

They cannot provide water supplies on their own holdings, and they ask that the Government shall make additional provision. That is why the Bill has been presented to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 18th October, 1928.

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

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary and read a first time.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—FERTILISERS.

Further report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

Debate resumed from 16th October on the following motion by the Hon. J. Ewing:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should forthwith proceed to establish in the Collie Coalfields Area a generating plant capable of supplying electrical current for lighting and motive power throughout the whole or the greater portion of the State.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: Mr. Ewing's proposal is one which is calculated to win many supporters among those who are not in a position to consider the question from every point of view. There is something enchanting in a scheme which transforms coal into electricity at the colliery itself, and which by the turning of a handle at Collie, can be made to distribute power and light to all the thickly populated parts of Western Australia, at what is alleged to be nominal cost. But things are not always what they seem, and Mr. Ewing's project is not the sound economic proposition it appears to be on his presentation of the case. Boiled down, Mr. Ewing's proposal is not to extend East Perth power station, but to erect a power station at Collie and to electrify the whole State. Let me take the first point. The idea of closing down, or of making the East Perth power house partially non-effective even under Mr. Ewing's scheme could not be wisely entertained. With a power station at Collie, East Perth power station would also have to be kept in full service in order to avoid trouble. It requires only a minute's thought to perceive that it would be very risky to have a 120-mile transmission line as the only source of supply. A heavy storm or a stray rifle bullet, or any of a score of other occurrences might create an interruption and cause a total shut down over the whole metropolitan area. Not only would the people be without light in such a contingency, but every factory and every workshop in the metropolis, and in the other districts to be served would be idle until the defect was discovered and remedied.

Hon. J. Ewing: Could not they duplicate the line?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member did not put up that proposition. Had he done so, I would have been in an even better position to prove that his proposal is not, and could not be, an economical one.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How do they manage in other places?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We shall come to that presently. While Melbourne is drawing power from Yallourn it must be remembered that it does not rely solely on Yallourn. It has taken fine care to make provision for continuity of supplies in case at any time Yallourn fails. In Melbourne

the electricity commission operate a power station known as Newport B. That power station has an installed capacity of 30,000 kilowatts and there is now being installed at Richmond a further 15,000 kilowatt turbo-generator, making a total of 45,000 kilowatts in Melbourne. They have also means whereby, in emergency, they can draw upon the railways power station known as Newport A, and therefore Melbourne is not entirely dependent on Yallourn. It follows that if we are to operate on safe lines the provision of electricity supply from Collie cannot justify the scrapping or the non-extension of the existing system. As Mr. Lovekin remarked in the course of Mr. Ewing's speech, it is useless to compare our Government's scheme with that of Victoria, where a maximum load of about 79,300 kilowatts exists against 17,300 kilowatts at Perth for the year ended 30th June, 1928, and it is estimated that it will be 1938 before we reach 42,000 kilowatts, which will be approximately half the maximum load on the Victorian scheme at the present time, and one-third of what Yallourn power station is now supplying. The two schemes cannot be compared in any way. We have only £1,120,262 invested as against Victoria's £9,586,111.

Hon. J. Ewing: What about the sixth unit? That will take another half million pounds.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The capital cost of the East Perth power station is given by Mr. Ewing as £922,355, to which he adds £300,000, making a total of £1,222,355. This statement is not exactly correct. The last extension cost £240,000, not £300,000. Also the actual total capital is £1,120,262. Mr. Ewing has overlooked the fact that the whole of the capital expenditure on the Government electricity supply system is not represented by the power station alone, but includes transmission lines, underground cables, sub-stations, etc., amounting to £312,611. The power station cost only £807,651. The next important question is—What advantage would be gained by transmitting power from Collie to Perth, and not extending the East Perth power station. The only saving that would be effected would be in railway freight so far as the cost of generation is concerned. That would mean a saving of 236d., which represents the cost of haulage of coal from Collie to the East Perth works.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is on the present consumption of coal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, at the present time. Against this, £500,000 would be required for transmission line. In addition to that another power station would be necessary at a cost of £1,000,000, including transformers for raising the pressure at Collie and reducing it at Perth. I claim on the information supplied me that the difference in the cost of generation as affecting the consumer would certainly not justify such capital outlay, and that the selling price of current would not be commensurate with the great expense involved. I wish to quote the words of the Chief Commissioner, Sir John Monash, on the price of power, and particularly as regards lighting. He stated in 1919, with reference to the Yallourn scheme—

To remove any misconception on the part of the public, it should be pointed out to them the reductions in the cost of supplying energy will have very little effect upon the charges at present in force to the average consumer for lighting purposes. Of the total amount of energy for all purposes in the metropolitan area lighting accounts for not more than about 25 per cent. From careful consideration of economies of the Morwell Scheme as set out in the foregoing report it will have been seen that the item of importance in the existing costs influenced by the proposed State Scheme is the generating cost of .512 pence per unit, and that the saving then is about .127 pence. This saving is but a small fraction of the total costs incurred by the undertakers in supplying the average lighting consumer, who is charged 4d. to 5d. per unit. Therefore it is quite apparent, and results have shown that the price for lighting current and small power in Melbourne has been reduced.

