

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 9th December, 1947.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Acts Amendment (Allowances and Salaries Adjustment).
- 2, Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment and Continuance.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

BANKING, NATIONALISATION.

Prime Minister's Reply to Parliament's Resolution.

The PREMIER: I have here a copy of a letter received from the Prime Minister of Australia in reply to the resolution passed by the Parliament of Western Australia with regard to the Nationalisation of Banking Bill. I move—

That the paper do lie upon the Table of the House.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

NORTH-WEST.

- (a) *As to Residence for Schoolteachers at Marble Bar.*

Mr. HEGNEY (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that there is no residence provided by the Education Department for schoolteachers in Marble Bar?

(2) Will he favourably consider the matter of provision of suitable accommodation for such teachers as soon as possible?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) It has been the practice of the department to place bachelor teachers at Marble Bar. The present teacher married during the year and is living at the Comet Mine, where accommodation is available, travelling daily to Marble Bar in the mine conveyance which brings the Comet children to school. There is a possibility, however, that accommodation may be found for the teacher at Marble Bar.

- (b) *As to Subsidy for Children Attending Metropolitan Schools.*

Mr. HEGNEY (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has any decision yet been made in connection with my recent inquiry relative to increasing the subsidy of £30 per annum payable to parents residing in the North-West who have children attending metropolitan schools?

(2) If the matter has been dealt with, will he announce the decision?

(3) If not, can he indicate when a decision is likely to be reached?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) and (3) It is unlikely that any increase will be made this financial year.

(c) *As to Water Schemes, Port Hedland and Marble Bar.*

Mr. HEGNEY (on notice) asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is he aware that the residents of Port Hedland are indignant over the delay in constructing the water scheme for the township?

(2) Will he state the definite reason or reasons for such delay?

(3) Will he give an assurance that his Government will proceed with the scheme whether his request to the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance in connection with the project is acceded to or not?

(4) Will he favourably consider reducing the price of the fresh water now supplied to the people from 3s. 6d. to 1s. 6d. per 100 gallons?

(5) Can he give any indication of the approximate date on which the proposed water scheme for Marble Bar will be completed?

(6) What is the estimated cost of such scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Chairman, Port Hedland Road Board, has asked to be advised the Government's intention regarding a water scheme for the township of Port Hedland.

(2) In view of the high estimated cost of £50,000 for a supply for a town of 300 persons, the Government has requested the Commonwealth Government to subsidise the scheme on a pound-for-pound basis.

(3) The Government will give the matter further consideration when a reply has been received from the Prime Minister.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

(5) Tenders have been called for all materials required for Marble Bar Water Scheme and work will be completed as materials come to hand.

(6) £1,700.

TRAFFIC OBSTRUCTION.

As to Charges Laid in Country Towns.

Hon. F. H. H. HALL (on notice) asked the Minister for Police:

What number of traffic obstruction offences, for which charges have been laid, have occurred in each of the following towns:—Northam, Geraldton, Bunbury, Collie, Kalgoorlie, for the year ended the 30th November, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

Northam, 1; Geraldton, 23; Bunbury, 47; Collie, nil; Kalgoorlie, 133.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

As to Poles for Bunbury-Boyanup Line.

Mr. MURRAY (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Were tenders called for the supply of poles for the Electricity Commission line from Bunbury to Boyanup?

(2) If the reply is in the affirmative, will he name the various tenderers and respective prices?

(3) If the reply is in the negative, will he ensure that tenders are called for any future supply?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) C. E. Parsons, Brookhampton; Smith & Davis, Dunsborough; R. O. Williams, Armadale; P. C. Payne, Bunbury; A. H. Mewett, Busselton; L. Lomasin, North Collie. Lowest tender accepted in each item.

(3) Answered by (1).

BUNBURY HARBOUR DREDGING

As to Availability of Power Barges.

Mr. MURRAY (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

Will he inquire into the availability of power barges which could be used in conjunction with the dredge now operating at Bunbury?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

PRESTON RIVER.

As to Measures to Overcome Flooding.

Mr. MURRAY (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the proposed early start with work in regard to Preston River levees, can he now satisfactorily inform the House—

(1) What action is proposed in regard to the removal of heavy siltage?

(2) What action will be taken to remove the clay bar at Johnston's Bridge?

(3) Will he make available to me copies of reports by engineer Angrove, Surveyor Winchcombe and overall reports of Hydraulic Engineer Edwards?

The MINISTER replied:

It is impossible to give the information required by way of answer to a parliamentary question. The plans and reports will be made available to the hon. member, at his convenience, at the Public Works Department.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Point of Order—As to Fair Print.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I seek a ruling. You, Mr. Speaker, may or may not remember that in the small hours of Friday morning last, a Bill was presented in bits and pieces, after having been amended several times. The amendments were either pasted or written in and the Bill, as amended, was accepted as a fair print. You will recollect that the Premier anticipated that he might finish the session this week. We have a very heavy notice paper seriously congested for reasons which perhaps I had better not state.

This congestion will necessitate, if many lengthy Bills are greatly amended, the writing in of the amendments by the Clerk or his assistant. I have no doubt that they will write in such amendments legibly. The Bills will then be presented to you for approval. My point of order is this: So that this side of the House may know what to expect, will it be possible—if Bills are substantially amended in Committee and there is no possibility of reprinting them and therefore they are unlikely to be a fair print—for you to stretch the Standing Orders to accept them as fair prints of the Bills?

Mr. Speaker: The answer to the question of the Leader of the Opposition is really the answer given the other night, namely, that when suspension of Standing Orders occurs, they are suspended to enable third readings to be taken at the same sitting. I think that is part of the actual wording of the motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. The only thing I wish to add is that I would urge the Premier, where possible on these occasions, to delay the third reading until a few items on the notice paper have been dealt with, so as to enable the Clerk and also the Chairman of Committees to be sure that the alterations are correct. I think, therefore, that the practice is in order.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.

Report etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Council with amendments.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.43]: This Bill was explained very clearly by the Attorney General and, as stated by him, it contains two main principles, which are the provision for an increase in the superannuation payments and the provision for ensuring a return of 3¼ per cent. to the fund. Many other minor matters are dealt with which it has, because of the passing of time and the experience of the board, been found necessary to include in the measure. The opportunity was therefore taken of rectifying them at the first chance. It will be remembered that a few years ago very grave doubts were cast on the actuarial soundness of the superannuation scheme, and it was found necessary to make increases in the contributions and also drastically to amend the parent Act to ensure that on the one hand contributions were commensurate with the risk as actuarially exam-

ined and attested, and on the other hand, that loopholes which provided opportunities for unfair charges on the fund should be closed.

The Bill proposes a contribution of £4,000 a year to make the $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. return for the fund safe. The actuary who did such great work in connection with this fund—I refer to Mr. Gawler—advised that there is no risk and that actuarially the fund was sound, even with the proposed 25 per cent. increase in payments to bring the fund into line with Commonwealth law. If I interpret the remarks of the Attorney General aright, it is extremely unlikely that there will be any necessity for an increase in the contributions. I understand that the Attorney General has been so advised and, that being so, the increase for which the Bill provides is entirely warranted quite apart from following the standard set by the Eastern States. Invalidity is a grave risk to these funds.

Members will recall that when the question of female pensions and charges on the fund were mentioned in this Chamber on several occasions, the board itself was anxious that that aspect should be closely examined. I was consequently interested to note the fact that the board obviously has advised the Government, in that connection, that there is still no need to take any violent exception to the present state of affairs. If there is to be any alteration in the case of early retirement of females, which was mooted at one time, that would permit of and require very serious examination of the fund.

The provision for a reserve units account is plainly a good one, so that a person who is earning a salary entitling him to take out additional units may, if he is of an age appropriate to contribute at a greater rate than he is obliged to contribute under the Act, pay into the reserve units account so that when his salary permits more units may be taken out by him, and he will have a reserve fund from which to meet the payments. The provident fund is in fact a savings fund. It is fully described in the Bill and obviously will give contributors an opportunity which the present law does not provide.

The minor amendments in the Bill are to provide for statutory sanction and

statutory approval of some things which are not now in the law, and also to cover and provide for legitimate happenings and undertakings with which the board must deal in its discretion. It is obvious that a board undertaking the task of management of such a fund as this, should have a considerable amount of discretion. It seems to me that the Bill now makes provision to meet almost every contingency that can arise. I can recall receiving advice from the Crown Law Department on a vital matter in connection with certain collections of the fund, and for which the board had to receive very definite authority. I know the Attorney General fully appreciates the position that then arose and the action which had to be taken by the Government in conjunction with the board.

