a sort of salve; we may pass a Bill which causes damage, which instead of ameliorating the evil, increases it. It is a contemptible thing to pass an Act of that sort. It is a mean thing to salve one's conscience like that. It is no mere sentimental objection when one remembers what it would mean to a woman to receive from a public department a notification which in effect would read, "I have reason to believe, in my capacity as a public servant, that you are suffering from a foul disease. Go to a doctor and get a certificate saying that you are not, and send it to me." That, I submit, is the deepest humiliation to which a woman could be subjected. It is not sentimental; it is real. Some hon. members have told us that such a thing as malice hardly exists, and that we need not entertain any fear of the malicious use of the weapon which this clause asks us to put into the hands of all and sundry. But the courts have been full of actions for malicious prosecution, malicious slander, malicious libel, malicious injury to person, malicious injury to property—malice in any and every shape and form is a daily manifestation. I wonder those hon. members did not tell us that human nature had now become so perfect that immorality had entirely ceased and therefore legislation of this kind was quite unnecessary. Now, here is a proposed protection of the individual against the Commissioner in the

form of an advisory committee. I have not the slightest doubt that the Commissioner will administer this Act with the utmost care and the utmost zeal and the utmost competency. It is not the Commissioner personally I am speaking about when I object to this clause. But the information coming before him will be an ex parte statement. Why, if one hears the prosecution, and the prosecution only, one is convinced that the defendant is guilty. And the Commissioner is going to hear only one side of the case—the case against the suspected person. In a few cases, of course, he will find some reason for doubting the charge; but in the majority of cases would he not be in the same position as we are all in if we hear only one side of the case? Of course he would be. The suggestion of an advisory committee seems to me the most fatuous suggestion ever put forward. For my part, I would rather leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Commissioner, who is, apparently, prepared to take the responsibility of the position, and the whole weight of anything going wrong. It is better that the Commissioner should have the whole responsibility on his shoulders than that we should pretend, or that he should pretend, to shuffle it on to the shoulders of a board. Besides, the Commissioner is to be chairman of the board, and is to bring before the board the case which has already convinced himself. The board is a sort of subterfuge, apparently, to limit the evil which the clause can do. I earnestly hope that, if this Bill passes, it will pass without the institution of this fatuous board.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Hon. members have traversed a good deal of ground in discussing this clause. On the one hand we have been told that it has been demonstrated that this legislation will not be effective. On the other hand it has been said that the legislation already on our statute-book has proved most effective. One hon. member even said that very little legislation ever was effective or ever attained its end. Members agree that it is desirable to stamp venereal disease out of our community. I am anxious to listen to any suggestion tending in that direction. But very few suggestions have been offered. We have had a suggestion from the member for Perth, who quoted from an English magazine, and in doing so reminded me of a remark of Carlyle's. Someone repeated to Carlyle the saying that "man is an animal looking before and after," whereupon Carlyle remarked "The more is the wonder he does not look around him a bit." Had the hon. member looked around him, he would not have needed to go to an English magazine for that information as to a preventive. The Commissioner of Public Health recommended that preventive in a lecture delivered at a church conference held in Perth on the 19th March, 1917; and I have the report of his lecture here. He dealt with the subject much more concisely and much better than the English magazine treats it. In closing the second reading debate I stated that I would not object to a clause dealing with the matter of a preventive being introduced into the Bill if such a clause could be drawn. I do not see how such a clause could be introduced into the Bill.