It will be seen that Sir John Monash stated that the cost of lighting and small power in Melbourne has not been reduced owing to the Morwell scheme.

Hon. J. Ewing: There is another statement about that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have other statements which I will read later. To return to the question of extending East Perth Power Station, the only reason given by Mr. Ewing for its abandonment is freight on coal, and to save this he proposed an expenditure of £1,500,000 at Collie, carrying an additional interest charge of £82,500.

Hon. J. Ewing: They will have to spend that money in Perth in order to build up.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If a power station were contemplated at Collie and approval given to it, instead of an ex-

tension of the East Perth scheme, the position would be something like this:

East Perth Power Station ..	£807,651	0	0
Collie power station and transmission line to Perth, including terminal sub-station at Perth ..	£1,500,000	0	0
Total ..	£2,307,651	0	0

The interest charges on the foregoing would amount to:—Interest charges $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., £127,000 per annum. As it would take at least three years to get such a scheme into commission, East Perth Power Station must in consequence be extended in any circumstances, failing which the load on the system cannot be carried, and the extensions recommended are absolutely essential. Assuming by the time the scheme was in operation we would be generating 100,000,000 units, we estimate 99,000,000 in 1932, the costs of generation would be as under:—

Mr. Ewing's Collie scheme combined with Perth:			
Present capital cost of East Perth Power Station ..	£807,651	0	0
Extensions recommended to be put in for 1929-30 ..	250,000	0	0
Total ..	£1,057,651	0	0

The total cost to bring the power station to 1929-30 requirements would be £1,057,651. To erect a power station at Collie to supply Perth over a 132,000 volt transmission line, the capital cost would amount to £1,500,000. With Mr. Ewing's proposals the total capital investment of the Government electricity supply system would amount to:—

Capital cost, including extensions to Perth, 1929-30 ..	£1,057,651	0	0
Collie power station as suggested by Mr. Ewing ..	1,500,000	0	0
Total ..	£2,557,651	0	0

Expenditure at, say, 1932—£2,557,651.

Interest charges calculated at $5\frac{1}{2}$ %—£140,000.

Estimated output in 1932—100,000,000 kilowatt hours.

Assuming such output represented the power generated both at Collie and Perth,

the cost per unit generated and sold would be:—

	Generated. pence.	Sold. pence.
Capital charges per unit ..	.336	.395
Generating costs ..	.417	.492
Distribution ..	.100	.150
Total cost ..	.853	1.037

Mr. Ewing's proposals are:—

Cost per unit generated—.853 pence K.W.H.
Cost per unit sold—1.037 pence K.W.H.

This is 100 per cent. more than Mr. Ewing says he can sell current for throughout the State of Western Australia.

Hon. J. Ewing: I am only judging from what people do in other parts of the world.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If all the power were generated at Collie the capital charges on the East Perth power station would still have to be carried, amounting to £46,500.

Generating costs per unit sold (including capital charges) based on 100,000,000 units: Present costs, East Perth—Interest, .172 pence; operation .754 pence; total cost .926 pence.

Proposed by Mr. Ewing, Collie—Interest, .395 pence; operation, .642 pence; total cost, 1.037 pence.

East Perth: Estimated generating costs per unit sold in 1932—Interest, .178 pence; operation, .700 pence; total, .878 pence.

Difference in favour of Perth based on 1928:—.111 pence per unit sold, £46,000.

Difference in favour of Perth based on 1932:—.159 pence per unit sold, £66,250.

Hon. J. Ewing: Apparently they generate more current, but it costs more to produce.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the cost for Collie coal, the same efficiency as Perth is assumed, but I am informed it would be less, as the power station load from 12 p.m. to 5.30 a.m. would not be more than 5,000 kilowatts, the major portion of which would be supplying losses of the 132,000 volt transmission line 120 miles long. The night load on the Government system is now only 3,500 kilowatts, and to transmit so small a load 120 miles at 132,000 volts would, in the opinion of the General Manager, be little short of ridiculous.

Hon. J. Ewing: He has changed his mind entirely. He is not to be trusted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Ewing states that with the power station he suggests current could be produced at Collie at .78d. and sold at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (.5) per unit throughout the State. He says .6d.,

which is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Mr. Ewing states he has worked out the cost of production at Collie at .78d. per unit. I am asked to challenge Mr. Ewing to show how he can generate electricity at Collie at .78d. per unit, and sell it throughout the State at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per unit. Such a statement is utterly absurd. It seems to be a mathematical impossibility.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It depends on the output.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to begin with.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It costs more than that to begin with.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The cost depends on the output.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If it costs $\frac{3}{4}$ d., I do not know how it can be sold at $\frac{1}{2}$ d. I came to the conclusion that it was a slip.

