

CHRISTCHURCH

SEWERAGE SCHEME

Transcript of Shorthand Notes taken at a Meeting of Ratepayers and Owners of Property held in the Christchurch Town Hall on March 23rd, 1904, "to consider the Scheme now proposed to be carried out at a cost of £30,000, with an annual expense of £547, equal to a cost of £40,000,

Mr. G. A. Preston was elected Chairman to preside over the meeting, and he was supported by Councillors W. E. Burt, G. Brownen, T. Tiller, W. D. Shave, and J. Budden, and by Mr. James Preston.

The Chairman, in the course of his introductory remarks, said:—" I think perhaps I have one qualification for standing here. I believe my attitude towards the Christchurch sewerage scheme closely corresponds to the attitude of a considerable section of the ratepayers of this borough. A good many of us think that this is a subject which ought to be approached without any feeling and without any prejudice. We want to know more about the details of the scheme. Of course we can go to the Town Council meetings and listen to the debates, and we can read the newspapers, but I understand very few people beyond members of the Council attend the Council meetings. I think there is lurking in most people's minds, whether it be right or whether it be wrong, the idea that the proposals of the Town Council are extremely costly. I know some people think they are unnecessarily costly, and being unnecessarily so they must be extravagantly so. I would like to say personally that I would give every credit to the majority of the Council for sincerely believing that Mr. Lomax's estimate of £30,000 is a reasonable estimate. I think it would be absurd, I think it would be inconceivable, that the Council should support the expenditure of so large a sum of money if they had not faith in their figures; but at the same time there are some of us who hope that they are mistaken in their estimate, and there are some members of the Council—a minority of the Council—who have gone into the question carefully and thoughtfully, and they maintain that the work of the drainage of this borough could be done at a considerable reduction below the estimate which is before us. That contention seems to have received a good deal of sympathy and support judging from the number of memorialists who signed the document which went up to the Local Government Board the other day. If £30,000 is to be spent upon this drainage scheme, it will mean an additional rate of something like 2s. 6d. or thereabouts in the £.; some think it may be as high as 3s. But the point we have to consider is this: have we got a complete and thoroughly effectual system?—I would like to lay stress upon those words, "a complete and thoroughly effectual system"—at a reasonable cost. It is certainly, I think, of supreme importance that you should be made aware, as ratepayers, of all the arguments which will go to prove the possibility of a cheaper scheme. That is the object of this meeting. You have gentlemen here who propose to give you facts and figures and details upon which they base their arguments, that if the alternative scheme—I will call it the alternative scheme for convenience—can be practically realised, it will do a great deal to relieve the burden of the ratepayers in this matter. The minority have taken you into their confidence, and I think they have done rightly in doing so. I think the Town Council years ago ought to have taken the ratepayers into their confidence and ought to have brought forward details which, so far as myself is concerned, have only recently come to light. We seem to have been in darkness concerning the details of the scheme. These gentlemen here will give you some details concerning the scheme in the field, and the one they propose as an alternative scheme."—The Chairman then gave particulars as to the procedure which would

be adopted at the meeting, and closed his remarks by saying "I personally am not, like yourselves, competent to enter into the subject."

Councillor Burt said: It is rather, I think you will agree with me, a serious position to take up: to call a public meeting to consider a matter like this upon the initiative of a minority of the members of the Town Council, but we feel like this: we are the servants of the ratepayers. We have been elected by them for the purpose of carrying out the work of the borough so far as we can, in accordance with the knowledge we have; and if, therefore, we fail in carrying a point we think ought to be carried then we are entitled to come back to you upon a serious question like this; to tell you what we have done; and then the thing for the future rests in your hands; we have done our work; that is the position in which we stand here to-night. What is to come out of this meeting, the results which will follow, are matters which rest entirely with you. We have done our best according to our lights, and we leave the rest to you. May I just as briefly as possible carry one or two points, so far as the history of the sewerage scheme is concerned; so far as I personally am interested? May I say at once that for many years past the drainage of our borough has been a matter heavy upon my mind. I have realised this point: that to drain Christchurch is a heavy item, because, go where you will the sewage has to be pumped at least once. Now that matter was one which has governed me in all my actions in the past, that knowledge, and I carry myself back to the time when I was elected in 1891, and I then served for three years upon the Council. We had under discussion then the question of the Stour road, which was then in a deplorable condition, and, after great effort a temporary expedient was found and a sewer was laid there. I may tell you at once that sewer was only laid by the minority giving way to the majority. The minority said 'here is a work costing some £300 or £400, which ought to be done, but the money ought to be spread over a certain period.' The answer was this: 'if you insist upon that it will mean we shall have to go to the Local Government Board, we shall have an inquiry, and we shall have a heavy scheme of drainage forced upon us, and our town can't stand it.' That was the feeling of the majority at the time, and the minority had to swallow their principle in order to carry their practice. I want you to see this point and you will gradually see how the educational side of the sewerage question has developed. You remember that there was still a minority on the Council at the time, and the result of that minority was that application was made to the Local Government Board. It was reported that crude sewage was being discharged into the rivers; an inquiry was held; and, under the Rivers Pollution Act, the Local Government Board made their order declaring that all the tidal waters from Haven House upwards were within the Rivers Pollution Act, and, therefore, we, as a council, are continually offending against that Act. These are well-known facts. Then comes the question: how is this matter to be dealt with? Nothing was done—and you will forgive me if I have to speak of myself, but it is not in an egotistical spirit, but rather in an explanatory manner. I was appointed as clerk to the Pokesdown Urban District Council in 1895, and immediately that council set to work to deal with its sanitary condition and to carry out a scheme of sewerage. In doing that they looked upon broad lines; not only what was to be done for the district as then formed, but what was to be done for the district as it might gradually develop, and the result was this: all drains were carried to the bottom of the Stourfield estate (the real bottom of the district). The sewage was then carried right through Tuckton and Wick farms out to sea near the Double Dykes. That scheme received the approval of the Local Government Board. Now for a side issue, I knew also that Christchurch had to deal with its sewerage at some future time, and I put before my council for their consideration, 'will not one outfall be available for the two districts, and thus by combining relieve both districts.' They saw the point, and from inquiries which were made the outfall sewer was increased from an eighteen inch sewer, which would have been ample for years to come, to a twenty-one inch pipe. Therefore, I want you to see that the matter was looked