Mr. Pilkington: No such clause is necessary at all.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I am convinced that the remedy is not effective, and I personally regard it as something almost repulsive. I consider Sir Bryan Donkin's article in the "Nineteenth Century" is totally spoiled by his postscript. He

says that the remedy will wipe out venereal disease, and that no other remedy is needed. That stuff has been used in the British Army and in the British Navy for the last 15 years; and yet in the postscript to which I have referred, Sir Bryan Donkin allows Miss Rout to say that one-third of the Australian, New Zealand, and Canadian soldiers are suffering from venereal disease—thus proving that the preventive is not effective. In any case, there is no reason whatever why that preventive should not be used by those who care to use it. There is no reason why those who care to advocate it should not advocate it. I do not advocate it, although the Commissioner for Public Health does. The member for North-East Fremantle put up the main case against the clause, and the other speeches have been largely repetition. The hon. member says we have given no reason for the amendment. The reason has been stated by the Commissioner, who has been administering the principal Act. He assures me, and is prepared to assure any member of this Committee, that he knows, as far as a man can know apart from actual examination, of people who to-day are suffering from venereal disease, but whom, owing to the requirements of the signed statement, he cannot compel to undergo treatment. The learned member for Perth, of course, says he can. No doubt a lawyer may find a way to defeat an Act of Parliament, but one hardly expects a physician to achieve that. Suppose the Commissioner put the law into force and went into court. I will undertake to say that if the defendant—if one may call him a defendant—got the member for Perth to defend him, that hon. member would at once raise the objection that no signed statement had been obtained.

Mr. Pilkington: Of course the Commissioner must have a signed statement. I never said that he need not have a signed statement.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: No matter what the Commissioner knew, he must have a signed statement. That is the point. He has quoted actual cases. There is the case of the young girl on whose bedclothes there were found, in the morning, stains which in 95 cases out of 100 indicate venereal disease. And yet, in the absence of the signed statement, he could not have the girl examined.

Mr. Pilkington: Why did he not get a signed statement?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: From whom would he get it?

Mr. Pilkington: From the person who knew of the stains. From you, if you knew of them.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: He did not get the certificate because the person would not sign.

Mr. Foley: Hear, hear! Rightly so.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Why would not the person sign the statement? I am sorry to be compelled to go into details. There is a certain discharge which in 95 cases out of 100 is the result of venereal disease. The other five per cent. may not be venereal; and the person who in such a case signs a statement alleging venereal disease has no chance of a get-out. Once he signs to an allegation of venereal disease, he is liable and his name must be given. That is the reason why people will not sign.

Mr. Pilkington: They are not liable.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: What protection have they?

Mr. Pilkington: They are not liable if it is honestly done.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: In that case, let us strike out the signed statement and insert the amendment proposed by the member for Gascoyne, which would meet the requirements equally well. If it is done knowingly and maliciously, the informant should be punished. If hon. members knew of any man suffering from the disease, it would be their duty to see that he was treated. But when there is a statement to be signed, people will not do it, but say, "Let somebody else do it." That is why we do not get the signed statement. Who are going to supply the information? Mostly those who have contracted the disease. Let us consider the Commissioner of Public Health. The medical profession is probably the highest in the world. Its members are taught to respect the confidence of their patients. When selecting a Chief Justice, we select the most reputable man in the legal profession. By the same reasoning when we select a Commissioner of Public Health, we select the most reputable man in the medical profession. Therefore, when it comes to dealing with a question of this nature, we have the best man in the State for the purpose. Whoever, at any time, is Commissioner of Public Health will be a reputable man in his profession, which is the highest and best in the world. The Bill says that when the Commissioner has reason to believe, he can do certain things. We may rest assured that he will have good reason to believe before he acts. Some members have told us what they would do if the thing happened to any of their people. It is not likely to happen, for the Commissioner would be very particular in his inquiries; and when an accusation is made against some person in less desirable circumstances than the wives and sisters of members of Parliament, the Commissioner will be equally careful. Although the provision suggested by the member for Hannans is not in the clause, it would in practice be followed. When any man went before the Commissioner and accused a woman of having the disease, the first thing the Commissioner would ask would be, "How do you know?" and unless he could answer that he had caught it from her, not much notice would be taken of his statement. If he said that the member for Perth had told him, the Commissioner would say, "Well, send the member for Perth along." It has been said that the Governor's daughter could be examined on the testimony of a burglar.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Someone said that Judge Rooth's daughter could be examined on similar testimony.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: The Commissioner would know what to say to the burglar.

