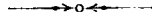


Melbourne
Water Supply



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The attention of members of the State Legislature is respectfully invited to the matter contained in this and a previous pamphlet.

The facts and figures are collated from the reports of the Metropolitan Board, from *Hansard*, and from an intimate personal knowledge of the locality extending over many years.

The history of the Maroondah water service, since its transfer from the Victorian Government, is not creditable to the Board or to its executive officers; it is, in short, a long record of neglect of duty and of opportunities wasted.

In *Hansard*, Vol. 63, it is clearly shown what the compact was to be between the Board and the Government, and the late Mr. Gillies—advised and prompted by the chief officers of the Public Works Department—made definite statements to Parliament respecting the potentialities of the scheme and the cost of certain necessary and projected works at Maroondah, which, to say the least, are accurate and reliable and compare most favourably with the speculative and interested assertions made by the Metropolitan Board respecting the O'Shanassy watershed and proposed works therefrom.

The objections to the Maroondah reservoir in the light of everyday experience are altogether illusory. First, the Board asserted its great cost; then it urged that the "still water" in the proposed basin would be so costly to pump into the aqueduct as to neutralise its value. These objections having been refuted by citing the experience of larger cities than Melbourne—such as London, New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia—the Board prudently receded from the position it had taken up, and now, relying on its municipal influence, tries to browbeat the Government by forcing it into a position harmful to the State, and detrimental to the best interests of the ratepayers of Melbourne.

W. A. ZEAL.

24th May, 1909.

MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY.

The Metropolitan Board has again approached the Premier with a request that it should be forthwith endowed with the watersheds of the O'Shanassy and Upper Yarra rivers, and it insinuates that direct evil consequences will result if its request is not at once complied with. It practically made the same threat when it clamoured for the upper reaches of the Acheron River, but when this reckless spoliation was thought undesirable it looked over its own reserves and found the Badger River, within three miles of the Graceburn conduit, and by further exploration also discovered Sawpit Creek, which it naively states it has utilised at a cost of £40. Possibly, if the Board continues the use of its reasoning and exploratory faculties it may discover at Maroondah a solution of all its present difficulties. This by the way. I, however, think the Government, before parting with other large and extremely valuable areas of water-bearing country, intersected by mountain streams, should call upon the Board to show cause for its recent change of front as regards the Maroondah reservoir, and should demand to know what it proposes to do with the 67,450 acres granted to it at Healesville, and 26,000 acres at Yan Yean, altogether 93,450 acres of exceptionally valuable land, withdrawn from settlement and cultivation, lying wholly undeveloped for 20 years, and during that time exempt from the impost of rates and taxes. This exemption from rating constitutes a grievous wrong to the shires in which the Board's reserves are located, and it will be realised when it is pointed out that Eltham and Healesville lose annually at least £6,745 in consequence of the exemption of the Maroondah reserve. In February, 1891, after the Board had been constituted, its officers discovered a small settler's property on the site of the Maroondah reservoir. It was a charming little orchard on the bank of the river—a little home and settlement hewn out of the primeval forest, and shut in by giant trees from the morning and evening sun. This little home was destroyed, fences pulled down, valuable fruit trees left to ruin, and all on the plea that here was to be the great Maroondah reservoir, and no settlement or cultivation must remain within its borders. This was in February, 1891. In February, 1909, the wreck remains, so that after an incubation of eighteen years the Maroondah scheme has proved to be the

Board's addled egg, and all "the great engineering skill and magnitude of the works achieved"—the Board's own words—is ruthlessly cast away, in favour of an entirely new project, the merits of which ratepayers are expected to take on trust and on the Board's estimate.

I trust, however, the Government will dissent, and before granting the Board any further concessions will demand that it carries out its contract as far, at all events, as Maroondah is concerned. Why, I ask, are we to take this Board's statements as indisputable, and ignoring all precedent blindly accept the interested assertions of a corporation which has everything to gain and nothing to lose by increasing its possessions, power, and influence to become a menace to the State?