ahead to. Now the sanitary condition of the district was very bad, our (the Christchurch) district I mean, and the result was this: we, as ratepayers, had under consideration the scavenging question, and I wrote to the Local Government Board in 1897, and the result was they communicated with the Town Council, but nothing was done which satisfied the Local Government Board, and Dr. Mivart was sent down. I hold in my hands a copy of Dr. Mivart's report, dated January 21st, 1899, and may I mention that the sewerage system of Pokesdown was completed and in working order in August, 1899. The work was in progress when Dr. Mivart came down here, sanction having been obtained for the loan some eighteen months previous. Dr. Mivart, in his report, a copy of which was sent on to the Town Council, says this (Councillor Burt here read an extract from the report, commencing 'the adjoining Urban District of Pokesdown,' and finishing 'population of 20,000.')

Continuing, Councillor Burt said: "These facts have been before the Town Council and they are before the Local Government Board. May I carry you another point. You will remember there was some talk of increasing the area of our borough, and there was a proposal to take Southbourne into the borough. There also was a proposal to include Southbourne within the urban district of Pokesdown. The inquiry was held by the County Council, that being the authority to do so, on the 1st of March, 1900, at Pokesdown, and this (Christchurch) Council was represented by the Town-Clerk, the Surveyor, and the Engineer (Mr. Lomax) who had recently been appointed. Now, the Pokesdown outfall was actually in working order on that date, and had been so for something like eight months. The proposal which was put forward, as from the Christchurch Council, for dealing with the sewage of Southbourne, was this (I quote as nearly as my memory carries): that the sewage should be brought from Southbourne, down the hill (I will not say whether over or under the Pokesdown outfall), and be carried across the river Stour to Light's Mead, to a point near where Admiral Douglas is building his house, and the overflow was to discharge into the river. That was the scheme which was proposed for Southbourne, in the face of the sea outfall being actually in existence at the time. Now, the date of Mr. Lomax's original scheme succeeded that date therefore you see at the time that was the general idea which was running through his mind. I want you to notice because, bye-and-bye, on a letter of his, I may call your attention to it, that scheme was revised, the one projected in May, and in August, 1900, a scheme was prepared for the Local Government Board; that scheme was the one which came out at £25,299. The scheme which was suggested first came out at £21,835. The plans were all prepared for the one scheme at Light's Mead, and after all the work had been done it was found that more often than not the wind would blow from that direction towards the town; that had not been discovered before. It was found that it would be necessary to clear out the sludge beds, and that that possibly might make a stench, and that stench would come towards the town. The result was this: the Council looked round for another point to which they could go, and Stanpit Marsh (Crouch Hill) was pitched upon as being a more suitable point, being away from any houses, and that is the scheme which is estimated to cost £28,963. I give you those figures accurately for this reason Mr. Lomax complained that the communication to the Local Government Board speaks of £30,000 for the sewerage scheme when it is only £28,963 but £30,000 was mentioned because that is the amount that the Town Council have asked for. It is £1,000 beyond Mr. Lomax's estimate, and the Town Council have not shown what they want that £1,000 for; five at least of the members of the Town Council have not been taken into confidence and told what the £1,000 is for. Therefore the £30,000 which Mr. Lomax has questioned has actually been asked for by his clients as an expression of opinion. With regard to the time which has gone by—the inquiry into the scheme was held in August, 1900, and may I to-night make clear my attitude on this matter,—you remember there was a proposal made as to mode in which the scheme should be carried out. I do not want anyone to feel they are bound to follow me. I am responsible to my own conscience for what I did;