Mr. Jones: It will not be the Governor's daughter. It will be the daughter of a man in poor circumstances.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: It will not be the Governor's daughter, nor the clergyman's daughter, nor the daughter of a member of Parliament; but whoever it may be, let us suppose that the accusation is correct, and the suspect has the disease—for it must be remembered that it is prevalent in all classes of society. Flexner claims that in America it is more prevalent among the richer classes than among the poorer. For my own part, and on behalf of other poor people, I resent the hypothesis that the prevalence of the disease is due to economic conditions; meaning that the economic pressure on the poor leads directly to this disease. I say that is incorrect.

Mr. Jones: It is only too correct.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: I say there is as much of this disease right up to the Governor's daughter as there is down to the navy's daughter, and equally as much immorality, if illicit intercourse is to be called immorality. The main thing we have to discuss in the Bill is that somebody might come along and make a malicious statement, Hon. members will agree that if a person has the disease, the best thing that can be done for him is to cure him. This is not a question of criminality, or guilt, or right or wrong. It is a question of curing a dangerous disease. On the other hand, take a person who has the disease, and refuses to be cured. There are many such, and we must have some means of getting at those people. How can we reach those who will not be cured? The member for Hannans suggested that we should not allow any diseased people to be employed in the handling of food. We have the power in the Health Act to prevent them being so employed, but how are they to be prevented when we do not know that they have it? And how are we to know that they have it unless we have them examined? If everyone went straight to a doctor, upon contracting the disease, we would not want this Bill. The trouble is that they will not do this, but spread the disease to others. Are we going to allow women to carry this disease about, and give it to young men without putting out a hand to stop it? At the Rockingham Camp there are at present 300 men, and 16 per cent. of these are from 18 to 20 years of age. I do not know what to say of the man who would convey this disease to a woman, but I do know of men who delight in doing this.

Mr. Munsie: We want a Bill which would intern a man of that description.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: Before we can do that we have to catch him. With regard to the amendments which appear on the Notice Paper, I intend to accept both of them, the one by the member for Gascoyne, making it a penal offence for anyone to knowingly give false information, and the other by the member for Leederville, to limit the operations of this clause until July of next year.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have another amendment. I want to find out who the malicious person is.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD: We all profess that we want to have this disease done away with. Members in opposition to the Bill have put up no remedy at all. I say, give this a trial for one year. If it is no good let it not be re-enacted. I would remind hon. members that a vigilance committee was appointed in 1915. This committee posted up notices all over the State informing people that if they came to any harm, because of the clauses of the Health Act dealing with venereal diseases, they would take up their case and see that they were not persecuted. The result was that there was not a single case of injustice which came under their notice. They were as strong against notification in 1915, as they are in favour of the signed statement to-day. Notification has not hurt anyone yet, but under the Act many suffering people have been cured. We have heard a great deal about innocent women who would be submitted to the indignity of examination. There is a possible chance of a woman being examined who is free from the disease. Innocent people have been hanged, and probably this law will not work out any more evenly than our criminal law does. What is absolutely certain is that there will be babes who, through this disease, will be born blind, or with syphilis in their blood. I ask anyone, when dealing with the Bill, to remember these un-

born babes, and remember the imbeciles at Claremont. I have seen babies blind as the result of gonorrhoea, and with the curse of syphilis in them. It would be better for a score of innocent women to be examined, than one syphilitic baby to be born.