Without desiring or intending to be offensive, I ask what qualification has either the Board or its principal officers to veto plans and projects designed by at least as capable men as any in the Board's service, and to say these plans are impracticable? What reservoir, dam, or other large work has the Board's officers ever constructed, and, if so, where is the super-human intelligence to be found in theoretical dogma, as opposed to the practical experience of other countries and States? What Sydney has done should be useful to us to know. The Maroondah reservoir scheme, after a most superficial examination, was condemned because a considerable portion of its proposed impounded water would not flow into the present aqueduct by gravitation; but these clever men forgot, or probably did not then know, that many other water supplies to greater cities than Melbourne were formed on the principle of gravitation and pumping combined. Did the Board's officers know, or do they know now, that 60 per cent. of the water supplied to Sydney is by the process of pumping from a lower to a higher level, and has not the City Surveyor of Melbourne told them what has been done at Chicago? The Sydney Commissioners supply water on a rate of 8d. in the £, as compared with the Melbourne rate of 1s. in the £ on all municipal properties, and the sewerage rate of Sydney is 11d. in the £, as compared with our 1s. 1d. The Sydney Commissioners paid into the New South Wales Treasury, up to 1905, a sum of £110,145 15s. 5d., to form a trust fund for the renewal of "perishable works," whereas our Board has not accumulated from its squandered resources even a brass farthing towards the same end. The Sydney water service of 1905 paid 4.18 per cent. on the capital invested, after providing all working and other expenses, and its sewerage system returned 4.23 per cent. on all capital invested, after deducting the cost of maintenance and management. These figures, it must be remembered, being based on the lower rates upon property chargeable at Sydney.

Will the Metropolitan Board now point out what it has done in a similar direction? Lest it should be reticent, I will quote some of its own figures. By its act, the Board has to lay annually before Parliament its statement of ways and means, and I now make extracts from that document, compiled to 30th June, 1908, which the Board was somewhat dilatory in presenting to Parliament. The gross revenue from water up to June last was £234,659 19s.; the charges were £143,683 7s. 4d., showing a profit from water of £90,977 11s. 8d. The revenue from sewerage was £243,418 16s., but the outgoings were £323,197 2s., a loss for 1908 of £79,778 6s.; this loss the Board reduced by the sale of some of its sheep to the extent of £6,246 14s. 8d. Setting the profit on water against the loss on sewerage, the result shows a profit of £4,952 11s., but this small return on the Board's outlay of £10,047,374 1s. 5d. cannot be regarded as a financial success, or even satisfactory. The Board has recently embarked in squatting pursuits. It purchased 56,573 sheep for £35,063 8s. 11d., but by keeping, grazing, and shearing these sheep their prime cost was increased to £41,535 17s. 10d. The Board sold 60,054 sheep for £32,083 9s. 1d, realising from the sale of the wool and skins of other sheep £7,048 9s. 11d., altogether £39,131 19s. 3d., or a net resultant loss on the year of £2,403 18s. 10d. The conclusions I deduce from the foregoing are that, whatever the Board's merits may be as exponents of "great engineering skill" and enterprise, when it embarks on the ordinary avocations of trade its experience proves it to be a most lamentable failure.—Yours, &c.,

W. A. ZEAL.

3rd March.

MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY.

The Metropolitan Board has again inspired information as to its works and the management of them, which may not inaptly be termed fairy tales. For instance, we are this morning informed that the present Engineer-in-Chief has "demonstrated" that the proposed O'Shanassy scheme would yield four times as much water as the Maroondah dam" (!), and, further, that the Maroondah service would not suffice for more than 600,000 persons, and he then proceeds to say—"add the O'Shanassy scheme and 800,000 persons would be provided for." This is a "demonstration" with a vengeance, for if the O'Shanassy scheme would provide four times as much water as Maroondah, it should supply 2,400,000 people instead of 800,000, as asserted. Will the Engineer-in-Chief therefore kindly elucidate this "demonstration"? Again, we are told, that if the Premier, like Humpty Dumpty of old, "will walk down one flight of stairs" at the Treasury and then "march 60 yards due east," he will discover the highest available authority on the water supply of Brisbane and the water supply of Hobart. Well, if the Premier takes this exploratory trip, how does the result prove that the Metropolitan Board's assertions are either correct or reliable? Further, it is stated, that the Board's total reservations are only 70,000 acres at Yan Yean and Maroondah, but on examining its report of 1905, page 14, it shows that the Yan Yean watershed "contains 26,000 acres," and at page 36 the area of Maroondah is given as 67,450 acres—altogether 93,450 acres. Which, therefore, is correct—the "demonstration" of to-day, or the published records of 1905, when there was no motive for