when I consider a thing to be right, I carry it out if I possibly can. I tell this meeting I am going to take you all I can into confidence, and show my mind in this matter, and I leave you to judge whether I have done right or not. I knew then — and I speak upon a matter of public importance—as a lawyer and as an Urban District official, that for the Surveyor to take the position it was proposed by the Council he should take, and that he should have an interest in the contract between the Council and Mr. Lomax, was a wrong position for him to take, and was one which might have serious consequences. I only took up the position which I afterwards took because there was none other open to me. I stood one evening at the Town Hall door, and I happened to meet Mr. Legg there, and I spoke to him upon the matter. He did not seem to take the hint I tried to throw out, as to his considering the awkward position in which he was placed. Now mind, gentlemen, I do not want to convey the idea of blame towards Mr. Legg; not one jot. Mr. Legg, I believe, thought he would be able to serve this borough and that he would be able to benefit himself in a fair way. I believe the Town Council felt they had confidence in Mr. Legg, but we did not all see with the same eyes, and I felt it to be my duty to call Mr. Legg's attention to it. Mr. Legg did not view the matter in the light I did, and I therefore took the view that I had a right to do, and I called public attention to it. Mr. Lomax expressed an opinion adverse to the one I expressed, but I am glad to say the Surveyor retired from the position it was proposed he should take up, and thus fully carried out the opinions I myself had expressed. Then in the following November I was elected by you on account of certain views I took upon sanitary matters. My friend Mr. Budden was elected at the same time upon similar views, later, Mr. Tiller was elected—a tower of strength—and also Mr. Brownen, who is also a tower of strength, and we have been pulling together upon the Town Council during the past twelve months, but we were in a minority. Practically the first thing I did when I got on the Town Council was this: I said, "I want to know about the sewerage scheme; please show me the plans, please let me see the matter"; and you know when I came to ask, I could find no plans available in the borough. I was shown the plans for the old abandoned scheme, which the Surveyor at once produced to me, but they were abandoned, and I said I wanted the new scheme. I wanted the figures, and eventually the Town Clerk wrote to Mr. Lomax, and some figures were sent. I said "No, Mr. Druitt, I want the figures which were supplied to the Local Government Board; I know what I want, and you may tell Mr. Lomax that." He (Mr. Druitt) said he had sent them to the Local Government Board, and as no copy had been kept he could not supply one. I said "Well, you write to Mr. Lomax, don't trouble him to make a copy, but to send the figures down to you, and I can see them." I did not get those figures until I had been on the Council for 14 months. The application was going to be made for £30,000, and I said "I will not vote until I have the figures and plans before me, and I am going to oppose the whole thing." It was only the day before the Council met that I got the figures which I had asked for, and then I said "We have not got the information; we have not got the plans; I want to know what I am voting on." The vote was taken in December, and these plans did not come to hand and I could not get a sight of them until the 1st of February. What time was lost after that? Directly I got my the information, I got a copy of the figures which had been sent down, and I went into the whole thing, and the letter which many of you were good enough to sign was sent to the Local Government Board on February 13th, so I don't think there has been any waste of time so far as this matter is concerned. Whether this matter has been kept back from us purposely or not? Well, I can't help feeling there has been a sort of feeling on the part of the majority of the Council, 'you come in as new hands you must adopt what we have decided on, and there is an end of the whole matter.' May I tell you that only recently have I found out the scheme proposed.—Councillor Burt, at this stage, showed by means of a plan, the routes of the proposed sewers, and speaking of the sewer which it is proposed to lay along the Fairmile road, said: "May I, in passing, call your attention to this item: the Cottage