The Bill, in bringing Western Australia into line with the recent improvements in the other States, varies from them in one particular. I am wondering why a limit has been placed on the number of units it is possible to take out so that the number is still less than what is provided for in the Commonwealth law. If there is any particular reason for that, and if the additional units would not make an unfair impression upon the fund, I would like the Attorney General to explain why. Insofar as the general application of the Bill is concerned I support it, and I support the second reading.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. R. McDonald—West Perth—in reply) [4.53]: I am indebted to the Leader of the Opposition for his survey of the Bill, the object of which is to give our public officers security comparable to that applicable under the Commonwealth Act and which will, I am sure, be applicable shortly in the other States. The Leader of the Opposition drew attention to one variation between this Bill and the recent Commonwealth legislation, namely, that his measure fixes the number of units for which a public servant may contribute at 20, calculated to yield him a maximum pension of £650 a year. The recent Commonwealth legislation provides for a maximum number of 26 units, and a maximum pension of £845. We thought that by this Bill we were making a substantial advance in the security for public servants in the event of old age or invalidity. Also, we

might regard a pension of £650 as being as much as most officers would seek to subscribe for.

There would be comparatively few officers who would want to subscribe for a higher pension, because the contributions would be so substantial; and in any case there is a limitation imposed on the right to subscribe for greater pension payments, based on the salary received. The right to subscribe for units is associated with the amount of an officer's salary, and he needs to be in receipt of a high salary before he can subscribe for a large number of units. Whether we should go the whole way and enable our public servants who are getting the highest salaries in the service to apply for units in comparison with what officers in the Commonwealth Public Service can apply for, is open to consideration. I have no objection to such a proposal, and if the Leader of the Opposition would like to put it forward, I have brought with me particulars of the number of units involved, which could be added to the end of the schedule in Clause 8.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you not think it would be better to do that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I think there are good arguments for it, although I must take the responsibility of having accepted what was, if I remember rightly, suggested in the first place, namely the increase of units from 12 to 20. However, I think there are substantial reasons why the right to subscribe for additional units should be the same as that in the Commonwealth, in the case of officers who are the heads of our Public Service.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 6:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When speaking on the second reading, I said I would be pleased to give a more detailed explanation in Committee. I shall, as the Bill proceeds, be glad to explain any matter that is not clear.

Mr. STYANTS: I take it that one of the purposes of the Bill is to provide an additional amount of pension per unit—25 per cent. is the amount. Is it intended to increase the contribution per unit by 25 per cent. also, and are those who have left the Service and are already receiving superannuation, to have their benefits increased by 25 per cent. under the provisions of the Bill?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The increase of 25 per cent. for retired officers of the Service—and their wives, when widows—will apply to existing as well as future pensions. It is not proposed to call upon contributors to increase their contributions. Contributions were necessarily increased by legislation in 1946, to ensure the stability of the fund. It is intended that the extra cost involved under the present Bill will be borne by the State.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is there to be any retrospectivity?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. The Bill proposes that the increased benefit shall operate at the first fortnightly payment of existing pensions after the measure comes into force.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—New division of Part V:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This clause deals with the provident fund, which is really a savings fund. Any public servant may make fortnightly contributions to this fund, on which he shall receive a rate of interest determined by the board. The clause also provides a compulsory savings fund for female contributors. At present they are obliged under the Public Service Regulations either to contribute to the pensions fund or protect themselves by way of a life policy. Under this provision, if they prefer to do neither of those things, they may make provision for their future by contributions to the provident fund. The female member of the Public Service, who does not as a rule contemplate remaining in the Service until she reaches 60 or 65 years of age is, by means of this provision, enabled, as a result of compulsory saving, to make provision for retirement at a later stage in her career.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Validation:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The purpose of this clause is to ratify what has been the practice of the board in various matters for which there was no explicit direction contained in the Act, and upon which it acted in line with what appeared to be correct administrative practice. Express directions in accordance with prior practice are now embodied in the Bill, and the practice of the board in the meantime, in relation to past transactions, is confirmed by the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [5.8]: As the legitimate father of most of this Bill, I naturally intend to give it my support. In fact, there is not much of the Bill that I propose to discuss, as I notice the Minister has changed the order in which this and the other water supply Bill were proceeding. I think the two Bills are now in the right order, and that this, which now comes first on the notice paper, should be considered and passed before the other Bill is finally dealt with. In the Press report of the Minister's second reading speech on this Bill, the public was given a wrong understanding of the portions of the Bill that differed from the measure introduced last year. I do not think anyone is to blame for that as the Minister, towards the end of his second reading speech, said he believed he had drawn attention to all those parts of the Bill that differed in a major way from the contents of last year's Bill. Unfortunately, that remark was taken to mean that everything he mentioned in his second reading speech was a recital of the major difference between this Bill and that of last year.

The Minister for Works: I did not intend it in that way.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sure the Minister did not, and his statement could not correctly be interpreted in that way, but unfortunately that is the way in which it was represented to the public, as the reporters concerned apparently interpreted the Minister's statement to mean that everything he had discussed in his second reading speech related to major alterations in this Bill as compared with the measure brought down last year. The Minister, in fact, dealt not only with major alterations in the present Bill, but with important matters that were also dealt with in last year's Bill in the same form.

The present Bill contains a provision—as did that of last year—to give the Minister a discretionary right to allow a concessional basis of rating in respect of any country lands where the owner or occupier has, in the opinion of the Minister, already made adequate provision for a water supply for the holding, including a supply for domestic purposes. Under this concession the Minister can charge no more than 3d. per acre, for each of the seven years, by way of water rate. If the circumstances warrant it he may charge less than 3d. per acre. When this proposal was before the House last year the present Minister, in his then capacity as member for Williams-Narrogin, moved to reduce the 3d. per acre to 2d. per acre. I do not know whether, in his perusal of the present Bill, he gave close attention to the views in that regard which he held so firmly last year. If so, I hope that when the Bill is in the Committee stage he will advise members why he has not been able, this year, to see his way clear to put into the Bill the principle that he tried to have inserted last year by way of amendment.

The Minister for Works: I might be forced to mention such factors as the 40-hour week, and so on.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Bill of last year proposed to establish a maximum rate of 5d. per acre for agricultural land. That principle is contained in this year's measure, and in addition there is an alternative to the 5d. per acre maximum rating. I refer to the imposition of a rate of three per cent. on the unimproved value of the land. The Minister is to determine what is the

unimproved value of the land in question. An amendment of this kind was suggested at one stage last year—I think it was an amendment put forward by the Legislative Council.

At that time I had the amendment investigated by the appropriate departmental officers, who advised me that the acceptance and application of that alternative system of rating would deprive the Water Supply Department of roughly £50,000 per year. Therefore, I hope the Minister has closely investigated the likely effect of the operation of this alternative because I imagine that, in these days of rising costs, the Water Supply Department is in no position to afford a loss of £50,000 per year, which might be the loss incurred if this alternative system of rating were applied to country lands in preference to the 5d. per acre basis. I admit there is a safeguard inasmuch as it is left to the Minister himself to determine the value of the unimproved land if the alternative basis of rating is applied to any particular property.

The only other part of the measure I wish to discuss has to do with the power to sell land where water rates have remained unpaid for a specified period. In the Bill of last year, this power to sell was covered by two clauses, but in this measure 15 clauses are required to cover the same matter. I cannot understand why the method used last year cannot be adopted this year. There must be some very solid reason why this measure requires an additional 13 clauses for that purpose. If the Minister can demonstrate that the present process of selling land for unpaid rates will be a shorter process and preferably much cheaper for all concerned, then I shall be very happy to support it. I quite appreciate that more phraseology might be required to lay down a more simple system with which to operate this power, but if the Minister is unable to advance solid argument to support the insertion of the additional clauses, I shall try to have some of them eliminated.

An important alteration has been made in the present measure in the order in which creditors shall rank when land has been sold for unpaid water rates. In last year's Bill local authorities were given third priority. In this measure they are to be given a lower priority by one grade, having been dropped

from third priority to fourth priority group. As against that, the Rural and Industries Bank has been raised in priority from No. 4 to No. 3. It appears, therefore, the local authorities are to be penalised in order that the Rural and Industries Bank might be advantaged. The No. 4 priority which was to have been given the Rural and Industries Bank by the measure of last year was challenged by either the present Minister for Works or the present Deputy Premier when this proposal was being debated. It was challenged very seriously because of what they considered the comparatively high priority being given to the Rural and Industries Bank. They argued that the bank should not have any such priority at all; in fact I think they wanted to reduce the priority being given. Yet, in this measure, the priority of that bank has been raised and the priority of local authorities lowered.