Hon. J. Ewing: No. With increased production the costs will be lower. That has not been considered by the superintendent. He has given a very biased opinion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We shall hear later what the hon. member has to say about the matter. Mr. Ewing states that this can be done by using pulverised coal, and that he has figures to prove that statement. I am waiting for him to produce those figures, and show how they compare with the Perth conditions, and how he proposes to sell current, as he says, throughout the State.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is where your superintendent fails. He does not give the value of pulverised coal.

The PRESIDENT: I would point out that the hon. member will have his opportunity of replying later.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Loss in transmission from Collie, 120 miles, does not appear to have been seriously taken into account by Mr. Ewing. He merely says that power can be transmitted over long distances at a loss of only 7 per cent. Now the fact is that the loss on transmission from Yallourn, 85 miles to Melbourne, is 12 per cent.

Hon. J. Cornell: What would the loss be on 140 miles?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no notes upon that subject. It would be well if Mr. Ewing would make due allowance for this wastage, and state that side of the case.

Hon. J. Ewing: These transmissions are made in other parts of the world.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Ewing says he does not wish the people of the metropolitan area to pay more for their current than they are paying now. This would mean to a large extent that the Perth City Council would derive any benefit which might accrue under the proposed scheme.

Hon. J. Ewing: They would not do that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot conceive any Government launching out into a scheme to spend at least £1,500,000 for the benefit of the Perth City Council. They now charge 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for lighting current, which is purchased from the Government at $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per unit. Assuming they received current at $\frac{1}{2}$ d., this would only mean $\frac{1}{4}$ d. reduction if it were passed to the consumer—which is not likely. Mr. Ewing states that the bulk of the electrical energy transmitted from Yallourn to Melbourne is at 11,000 volts. That is the information required by Mr. Lovekin. Mr. Ewing is, however, quite wrong. The main transmission is to Melbourne at 132,000 volts over 85 miles, and 95 per cent. of the output from Yallourn goes to Melbourne. The 11,000 volts referred to by Mr. Ewing is purely the local supply around Morwell within a comparatively short distance of the works.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is understood.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Ewing informs us that the Victorian scheme is producing wonderful results. On this point the people of Victoria and particularly Melbourne would differ. They have asked many times what have they got in return for the £9,586,181 expended. Last year the Electricity Commission made a loss of £196,654 while East Perth with a total capitalisation of £922,395 made £11,734 profit.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Was not most of that loss due to strikes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say. Mr. Ewing seeks to show that Western Australia is behind in electrical energy. Facts prove that Western Australia can compare more than favourably with other parts, as some figures I have here will show. The following table will be of interest:—

System and kilowatt hours sold per head of population served.

Manchester	413
Perth, Western Australia	338
Sheffield	309
Bradford	265
Leeds	253
Dundee	208
Glasgow	184

There are no privately owned plants generating electricity within a radius of 27 miles round Perth. Since the introduction of the Government Electricity Supply scheme the following plants have been closed down, in addition the districts mentioned have taken power:—The plants closed down were those of the Perth, Subiaco, Claremont, Fremantle, and Midland Junction municipal councils, all of which took bulk supplies. Bulk supplies were also taken by the Guildford municipal council, Midland Junction council, and Bassendean road board. The new districts supplied by the Government scheme, districts which previously had no electrical service, were Bassendean, Greenmount, Caversham, Middle Swan, Lesmurdie, Gooseberry Hill, Kalamunda, Queen's Park, Kenwick, Cannington, Maddington, Gosnells, Kelmscott, Armadale, Cardup, Ryford and Applecross, a total of 17. Those that were taken over by the Government from local authorities were Cottesloe, Cottesloe Beach and Peppermint Grove. It will be seen that the Government Scheme has brought electricity to 17 new areas, which had previously no electrical power available. Regarding the price of current: Mr. Ewing infers in his remarks that the Electricity Commission in Victoria are selling current at a low rate. This also requires repudiating as the following will show. These rates are taken from the Victorian Commission Rate Pamphlets:—

Current supplied from Yallourn.

Schedule 3—Maffra, Altona, Werribee Districts:—

Flat rate, 1s. per unit.
Up to 300 units per month, no discount—1s. per unit.
Over 300 units per month, 10% discount—10½d. (approx.)
Over 500 units per month, 20% discount—9.6d.
Over 1,000 units per month, 40% discount—7.2d.
Long hour shop window lighting, 1s. per unit, less 30%—8.4d.
Commercial power—4½d. per unit.
Discounts 10% to 40%—lowest price 2s. 6d. per unit.
Range 250 units per month to 800 units per month.