dispute, and the Board had not sought to repudiate its responsibilities? Then the late Mr. Gillies's testimony is dragged in, and it is inferred that he intended to endow the Board with a further area of 140,000 acres on the Upper Yarra; but a perusal of that gentleman's remarks in Parliament proves incontestably that there were certain works to be first constructed before any further grants were made. *Hansard*, Vol. 63, Fol. 403, reports Mr. Gillies as follows:—"In fact, by erecting another dam—at Maroondah—at a comparatively small cost, and making the sides of the aqueducts a little higher, the supply from the Watts River scheme can be doubled; it can be made to supply 50,000,000 gallons per day." This dam of "small cost," according to Mr. Gillies, is now transformed to the "huge structure at Maroondah," and the cost of building it and raising the sides of the aqueduct have been recklessly estimated at from £450,000 to £500,000. The proposed dam site, however, reveals features not consistent with these alarmist assertions. I have frequently inspected the locality, and from what I have seen, I assert that the dam at its apex would probably be about 200 yards long, and at its base about 110 yards. Its maximum height has been stated by the Board officers at 100 feet, 105 feet, and recently 120 feet. This "huge structure" shrinks into insignificance when compared with the Barren Jack dam, across the Murrumbidgee, which will measure 240 feet in height and impound 209,500,000 gallons of water, as compared with about 8,000,000 gallons at Maroondah. The contract accepted on 25th January last for the Barren Jack dam was £217,000, so that the interested and most extravagant estimates of the Board of Works need discounting very considerably. In proof of this the Board, after publishing alarmist estimates of the probable cost of raising the sides of the aqueduct from Maroondah, actually constructed the work by day labour, and increased the carrying capacity of the aqueducts to 30,000,000 gallons, for a sum of £11,000; now it wishes its ratepayers to believe that 60 miles of new works, pipes, siphons, tunnels, aqueducts, reservoirs, and distributing services, as well as the purchase of all the land required, can be accomplished for less than the cost of

developing the Maroondah watershed; and that after all the Board's years of blundering and comatose incapacity its statements should be considered infallible, and its "demonstrations" as the pronouncement of experts who regard the liliputian works on the Hobart rivulet as brilliant illustrations of engineering skill, unmatched in the civilized countries of the world.

One illustration in conclusion will, I think, cause reflective people to ask Why, if the intermittent supply at Maroondah in time of drought is unreliable, how can another intermittent scheme at O'Shanassy provide for the wants of the metropolis, and is not the common sense and reasonable inference that the solution of the trouble is to impound water falling during a time of plenty, for use in a time of drought?—Yours, &c.,

W. A. ZEAL.

5th April.

MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY.

A statement prepared by the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board was forwarded to the Premier during the first week in April, which contained assertions so much at variance with the Board's published reports, I feel compelled to draw attention to it. In a previous letter I quoted from this report to show that the Chairman's assertion as to the area of the Yan Yean and Maroondah watersheds was inaccurate. I now deal with another statement, equally misleading. The Chairman says that the Board was under no express or implied obligation to complete the Maroondah dam. As this assertion is contrary to my knowledge of what transpired in Parliament, I inquire of the Chairman, who is his informant? As I feel sure he knows nothing personally of the circumstances connected with the transfer from the Government; in point of fact, the Board was not formed, and he was then in no way connected with the negotiations. The facts are these:—After the Bill had passed the Legislative Assembly, where its advent is minutely described in *Hansard*, Vol. 63, and where it is shown that the most valuable water rights then, or now, existing in Australia, were to be handed over by the Government to the Board for a sum of £800,000, less than prime cost, and in addition two large areas of Crown land, aggregating 93,450 acres, were to be given in, to complete the transaction. In due course the Bill arrived at the Legislative Council. I took an early opportunity of asking the then leader of the House what had the whole scheme cost (see *Hansard*, Vol. 65, Fol. 2016), and was informed £3,000,000. I thereupon remonstrated, as I considered the proposal a one-sided one, and quite unjustifiable, and I told the leader I intended moving that the Bill be referred to a Committee. That gentleman remonstrated, and pointed out that such a course would imperil the Bill, and then stated that as the Maroondah dam had to be built, he thought the arrangement forced on the Government might be allowed to stand. He also consulted the promoters of the Bill, then sitting in the Council gallery, and returned to me, giving me the verbal assurance that the proposals of the Government would be carried out. This assurance I received in good faith, and withdrew from the stand I had taken, but I now much regret that the promise given was