The Minister might have a good case to support these alterations and he might be able to convince me in Committee that his proposal is the right one. However, I ask members carefully to study the list of priorities. I know that the Rural and Industries Bank is a State trading institution and that we are in duty bound to do everything within reason to protect and strengthen it, but I consider it arguable whether a higher priority should be granted to it than to local authorities, which have probably expended a good deal of ratepayers' money in the making of roads and on other works without which the farming lands concerned could not have been established, as well as after they became producing units in the agricultural industry. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 62—agreed to

[*Mr. Hill took the Chair.*]

Clause 63—Land subject to water rate:

Mr. PERKINS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of paragraph (2) the following proviso be added:—"Provided that any such holding shall be rateable so far only as it extends to a distance not exceeding one mile and a half from the pipe."

This is a similar amendment to one which I moved when a like Bill was before the Chamber last year. Actually it will only make the position the same as it is at present. If the clause is carried as printed, irrespective of how large a property is and how far it may extend back from the pipeline, all of it will be subject to rating. I contend that that is undesirable. For one thing, it would be fairly easy for landholders who were so minded to get round the provision. Obviously if a property were divided among members of a family and the block nearer the pipeline were put in the name of one member and those blocks further back in the names of other members, the holders of the property would be able to evade the provisions of the clause. In any event I believe it is fair to rate only that portion of a property within a mile and a half of the pipeline as a matter of principle.

I know of properties that extend up to 10 miles from the pipeline and it is conceivable that a property could extend 15 miles back and because one corner happened to touch on the pipeline, the whole of the property would be rated. Yet it would not necessarily follow that the water service would be equally useful to the back part of the property. It would be necessary, if advantage were to be taken of the scheme water to run a private pipeline to the outer portions. I think most members are aware that it is not practicable for stock to travel much more than two miles to water. The original Act of 1902 did not contain this proviso, but it was incorporated in the Act of 1911 which was introduced at a time when the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme was being extended to the agricultural areas. Section 3 of the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act of 1911 contains a proviso exactly similar to my amendment, and that provision has been in force up to the present.

I contend there is no sound reason for not including it in this legislation. In our agricultural areas the pipelines very largely run along the bottoms of the valleys through strips of good country running amongst poorer country, which is characteristic of a great deal of our agricultural districts. That is the portion best able to bear a water rate, because it is much more productive than the lighter areas some distance out of the valleys. In that lighter country it is

much easier to get reasonable stock water and in many instances the owners of the properties, some of which comprise rich land in the valleys and lighter country in the back portions, find it more economical to water those back portions by means of bores or other surface water supplies.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The case submitted by the hon. member is much the same as he presented last year, and on that occasion he received the support of every member on this side of the Chamber. Under this Bill, we aim to take over the Goldfields Water Supply Act and I think there are sound grounds for taking over everything in that Act unless there happens to be some strong argument against it. I am not disposed to quarrel with the submissions of the hon. member, because I have ascertained that his amendment does not interfere with income at all or at any rate to only an extremely small degree—probably a little bit smaller than the hon. member realises. I have very closely scanned the lithos setting out those areas that will be omitted if the mile and a half limit be imposed.

I did anticipate finding quite considerable areas would be affected, but discovered that was not so. They are small and far between. I do not want the hon. member to think his amendment is not worth carrying on that account. There may be instances where a measure of fair play will ensue from adopting his idea. But it is largely on the score that it does not interfere with income that I intend not to oppose the amendment. I am particularly concerned that it should not interfere with income, because this Bill has been approved by the Commonwealth Government and it is upon this legislation that that Government will decide whether and how much it will assist us with finance. For that reason I am anxious that no action shall be taken that will have the effect of reducing income to any material degree.

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

Clause 64—agreed to.

Clause 65—Amount of rate:

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Subclause (2) sets out an alternative method of rating which is entirely new and did not find any place in the Bill of last year. I am anxious

to have from the Minister an explanation why it has been included and how he thinks it will in practice operate. An amendment based on this alternative was put forward by the Legislative Council last year which, on investigation by departmental officers, was estimated to be likely to cost the Water Supply Department £50,000 if it were to be widely applied.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Had there been any fear in my own mind that there was likely to be a loss of £50,000 I would not have had anything to do with it. The clause is so worded that the discretion is left with the Minister as to which method of rating shall be brought into operation for the time being. Had a free hand been given to farmers to rate their land as they wished there would have been a real danger of the income from the scheme being sadly reduced. The hon. member admitted that no ill results were likely to accrue having regard to the discretion vested in the Minister. There may be occasions when in the interests of fair play the alternative method might be desirable.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister has not given a satisfactory explanation. Surely some solid case must have been presented to him to induce him to include this alternative method. My first thought was that it was put in to enable the Minister to give proper consideration to a farmer occupying poor quality land in a comparatively good district. Had that been the reason the Minister would have told us about it. But the case could be met by imposing a rate lower than the general district rate, though that might lead to a lot of trouble on the part of other farmers whose rating was on a higher plane. There must be some good reason for the inclusion of this alternative system. I hope the Minister will give us a frank explanation and indicate the circumstances in which he would agree to apply the alternative method.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The subclause was inserted to ensure that properties of low value might be safeguarded against excessive rating.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That could be done under the other system.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not want too many varying rates. A rate in one spot different from a neighbouring rate would lead to the creation of another rating zone. If a rate was lower than 5d. the income from the sale of water might be reduced by many thousands of pounds. I would not agree to pursue the solution of the problem along the lines suggested by the member for Northam.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister has put forward some justification for the alternative system but has given no specific instance in which the alternative could be applied. If he used the alternative system of rating and rated under the unimproved land value system he would still have to lose revenue, because he would only adopt the unimproved land value system to help the farmer who was on poor land. The main justification for the alternative system seems to be that the Minister may, in a specific district, allow a lower rating to farmers with the poorest land. That seems to be the real ground for the inclusion of this alternative in the clause, namely that the Minister may exercise his discretion fairly and justly in specific instances.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme there has never been any differentiation in regard to rating arising from the fact that some land is poor and some otherwise. We have had a sixpenny rate over nine-tenths of the entire area, and on the remaining area from Spencers Brook westward the rate has been 2d. or 3d. as a rule.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 66 to 88—agreed to.

Clause 89—Land may be sold for arrears of rates, etc., remaining unpaid for five years:

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: This is the first clause of 15 that comprise the division dealing with power of sale. They are provided to deal with the same transactions as were covered by two clauses in the Bill submitted to Parliament last year. This point was raised by the member for Northam during the second reading stage. I would also draw the attention of country members—I regret not more of them are in their seats at the moment—that one of the clauses in this division vitally affects local governing bodies in that the period

during which rates can remain unpaid before the land may be sold has been extended from three years as proposed in the 1946 Bill to five years. Then again the Rural and Industries Bank has been given a higher priority than in last year's Bill and that provided for local authorities has declined. These points certainly call for a clear explanation on the part of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As the Leader of the Opposition says more words have been used in the Bill than were considered necessary in the previous measure and also that the period during which rates may be left unpaid before the land is sold has been increased from three to five years. I think that is a change that will be appreciated.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would not say that verbiage in legislation makes it all the better.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Does the hon. member suggest that the verbiage has clouded the issue and that some of it is useless?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I think so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not draft the Bill, but the manner in which it has been drawn was supposed to be in the interests of clarity.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: When it takes 15 clauses to set out what two did before!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The extension of the period to five years is in conformity with the amendment embodied in the Road Districts Act Amendment Act passed by Parliament last year at the instance of the hon. member's own Government, when dealing with precisely the same matters. In that instance, of course, it applied to ordinary road board rates and not water rates. That was supposed to be an improvement on the previous position. I can see no weakness in the division apart, perhaps, from its length.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The explanation of the Minister is wholly unsatisfactory, particularly as to why 15 clauses are required to deal with what two were sufficient for in last year's legislation. The marginal note to the clause differs from that of last year's Bill only in respect of the term of years. My great concern is not only with regard to the provisions of the clause un-

der discussion but with respect to the others that follow in the division and which are akin to Clause 90 of last year's Bill. I would like a clearer explanation from the Minister with regard to the added powers of sale.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The object of the draftsman has been to secure uniformity in provisions of this type. Last year we passed the Road Districts Act Amendment Act when occasion was taken to recast the procedure for the compulsory sale of land for arrears of rates. As I understand the position, the draftsman of this Bill, has, for the sake of uniformity, followed substantially, and I think almost entirely, the provisions of the Road Districts Act Amendment Act of last year.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Does it follow the provisions?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: There may be some verbal alterations but in substance, and largely in the actual wording, it follows the corresponding provision in the legislation of last year. The idea was that it would no doubt be helpful that all cases dealing with the compulsory sale of land under these conditions should be similar.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I agree.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: So far as I can see from a hasty glance, I think the provisions largely correspond except for the necessary variations.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: It would be unfortunate if there were any additional authorities provided.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would not like to say anything definite on the point without examining the position more fully. It would appear that the provision for the sale of land in respect of which rates have remained unpaid for five years corresponds with the period provided in connection with similar transactions under the Road Districts Act Amendment Act of last year.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The explanation given of this clause and of the subsequent provisions in this division of the Bill makes it perfectly clear that it is proposed to follow the provisions contained in the Road

Districts Act Amendment Act, No. 64 of 1946. I find that the treatment in this Bill is entirely different from that in the similar Bill of last year. I have no objection to the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 90 to 98—agreed to.