Mr. TEESDALE: A good deal of the discussion which has arisen is due to what has appeared in the papers. The "West Australian" has done more to work up the agitation than any other agency that could be mentioned. Many of the people run away with the idea that, because this journal says something, it is important, whereas, after all, the opinions expressed are only those of one man. The editor may have a kink upon this question, and possibly his opinion has no more weight than my own. Whoever wrote the article, which appeared a few days ago, knows very little about the fearful ravages of the disease. I have seen frightful results of it. I have seen children in all stages, up to the time when their eyes have burst as the result of gonorrhoea infection. These are innocent sufferers, because in most cases this infection came from flies. It is not generally known that the fly is a most certain source of infection, especially if the person attacked is a little run down. I have seen men far away, from any medical man, in a loathsome state because of this disease. In 1917, there were treated 570 cases of people between the ages of 20 and 30. Surely that is sufficient to induce us to do something to put down the disease. We have also 182 cases of people from 10 years of age to 20. What a nation we shall become if some steps are not taken to deal with this frightful scourge. What a nation shall we be if we are to have our little boys and girls growing up and perpetuating their syphilis-infected species? A number of cases are congenital, the result of ill-sufficiently cured cases on the part of parents.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That represents a small percentage only.

Mr. TEESDALE: This is a shocking illustration of parents' carelessness and neglect. It is enough to make the children, when they are grown up, to curse their own parents, because they have this disease as a result of the rotten carelessness and neglect on the part of their parents. We have hon. members detracting from the determination of a first class man, like our Commissioner, to put down this disease. It is a shame to block this expert, who is only actuated by the purest methods, and a determination to leave us a clean nation, and give Western Australia a pure childhood. Everything depends upon our being healthy. Are we to allow this legacy of disease to be handed down to future generations? We should at least give the Bill a 12 months' trial to see how it works. All that has been said about dragging unfortunate and innocent girls up for examination is a scandalous exaggeration. Nothing of the kind will ever be done. Everything will be carried out in a strictly private manner. At the present time the greatest secrecy is observed in connection with these cases. Private medical men never report the names of the individuals suffering from the disease; they merely record the fact that a patient, male or female, has been examined and give details without in any way disclosing the identity of the individual. The police will have nothing whatever to do with the matter. The Commissioner explained that fully when giving evidence before the select committee, and it is not right that that bogey should be continually held up for the purpose of frightening the women folk. Why,

if the Criminal Code were put into force in its entirety we would not be able to go out into the street. Is it thought for a moment that the Commissioner will take advantage of the full powers which will be given him? He is bound to exercise discretion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You have not read the Bill; you are only reading the evidence.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Commissioner explained in giving evidence that the only time when he had occasion to consult the police was when he asked them to endeavour to locate a man who had failed to continue to report himself. This man was regarded as a menace to the community, and as he had not been heard of for the specified period of six weeks, that is to say, as he had failed to continue medical treatment, the aid of the police was sought. The police located the man and informed the Commissioner, and then the Commissioner communicated with the man. Was there any publicity there? I am sorry to notice the attitude of the churches, with perhaps one or two exceptions. I am disappointed to find a dignitary like the Archbishop of Perth taking up the stand he did when giving evidence before the select committee. He was asked whether he would allow a man or woman to continue to be a menace to the community, because no one would sign a statement, and his reply was that he thought he would if that was the only way in which such a person could be got at. Then he was asked whether he would allow such a person to go at large and he said, "Yes, rather than run the risk. I am a great believer in individual liberty." The Archbishop would allow a man who is a mass of disease to remain at large rather than suffer an affront. There was no justification whatever for hon. members to paint pictures they did about unfortunate girls who might be dragged from their homes to undergo an examination. I know that in some instances, if it were found that there was nothing the matter, a woman would be glad that she had had the opportunity, in the interests of humanity, to show that there was nothing the matter, and she would say that if that examination was a benefit to others she was amply satisfied. Were the woman folk likely to die of fright because they might be expected to undergo an examination? Is it such a fearful thing to ask a woman to undergo a medical examination when there is a fear of this terrible scourge spreading? It becomes hon. members to ridicule the Advisory Board which it is proposed to appoint, because I consider that women folk should be represented, and they have a perfect right to be represented by their own sex on such a board. I have a sufficiently good opinion of women to know that they will do their work honestly. I ask members to allow the signed statement to affect them, but to give the Commissioner an opportunity of testing this scheme, not with any idea that he will benefit himself but that he will benefit the State as a whole. He is not doing this for his own glorification. The Commissioner will exercise the greatest care in carrying out the extra power which is given to him. We can leave the matter in his hands with perfect safety. There is a gentleman who signs himself M. O'Connor, M.D., writing in this morning's paper, and he says "the question of morality does not appear to concern the Government; the ruin of young girls is of no consequence. People may be as immoral as they wish, in fact, they are almost encouraged to be so, by being led foolishly to believe that they will be safe from contracting