Homes is outside the district, but we, as a sanitary authority, can call upon persons to drain into our sewers if we bring them to within 100 feet of their boundary. Why should we, as a small borough, incur the expense of laying that small piece of sewer in order to deal with property which belongs to the Christchurch Union, of which we form a very, very small part, so far as rateable value is concerned? Another point: it is proposed at the present time, of course, we are told it need not be carried out—then why ask for it? the money will be borrowed at once — from the cemetery to the cemetery corner, and from that corner along Barrack road till we get to the nursery not a single house is to be put, and thus a dry sewer will remain there for some years to come." —Proceeding in his explanation of the scheme, the speaker described how the sewage would be pumped by means of ejectors to Crouch hill, and speaking of the ejector system proposed to be adopted, said: "What will be initial force to be spent at Crouch hill to obtain sufficient power to do this work at Whitehall? Will there not be a tremendous loss of power in getting over the distance because of the friction? We cyclists know something about friction and most mechanics do, I think, and that shows to my mind the tremendous difficulty which will be experienced before it is got here."—Councillor Burt then detailed the number and size of the bacteria beds, in which the sewage is proposed to be treated, and said: "These and the works, such as the boiler house, engines, and air compressor, it is proposed to carry out at a cost, of £28,963. I should like to call your attention—I am afraid I am going to take you some time; I will keep it as short as I can, but the matter to my mind has become too serious to be a question of time. The sewers are put down to cost £8,099, the concrete over the shallow sewers £293, the bacteria beds £4,873, the bridge road and trestle bridge over Stanpit marsh £1,647, the timber landing stage £100, chimney £211, engine and boiler house £775, ejecting chambers £620, ejectors £1,530, rising main for conveying the sewage from the ejectors to the works £3,201, boilers, engines, etc., £1,874, air main £1,141, stop valves £72, connections to ejectors £534, laying out land contact works £720 (the Local Government Board have insisted that a large area of land shall be taken so that the sewage can, if necessary, run out over the land and be cleansed in that way; of course the sewage would have gone through the beds). Then the contingencies were put down at ten per cent, £2,569; and the cost of the land is down at £700—making a total of, shall I say roughly, £29,000—and after you have spent the money you will remember that we should still have a bit of material left on our hands to do what we like with. That is the scheme that is proposed. I want to deal now with the way in which we suggest the matter should be carried out in order to save a great amount of money. Here I would draw your attention to the fact that there are some places which were not proposed to be included in the sewerage scheme—four roads in Avon park, Clarendon road, the little road with four houses in it near the recreation ground, Beaconsfield road which has forty-three houses. These houses have been built, many of them for over twenty years, and these are the houses which are going to be left out. We have also Cameron road, Moffatt road, part of Scott's hill road, all roads upon which houses are actually existing, but which have all been left out of the scheme. It is however proposed to lay the sewer in a part of Stoney lane. As to the alternative scheme, the whole question is this: is it possible to do away with the expense of lifting, or at least reduce it to a minimum? I submit it is possible to do so. It is proposed to bring the whole of the sewage by gravitation to Whitehall (with the exception of that from a little piece in Millhams street and Castle street, which is made an area by itself. At the Coastguard station the ordnance survey shows we have a datum of 8ft. above sea level; at Whitehall we have 5ft. above sea level. What I say is this: we can cut down in reason so far as we like into the ground for our sewers, and if we can expend capital which will be a means of saving annual expense, it will be money well spent. If you have a machine which is continually and steadily doing its work, it is far better than having a dead machine,—for I may almost call a dead machine a dead sewer. If we can make a dead sewer which will automatically do its work we

should be doing far better than by having something which may get out of order, and which may be expensive to renew. What I suggest is this— and I am not going to mention one engineer as against another in this matter. It has been put to me, "Can Mr. Lomax carry out the scheme you propose"? I say I have nothing to do with Mr. Lomax, or Mr. Brown, or Mr. Robinson, or any other engineer. I am considering one scheme as against another and the possibility of saving money by a scheme. That is the principle I give you, and the one upon which I stand to-night. I don't want any red herrings drawn across the path; I want to leave personal matters, and deal only with facts. If we can drain from Burton road and Stanpit, and carry an iron sewer across the low-lying grounds, across the shallows just near Mr. John Preston's, over the little bridge across the mill stream, up Castle street, and taking in Millhams street, and down to Whitehall (and I believe there is sufficient fall) the result, is this: the actual outlay is the first outlay because such a sewer as that would be doing its work continually. There is another point I want to call attention to. Where there are houses to connect the great thing is to keep the sewers as high as possible to minimise the cost of making the house connections and any repairs, and that I think would be served in such a sewer as this because you can carry short heads. The pumping station would be at Whitehall, and remember there would be no stench because the pumping would be done as the sewerage was delivered, and it would be pumped into the Pokesdown outfall. I want to point out to you this: the rising main which would be made available for that purpose is within some fifty feet of the same length of the main which it is proposed to lay across Stanpit Marsh to the beds at Crouch Hill. That is one item which did not strike me until last night, but there is only a difference of fifty feet between the two. Now comes the question as to what the cost would be. We should still want our sewers that would bring the material to Whitehall and all the sewers in the original scheme may be taken as being required for that purpose. The additional would be bringing the iron sewer across Stanpit Marsh to the pumping station at Whitehall. These figures I have confidence in placing before you; I am taking as far as possible Mr. Lomax's figures and upon his own basis I make them work out in this way:—sewers, £8,100 (Mr. Lomax says £8,099—I give him the odd pound); concrete over the shallow sewers, in round figures £300; the iron pipe (I have treated that being a 12 inch pipe across Stanpit, but an engineer may say that for half of it a nine inch pipe will be sufficient) £2,000; the nine inch rising main to carry the sewage to the outfall £1,300. I have put down £500 for the land for the pumping station, and as to the cost of pumping, I practically take Mr. Lomax's figures and adding a little more to it call it £3,000; for the manholes in the iron sewer £200; that makes a total of £15,400, add ten per cent. for contingencies £1,540; but in coming across the meadows we may have to pay something for compensation and I have put that down at £200; that brings us to £17,140, and I believe that I am not very far out in saying that the work could be done for that. Now I have said there should be a saving of £10,000 and I stand here to-night and say I believe that could be done with such a scheme as this.