Clause 99—Application of purchase money:

Mr. PERKINS: I move an amendment—

That in line 14 after the word "the" the words "Agency Department of the" be inserted.

The effect will be to restrict the clause to the agency department of the Rural and Industries Bank. There is no need for the clause to apply to the other department of the bank. The Commissioners of the bank are well able to take care of anything covered by a general mortgage.

The Minister for Works: I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clauses 100 to 122, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL AREAS, GREAT SOUTHERN TOWNS AND GOLD-FIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [7.42]: I claimed in connection with the Bill we have just discussed to have been, to the extent of about 95 per cent., its legitimate father. I make no such claim in connection with the Bill now before the House, because I think it can be shown that I am its legitimate father only to the extent of about 40 per cent. That means that 60 per cent. of its legitimate parentage belongs to someone else. I am naturally proud of the 40 per cent. of the Bill of which I am the legitimate parent. As regards the remaining 60 per cent., anyone who cares to claim parenthood of that is quite entitled to do so as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Marshall: It seems as though you and the Minister are not altogether moral.

The Minister for Works: I think we have noticed that without your having a word about it.

Mr. Marshall: Never mind about your butting in.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: The scheme set out in the Bill is 60 per cent. less in extent than the scheme set out in the similar Bill of last year. That Bill proposed to establish a scheme to supply water to every town that will be supplied by the new scheme and to supply water also to approximately 12,000,000 acres of country land; whereas the scheme in this Bill proposes to supply water only to 4,000,000 acres of country land. The foundation of the scheme is still to be the same; that is to say, the present Government proposes to continue with the work put in hand by the previous Government of raising the retaining wall at Mundaring Weir to enable the future holding capacity of that reservoir to be 15,000,000,000 gallons as against its present holding capacity of 4,000,000,000 gallons.

The Government proposes to raise the retaining wall of the Wellington Reservoir to increase its holding capacity from 7,000,000,000 to approximately 35,000,000,000 gallons. That was the basis of the scheme put forward by the previous Government last year. Consequently the present Government will, by continuing that policy in these two directions, be enabled to store sufficient water at Mundaring and Wellington to supply not only the needs of this 40 per cent. of the scheme, but ultimately the full needs of the scheme if, with the passing of time, the original scheme proposed in the Government's legislation of last year is established. The total estimated cost of the previous scheme was £10,900,000, and that did not include, if I remember rightly, the cost of raising the retaining walls at Mundaring and Wellington.

The Minister for Works: Neither does the present figure.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: The estimated cost of the much reduced new scheme is approximately £4,500,000, which figure does not include the cost of raising the retaining walls at Wellington and Mundaring. The reduction in the new scheme, as compared with last year, is due entirely to the total exclusion of 6,000,000 acres of land

in the Great Southern area. I also notice, according to the plan, a reduction in the agricultural areas to be included in the North-Eastern agricultural areas. I am not sure how many acres of land have been sliced out there. I was hoping the member for Mt. Marshall would be present at this stage for the purpose of giving the House the benefit of his advice regarding the substantial area that has been eliminated from the North-Eastern agricultural section.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Perhaps the Minister will adjourn the debate for him.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As far as I am able to judge from the plan at the back of the document, which the Minister has made available to us, a fairly substantial area of country has been eliminated. I would like the Minister to tell us precisely how many towns and acres of agricultural land have been eliminated, and to give us the reasons for it. I regard the elimination of more than half of last year's scheme as something in the nature of a tragedy. I know this situation has, to a large extent, been brought about by the short-sightedness of most of the farmers in the Great Southern districts, by the lack of statesmanship of the members of Parliament who represented those districts in this House and in the Legislative Council last year, and by the easily understood readiness of the Commonwealth Government to exclude as much as possible of last year's scheme from what that Government would be called upon to assist financially. On this point the Minister, in his speech, said—

The question is frequently put as to whether the attitude of the farmers in that area

That is the Great Southern area

is likely to be permanent. Experience has tended to show that it is not. While I believe in observing the majority wish in cases where that wish is expressed and where no law is contravened, I realise that at a later date the sons of the fathers may adopt an entirely contrary viewpoint.

I think that prophesy of the Minister is likely to be borne out by events in, perhaps, the not very distant future. To some extent it was unfortunate that last year's Bill was introduced at a time when seasons in the Great Southern had been very good; when the winter rains had been heavy and there was no water shortage of any consequence in the areas proposed to be served. When the next cycle of dry sea-

sons comes—and no-one can say how soon that will be—I think many farmers who were opposed to last year's scheme, or who were lukewarm about it, will learn that they were wrong. In another part of his speech the Minister said—

The people of Kalgoorlie are grateful for what the pipeline has done for them.

He was referring then to the pipeline from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie. He continued—

An instance quite to the contrary of what applies to the pipeline country is found in a string of towns that are so placed that they regard the heavy rationing of water, dead gardens and the feelings of disgusted housewives—and often for long periods the complete absence of water—as being quite of the normal order of things. Thus may we describe the towns of the Great Southern at certain times, and thus also countless farms in that area.

I do not think the Minister was absolutely accurate in the language he used then. I think, in an endeavour to get eloquence, he sacrificed accuracy to a large extent. Nevertheless there was a solid amount of truth in what he said, and I am sure he has seen the conditions which he mentioned as existing throughout the Great Southern when one dry year followed another and when, as a result, the people on the farms were not able to conserve in their dams or elsewhere anywhere near the quantity of water they required to enable them to carry on fully their farming operations or, reasonably, the domestic side of their affairs. I think therefore it might be concluded that a time will come when some of the agricultural areas in the Great Southern—if not most of them—will be anxious to become connected to a Government water scheme capable of supplying them regularly with ample and good quality water.

Under the scheme proposed in the Bill the Government will receive Commonwealth financial assistance to construct a pipeline from Wellington Dam to a point reasonably close to Narrogin, from where water will reticulate to all the Great Southern towns proposed to be served by the scheme. The proposal approved by the Commonwealth authorities, as I understand the position, is that a pipeline of only 18 inches in diameter shall be constructed from Wellington Dam to a point near Narrogin. The State Government of its own initiative, and presumably at its own expense, will construct a much larger pipeline which will be in the vicinity

of 30 in. diameter. It will thus be capable of carrying from the Wellington Dam a much greater quantity of water than will be required to serve only the Great Southern towns. It will be able, if the necessity arises in the future, to carry sufficient water—or nearly sufficient water—to serve the Great Southern agricultural areas which were included in last year's Bill, in addition to the Great Southern towns.

Because this year's proposed scheme does not take into consideration the reticulation of the agricultural areas, we are going to have the same position develop in the Great Southern agricultural districts in the future, as we have had in many of the Eastern agricultural districts in the years gone by. In other words, any extensions from the Great Southern mains to serve the agricultural lands will be of a hotch-potch and most unsystematic nature. By the scheme of the previous Governments, the reticulation of the Great Southern agricultural areas was to be carried out on an orderly basis, and the reticulation pipes from the main to the agricultural areas would have been so ordered and of such size as to have established a balanced reticulation system from which every farmer drawing water from the scheme would have been able at all times to have received his reasonable requirements. Does anyone think that that orderly, systematic basis is likely to develop out of a half-baked scheme such as the one now before Parliament? Of course it cannot possibly develop.