venereal disease." That is a serious thing for a man calling himself a doctor to say. Then we have another statement which says, "Young men, show your manhood not in risking its dangers but in the exercise of self-control, until the clean and wholesome association with a woman such as you would have your mother and your sister be, is possible." That is the sort of thing that is circulated throughout the country, and in many instances it is not contradicted. It is a lying statement, and I believe that 20,000 of these documents have been circulated. I ask hon. members to give the Commissioner a chance of carrying out his scheme.

Mr. PICKERING: The difficulty will be in getting evidence that will be satisfactory to the Commissioner. I hesitate to do away with the signed statement. I think the informer should be made available to the person, because that is his protection. Why should the informer be protected? If a man is making a serious charge against a woman that man should be made responsible. It seems to me to be quite contrary to the ordinary law. I should like to know what position the country districts are in.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Commissioner can delegate his power.

Mr. PICKERING: I object to the delegation of power by the Commissioner. If one looks at the reports of the law courts one notices that they are crowded with slander and libel cases. There is a possibility of innocent women being dragged up for examination, and therefore I think they should be protected. I shall vote for the amendment moved by the member for North-East Fremantle, and failing that, I shall vote for the other amendments as they come along in due course. The Act to-day has done very good work, and I think it should be allowed to continue for another year. We may by that time have no necessity for the drastic amendment submitted by the Minister.

Mr. FOLEY: I wish to refer to that portion of the clause which would be affected by the carrying of the amendment. The section of the principal Act provides—

Whenever the Commissioner has received a signed statement, in which there shall be set forth the full name and address of the informant, stating that any person is suffering from venereal disease—

and so on. I know of a specific case where a mother had reason to believe that her daughter was suffering from venereal disease. She did not know positively, because she had not made an examination, and moreover was not qualified to make an examination. I am glad to think that 99 mothers out of 100 in this State are equally disqualified to make such an examination. However, the mother went to the Commissioner and told him that she had reason to believe her daughter was suffering from venereal disease; and the Commissioner was powerless to help the mother, and under the law as it stands, he was powerless to submit the girl to an examination.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He was wrong.

Mr. FOLEY: I have sufficient confidence in the gentleman holding the position of Commissioner of Public Health to believe that he took the right view.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Surely you would not put the Commissioner's legal knowledge against that of the member for Perth.

Mr. FOLEY: I would put the Commissioner's knowledge in this respect against the knowledge

of the member for Perth. Besides, there is the Crown Law Department. Had the Commissioner not consulted the Crown Law Department, he would not have been in a position to say what he could do, and what he could not do under the Act. His view is that he cannot take action on the mere "reason to believe." The member for Perth said that in his opinion a commonsense view would be taken of the matter. But what counts is the interpretation which the legal minds put upon legislation. There has been a great deal of talk from the sentimental and sympathetic point of view. Let us cut that right out. But still, the member for Perth would have the mother sign a statement against her daughter in order to comply with the existing law. That would really be compelling the mother to make a charge against her daughter, in order to have her daughter treated, while not knowing whether the charge was true or false. Under this clause it would be sufficient if the mother informed the Commissioner that she had reason to believe that her daughter was suffering. The mother was prepared to sign such a statement.

Mr. MUNSIE: That would be all she need do under the existing Act.