not incorporated in the Bill, as its repudiation carries with it a most unpleasant flavour. It will be seen, however, on referring to *Hansard*, Vol. 63, Fol. 2498, that I moved an amendment to restore the £800,000, but on a division I lost this motion, the result being—Ayes, 15; Noes, 16. I know that the regard felt by members of the Council for the late Mr. Gillies lost me the amendment, as my colleague and several other friends would not vote.

As to the maintenance of the Sydney water scheme and the Board's scheme, the Chairman says:—"The expenses of the Sydney Board's water service in 1907 were £50,453, as compared with £21,605, the cost of the Melbourne service." The Board's report for 1908 (see statement No. 1) shows the maintenance of the schemes to be £25,017 17s. 10d., and the management £18,887 14s. 9d., or altogether £43,915 12s. 9d., or more than twice the sum of the Chairman's figures as to the cost of supplying water. Since the publication of the City Surveyor's figures as to the cost of pumping at Chicago, and the report of the Sydney Commissioners as to the cost of pumping at Sydney, the Chairman wisely refrains from enlarging on his objection, and, in effect, he says quite airily, "Dear me, is this so? But if it is, it is of no consequence "whatever." In the preliminary discussion on the merits of a gravitation scheme as compared with a combined system of pumping and gravitation, this latter system was held by the Board to be quite obsolete; but when it became known that the pumping scheme of water supply to Chicago cost only 3.89 c. (less than 2d.) per 1,000,000 gallons, pumped 1 foot high, and that at Sydney the cost of pumping 60 per cent. of the total water supply cost only 0.6d. per 1,000 gallons, raised upwards of 100 feet, the Chairman wisely and prudently beat a retreat.

The Board, and one of the Board's engineers, I very much fear, designedly misrepresent the capacity and cost of the proposed Maroondah reservoir. As I have already pointed out, the Board, to support its assertions and arguments, has at various times stated the height of the proposed dam to be 100 feet, 105 feet, and 120 feet respectively, and the holding capacity of the reservoir at 2,500,000,000 gallons, but very disingenuously omit to say that this does not include what the Chairman calls still or "turbid" water. Every person knows this alleged objection of still water is a myth as far as Maroondah is concerned, as during eight months of the year enormous quantities of flood water would pour into the reservoir, and would provide, as Mr. Gillies alleged, by a free-running stream, an ample supply for 750,000 people. If the dam at Maroondah was built 120 feet high, the whole valley from No. 1 tunnel to Fernshawe would be turned into a huge lake. In

any case, what is to be thought of the Engineer's estimate of £92 per million gallons when the contents of the reservoir would be nearer 8,000,000,000 than 2,500,000,000 gallons.

The Chairman again puts words into my mouth I never used. He says I am "incorrect in saying that when the Government had control the charge was 8d. per 1,000 gallons, but now it was 1s. per 1,000 gallons." I never said anything of the kind. My allegation was—"Few people are sanguine enough to believe "that the tariff found sufficient by the Government in 1862-63, "and again in 1874 and 1889 will be again resorted to, the water "rates in the two last-named years being 8d. and 6d. per 1,000 "gallons respectively." Perhaps the Chairman will explain his gross misrepresentation.

The Board, during its entire existence, has utterly neglected to develop the Maroondah reserve, if the small dam at Donnelly's Creek (cost £940) and the picaninny dam at Sawpit Creek (cost £40) be excepted. It tried hard to seize the Acheron head waters when it had the Coranderrk Creek in its own reserve lying useless and undeveloped, and when foiled in its bushranging career tries now to appropriate the Upper Yarra watershed of 115,000 acres, and, if permitted, proposes to leave all the expensive provision made between Maroondah and Preston undeveloped, neglected, and only partly used.