Schedule 8—Yarragon:—

Flat rate:
Commercial lighting:
Up to 300 units per month—1s. per unit, no discount.

Discounts—Over 300 units per month, 10%.
Over 500 units per month, 20%.
Over 1,000 units per month, 40%.
Long hour shop window lighting—1s. per unit.

Commercial power—domestic heating, cooking and small motors:—

Up to 250 units per month—5d. per unit.
Discounts—Over 250 units per month—10%.
Over 400 units per month, 20%.
Over 600 units per month, 30%.
Over 800 units per month, 40%.

Meter rents 6d. per month.

Minimum charge 5s. per month.

Essendon:

Flat rate:

Commercial lighting—5½d. per unit.
Up to 300 units per month, no discount—5½d.
Over 300 units per month—10%—3.625d.
Over 500 units per month—20%.
Over 1,000 units per month—40%.

Commercial power—domestic heating and cooking 2½d. per unit.

Discounts—Up to 250 units per month—no discount.

Over 250 units per month—10%.
Over 400 units per month—20%.
Over 600 units per month—30%.
Over 800 units per month—40%.

Meter rents—6d. per month per meter.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why don't you quote Melbourne?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am referring to the important towns. I shall quote Melbourne directly.

Sale—

Flat rate—9d. per unit.
Up to 300 units per month—no discount.
Over 300 units per month—10 per cent.
Over 500 units per month—20 per cent.
Over 1,000 units per month—40 per cent.
Long hour window lighting, etc.—9d. per unit, less 30 per cent. = 6.3d. per unit.

Commercial power: Domestic heating and cooking—4d. per unit.

Discounts up to 40 per cent. for 800 units per month at that consumption, the price per unit would be—2.4d. per unit.

Meter rents—6d. per meter per month.

Warrnambool and Benalla—

Flat rate—9d. per unit.
Commercial power: Domestic heating and cooking—5d.

Discounts as in other districts.

Meter rent—6d. per unit per month.

Leongatha and Korumburra—Schedule 5—

Commercial lighting—10d. per unit.
Over 1,000 units per month—40 per cent. discount = 6d.

Commercial power: Domestic heating and cooking—4½d. per unit.

Discounts to 40 per cent. for 800 units per month = 3.7d.

Hon. J. Ewing: You have gone all round the compass and not mentioned one important city.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will give those figures now:—

Sydney City Council, New South Wales—

Rate for lighting—4½d. per unit.
Rate for domestic heating and cooking
1 7/10 = 1.7d. per unit.

Melbourne Electric Supply Company—

Rate for lighting—5¼d. per unit.

Rate for domestic heating and cooking—
2½d. to 1¼d.

Bulk supply for Victorian Commission for
large power consumers—

Maximum demand—£9 per kilowatt, plus
.25d. per unit. This would work out on
such a consumer as we have (Cuming
Smith & Co) as under:—

Maximum demand, 300 k.w.—£2,700.

750,000 units at .25d.—£785.

Total—£3,485.

= 1.06d. per unit.

This is higher than we are supplying a big
consumer.

I hope the hon. member is satisfied with the
information I have supplied. To prove the
inaccuracy of Mr. Ewing's statement that
Victoria is getting cheap electricity or sell-
ing it to others, the rates as shown are:—

District:

Lighting—

Yarragon—1s.

Essendon—5¼d.

Sale—9d.

Warrnambool and Benalla—9d.

Leongatha and Korumburra—10d.

Power and heating—

Yarragon—5d.

Essendon—2½d.

Sale—4d.

Warrnambool and Benalla—5d.

Leongatha and Korumburra—4½d.

Other Eastern States Systems:

Lighting—

Sydney City Council—4¾d.

Melbourne Electric Supply Company—
5¾d.

Melbourne City Council—3½d.

Power and heating—

Sydney City Council—1¾d.

Melbourne Electric Supply Company—
2¼d. to 1¼d.

Melbourne City Council—1¾d.

Perth, Western Australia, Government System:

Lighting flat rate (all districts)—5d. and
4d.

Domestic power and heating—1¼d. to 1d.
Meter rents—Nil.

Shop window lighting—2½d. per unit.

Hon. members will see from the figures I
have quoted that our prices are cheaper
than those of any district supplied by the
Morwell Scheme. For lighting, a good ex-
ample is Essendon just outside of Mel-
bourne: there lighting costs 5¼d. against
Perth 5d. to 4d., and Domestic Power 2½d.
against Perth 1¼d.

Hon. A. Lovekin: No one uses it there;
it is too dear.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: These are
facts or they are not facts. Mr. Ewing
says if the Government would carry out

his suggestions it would be possible to sell
current at ½d. per unit throughout the
State. I leave it to hon. members to de-
cide whether it is possible. The total elec-
tricity consumed throughout the State ex-
clusive of Kalgoorlie amounts only to
about five million units. To suggest shut-
ting down all the small country plants and
supplying from Collie at a capital expen-
diture of 4½ million pounds is to propose
something that is not entitled to serious
consideration.

