File No. 2690.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CITY OF BALTIMORR
WATER DEPARTMENT.

Baltimore. March 20, 1905.

Hon. W. Cabell Bruce,
City Solicitor,
Baltimore,
Dear Sir:-

2377

Previous to 1900, or the beginning of the administration of Mr. Thomas G. Hayes, the premiums of such bonds as were required of certain employees of the department were paid by the Water Board, and I believe that this rule also prevailed in other city departments, but Mr. Hayes issued an order that city employees should pay for their own bonds, and from that time up to the present the Water Department has complied with that requirement. The question of the department paying for the bonds of its employees was recently raised, and in view of the fact that the School Board pays for the bonds of its principals, the Fire Department for its captains, and the general custom of large corporations in this connection, the Water Board decided in January to pay premiums on the bonds of those employees of the department who are required to give bond for the faithful performance of their duty. The aggregate of these premiums is about \$65.00 a year, and the amount so raid would be charged either to the appropriation of \$6000 for current expenses or \$1,1000.00for sundries.

2378

After the decision of the Water Board to pay the premiums mentioned a proper voucher for such premiums amounting to \$45.00 was sent to the Comptroller for payment, but the voucher and bills were returned to this office, I understand by Mr. Freeman's instructions, with the statement that payment was refused. Why payment was refused the City Comptroller has not explained.

Therefore, we shall be obliged if you will advise us if the Water Board has the authority to pay the premiums on the bonds of its employees, and, if so, has the City Comptroller any right or authority to withhold payment of bills for such premiums, which have been duly audited and vouched for by the Water Board in the same manner that all other bills are audited and vouched for, and especially in view of the fact that the department has two appropriations out of which this pay-