No system at all, if we stick to the true interpretation of the word "system," can possibly develop out of the proposed scheme. The Government of the future will find that when the main pipeline from Wellington Dam to Narrogin is established and lines running south and north from Narrogin are laid, a farmer here and there will apply to have his land connected up with the system. The department will use a reticulation pipe of sufficient size only to supply the needs of those farmers.

Mr. Marshall: That will be nice!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is what will happen, as it has happened in hundreds of cases in the Eastern agricultural districts served by the Goldfields water supply main. Is it imagined that when a few farmers on the Great Southern apply to be connected to the pipeline, the Government will

lay reticulation pipes of sufficient size to the properties concerned to enable other farmers further out—with the passing of years—to be connected satisfactorily? No Government and no department would do that. They would not know when or whether those more distant farmers would apply to be connected with the scheme. In the Great Southern agricultural areas in future we will see spasmodic connections made from the pipeline to the properties of individual farmers. When dry seasons come—as they must—other farmers will clamour to be connected, and the department and Government of that day will have either to continue the reticulation pipelines then existing, or tear them up and instal larger mains to meet the needs of all those then concerned.

My condemnation of the Bill is that it will make it impossible for the agricultural lands of the Great Southern to be given in future a water supply worthy of the name. Farmers in that area who will need an assured supply of good water, will have little or no hope of getting it through this scheme and under this Bill. I do not know that area sufficiently well to be able to say whence the majority of requests for connection with the scheme are likely to arise. In the early stages they may come from farmers located nearest to the main pipeline running either north or south from Narrogin, but after a time there will be one or two successive dry seasons, and then the Government will receive many requests from farmers, suffering as the result of those dry seasons, for their properties to be connected with the scheme. Because there is no plan for the reticulation of the farming areas, the connections will be made hotch-potch and higgledy-piggledy, and with the passing of the years the position will be entirely unsatisfactory. The Government of this State will have to bear the whole cost of reticulating the water from the main pipeline to the farmers.

The Minister for Works: Do not be too sure on that point.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Whereas under the Bill of last year the Commonwealth would have been called upon to meet half the cost, the Minister, by way of interjection, asks whether I am sure the State Government in future will have to bear the whole cost of reticulating water to agricultural lands in the Great Southern area.

I am sure, because never will there be any substantial orderly extension of water supply facilities to the farmers in that part of the State. Never will there be a sufficiently large number of requests from farmers, at any one time, for the Government to reticulate water to their properties. Surely the Minister does not flatter himself with the thought that if the pipeline is taken from Wellington Dam to Narrogin, and subsidiary pipelines are constructed south-west and north-west from Narrogin, and half a dozen farmers wish to be connected to the scheme here and there, he will be able successfully to apply to the Commonwealth Government to meet half the cost of that reticulation. I am sure no Minister—not even the present Minister—would advance to the Commonwealth Government a request of that kind.

The Government and people of this State, by the defeat of last year's Bill and the approval of this new scheme, will once and for all have freed the Commonwealth Government of the responsibility of meeting, to the extent of even one penny, the cost of reticulating water to the boundaries of the properties of farmers in the Great Southern area in the future. The Minister said—and seemed to be impressed by the fact—that the Commonwealth Committee of Investigation readily agreed to the exclusion of the Great Southern agricultural areas. I should think the committee would agree. The complete scheme of last year was estimated to cost £10,000,000, not including the cost of raising the retaining walls at Mundaring and Wellington Dam. The Commonwealth was asked last year, by the then Government, to meet half that estimated cost. It would therefore have been called upon to provide approximately £5,000,000, had it agreed to that request.

The total estimated cost of this year's scheme is £4,500,000, of which the Commonwealth is being asked to meet half, or roughly £2,250,000. It is clear that under the scheme of the previous Government the Commonwealth was asked to provide about £5,000,000, as against £2,250,000 under the present scheme. I do not know whether members generally are au fait with the personnel of that Commonwealth Committee of Investigation. If they are they will know that the majority of its members would not be anxious to load the Commonwealth Government with heavy

expenditure. I can understand why that committee readily and enthusiastically agreed to the exclusion of the Great Southern agricultural areas from the scheme. It agreed primarily because that would mean saving the Commonwealth about £2,750,000, as against what would have been its contribution under last year's scheme.

As one who for years has keenly studied financial matters, Mr. Speaker, would not you—if you were a member of the Commonwealth Investigation Committee—embrace affectionately the opportunity of saving your Government £2,750,000? Would you not embrace it more especially if the farmers in the areas concerned had been whipped into a frenzy of opposition to the scheme as it applied to them? Would you not embrace it even more enthusiastically if you were aware that the political representatives of the districts concerned had adopted a wishy washy attitude—especially in the Legislative Council—in relation to the scheme of last year as it affected the agricultural areas concerned? There need be no surprise, on the part of the Minister or anyone else, that the Commonwealth committee readily agreed to exclude the Great Southern areas. I imagine that it just as readily agreed to exclude as much of the North-Eastern agricultural areas as possible, so that the total cost of the reduced scheme of this year—as compared with that of last year—might be as low as possible.

Mr. Marshall: If this scheme ultimately fails or is inefficient, who will take responsibility for it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have no fear that the scheme set out in the Bill will fail. I am satisfied that technically and financially it will work reasonably well, because, as I have said, it is 40 per cent. of the complete scheme put forward last year. Even though it is only a medium slice of last year's scheme, technically and financially it is all right. From the Commonwealth point of view it is good, as it will save that Government £2,750,000, which will never in future be recoverable. No future Government of this State will be able to put a case to the Commonwealth to recover that money, because the Great Southern areas reticulation scheme will not be systematic. It will be a thing of bits and pieces, and no State Government

with a sense of decency could approach the Commonwealth for financial assistance in order to carry out such a scheme. So the substantial reductions on last year's scheme are, in my opinion, nothing short of a tragedy to anyone who is prepared to look a sufficient number of years ahead.

I am sure that the Minister, deep in his mind and heart, would much prefer that the scheme of last year had been proceeded with, that that scheme had been the one to be investigated by the Commonwealth, the one upon which the Commonwealth should be called upon to make a decision, because it would have been a complete scheme and one upon which the State would have had an excellent case to request the Commonwealth to find half the cost. When opposition amongst farmers in many of the Great Southern areas developed on such a widespread scale as it did, the position became extremely difficult. Nevertheless the Government would have been well advised had it endeavoured to find a way out of the difficulties that did develop. I am sure that a way out could have been found had the Government stuck to the problem, instead of just taking the easy way of allowing the Commonwealth committee to agree to the exclusion of more than 50 per cent. of the agricultural areas included in the original scheme, so that the Commonwealth, instead of being called upon to provide £5,000,000, would have to find only 2¼ million pounds of the total estimated cost.

I do not know whether the portion of the North-Eastern agricultural districts, which have been excluded from the proposed scheme as compared with last year's scheme, was excluded on the recommendation of the Commonwealth committee or by the Minister and the State Government.

The Minister for Works: It was excluded before we came in.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is not so. It is of no use the Minister's saying that the exclusion took place before the present Government assumed office. I say quite clearly and beyond a shadow of doubt that up to the day on which I left office, which was the 1st April, there had been no exclusion at all.

The Minister for Works: You mean that no report had come to hand.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Nothing of any kind had been received from the Commonwealth up to the 31st March as to the exclusion even of the Great Southern areas, let alone the North-Eastern areas.

The Minister for Works: I realise that. I am explaining the exclusion of the North-Eastern portion.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister a few moments ago led the House to believe that the exclusion took place during the period in office of the previous Government. That is not so.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is what he pretended.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It might well be that the Commonwealth committee had made some recommendations before the 31st March, but if so, we as a Government had not received the slightest inkling of them. Does the Minister now say without any qualification that the Commonwealth committee had, prior to the 31st March of this year, arrived at decisions recommending the exclusion of the whole of the agricultural areas in the Great Southern and also portions of the North Eastern agricultural areas?

The Minister for Works: I go no further than to repeat what I have already said, namely, that I disclaim responsibility, and so does the Government, for the exclusion.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is only one of the things the Minister said. He said that the exclusions were made prior to the present Government taking office.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Which was quite wrong.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I tell the House plainly that no exclusions of any sort were notified to us by the Commonwealth committee and, so far as I am aware, the Commonwealth committee had not made any decisions to exclude any of those areas prior to the 31st March. Before the Bill is taken into Committee I should like to know just when recommendations were made for the exclusion of those districts. I also want to know who made those decisions. It is equally necessary to know whether the Government put up any argument or figure against those exclusions.