Hon. J. Ewing: Is that the view of the
Government?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the
hon. member not to again interrupt the
Minister. He will have an opportunity to
rely.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: With re-
gard to extensions to East Perth, by de-
veloping those extensions we shall be able
to sell electric power at a rate lower than
the Eastern States. With East Perth op-
erating as efficiently as the large stations
at Melbourne, Newport "A" and "B," and
with a good coal such as Collie, a long
transmission cannot be justified in the
light of experience with the improvements
that have been made with the special
mechanical stokers at East Perth. The
hon. member probably knows something
about those stokers.

Hon. J. Ewing: I do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The basic
fact that must be remembered in the trans-
mission of electricity is that transmission
is justified only when the fuel is of such
poor quality that it does not pay to trans-
port it by rail. That does not by any means
apply to Collie coal, which is admitted to
be a fuel of excellent quality for the pro-
duction of electricity.

Hon. J. Ewing: That is the best thing
you have said so far.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The cost
of coal at Collie is 12s. per ton; Morwell
brown coal costs 2s. 6d. per ton in bunkers
at Yallourn. That makes a world of differ-
ence, and explains why power is trans-
mitted from Yallourn to Melbourne.

Hon. J. Ewing: Is it contended that it
pays to transport the coal from Collie to
Perth?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is con-
tended that it would pay better under ex-

isting conditions to continue the East Perth power house for the production of current. Mr. Ewing states there is sufficient water in Minninup Pool for a power station to supply the whole of the State. On this point there is a difference of opinion. I am given to understand that it is sufficient for a power station of only limited capacity. The Sydney City Council is building a power station at Bunnerong outside of Sydney with an initial installed capacity of 150,000 kilowatts, and an ultimate capacity of 300,000 kilowatts. If there had been any justification for a power station on the coal fields of New South Wales surely it would have been erected there!

Hon. J. Ewing: You know what is being done in England.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The East Perth power station is situated at the centre of the load. This can readily be appreciated when it is stated that 70 million units were generated for the year ended 30th June, 1928. It has been said that the General Manager of the Government Tramways and Electricity Supply advocated the provision of a power station at Collie when the demand reached 44 million units per annum. He informed me that he did not put it that way; what he said was, and what he says now, is that any such proposal must be considered on its merits.

Hon. J. Ewing: Undoubtedly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Other members have spoken in support of Mr. Ewing's scheme, but it is unnecessary for me to traverse the arguments of each. My reply to Mr. Ewing should show that by adopting his proposal the Government and Parliament would be imposing a heavy financial burden on Western Australia without any compensating benefits. He proposes to serve the whole of the State—by that, I suppose he means the thickly populated portion of the State—at a halfpenny per unit. Even if he served only the centres that now have electric power installed, it would be a very costly service. The hon. member does not appear to have taken into account the cost of connecting up those centres, and the heavy capitalisation involved. I have shown that with coal at 2s. 6d. a ton at Yallourn as against 12s. a ton at Collie, power and light produced by the Yallourn scheme are sold in different centres

and valued at a price much higher than is charged in Perth, and despite this fact there was a loss of £196,000 on that scheme last year. I have pointed out the risk involved in depending for our supplies upon a 120-mile transmission line from Collie and the danger of a stoppage of our factories unless we had a standby like the East Perth power house. I have stated that the Collie scheme would cost a million and a half of money, even if it reached only the metropolitan area. The interest on that would be £82,000, whereas the coal freights for last year ran into only £68,596. So that, at the start, it would have £13,904 a year to catch up provided the scheme was confined to the metropolitan area. If it were extended, the deficiency would be much greater because of the heavier capitalisation. The General Manager of the Government Electricity Supply has a splendid record. On all occasions he has honestly advised the Government as to the most economical procedure to adopt with regard to its electricity developments. The result is that, with a power station, designed in the first instance, for a capacity of 12 million units, it has reached 70 millions, and the Government are supplying over an area of 27 miles from the power station. Industries have been created by reason of the cheap power available, and the fact that no private plants have been installed outside the defined radius is evidence of the success of the Government system. A large measure of that success is due to the skilled administration of Mr. Taylor. If during the course of many years his advice to the different Governments has been sound and has produced the results he predicted, it should require more than the opinion of a novice in electrical science like Mr. Ewing to override his judgment on the Collie power scheme question. And Mr. Taylor says deliberately that he could not conscientiously recommend its adoption by the Government. I oppose the motion.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUNBURY ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, read a first time.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.*In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. C. F. Baxter in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Poison may be laid in certain cases:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That after "person" the words "not being an aboriginal" be inserted.