The Chairman girds at the people of Healesville because they have criticised the Board's neglect of duty, and this "great public corporation," as it grandiloquently calls itself, imputes all kinds of selfish motives to the Shire Council which has had its territory cut in two and a large tract of country freed from rates and has had the temerity to complain. The Board's borrowing power, formerly assessed at from £3,000,000 to £5,000,000, has, like an octopus, grown to nearly £11,000,000, and if the Government does not soon intervene it will launch a bran new scheme, costing at least £1,000,000, the supply of water from which will be then only intermittent, whereas by spending £230,000 (its own estimate) the Maroondah reservoir can be completed and the supply of water to Melbourne in the future be an assured success.—Yours, &c.,

W. A. ZEAL.

6th May.

MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY.

A Mr. Cobb has come forward to champion the Metropolitan Board, but his arguments only illustrate the truth of Dr. Johnson's remark of "encumbering one with help," as he has added no new light to the controversy. He repeats what has been admitted by everyone, except it be the Metropolitan Board, viz., the desirableness of providing adequate stored water for Melbourne. But how Mr. Cobb proposes to do this by another intermittent supply at O'Shanassy I fail to see.

Mr. Cobb gravely states it is possible to store 5,300,000,000 gallons at Yan Yean—6,400,000,000 gallons, by the way, is the Board's measurement—but he asserts this storage should be increased to 12,000,000,000 gallons—why this precise quantity, however, he neglects to explain. Twelve thousand million gallons would provide 32,876,912 gallons per day every day of the year to be distributed amongst every man, woman, and child in Greater Melbourne, and as our requirements vary with the seasons, it follows that during the winter, or rather for eight months of the year, we should have water in plenty, even sufficient to satisfy Mr. Cobb's temperance proclivities.

I have endeavoured from the outset, and have tried my best to explain, that all that is asked of the Board is to first complete its present service before seeking others, and it really seems incomprehensible to me why this is not to be done. The Public Works Department before 1890 designed all the necessary works at Maroondah; delineated the form of the proposed reservoir on its map, and in fact completed the present service except by building a dam. It constructed some fifty miles of works; conduits, capable with minor additions, of carrying 50,000,000 gallons per day; pierced the ranges with twelve tunnels—between the weir and Preston—of lengths varying from one-half to one and a half miles, and of similar ductile capacity to the conduits. In short, in all except smaller details the works have been soundly built; have stood the test of twenty years' wear and tear, and constitute a creditable record of the ability and industry of the designers. If the O'Shanassy scheme is decided on, it will cost at the very least from three to four times as much as it would to complete the work at Maroondah,

and then it will be only an intermittent service, after all, such as we have now. If a dam is built at O'Shanassy in addition to the projected works, the outlay will be practically doubled, and it will take from three to four years to complete. In the interval, if a drought supervenes, how much better prepared should we be then to provide for it?

Why, I ask, has there been this change of front on the part of an officer in the Public Works Department and the Board, for it is barely two years since the latter marked out the dam site at Healesville and sunk trial shafts along the proposed base of the dam? Now a turn of rightabout face has been made by men who, it is alleged, cannot make mistakes, and the long-suffering ratepayer is expected to authorise new works and new loans, all in the spirit of acquisitiveness, and to glorify the Board and its officers, as the proponents of a scheme labelled by them as the most elaborate in the southern hemisphere. It may be heroic, but it savors to me—at this juncture—as little short of lunacy.—Yours, etc.,

W. A. ZEAL.

22nd May.

WATER SUPPLY OF SOME OF THE

(Compiled from a Paper published

CITY.	POPULATION.	DAILY SUPPLY. GALLONS.	HOW SUPPLIED.
LONDON	6,976,795	219,046,087	Pumped
LIVERPOOL	897,792	27,514,000	7·36% Pumped
MANCHESTER	1,200,000	39,000,000	Gravitation
BIRMINGHAM	806,000	18,549,000	26·29% Pumped
GLASGOW	1,142,474	66,069,319	2·1% Pumped
SHEFFIELD	641,615	14,057,822	Gravitation
SAN FRANCISCO	400,000	26,560,000	50% Pumped
ST. LOUIS	750,000	58,100,000	Pumped
BROOKLYN	1,392,000	112,538,403	Pumped
CHICAGO	2,225,000	454,615,954	Pumped
PHILADELPHIA...	1,500,000	300,000,000	Pumped
BOSTON	934,730	124,135,000	75% Pumped
SYDNEY	620,415	24,567,493	61% Pumped
MELBOURNE	533,000	31,582,000	Gravitation
ADELAIDE	170,000	9,000,000	2·7% Pumped

* Includes

† Sydney has a Reserve Fund of £265,314

‡ £800,000 of the prime cost and all interest was remitted by the

NOTE.—Of the above fifteen cities only three are supplied by Gravitation; the four Pumping; and the remainder by Pumping and Gravitation combined. The lowest Pumping. The charges made for water are either by meter or by rating.