Mr. Ackland: There would have been a fight from the farmers had they not been excluded. They do not want the scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I want to know clearly how those exclusions came about and the reasons why the State Government finally agreed to them.

Mr. Triat: The farmers do not want the water. That is why.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If the Minister can justify those exclusions, especially the exclusion of the North-Eastern agricultural districts, it will be for members to decide whether they think the right thing has been done. If a majority of members consider that the wrong thing has been done, they will need to shape their course of action accordingly.

The Minister also told us that, although he confidently anticipates that the Commonwealth Government will make available half the total estimated cost of the new scheme, he has not yet received any final reply on that point. In other words, this greatly reduced scheme is still in the air and very much in the air. I do not know what steps the Government has taken with a view to getting a decision from the Prime Minister. I am anxious to know just what steps, if any, have been taken. Has the Minister himself visited Canberra to discuss this matter with the Prime Minister in order that a quick decision might be obtained from him? The Minister might think that, as the Bill is not yet law and as the department is not yet ready to move ahead with the work on the scheme, further delay is not serious.

I think further delay would be serious because Commonwealth finances will become increasingly harder. Any member who considers Australian conditions today will realise that the financial affairs of all Governments will become more difficult as the years go by. The State Treasurer has discovered this already. No doubt he proposes to approach the Prime Minister in the reasonably near future to try to get some financial assistance for his deficit for the current financial year. Other State Governments may be in a similar position. The demands upon the revenue of the Commonwealth are increasing from very many directions—demands in respect of social services, post-war commitments and a hundred-and-one other things. So it is obvious that the Commonwealth Government will in future have to look more carefully to its expenditure than it has done

in the past. Therefore it appears to be a matter of considerable urgency that the State Government should do everything in its power to obtain a final decision quickly from the Prime Minister as to the extent to which his Government will assist the State to establish this very much reduced water scheme for certain country districts.

The reasons I have put forward as to why the State Government should press the Commonwealth to make a decision quickly on the point are also very solid reasons why no Government in Western Australia in future will have much chance, if any, of getting financial assistance from the Commonwealth to reticulate farming areas in the Great Southern districts when farmers apply to have their properties connected with the pipeline. There again the State Government has lost a golden opportunity of getting £5,000,000 from the Commonwealth instead of $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions to establish a comprehensive water supply system capable of supplying, not only four million acres of land to be served by this scheme and the 30 or more country towns, but also six million acres of country lands and also some additional towns.

We are passing from the golden age of finance which has been with us in Australia for, say, the last seven years. I think the age of easy money is slipping away. I believe that the opportunity for State Governments to get financial assistance from the Commonwealth for large and worthwhile projects is fast disappearing. The last seven or eight years, including the present year, have been the vital years when State Governments had a very good opportunity of submitting to the Commonwealth big projects for the purpose of obtaining a large measure of financial aid.

The Premier: Money will have to be found for development, especially in the less populated States.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier has made a profound observation and one with which I completely agree. Money will have to be found for carrying out important developmental projects in all States and especially in the less developed States. The point I am making is that, instead of the States concerned being able to get the Commonwealth to meet one-half or a large proportion of the capital cost, they in the

future will have to shoulder the whole of the capital cost. Consequently the people of the States have to shoulder the whole of the debt burdens for years to come because of the State Governments having had to raise all the moneys on their own initiative. That is the vital difference in the Premier's viewpoint and my own, and it is a very vital difference indeed from the point of view of the people of a State like Western Australia; because, as we know, the people of this State over the years have had to build up a huge public debt in proportion to our small population in order that developmental projects might be established. And unless our population be very much increased in the next few years, our still comparatively small population will suffer a heavy financial burden if the whole of the capital cost of future developmental works has to be loaded upon the State instead of being shared reasonably between the State and the Commonwealth.

I think the question of Commonwealth financial aid in connection with even this much reduced scheme is very urgent and vital, and a special visit on the part of the Minister for Works to the Eastern States would be justified. I am not aware when the Premier will next be in the Eastern States. If it is likely to be very soon, I suggest that he take the Minister for Works with him and that they both personally interview the Prime Minister to try to get a favourable decision as quickly as possible.

The Premier: He told me when I was in Canberra that he would look favourably on this scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We know how busy the Prime Minister is and how much busier he has been in recent weeks than he should have been. We know how much work and pressure have been put on him by the inspired propaganda of certain financial institutions.

Mr. Bovell: He brought that on himself.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is necessary, therefore, that the Premier should continue to stress this matter, and I suggest that it is worth a visit by the Premier or one of his Ministers to Canberra within the next fortnight. I would be very much happier in regard to the measure of financial assistance which the Commonwealth is to grant

if the State Government could get a decision from the Prime Minister before the end of this year.

The Premier: The Prime Minister is well informed on it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know, because I had the pleasure myself of personally explaining the comprehensive scheme to him in Canberra many months ago. Nevertheless, in connection with this much reduced scheme, the State Government is still awaiting a decision by the Commonwealth Government. I believe myself, that the Commonwealth Government will agree to make available half of the £4,500,000 required for the scheme, but the members of the Government in this State would be unwise just to sit back and say they will get a favourable decision some day. The Government of Western Australia is not the only Government dunnig --if I might use that word--the Prime Minister for money. Every State Government in Australia is doing the same thing and so are hundreds of different organisations representing farmers and workers and other groups and also tens of thousands of individuals. So it is essential--and I say this as a result of my own experience over the years--that the request of the State Government to the Commonwealth in this matter should be pressed continually; and the best method of pressing it is by personal representations by a member of the State Government to the Prime Minister himself.

I trust the Premier will give serious consideration to that suggestion, because I am sure it is the only way by which a reasonably quick decision will be obtained and it may be the only way by which the desired decision will be obtained. I was interested in page 16 of the yellow-covered book which the Minister made available to us; and I think the colour of the cover is appropriate when one compares this scheme with that put forward by the previous Government last year.

Mr. Marshall: A yellow streak. They cannot look 20 years ahead.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Before dealing with page 16, I would draw the attention of members to the summary of the request by the State Government to the Commonwealth, that summary being set out on pages 5, 6 and 7 of the document. This summary is almost word for word the same as that

of last year's request by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government. I would say that it is about 95 per cent. the same, word for word, the only alterations in this year's summary as compared with last year's having to do with the alteration in this year's proposed scheme as compared with that of last year—which seems to indicate that when the summary of the scheme was drawn up and approved last year, it was done exceptionally well. Pages 16 and 17 discuss briefly the metropolitan power scheme, the South-West power scheme, the raising of Mundaring Weir, the raising of Wellington Dam, Bunbury industrial area, and the State charcoal-iron industry and alunite industry.

I have already said that the scheme put forward by the Government this year is part of the comprehensive scheme submitted by the previous Government, and when I remember that, and when I read these items discussed on pages 16 and 17, I cannot help saying that the water supply scheme dealt with in this Bill and in this document, the metropolitan power scheme, the South-West power scheme, the raising of the Mundaring weir, the raising of Wellington Dam, and the proposed industrial area at Bunbury, and the State charcoal-iron industry and alunite industry, were all part and parcel of the policy and work of the previous Government. Not in any respect has the present Government had anything to do with any of those things except to reduce the proposed comprehensive water supply scheme of last year to about 40 per cent. of what was proposed at that time. I regard this Bill and the proposed scheme which the Bill calls upon Parliament to approve as disappointing in the extreme; as short-sighted in the most intense fashion possible; as lacking completely in vision of the State's future, and therefore completely lacking in statesmanship.

In the circumstances the Government may not have been in a position to go on with the proposed comprehensive scheme of last year. I know there were very serious political considerations in the way. I know the Minister for Works—at least I think the Minister for Works—would be far happier today if he were handling the comprehensive Bill and scheme of last year than he is at having to handle this one-third of a scheme. I think the Deputy Premier would similarly

much prefer to have seen the comprehensive scheme established as against this piecemeal scheme.

The Premier: There was no certainty you would get the money for the original scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Well, here is a Daniel come to judgment with a vengeance! Of course, there was no certainty!

The Premier: There is much more certainty about this modified scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not know whether there is much more certainty.

The Premier: Oh, yes! The Prime Minister says so himself.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When I interviewed the Prime Minister many months ago in connection with the comprehensive scheme, he was intensely interested in it.