Councillor Brown said: "First let me get rid of the personal matter and keep it out of the way. I was elected as you know, last November, rather reluctantly, but having been elected I felt it to be my duty to serve, and there has not been a Town Council meeting or committee meeting to which I have been summoned which I have not been fortunate or unfortunate to attend, therefore, I think I have fulfilled the duty you put upon me when you elected me to go in the Council, and I have attempted to serve you, although it has been sometimes in stormy times. But we have only had one sewerage committee during the time I have been on the Council, and if I cannot say very much about the scheme you must put down that as somebody else's fault and not mine. The scheme is said to have begun seven years ago, but it is not begun now. It has been talked about, and we talk about things a lot before we begin them, and sometimes it is best to talk about them a little longer before they are put in practice. I have sought for and tried for details, but I could not get them. You may

be told that they have been all worked out, and that they are all right in somebody's brain, but that somebody's is not mine nor yours. On January 29th this year we did get some details, but we had the month of February close upon us, and we were then told it was settled—settled—settled. When we got the first sight of these details we found they were very unsatisfactory because they were incomplete, and I am sorry to tell you they are incomplete even now. I made a final effort, a desperate effort, on Monday morning at the Town clerk's office to try and clear up a little matter. I wanted to know the size of the effluent pipes to carry off the effluent water from the bacteria beds, and the sludge banks at Crouch hill into the river; out unfortunately these pipes are not yet in existence, and, whoever is to put them, they are not included in the estimate which has been brought before the Town Council, and which has been supplied to the Local Government Board. The reason they are not there is because they were not in the original drawing which I took very great care to examine at the Town Clerk's office on Monday morning last. I suggested it was a rather funny thing that the water should be taken down there. Because you know the estimate is thirty-gallons per head for about 4,500 inhabitants, which will come out at about 120,000 gallons per day. You have 120,000 gallons going from the town to Crouch Hill daily, it will be put through the beds there, and after that what will become of it. I suggested to the Town Clerk we were going to build another Tower of Babel, only it would be built of water and left on the top of the hill. If it is allowed to spread over Crouch Hill will not the adjoining owners complain? If it goes into the river, what then? I would wish you to strongly think of that, because I think it is a serious difficulty in connection with the scheme. From what I have been told—and you can verify this by going as ratepayers, and I think you will be justified in doing so, and demanding to see if the effluent pipes are put in the scheme. There is to be a road to get to the site, and Mr. Druitt suggested the sewer might be laid underneath it, but who is going to pay for the pipes, because they have not been inserted in the estimate, and, therefore, I say that so far as the estimates are concerned the scheme is incomplete, and so far as the drains and plans are concerned, they are incomplete also. All this is bringing the thing up to date. I am not going into an elaborate discussion as to past history; Mr. Burt has done that amply. I turn from the personal matter to the facts. There was first of all what was called Light's Mead scheme, and I confess I would very much prefer to see Admiral Douglas's fine house rather than a tall chimney in that part which we hope in a few years will be covered with houses, and which will add rateable value to the town. In that scheme it was calculated that they would have to go down 8ft. at Purewell. I think that would be somewhere in water, and I leave it to you to judge how difficult it would be to make the connections with the sewers if that was done. It is all very well to put down drains, but when you have to make connections covered with water, I think the ratepayers would hold a different view. Then there is to be the great trestle bridge which is to be carried for an enormous distance across the Marsh. Recollect, that trestle-bridge will have to be made and the wooden piles driven into marshy ground. I cannot see that anything has been estimated for the upkeep of that. We were told first of all the upkeep of the scheme would be £600, now it has been cut down to £547, but so far as I can make out there is nothing allowed for the wear and tear of this enormous trestle bridge which is to be carried through the low lands and the swamps to Crouch hill; and recollect there are to be 120,000 gallons a day to be spread on the land to help to rot the piles and thus help to increase the cost of repairs. I think those who have to do with the timber trade will rub their hands and say 'there is a good time coming, and that very soon.'"—Mr. Brownen proceeded to explain the action of the ejectors, and said he had had to do with one of them, and had also had to deal with half a million of gallons of sewage a day at the Wimbledon works, so that when he talked about sewage purification, etc., he was talking about something which he knew something about. "I am afraid," continued the speaker, "the Council are a little jealous of their knowledge, or have not got it to give, and consequently