20,5,09.

PRINCIPAL CITIES OF THE WORLD

by the Sydney Water Board).

GALLONS USED PER HEAD.	CHARGES PER 1,000 GALLONS.	CAPITAL COST.	EXPENSES UPKEEP AND MANAGEMENT.	ANNUAL REVENUE.
		£	£	£
31·55	6½d. to 11d.	44,773,953	1,392,783	2,880,520
30·647	6d. to 10d.	6,418,818	360,072*	359,953
32·00	3d. to 1s.	7,048,249	374,679*	384,633
23·19	6% on value	8,046,855	69,939 + 22,777	291,267
57·00	5d. to 10d.	3,860,730	58,817 + 13,643	246,189
28·77	6d. to 10d.	3,376,914	35,614	161,333
66	9½d. to 1s. 8d.	6,500,000	218,000 + 120,000	386,555
78	4d. to 1s. 0½d.	5,000,000	175,238	348,052
80·74	8d.	5,000,000	331,173	613,421
204·3	3½d.	9,199,816	191,529 + 296,697	945,241
200	2½d.	16,350,904	459,069	804,164
133	11d.	—	501,313	510,369
39·59	6d. and 1s.	5,185,499	57,893 + 17,123†	283,410
59·25	7d. and 1s.	3,826,447‡	23,004 + 18,652	233,549
53·0	6d. to 1s. 3d.	1,700,800	14,328 + 6,906	76,708

Sinking Fund.

10s. 11d. for renewing perishable works.

Government at the time of transfer to the Metropolitan Board.

largest—London, Brooklyn, Chicago, and Philadelphia—are provided for solely by charge is at Philadelphia, viz. : 2½d. per 1,000 gallons, and the supply is wholly by

W. A. ZEAL.

MELBOURNE WATER SUPPLY.

On the 16th January last the Inspector-General of Public Works, at a convivial meeting of the Metropolitan Board held at Healesville, after being highly complimented by the Chairman of the Board for his great skill, is thus reported to have expressed himself:—"He did not think the Maroondah dam would be built "in their time, as he believed better counsels would prevail."

On the 24th March last a large deputation from Healesville waited on the Premier (Mr. Murray) to protest against the action of the Board in declining to proceed with the construction of the Maroondah dam, with the view of acquiring another huge tract of land on the O'Shanassy.

After listening to the deputation, the Premier avowed himself as greatly impressed by the statements made, and signified his intention of not only inquiring into them, but he promised to visit Healesville and see for himself.

About the 10th May it was notified in the Melbourne papers that the Premier had decided to appoint a Board of inquiry to consider the relative merits of the rival schemes of Maroondah and O'Shanassy, and on the 26th May it was officially announced that the Board was to be Mr. W. Davidson (the Inspector-General) as Chairman, Mr. Garson, and Mr. Fowler.

I therefore called at the Government Offices to inquire if Mr. Davidson (the Chairman) was the person who on the 16th January last had expressed himself so determinedly averse to the Maroondah scheme, and I learnt to my intense astonishment that he was.

On the 25th May Mr. Fowler called at my office, but I was absent, and he wrote to me to say:—"I am taking a run up to Healesville to-morrow, and am anxious to learn whether there are any special points you would like me to know." The same afternoon I sent Mr. Fowler some papers, and also a copy of Mr. Keele's address read before the Royal Society of New South

Wales at Sydney on the Melbourne Water Supply. Mr. Keele, I may remark, is a prominent engineer in Sydney, and has been professional Chairman of the Metropolitan Board in Sydney.

On the 27th May it was reported that Mr. Fowler went to Healesville, accompanied by the Engineer of Water Supply, and was there on a tour of inspection lasting two days.

On the 29th May Mr. Fowler returned to Melbourne, and wrote to thank me for my "letter and notes," which, he says, "I found most useful," but he was altogether silent as to having a travelling companion or what had been the result of his survey.