The Premier: I do not doubt that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: He regarded it as one of the best projects put forward in the whole of the Commonwealth for the further development of rural industries and for the decentralisation of secondary industries and for the building up of rural population. Therefore, I think it is reasonable to believe that the Prime Minister would have looked with considerable sympathy upon the Commonwealth Government joining in on a 50 per cent. basis with the Government of Western Australia in the implementation of the proposed comprehensive scheme. I will admit we would have had to keep pegging away at him. We would frequently have had to send either the Premier or the Minister concerned to Canberra to discuss the matter with the Prime Minister, with other appropriate Commonwealth Ministers and probably, in detail, with Commonwealth Treasury officers.

The Premier: I think he was impressed by the committee's report.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course he would be impressed by the Commonwealth committee's report and recommendations. What Commonwealth Treasurer would not be? What Prime Minister, met with a request to find half of the finance required for a £10,000,00 scheme and afterwards presented with a request in connection with a similar scheme to make only £2,250,000 available, would not be impressed? I do not think there is a Commonwealth Treas-

urer that ever existed or is ever likely to exist who would not be impressed with the £2,250,000 idea as against the £5,000,000 idea.

The Chief Secretary: I think that is unjust to the Prime Minister.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I think that if the Chief Secretary could put himself in the position of the Prime Minister he would realise it was not one scrap unjust but was completely merciful. The Chief Secretary does not want to run away with the idea that the Prime Minister is sitting in his chair at Canberra waiting for someone to tell him how, where and when to spend the money he has.

The Chief Secretary: I think he is interested in the development of Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Naturally.

The Chief Secretary: In the most efficient manner.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Prime Minister has requests plus commitments which would double and indeed many times double the financial resources available to him, so whenever financial relief comes to him, as it came to him as a result of the recommendations of this Commonwealth Committee of Investigation, he very naturally takes advantage of it to treat with the State Government upon the new basis as advised by such committee. I am confident in my own mind that if we had been able to keep alive the comprehensive scheme, if we had been able to obtain the approval of both Houses of the State Parliament to that scheme, the Prime Minister would in all probability have agreed to make £5,000,000 available from Commonwealth resources to assist us to establish that scheme in this State. My position is that part of a scheme is better than no scheme.

One-third of a loaf is better than no bread; so I have no option but to support the second reading of the Bill. I shall have no opportunity either of doing anything with the Bill in Committee either because it is one to approve of the scheme and to authorise the construction of it. Even if there were some reasonable opportunity in a technical sense to expand the proposed scheme, there would be no opportunity in a legal sense because our Standing Orders and the rules of procedure in Committee would not permit a private member to

move an amendment, the effect of which would be to increase its scope and cost. Thus, no matter how much a private member might desire to expand the scheme or how anxious he might be to extend it in the reasonably near future he has to accept what is proposed because no other course is available for him. With considerable disappointment I propose to support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. PERKINS (York) [8.48]: I am sorry the member for Northam has taken such a pessimistic view of the Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I have taken a practical view of it.

Mr. PERKINS: He has certainly taken a pessimistic view regarding the scheme outlined in the booklet that has been circulated amongst members. I suggest that if he were to go around some of the country districts and contact the people who will be served by it, his ideas might be brought into proper perspective.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The time will come.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: You bet it will.

Mr. PERKINS: To listen to the member for Northam one would imagine his concern to be that his original proposal has been amended so as to spend only half the amount of Loan funds that would have been expended had his comprehensive scheme been proceeded with, irrespective of the fact that he was told at the time by a great many people that they did not desire the Loan funds to be spent in that direction, and that they considered there were other ways by which the money could be spent and the labour and material, both of which were and have been short for a considerable time, used to better effect. Many of the districts were reasonably well watered and the settlers there considered they could obtain all they required for their own needs. Surely it will be conceded that individuals who are to have such utilities and services provided for them are the best judges of whether they are required.

I have before me the maps showing the boundaries under the comprehensive scheme as outlined by the present member when he was Minister for Works, and that relating to the amended scheme as submitted to the House in connection with the Bill under

discussion. In my opinion, the amended scheme provides all the essentials that the former comprehensive scheme embodied. Members representing rural constituencies were inundated with letters at the time of the comprehensive water supply scheme proposals, those communications coming from people who objected to being rated under the proposal when they already had sufficient water for their own purposes.

I had letters from some farmers who had taken up sandplain country through which the survey for the projected scheme ran, who said that if they were to be levied a rate of 5d. an acre they would be compelled seriously to consider the abandoning of the properties. On a good holding, a rate of 5d. an acre at times when the prices for agricultural products were reasonably good could be met, but in the marginal areas such a rating might mean all the difference between profit and loss. In any case, this House would be wrong if it ignored the expression of opinion of those most vitally concerned in such a scheme and the use of it. I am afraid that is what would have happened if the present member for Northam had been able to force his scheme upon the country in the form placed before the House. It might have been possible to have amended it, but he was not prepared to accept certain vital alterations to the Bill he placed before members.

The scheme outlined by the Minister for Works under the Bill embodies some of those amendments, and I think the scheme will now be accepted without much opposition in the areas proposed to be furnished with this service. Of course, it is inevitable that there will be some opposition, but I think the majority of reasonable people will agree that where the greater number desires the service then, even though it might perhaps, slightly disadvantage some by the installation of the scheme, those disabilities, if they can be regarded as such, will have to be suffered for the good of the greater number. As the comprehensive scheme was drafted, the indications were that in certain areas a big majority of the farmers would be entirely opposed to it.

Coming to the actual area that the amended scheme is designed to serve—I do not intend to say anything about the Great Southern portion of it because I do not

know that part so intimately as other members, and I will leave it to them to deal with from that phase—I shall refer to the North Eastern and Eastern areas, in the light of my study of the map and my contacts over a long period with the producers in those areas. In my opinion the area within the lines marked on the map is that which is in the greatest need of reticulated water supplies. I cannot follow the member for Northam in his remarks about the North-Eastern portion that has been cut off. On comparing the two maps, I notice that the boundaries of the respective schemes are exactly the same coming from Kondinin around the eastern frontage, following around the North-Eastern end until we come north of Cadoux and on to the rabbit-proof fence. The boundaries there are exactly similar.

There is an area cut out running up to Dalwallinu. I am informed by the member for Irwin-Moore that the majority of the land holders in that area would have been opposed to a reticulation scheme there because they already have sufficient water supplies for their own needs. In the far North-Eastern parts the boundary lines coincide exactly. On the western side the boundary follows largely the No. 2 rabbit-proof fence. From my knowledge of the country I would say that the area to be served by the new scheme is that which requires water from a reticulated type of undertaking. Inevitably, there will be some small areas that could do with water supplies if the pipes could be run out to them, but they would be very limited in extent. As one goes westward from the rabbit-proof fence the agricultural areas are quite well watered at present.

In recent years the farmers have been concerned with the effect of too much water rather than of too little. In those areas that are subject to flooding it is quite usual to find good underground water supplies. In the towns in those areas, as apparently occurs in the Great Southern, the provision of water supplies for the towns from local catchments creates some difficulty and possibly further investigation is necessary to decide whether it is advisable to connect up any such local reservoirs in those parts with the Goldfields or the Wellington Dam schemes. I have noticed that no provision is made to connect any

local reservoir up to the Goldfields scheme, but it is a comparatively small matter to connect up a town which is only 20 to 25 miles from the main pipeline.

I also notice that, according to the map, the size of the pipeline has not been whittled down proportionately to the reduction of the area which the scheme is designed to serve, so it is reasonable to expect that the main pipeline will have quite a considerable reserve in capacity to meet the growing needs of that country for a considerable time to come. We can only anticipate a reasonable distance ahead. If those towns in the eastern area continue to grow and require more water, then that will justify the increasing in size of the main pipeline to an even greater extent. But I think we can take the opinion of the engineers in the Goldfields Water Supply Department that the scheme, as outlined, provides a reasonable margin of safety in the size of the main pipeline, even though the Goldfields continue to take increasing quantities of water, and the agricultural areas continue to draw very heavily on the scheme and the towns in those areas continue to grow.

I for one will be only too pleased to see the projected scheme become too small some time in the future, because that would be an indication of the tremendous growth and improvement in living conditions in the Eastern agricultural areas. I believe that the scheme, as outlined in the pamphlet accompanying the Bill, is sufficient to meet the needs of the people in the towns and farming areas in the Eastern districts which it is designed to serve, together with the Goldfields portion of the scheme. We as a Parliament are not obliged to spend Loan moneys merely for the sake of spending them. They should be expended on reproductive works. I am doubtful whether we can show that such Loan moneys, if spent on serving an area where the producers at present say they do not require a reticulated water scheme, could be classed as being reproductive Loan expenditure. If the member for Northam is keen on seeing additional Loan moneys spent within the State, I am of opinion that almost every member in this House can suggest many avenues in which to spend them. It is not the money which is the vital concern, but the goods, materials and labour.