It would be unsafe for land owners to give poison indiscriminately to aborigines; at any rate, they are not so trustworthy that poison could be given to them with safety. They might throw it down anywhere and thus cause the destruction of stock.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: What will be the position of station owners under the amendment? Remote stations are largely worked by aboriginals, and it may be necessary to issue the poison to aboriginals in order to bring about destruction of dogs.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The amendment has been suggested to me by the member for a northern constituency in another place. He cited a case where an aboriginal indiscriminately using the poison caused damage.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Insertion of new section after Section 34; Power to make by-laws:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added to proposed Section 34a:—"limiting the number of dogs that may be kept by any person."

It may not be necessary for all local authorities to make a by-law on this point, but when doing it they should limit the number of dogs as suggested. Much trouble arises from persons keeping several useless dogs. A previous Bill, which was laid aside, contained a similar provision.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The amendment gives far-reaching powers to local authorities, which may authorise one man to keep four dogs while restricting another man to a single dog. The Bill does not sufficiently

protect owners of good dogs against unscrupulous persons.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The clause will be administered by local authorities, and not by individuals; and surely local authorities can be trusted. There is no need to worry about abuse of the amendment; indeed, I think it rather errs on the side of caution.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—Application of Sections 6A, 22A, 23A, and 34A:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Section 36 the following words be struck out:—"or within any municipality outside the metropolitan area, unless extended to such municipality by an Order-in-Council published in the 'Gazette'."

There is no objection to the metropolitan area being exempted, but in 16 municipalities much destruction of stock is caused by dogs. Indeed, many persons would now rather purchase a property removed from townsites, on account of that destruction.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest to Mr. Baxter that, having made rapid progress with the Bill, he should now report progress. This is an important clause, and I have a desire to draft an amendment making it compulsory to destroy any vicious dog; that is to say, any dog which has bitten a human being or an animal. Such a dog should not be allowed an opportunity to bite another person or another animal. There is a breed coming about that is not desirable. Many of these dogs are vicious. Even in the metropolitan area women and children have already been bitten by them. The owner of such a dog can be fined, but it is not pleasant for one person to bring a neighbour up to court and have him fined. The local authority should be empowered to destroy a vicious dog.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I should be glad to meet Mr. Lovekin's wishes, but this clause does not touch the question raised by him. His suggested amendment would come under Section 23 of the parent Act.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I can move to recommend the Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the amendment will not be carried. A municipality troubled with dogs could, without difficulty, have an Order-in-Council made bringing it

within the measure. Not every municipality has trouble with dogs.

Progress reported.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH SUPER-ANNUATION FUND.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

HON. J. T. FRANKLIN (Metropolitan—in reply) [5.44]: In reply to some of the remarks made by hon. members, I wish to point out that even if the Bill is passed, Parliament will not be committed to anything. The City Council would in that case have to prepare their by-laws, get them approved by the Governor-in-Council, and then submit them to Parliament. Thus members are fully protected so far as the conditions of the proposed fund are concerned. Further, the Bill does not commit the City Council to the establishment of a fund, but merely authorises that body to create a fund. It is not believed that the proposed scheme will be any more expensive to the council than the payments made hitherto under Section 155 of the Municipal Corporations Act. I think hon. members will agree with me as to that. I explained the point when introducing the Bill. Under Section 155 the council may pay to a retiring officer one month's salary for each year of his service. With regard to contributions, fears have been expressed that the amounts will prove too heavy a strain on the lower-paid employee; but it should be borne in mind that employees now in the council service have certain accrued moral rights under Section 155. It is proposed to have these rights actuarially valued, and the amounts offset against the employees' contributions. Hon. members will agree with me that if we are to establish a superannuation fund for the employees of the City Council, the amount that would be due to individual employees under Section 155 of the Municipal Corporations Act should be taken into consideration when their premiums were being assessed.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Bill does not give you power to off-set.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: That would be dealt with in the regulations.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The power should be included in the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: If you were to embody in the Bill all that is required, we would know exactly what we were asked to agree to.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: It should be pointed out that the present employees will be given the option of coming into the scheme or of remaining outside it, as they may desire. We think it only fair to give the employees the option, because some of them may not desire to participate in such a fund. Some objection was taken to the section of the Commonwealth Act that allows a contributor under certain circumstances to pay a lump sum in lieu of fortnightly contributions. It would be only when an employee had practically reached the age of retirement that that provision would be utilised.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But you have some employees who have practically reached the age of retirement now, so that would apply to them.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: Quite so. It was further stated that some employees of the City Council would draw a pension of about £600 per annum. The idea would be that if an officer took out 16 units, the largest number he could take out, the pension would amount to £416 and not, as suggested, £600. I think that would be a fair thing. A point was also raised in regard to desertions. It was suggested that something more definite was required. It is proposed, as in the Commonwealth Act, to define desertion, as "legal desertion." The wife may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction, and on proof of such desertion, the court may order the payment of a pension to the wife during such period as the court may think fit. I think that will safeguard the position against any undue hardship being imposed. Some mention has been made as to which of the City Council employees will come under the proposed superannuation fund. Unfortunately we cannot include all the employees because some are temporary hands. Some may be employed for two or three months, or perhaps for six months. The fact is that the scheme is for the permanent employees.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You do not define what is a permanent employee.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: If an officer has been in the service of the City Council for a number of years, and has not been