they are in a fog. In that fog I think they still remain; but I hope it will soon blow away. The sewage is to be pumped to Crouch Hill, and it will find its way some-where; it will go all over the ground, rotting the trestle bridge, but it will finally find its way into the river. You have here the effluent of sewage, which consists not merely of human excreta but of slops, which, not being strained by the land and which will easily pass into the river. What will be the effect on the fish? What effect will it have upon the Run and the salmon who come up the river? I know there are some-eels and coarse fish — which don't object to be near a w.c., but the salmon is not that class of fish. I contend that the effluent, and I am speaking from a knowledge of effluents and what they really are, when discharged into a river becomes objectionable to the fish, and the fish leave that river. That is to be seen in the river Frome at Dorchester, into which sewage is discharged, and the result is the killing of the fish and the threat of an action by the fishing club. I do not know whether you would like to see an action entered against the Town Council by those who own the royalty or by the poor fishermen who have their craft endangered by the fish going in another direction. I say that is a danger which requires to be well threshed out, and speaking as one of the Council, I am quite willing to help them; but, unfortunately although we are willing to do this, they will not let us. We want the fullest examination before we spend such a large sum of money, because we have no proof that in the course of a few years the work will not have to be all done over again. We are dealing with a town with a limited rateable value. A penny in the £ does not bring thousands like it does in Bournemouth. A penny in the pound here only produces £60 or £70. We were told by one of the overseers that a penny in the £ on the next rate will bring in £70, but that rate will not be sealed before the 30th of this month, and therefore he was making an unfair use of knowledge which had come into his possession. We want facts and not views. We want facts and figures, and until we get them we feel inclined to stand to our guns, first in the Council Chamber, secondly before the Local Government Board, and thirdly to you, for you will be called upon to pay the piper, and if you are satisfied, we have discharged our duty. If the Council was not going to call upon us to pay the piper, it would be another thing, but when you and I as ratepayers have to pay these rates, I contend the fullest and most open inquiry should be held, and we should have these figures and facts before us, and I cannot see for the life of me why the plans and estimates should not be put up in this hall, so that any ratepayer might have a look at them and might see to what he is being committed. If the £30,000 scheme is begun you must carry it through, and these ten or thirteen roads will have to come in somehow, and a supplementary grant will have to be asked for and like Mark Tapley, we shall be wanting more, and the question is: is the old town able to bear it? Many of us are opposed to the other scheme, and some of us have been making enquiries. I began to get a few figures, and to piece them together, to try and find out where we are. I thought it would not do, and I did not see why we could not get into the Pokesdown sewer. I got to button-holing a few men, and among them some of the Bournemouth town councillors. I said "I am not speaking to you as a councillor, but as a friend; will you stand by us if we make an appeal; if the Christchurch town council asks you to give us consideration will you give it? What is for the sanitation of Christchurch will be a help to Bournemouth, and if you have an insanitary Christchurch it will be a danger to Bournemouth." I spoke to men of different political parties and there was a unanimous "Yes." In some quarters that has been misrepresented. I never spoke as a town councillor of Christchurch, but as a ratepayer; but I spoke to men who were not only town councillors of Bournemouth, but ratepayers. As a result of his enquiries a letter was written to the Town Council, and I believe certain local papers either gave a wrong impression of what was written, or any rate, they put in what was not correct, so the town clerk of Bournemouth, without my interviewing him, has written this letter which is not marked "private," and therefore I will read it:—"Mr. Councillor Brownen, dear sir, I am asked by the sanitary

committee of the corporation of Bournemouth to send you the enclosed copy of a letter which I wrote to the chairman of the Christchurch sanitary committee a few days ago, because the newspaper report makes it appear as if the Council were not informed that any communication they might send would receive consideration. I am justified in repeating that any communication from your council will receive courteous consideration; but that is as far as I or any other official can go Yours faithfully, Geo. Wm. Bailey, town clerk of Bournemouth." I wrote thanking him, and told him he had not only taken a load off my mind, but removed it altogether out of the way in regard to any future action of Christchurch. We are friends, and I don't see why we can't get rid of our sewage by pumping it into the sea. The pollution of the foreshore is but local, and that can be removed. The money for a scheme is being paid: a cheque has been drawn for Mr. Lomax, so that the expenditure is going, going, and bye-and-bye it will be gone. We have already commenced these unhappy matters, but what I feel about it is this; if we can only exercise more economy, and save our pockets, and at the same time get an efficient system of sewerage for the town, no matter whether it goes into the Bournemouth sewer or anywhere else, if we can do it at a cheaper rate we are bound to do so, because it is our interests as ratepayers to keep down the rates considering the low rateable value of the town in which we live. I really cannot see why one cannot be trusted to see how the matter can be thrashed out and worked up; and I do most strongly object, and have objected to the way in which we have been treated, and sat upon by the majority of the men on the Council. They may think they are wise and that their wisdom will die with them, but this is a job concerning which there is a little wisdom in the world which is not in their heads. I appeal to you as ratepayers, now you have heard a fair explanation as to what it is proposed to do. We do want a good and economic system of sewerage to be decided on for the town, and we should be made cognisant of what is intended to be carried out. There are four Shoan's ejectors in the House of Commons (they propose to have six here) and they take four gas engines of five h.p. to work them. Add to this the cost of wages, fuel, and all the rest of it, and I think £547 a year is below rather than above the estimate of what this expensive scheme will cost. All this would be saved by simply letting the sewage run into the Pokesdown sewer, and sending it out to sea. We ask you to demand that a full, free and fair examination shall be given to the schemes, and that you shall adopt, and the Town Council shall adopt, that which is the best.