Mr. FOLEY: No. The present Act requires a definite statement that a person is suffering from venereal disease. If the case is otherwise, I am prepared to vote for the amendment. But, so far as my present information goes, I consider the clause should pass as printed.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I wish to emphasise the point made by the Attorney General. I quote from the evidence given before the Select Committee of another place by Dr. Trethowan, beginning at question 531—

There have been cases in which persons have admitted that they are suffering, to the Public Health Commissioner, but will not allow themselves to be treated?—He has no power to compulsorily examine them, but should have the power.

Either on the word of a person who has been infected or on the admission of the person who is infected?—That is on the word of a person who has been infected. If B is infected she says "I got it from A." That ought to be allowable. It should not be allowable, however, for C to say, "I know that B was infected from A."

Thus, if a person who has contracted the disease, and applies for treatment, makes a statement that he or she contracted the disease, or believes he or she contracted the disease, from a certain person, that should be sufficient for the Commissioner. But a statement by "A" that "B" caught the disease from "C" should not be accepted. I quite appreciate the motives actuating hon. members in forming different views of the clause, and I am pleased with the discussion which has taken place. If hon. members can take the view I have suggested, they will feel that there need not be so much nervousness as to passing the clause.

Mr. ROCKE: I consider that members on either side might be credited with sincerity. Their differences of opinion spring from diversity of viewpoint. I intend to support the amendment because I believe that with the retention of the words sought to be struck out the measure will be, in its application, one of the most vicious nature. If the clause is passed, this will be the only British community which will have adopted the proposal of denying an accused person the

right to be brought face to face with his or her accuser. If a man or woman will not put his or her name to a statement, we can rest assured that there is something radically wrong. Not much importance should then be attached to the statement: in fact it should be regarded as an act of malice. If a man is chivalrous, he will treat every woman as he would his own mother or sister. I look for what is good in human nature, and I find a lot of it, but I cannot close my eyes to the fact that a good deal of malice exists. If a man were called up to undergo an examination, it would be humiliating enough, but a man can get over such humiliation much quicker than a woman, but if there should be any malicious intent, that malicious intent will not be directed towards men but towards women, towards the wife or the daughter of the person against whom the grudge exists. I contend that it is a matter of impossibility to preserve secrecy in connection with these examinations. Then again it will not be possible to keep the police out of the investigations which will have to be carried out. Members have shown that the Act of 1915 has operated satisfactorily; Therefore why not let the operation of it continue. The Bill, if carried, will make people criminals, because the police will be brought into it. The subject has been so well debated that I do not think any more remains to be said. I sincerely trust that hon. members will not agree to the clause, and that we shall be permitted to give the 1915 Act a further trial.

Mr. MUNSIE: During the time Hon. G. Taylor was addressing the Committee, I asked him to give some reason as to why it was considered the 1915 Act had failed. He went into hysterics, but did not produce any evidence of failure. I asked the member for Leonora to let us have a concrete instance of failure, and he quoted the case of a mother and daughter, and then he took the member for Perth to task because that hon. member suggested that the mother could have signed a statement against the daughter, on which the doctor could have taken action. I am with the member for Perth in desiring that the existing Act should be permitted to remain in force for a further period. The Honorary Minister stated that a good deal of capital had been made of the fact that the present amendment was going to give the Commissioner power to act, provided he had reason to believe, and he asked how the Commissioner was going to get that "reason to believe." Someone will make a statement. The first question to be asked will be "How do you know?" Then he told us that if the person was not infected, the Commissioner would not believe him.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Would you?

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not think I would. But how much further will the Commissioner go if the amending Bill is carried? I am just as anxious as any other hon. member to do everything possible to eliminate the disease, but no good will come by doing away with signed statements and resorting to the proposal contained in the Bill. There will not be any more cases brought to light for treatment.

Hon. R. H. Underwood: Give us a year's trial.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Honorary Minister told us that if a person made a complaint the strictest inquiries would be made. But how will the Commissioner make those inquiries? He has either to believe the statement made to him or not believe it.

Hon. R. H. Underwood : He can make inquiries through his health inspectors.