dismissed and has not resigned, he is a permanent employee. Persons who are appointed to positions in connection with the municipal council rank as permanent officers. They remain as such until they commit some act that may result in their dismissal, or until they choose to resign. Members may rest assured that the council is not likely to undertake a scheme that is actuarially unsound. The services of Mr. Bennett, the Government Actuary, who has already prepared certain data, have been secured, and before a scheme is even submitted to the City Council, it will be thoroughly investigated by Mr. Bennett or by some other qualified actuary. That being so, the City Council and the ratepayers themselves will be amply safeguarded under any scheme that will be formulated. It would not pay the council or the ratepayers for any wild-cat scheme to be introduced, a scheme that could never be carried out. I am convinced that the councillors themselves will not be able to decide upon many of these matters, and we must have somebody competent to give us expert advice. With regard to Mr. Fraser's point concerning single men who have dependants, the council will probably have no objection to provision being made for them, provided by-laws can be framed that will adequately protect the fund against imposition. That point was missed in the Commonwealth Superannuation Fund, and I thank Mr. Fraser for his suggestion. We realise that in some instances, but not in all, a single man may have the same responsibilities as a married man, and that fact should be taken into consideration when the by-laws are being framed.

Hon. E. H. Harris interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would remind hon. members that if the Bill is taken into Committee, they will have ample opportunity for asking questions and securing replies.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: I do not know that I need say any more. I hope members will give the Bill fair consideration. All that the City Council are desirous of doing is to secure the passage of legislation that will enable the council to do something for the benefit of the employees.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To Refer to Select Committee.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [5.52]: The best thing we can do with the Bill is to refer it to a select committee in order that it may be put into something like shape. According to what Mr. Franklin has told us, the Bill does not include anything like the total requirements for such a scheme as that proposed. It would be in the interests of the House and of all concerned that we should have details of the complete scheme, not a scheme that is really in the clouds. There are many points that require consideration, quite apart from those dealt with in the Bill. For instance, in my opinion it will be impossible for any man on the basic wage to be included under the provisions of the scheme. It will require to be a scheme that is actuarially sound, and if that is to be the position, a man in receipt of £4 a week could not possibly participate in it. If he were to subscribe for one unit in the scheme, it would amount to £26 a year. If he applied for two units, which is the minimum under the Federal Act, it would mean £52 a year. If a man on the basic wage were to attempt to do that, he would run the risk of losing the Federal old-age pension merely in order to secure a pension under the City Council scheme. Thus the employee would probably lose the benefit of £50 under the Federal pensions scheme, although he could receive that old-age pension for nothing. If a man on the basic wage could secure a pension of £140 a year—a pension of £2 a week is little enough in these days—he would find that he could not afford to pay the necessary contributions. When we consider the contributions that will probably be essential to make the municipal scheme financially sound, it will be realised that a man on the basic wage will not be able to participate. The man on the lower rung is as much concerned about the future as are those occupying higher positions. We know that the future of his wife and family is usually the bugbear of the life of every married man; it is that phase that causes him most worry. If we refer the Bill to a select committee we can go into that phase. Another matter that should be looked into—I am speaking in this way in the interests of the Bill and of the City Council too—is the question whether the scheme has been thought out actuarially up to the present time. We all know that insurance schemes depend upon averages. The contributions to the Federal scheme depend upon the average of the

whole of the Commonwealth public service. The same will apply to the City Council scheme. What may be actuarially sound for the whole army, may be unsound for part of the army. Applying that to the City Council scheme, members will see there is another point to be considered. In any event, if contributions demanded should be such as are prescribed in the schedule to the Federal Act, it would seem almost impossible for the City Council scheme to be successful, except for those on the higher rungs of the ladder. That aspect too could be dealt with by the select committee. Mr. Franklin has referred to the fact that certain of the municipal employees have moral rights under Section 155 of the Municipal Corporations Act, and that those employees would receive consideration when the premiums they would be called upon to pay were being fixed. For a number of the employees the amount involved would be negligible. It would not be worth considering at all. Thus when the interests of those employees were being considered in relation to the superannuation fund, that consideration would not weigh to any extent. Then there is the question of lump sum payments. As Mr. Harris pointed out, it would be easy for an employee nearing the age of retirement, to pay, as he instanced, a small sum of £227 and within a few years he would secure a pension equal to £416 a year, which would be a very profitable investment. Mr. Franklin has pointed out that the Federal scheme limits employees to a maximum of 16 pension units.