Councillor Shave then addressed the meeting, and in view of his short experience as a member of the Town Council, said he hardly felt competent to criticise the scheme at any length. He thought, however, he would be wanting in courage if he did not uphold Mr. Burt and those associated with him in the scheme they had advanced. He thought the Council made an error in the manner in which they engaged Mr. Lomax. The Council should have advertised for an engineer and made a selection from the candidates. Now the Council were in the hands of one man, and the more he could charge them over the scheme the more commission he would get, and that he strongly objected to, for it was open to great suspicion and great abuses. Possibly Mr. Lomax was one of the most honourable men in England, and he would not say anything against him, neither had he anything to say against those gentlemen who were associated with the preparation of the present scheme, which the Council had decided upon. He believed they were honest men, but the most honest men in the world made errors of judgment at times; they might not be capable of exercising a proper judgment, and, therefore, they ought to have the highest opinion in carrying out the scheme. The scheme did not cover anything like the whole area of the borough, and, therefore, the cost of the scheme would have to be increased as the other areas were brought into working. That made Mr. Lomax's estimate misleading. If sewers were laid in every road and every house connected with them he was disposed to think that the cost of the scheme would be from £15,000 to £20,000 more than the present estimate. Not only would the rates go up to

perhaps 5s. in the £, but every man who owned a house would have to pay for connecting it with the sewer, and that would come very hard upon builders and men with limited means. Councillor Shave also commented upon the fact that nothing had been said about the employment of local labour in carrying out the scheme.

Councillor Burt reminded Councillor Shave that as no contract had as yet been entered into the question of employing local labour had not been considered. He also corrected the previous speaker's remarks about the employment of Mr. Lomax, and informed him that Mr. Lomax was selected from a number of candidates. Replying to other statements Councillor Burt stated that as Mr. Lomax had left out of his scheme the cost of house connections and of sewerage roads in the borough not dealt with under the existing scheme, he had done the same in connection with the scheme he had advocated.

Letters in opposition to the Council's scheme from Mrs Holt and Mr. A Mallett were read.

Mr. James Preston proposed "that this meeting of ratepayers and owners of property in the borough of Christchurch, having considered the scheme for the sewerage of the borough which has been submitted to the Local Government Board by the Town Council, and also the suggested alternative sewerage scheme for the Borough, at a far less cost, considers that steps should be taken to provide a scheme less costly than the one adopted by the Council." Mr. Preston said he felt that if the present scheme was carried out Christchurch would become ruined or become bankrupt, or something of that sort.

Mr. F.W. Bemister seconded the resolution, and said if the new proposal cost the same as the old one he should still support it, as he considered the sea was the proper place for sewage.

Questions were invited, and Mr. Henry Stout at the back of the Hall asked if the sewerage scheme would be started before the tramway scheme, and expressed the opinion that if it was not it would cost double.

Councillor Burt: I quite agree with the speaker; this ought to have been done years ago; it ought to be carried out before the tramways come in, for I believe it will be a bigger expense. I said to one member of the Council twelve months ago, "are you going to propose any scheme?" I said, "I am sure you are making a great mistake for our borough. You have lost your opportunity. The time was when you practically had an invitation to join the Pokesdown outfall when it was being made, but you deliberately shut your eyes and refused to come in." By electing Messrs. Tiller, Brownen, and Shave, we feel you are behind our backs and that has given us courage to take the step we have in calling you together.

Mr. H. A. B. Shrubbs: Mr. Burt, can you state for the information of the meeting the capacity of the Pokesdown sewer, expressed in gallons per hour?

Mr. Burt: That I say at once is a matter upon which I cannot give you further information. If I had access to the papers of the Pokesdown Council, which are now in the possession of the Bournemouth Corporation, I could give you the answer in five minutes, because I know where to put my hand upon Mr. Ingamell's report. I have no right to use such a report as that at this meeting, because it is the property of the Bournemouth Corporation. I want to call your attention to this: In a letter written by the Town Clerk of Bournemouth to Mr. Newlyn, Mr. Bailey said:—"The sewer was laid for the purpose of providing for the Pokesdown Urban District, and now the present outfall sewer is about to be utilised for receiving the sewage of Winton, and according to the figures put before the Local Government Board Inspector at the inquiry thereon there is sewage accommodation for what may be expected to come into it for the next 15 or 20 years." "Now I am in a position to state this point, for, thanks to Mr. Newlyn, it has become public property. Like my friend Mr. Brownen, we have tried to get at the bottom of things all round. I went to the Borough Engineer of Bournemouth (as stated in the Town Clerk's letter), and I asked him "if

application is made to the Bournemouth Corporation, will you, as borough engineer, have to advise your Corporation if there is or is not sufficient accommodation to take Christchurch sewage?" The answer was, "Oh, there is ample room to take you, and that would be my answer to the Corporation; but, mind you, I have not said you can come in." That expression of opinion was enough for me.