Mr. MUNSIE : There is only one way and that is by examination ; the person so accused has to be examined.

Hon. R. H. Underwood : Do you not think the Commissioner will inquire as to the character of the person ?

Mr. MUNSIE : If I thought for a moment that was going to influence him it would make me all the more strongly opposed to the provision. In this regard the highest in the land should be on the same footing as the lowest.

Mr. Johnston : If the health inspectors are going to make inquiries, that is a fresh danger.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : The health inspector has no right under the Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE : Suppose the amendment is defeated, I understand hon. members will still have the right to vote for or against the committee being retained in regard to the inquiry ?

The CHAIRMAN : The only thing the Committee cannot do is to go back.

Mr. DRAPER : Does the amendment go beyond striking out the first few lines ? I understand it does not go to the extent of suggesting the words to be substituted.

The CHAIRMAN : No, it is merely that the words be struck out. Other words, of course, will be substituted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : No. I have no words to substitute for those I have moved to strike out.

Hon. J. MITCHELL : I will support the amendment. I have listened to a great deal of argument, but nothing has been said to convince me that the clause ought to be passed as printed. I think we should retain the signed statement, and not give the Commissioner power to act on a verbal statement.

Mr. GRIFFITHS : Free, secret, adequate treatment and night clinics have not been tried to the extent they should be. Nor has sufficient publicity been given to the means available for treatment. The night clinics have done good work already, even with the little publicity given to the available treatment. The existing Act has already done good work, and if given a further trial will eventually do the whole of the work for which it was designed. We do not want compulsion in the treatment of the disease, for compulsion will certainly drive the disease into hiding. Judged by the evidence adduced before the select committee, it seems that what we want is a school for parents, for it is lack of parental control which is mainly responsible for the street flapper, who, we are told, constitutes the chief source of infection. I will support the amendment.

Mr. NAIRN : The clause is the Bill. I agree that the Commissioner has been confronted with serious difficulties, mainly in regard to those people who refuse to make signed statements. I believe that no person should be harassed on the verbal statement of another. There should be full responsibility on the person prepared to make an accusation against another. It appears that people are prepared, through malice, prejudice, or fanaticism to make any sort of charge against their fellowmen. We cannot overlook the Press interview with Mr. McLeod, the ex-Victorian Minister, published to-day. He says that the statement previously published relating to waitresses was not uttered by him, but he is unqualified in saying that several cases had come under his notice of men suffering from the disease who had caused innocent girls, who knew nothing

about them, to contract it, and he had reason to fear that in some cases the vilest charges had been made through spite and malice. That is the very thing we are afraid of. In our desire to rid ourselves of this scourge we must see that we do not bring about a greater misfortune and wrong than exists at present. If a person is to be accused falsely and this accusation is made public, we shall be in a worse case than before. The person who does that injury should come within reach of the law. The Act might have been carried out in a less elaborate manner. It might have been amended, so far as Section 242 is concerned, to read that, wherever the Commissioner has received a signed statement, the person making that signed statement should have reason to believe that the statement he made is true. That would have given ample power to the Commissioner. I cannot support the clause as it stands. My fear is that we are going to open the door to the possibility of the admission of malice and spite, and also the possibility of people who, from the best of intentions, may make accusations against their fellow people which cannot be sustained.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : The hon. member says that it is a common principle of British justice that there must be a signed statement.

Mr. Nairn : I said that the accused must be met by his accuser.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : I would remind hon. members that a policeman at 7s. a day, if he has reason to believe that a person has committed a felony, can put the handcuffs on him and place him in gaol. Where is the signed statement now ?

Mr. Nairn : Is he not responsible for so doing ?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : Has the doctor any responsibility ?

Hon. W. C. Angwin : The Commissioner is asking for more than he should get.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : It is said that Mr. McLeod is afraid that there have been cases in which accusations have been falsely made. We wired to the Health Department, Melbourne (Dr. Robertson), to say that there was a

Keen controversy here, and that we would be pleased to hear a fuller reply as to the operations of their section regarding the treatment of alleged infected persons.