Hon. G. Fraser: Under the Federal scheme, men have secured their pensions after they had already retired.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is another point that should be looked into. Then there is the question of the single man with dependants. He is entitled to equal consideration with the married man and his wife. If the Bill is referred to a select committee, the House, instead of dealing with the skeleton of a Bill that is now before us, could receive from the select committee in its place a Bill that would embody the details of the scheme, and we would know exactly where we were. If we were to agree to the Bill with its regulation-making clause, the City Council could go ahead and make regulations. The scheme could be in operation for a month or more before the regulations could be dealt with by Parliament. Should one or more of the

regulations be disallowed, the result might be to affect the safety of the whole scheme. Therefore, I think it is very necessary we should have the full scheme before us. If we appoint a select committee to go into this question and report to the House, we shall be doing the right thing. I suggest that when the time comes we ballot for the select committee. Although I am moving for the select committee, I have quite a lot to do, and I have had my full share of select committee work. Therefore I would prefer to be left off the committee in the event of its being appointed. I move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

HON. J. EWING (South-West) [6.2]: I second the motion. I hope a competent select committee will be appointed and that the trouble will be unravelled. It seems to me the committee will embody in its report all that is required. Also, I am quite ready to believe that the appointment of such a committee will meet the wishes of the hon. member who introduced the Bill.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [6.3]: I did not speak on the second reading. Had it gone to a division I would have voted against the second reading. The position is that all the City Council are asking for is that the Municipal Corporations Act be amended to allow of the council initiating a superannuation fund. The question is whether we should give that power to a municipal corporation. If we should, then I think we ought to give that body credit for being sensible enough to put its scheme into operation. It is only the power that the City Council are asking for. I am not going into the intricacies of superannuation; all that I propose to do is to touch upon the principle involved. The House has accepted that principle by adopting the second reading.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But under the Bill, the City Council do not get all the power that is necessary.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They asked for all the power they thought was necessary. Now it is proposed to refer the Bill to a select committee. Why? To find out whether the City Council have in the Bill all the powers they should have. The select committee cannot go any further than the Bill; the committee cannot bring down

recommendations and work out a superannuation fund.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The select committee can traverse the whole of the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The City Council has asked for certain powers, and that after mature thought. The select committee will say, "You have not provided for superannuation, but we will provide it for you. Will you accept it?" Of course, if the scheme be not satisfactory to the City Council they will not accept it. And this Parliament cannot make them accept it. There is no analogy whatever between the proposed City Council superannuation fund and the superannuation fund of the Commonwealth Public Service. That fund, of course, has its basis in an Act of Parliament. It involves the money of the whole of the people of the Commonwealth, and is a charge on Consolidated Revenue. And rightly so, too. In those circumstances Parliament should fix the basis of the scheme. But by no stretch of the imagination can we picture any Parliament permitting a municipal corporation to provide superannuation unless Parliament make it mandatory that the municipal corporation shall make provision for pensions and make it on the lines laid down by Parliament. I do not think members realise what the Bill involves. To boil it down, it involves this: The City Council have asked for further power to provide a superannuation fund for their employees.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Some of them.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That does not matter; some or many. All we are asked to do is to give the City Council that power. If we are prepared to give them all the power embodied in the Municipal Corporations Act, why not give them this power also?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Would you give them any power they asked for?

Hon. J. CORNELL: They ask only for power to establish a superannuation fund. Personally, I do not think they ought to have that power.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A select committee could determine that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we are going to approve of the principle of a municipal corporation having power to establish a superannuation fund, we should take the question, not piecemeal, but in its entirety

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is exactly what the Bill does.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But only in respect of the Perth City Council. If Parliament is going to amend the Municipal Corporations Act to include superannuation funds, it can only do it by making it obligatory on all municipal corporations throughout the State to establish superannuation funds on lines laid down by Parliament.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Suppose the proposition is unworkable; ought Parliament to pass it?

Hon. J. CORNELL: For years past we have given municipal corporations statutory power to do innumerable things, to govern themselves within the four corners of the Act, and to make regulations under the Act for very many purposes. It is now desired to give them power to form a superannuation fund. It is proposed to make inquiries and set out the basis of that fund. If that be done, then it ought to be put into the Municipal Corporations Act and made essential that any municipal corporation desiring to establish a superannuation fund, should proceed on those lines.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That can be done.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not think members realise what a superannuation fund means. After all, probably under the powers comprised in the Municipal Corporations Act a municipal corporation is already entitled to establish a superannuation fund and, if it be acceptable to its employees, put it into operation. I cannot see of what use the proposed select committee will be.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.