Then the inquiry began, and the Board's chief officers, and all its light and heavy artillery in the shape of inspired and prepared reports, were presented, and the officers were asked to give evidence. If this evidence is examined, it will be plainly manifest that the determination of both the Inspector-General and Mr. Fowler was to elicit testimony that would support the Board's position, and the leading questions put to the witnesses clearly show that intention. For example, Mr. Fowler leads Mr. Ritchie to say there was always a fear of a breakdown in the direct high-pressure service from Morang at Heidelberg; but how often, I ask, has this occurred? The Chairman also invited the Chief Engineer to say that the cost of the completed Maroondah scheme would absorb more than the difference of cost between the intermittent scheme of the O'Shanassy (£450,000) and that of the permanent work at Maroondah (£365,000). The witness, so reminded, promptly says: "Yes, considerably more." It is too long a task to wade through the whole of the evidence, but it will be found chiefly of an *ex parte* character and quite one-sided.

In due course the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board appears, and like the head of the "great public corporation," he discourses learnedly about the "pressures in water pipes," but the Inspector-General evidently thinks this evidence irrelevant, for he cuts the Chairman short, and I really think the public has not lost much, for I question if the Chairman was called for his opinion, he would be puzzled to define which was the "faucet" and which was the "spigot" end of a water pipe.

The Engineer (Mr. Ritchie) is evidently the great gun, the sheet anchor of the Board, for he elaborates twelve wordy reasons why the O'Shanassy intermittent scheme is preferable to a permanent supply from Maroondah. Like the postscript to a lady's letter, his twelfth reason is a gem, a wonderful evidence of genius. Mr. Ritchie informed the wondering Board that he had consulted

a military officer, who alleged that if Melbourne was invested by an enemy, a third line of water supply would be a great advantage to the city. This astute opinion of Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines more than adds weight to Mr. Ritchie's deductions; it proves the wide and searching range of his investigations.

After this there is a delay in the inquiry to enable Mr. Fowler to accompany the Engineer-in-Chief to the west to report on the sewerage of the City of Perth. Of course such a duty during a critical inquiry is, to say the least, irregular, as it tends to cast a "doot," as Scotch folk say, on the proceedings.

In due course the inquiry was resumed, and after all the Board's evidence had been exhausted, the Inspector-General called at my office, accompanied by the Secretary of the Inquiry Board, to invite me to appear and give evidence. This was on the afternoon of Wednesday, 9th June. I was quite frank with the Inspector, and told him I should have been pleased to attend and give evidence, but as he had already made up his mind, it appeared to me to be a waste of time. The Inspector retorted: "If this is so, it is no use debating the matter," when I added: "I will not say definitely I will not attend, but if you will put your request in writing, I will consider it and send you a reply." There the matter ended, for I have heard nothing since.

Now, as the Board has reported, and the expected has happened, I think I am not unfairly acting in denouncing the whole procedure.

A partisan Board—or at least two members of it—has met and drawn up a report on *ex parte* expert evidence, elicited to a large extent by leading questions of a particular complexion. Officers, books and papers, and the offices of the Metropolitan Board have been placed unreservedly at the command of the Board of Inquiry, and all evidence which would show what the Board bargained to do, and what it intended to do up to a certain time, has been ignored and discredited. Unfortunately for the Board, *Hansard*, Vol. 63, is procurable, and there it can be seen what the late Mr. Gillies stated, and what he was briefed to state by the Public Works officers, some of whom have turned "right about face" with apparent impunity.

I trust, however, members of the State Parliament will call for further inquiry before the Crown parts with another large tract of water-bearing country, seeing that the 67,450 acres of undeveloped land at Maroondah practically remains in the condition in which it was handed over to the Board in 1891—part of a scheme which cost the State £5,554,631 (*Hansard*, Vol. 63, Fol.

667), and which the Board acquired for £2,390,000 (Board's Report, Fol. 5), with all the valuable freehold and Crown lands given in.

This unique, self-contained, and isolated territory has no counterpart in Australia, and its possibilities of development are so immense that under intelligent management it would easily provide for all the wants of a population of nearly one million souls.

Is the Board like the "dog in the manger" of old Æsop's time, to stand in the way?

Yours obediently,

W. A. ZEAL.

4th September, 1909.