The reply was—

No case respectable woman accused by infected man known. Prostitutes have given names of innocent women, thus causing trouble. Here we come to the discretion of the Commissioner. A prostitute makes an assertion to him, but if he got a statement from any known prostitute he would not act upon it.

Mr. Troy : Why not ?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : Because he would not have reasonable ground to believe.

Mr. Troy : Because she is of that class ?

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD : She would not have any particular knowledge about these respectable and innocent women. This, at all events, proves that some prostitutes have been trying to make trouble.

Mr. HARRISON : Had it not been for the difficulty, which the authorities had in treating this disease, we should not have had this Bill. Are we in earnest in our desire to stamp out this disease ? The use of preventives would not do away with it. Vital statistics were never more needed than they are to-day. This disease is handed on from generation to generation. The Commissioner of Public Health, and the medical

men of the State, should be best able to advise the Minister controlling the measure. I am willing to back the Commissioner and the medical fraternity of the State with my vote, and to trust to the honour of the people as to whether they will be men and women, or whether they will be thieves. I am going to vote for the clause as it stands.

Mr. MONEY: I had not thought it possible that the discussion on this clause could extend over such a length of time. Cases have been instanced where the disease exists, but where the Commissioner has been unable to obtain a signed statement. The Committee therefore has to decide whether a formality is to be insisted on and the cases allowed to go untreated, or whether the formality is to be dispensed with and the cases to receive treatment. If we know that disease exists, why should we not insist on its being treated? It ought to be treated, irrespective of the signed statement, which has not the extreme importance attached to it by certain hon. members. The signed statement could be made by a mere dummy, and then acted on by the Commissioner. If only for the sake of the cases known to be in need of treatment, I shall vote for the clause as printed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Sufficient has been said to allow of a vote being now taken, but I desire to thank the Speaker for the strong argument he put up in support of my amendment. He has proved that the clinics established under the existing Act have worked splendidly. But before the Speaker makes another speech on this subject, he should read the existing Act, when he will find that it makes provision for detention in hospital. I am glad the Honorary Minister has placed in my hands the papers which he brought under the notice of the Committee, and which purport to contradict certain statements made by Mr. McLeod, formerly Minister for Public Health in Victoria. Here is the telegram addressed to Dr. Robinson, of Melbourne, by our Commissioner—

Keen controversy here. Pleased hear further lettergram as to operation your section regarding treatment of alleged infected persons.

The reply to that telegram reads—

No case respectable woman accused by infected man known. Prostitutes have given names of innocent women, thus causing trouble. But the inquiry was sent on the 12th April, and the telegram in reply was received in Perth on the 11th April—it is post-marked the 11th April. It is on that alleged reply the "West Australian" is to be charged with having published misleading information.

Mr. Thomson: You know there must be some mistake. Is that the only argument you can bring forward?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have stated the exact position. The member for Roebourne pleaded hard with the Committee for the innocent children suffering from venereal disease whom he had seen by scores in the North.

Mr. Teesdale: Not scores.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But is the hon. member sure that the disease he saw is the same as that referred to in this Bill? It may have been the disease from which aborigines suffer, and for the treatment of which lock hospitals have been established. There is a difference of opinion as to whether aborigines suffer from venereal disease in the same way as whites.

Mr. Teesdale: These are white children.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: These circumstances take away a good deal of the force of the hon. member's argument. I trust the Committee will agree to keep our legislation in this respect as it now stands.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	21

Majority against ... 8

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Draper	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Roche
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Troy
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Munster
Mr. Nairn	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angulo	Mr. Malcy
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Brown	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomson
Mr. George	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Green	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lambert	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair].

Progress reported.

BILLS (2)—RETURNED FROM THE COUNCIL.

1. Appropriation.

Without amendment.

2. Employment Brokers Act Amendment.

With an amendment.

BILL—RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.45 p.m.