Mr. Brownen: By tapping the sewer, the sewage from Christchurch would act as an aspirator, and therefore it would increase the capacity of the sewer.

Mr. Shrubb: What do you think we should be called upon to pay for the use of the outfall?

Mr. Burt: In the first place we have not asked Bournemouth, and therefore it is impossible to say what their reply would be. I can tell you this, and it is the only basis I can give you, the Pokesdown outfall, from its nearest point to Tuckton Bridge to the sea, cost in round figures £7,500. That was calculated on a rateable value of £22,000, and the £7,500 has to be repaid, principal and interest, in thirty years.

Mr. Shrubb: At what rate per cent.?

Mr. Burt: Two-and-three-quarters.

Mr. Shrubb: No money is to be obtained at that rate now.

Mr. Burt: I know that, and I can tell you another thing: The Corporation are not going to pay off that loan, because it is on the best terms they have got. The annual cost to the Bournemouth Corporation of that portion of the sewer is about £375, which was originally on a rateable value of £20,000; but it now takes an additional £9,000, the rateable value of Southbourne, and it is proposed to bring into it the sewage of Winton with a rateable value of at least £20,000. Distribute that over the whole area, and what is a fair price to take? It looks to me that if Christchurch were to pay £150 a year, Bournemouth would be making a fair profit.

Mr. Shrubb: There is no idea of the rate being 3d. in the £., and that possibly Bournemouth might charge that.

Councillor Burt: They have not been asked.

Mr. Shrubb: It is possible, is it not?

Councillor Burt: It is possible.

Mr. Shrubb: May I ask with every courtesy another question? £28,963, these are Mr. Lomax's figures. Without committing yourself, may I assume that Mr. Lomax's figures do not as a rule commend themselves to you?

Councillor Burt: What do you mean?

Mr. Shrubb: I mean his figures.

Councillor Burt: I have taken his figures.

Mr. Shrubb: In your opinion, £28,000 odd is not likely to be the total cost?

Councillor Burt: Do you mean I do not think he has properly calculated them?

Mr. Shrubb: Do you think he has under estimated or overestimated?

Councillor Burt: I am not going to express an opinion, because for my purpose there is no reason for doing so. I am comparing the two schemes, and I have, so far as possible, adopted the same basis between the two schemes. If he is wrong, I am wrong; if he is less, mine is less; if he is more, mine is more.

Mr. Shrubb: These figures and estimates represent a great deal of labour on your part; but you do not pose in any capacity as being an engineering expert?

Councillor Burt: I heard one gentleman the other day say he was little more than an amateur engineer. I am not; I am trying to bring common sense to bear.

Mr. Shrubb: Have you any expert evidence behind you?

Councillor Burt: I am not going to answer that question.

Mr. Shrubb: Without giving names?

Councillor Burt: There has been an attempt already to draw a red herring across the path, and to show that somebody or other will be trying to get the job out of Mr. Lomax' hands. I am not going to lend any countenance to such a suggestion—and the way in which Mr. Shrubbs has put it;— he has put it in all fairness perhaps; but he has not put it quite in all wisdom.

Councillor Brownen: I don't think you would get professional gentlemen in this country to go behind one another in that fashion. We should object, and in some professions we should be struck off the rolls.

Mr. Shrubbs: I beg to thank Mr. Burt for the courteous way he has answered my enquiries. I am speaking in the public interest, and I have no axe to grind.

Mr. H. E. R. Jackson: Once we begin paying rates to Bournemouth where shall we stop? Is it likely that Christchurch will go into Bournemouth, and pay what rates Bournemouth likes to impose? Is Christchurch going to be bossed by Bournemouth?

Councillor Burt: It is a very common thing throughout the country for two or three authorities to combine in one outfall scheme, and more especially is that so in the Midlands. There is no question of bossing; not the slightest; if the Bournemouth Corporation attempted to pinch us I am perfectly sure the Local Government Board would give us permission to put in our own sea-outfall. I think we are self-protected in that way.

Mr. John Preston said that while he was in favour of an amended scheme he could not entirely accept the figures presented by Councillor Burt, because they should be worked out by an engineer. As a member of the Council at the time of Mr. Lomax's appointment Mr. Preston bore out what had been said as to the selection of Mr. Lomax from a number of candidates.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried, there being only one dissentient.

Mr. T. H. Barnes moved: "That the Chairman be requested to inform the Local Government Board of the above resolution, and to ask them to receive a deputation consisting of the Chairman, and Messrs. Burt and Brownen."

Mr. Bemister seconded, and the motion was carried.

The Chairman expressed, on behalf of the meeting, the indebtedness they felt to those members of the Council who were in a minority, for the valuable instruction they had given, and a vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.