**SOUTH-EASTERN DRAINAGE ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 1921**

**House of Assembly, 18 August 1921, page 307**

Second reading

**The COMMISSIONER of PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. W. Hague)—**Under the South-Eastern Drainage Act Amendment Act, 1908, as amended by recent Acts, the South-Eastern Drainage Assessment Board may make an assessment of all ratable property within the South-East, and on such assessment may declare an annual drainage rate for the purpose of providing funds for carrying out the drainage scheme. The Act gives a right of appeal against the assessments to the South-Eastern Drainage Assessment Board, and on such appeal the board may alter any assessment appealed against. The board’s decision on appeal is final. This power of the board to vary any assessment on appeal is the only power the Board has in that direction, and if an assessment is not appealed against there is no power to vary it in any way subsequently. It has happened before this that on the hearing of the appeals, evidence has been brought before the board showing that not only has the particular assessment appealed against been too high, but also that the whole assessment in general has been made on too high a basis. However, unless the assessment of any property is appealed against, there is no power to reduce or vary it in any way. The purpose of the amendment proposed by the Bill is to confer this power, notwithstanding that no appeal has been lodged against the amount at which the property has been assessed. If the board, on the hearing of any appeal or on information derived from any other source, comes to the conclusion that any particular assessment is too high, then it may not only reduce that assessment, but may review the assessment of all lands in a similar condition, even though the owners have not appealed, or it may even go further, if the information before it justifies such a course, and order a general reduction of the assessment throughout the district. The powers of the board to review the assessment in this manner without appeal are limited to reducing it or to striking it out altogether. The board may not increase it. That is the purport of the Bill. I move the second reading.

Mr. REIDY secured the adjournment of the debate until August 23.