It appears to me to be rather beating the air to talk about grand comprehensive schemes for areas where it is doubtful that the people require the service, when we have other areas at present desperately short of water and for which no piping can be obtained even to serve a limited part. I know of one town in my electorate which requires only about 12 miles of 3-inch piping to connect it to the Goldfields Water Scheme. At present the people in that town are restricted in the use of water in a way similar to that in which other towns are restricted when their water supplies run out. That town has been on restricted supplies since last September. It has not been possible even to obtain that limited quantity of material. We have to recognise some priorities, and if piping and similar materials are in such short supply at present, it is hardly reasonable to expect that within two or three years it will be possible to obtain sufficient materials to put even this more limited scheme into operation. If the member for Northam had his way, we would be embarking on a project very much greater than the one proposed by this Bill and requiring much heavier material back in the primary mains.

This would entail indefinite delay in the provision of the water service at the end of the main. Viewing it from a selfish standpoint, certain people in the eastern part of my electorate see in this scheme the possibility of getting water within a reasonable time; whereas, if they had to wait for water to be provided right on the extreme end of the Wellington Dam scheme, it could easily be 15 or 20 years before they received any water. In the meantime, the member for Northam would have us believe that it is preferable to proceed with a scheme providing a service in districts which do not immediately require water.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You are not very hopeful about any efforts on the part of your Government.

Mr. PERKINS: Other people, besides this Government, are concerned in the matter of supplies. One has to be hopeful of a big improvement in order to obtain hundreds of miles of 12-inch, 10-inch, 8-inch and 6-inch mains, as provided in this scheme, without all the smaller reticula-

tion rains, when at present we are finding the greatest difficulty in obtaining even 12 miles of 3-inch main.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: There did not appear to be any difficulty facing your Party 12 months ago.

Mr PERKINS: I believe the scheme is sufficient to meet our needs within any period we can forecast. If our needs grow to such an extent that this scheme will be inadequate at some time in the future, then it will be possible for us to make any extension that might be required. Looking at the scheme realistically, I think the majority of members would decide that it is a satisfactory and realistic approach to the problem with which we have to deal.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. V. Doney—Williams-Narrogin—in reply) [9.7]: I assure the member for Northam that we did not wait for any prompting from him before taking into account the need for interviewing the Prime Minister with regard to the proposal with which we are now dealing. We intend, and have intended, taking the earliest possible opportunity to interview him upon this matter. The member for Northam, and members generally, will agree that during the few months we have been in office there has been extremely little time for journeys to the Eastern States for that or for any other purpose.

Mr. May: The Premier was over there the other day.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: That might easily be so, but then the Premier, if so happens, does not run my department.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I suggest the Treasurer has a good deal to say about it.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: I admit that. The member for Northam found considerable satisfaction in what he saw on page 16 of the brochure that has been distributed among members. He was justified in that, but I remind him that inevitably it could not be otherwise than that works which were left undone—through no fault of the previous Government—should be taken up and carried to completion by the next ensuing Government. By and by—I do not know how far off that time may be—

Hon. A. H. Panton: It won't be long!

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: That may be. It is purely a matter of guesswork, but in due course we may be precisely in the same position as members opposite. The member for Northam said that the present Cabinet entirely lack vision and statesmanship. He certainly was not justified in making that statement. The present job, it must be obvious to anyone, is just salvage from the wreck of the first project.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who wrecked it?

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: "Wrecked" is the correct word. I am not putting the blame for that on those who precede us. I could not do so, as it would not be correct. The scheme, as I said, is just salvage from the wreck and I claim it was absolutely the best that could be done in the circumstances. Had members opposite still been on this side of the House they could not have done otherwise, nor would they have wished to do so. They would have followed precisely the same lines that this Government has followed. The hon. member to whom I particularly refer, my friend from Northam, endeavoured to put some words into my mouth and asked me to swallow them. I have had that dodge tried on me before, but have not fallen for it. He badly wanted me to admit that in some way I charged our producers with being involved in the present scheme. I had no intention whatever to convey that meaning, nor do I think I did. I do not think he used my actual words, but what does it matter?

Hon. A. H. Panton: No.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: There is always this, that "Hansard" has a far more correct version of what I said than any member has. The sense of it was—and that is what I am concerned with—that this Bill is based upon a report of the Federal committee led by Mr. F. W. Loder.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is not what the Minister said.

The **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: I am giving my version, not the hon. member's, which I know full well is entirely different from mine. I said that this scheme is based upon the report submitted by the committee to which I have just referred. I may have gone on to infer, or to say, that this Government had no hand whatever in laying the foundations upon which the present

proposal is built. The member for Northam said that the present project is half-baked. I admit it is half; it certainly is not half-baked. It is half of what the hon. member himself desired to do and we might just as well let it go at that. I am rather pleased at the manner in which the House, speaking generally, has accepted the two measures. I will admit, I am sorry to note it, that the member for Northam has a most dismal and depressing outlook upon the future of the scheme. He used some rather harsh words. I fully admit that the manner in which the previous scheme finished up would have upset me had I been in his place, and because that is so I am taking no undue notice of what the hon. member said.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I did not think anyone would upset you.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Remember what you said after the Bills had been dropped? It was published in "The West Australian."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have a good recollection of that, too. The hon. member has been good enough to credit me with some views not materially different from those which he himself has expressed. I probably had my disappointments, but nevertheless the manner in which the scheme has progressed since then has suited me down to the ground. I have no wish to deal any further with what has been said. I conclude by expressing my thanks to members for having supported the Bill as they have.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Hill in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Approval of Scheme and adoption of recommendations:

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have not been supplied with a copy of "Hansard" containing my second reading speech, but I hope to get it in time to be able to quote from it on the third reading to show the Minister exactly what he said. I think it will be found that he said that the modifications to the scheme were effected during the previous Government's period, or before his own Government came into office, leaving the im-

pression that the previous Government knew all about it and had not taken any steps to rectify the position. The member for York tried to argue that approval of last year's comprehensive scheme would have deprived farmers in the area outside of the proposed scheme of getting water piping which they urgently needed. I think he drew the long bow there.

The whole of my argument was that the acceptance of the scheme would have given the State Government an opportunity to press the Commonwealth Government to make £5,000,000 available to carry out the scheme. Had the Commonwealth Government agreed to provide half of the £10,000,000 required it does not necessarily follow that the carrying out of the scheme would have denied farmers in any part of the State an opportunity of getting the water piping they required. The actual time for the carrying out of the comprehensive scheme would not have mattered much as to a year or two. The vital thing was to try to get the Commonwealth Government to assist on a 50 per cent. basis. The State Government could then have implemented the scheme stage by stage according to circumstances. No person outside the scheme would have been delayed a day in getting water piping, especially if his claim were greater than that of those in the area proposed to be served by the scheme. I hope it will be clear to the member for York that the comparison he was trying to make, to my detriment and that of the proposed comprehensive scheme, is not one which existed in fact at all.

Mr. PERKINS: I am doubtful if we would be doing the State a service by claiming assistance from the Commonwealth when a great many of us question whether the schemes involved are well based. In addition, we eventually have to find our share of the debt. If a portion of £3,000,000 of loan money is to be thrown down the drain, it will react against us. If water schemes are to be established in areas adequately watered so that we take money from settlers that they could spend in other directions, we are not doing the State a service. I think there can be no argument about what I said as to people in the outer areas having the supply of water postponed because of the comprehensive scheme.

It was proposed to reticulate from Merredin to a point about six miles south of Bruce Rock, and the area below that, which was on the edge of the comprehensive scheme was to be served by the Wellington Dam scheme. That meant that the rest of the scheme would have had to be established before that area could be served. The people east and west of the Great Southern railway who stated they had any amount of water and were bitterly opposed to reticulation in their areas would have been served while people in the Eastern areas had an insufficient supply. It would have been a farcical position for them to have waited 10 or 15 years because they came within the area of the Wellington Dam scheme. My statement was justified, that the comprehensive water scheme would have resulted in many people, who required water most desperately, having that supply delayed, as compared with the present modified scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The member for York is hard put to it to justify his statement of a few moments ago that the implementation of the comprehensive scheme would have had the effect of depriving settlers in districts outside the scheme of having water piping made available to them. Any decision to be made on such a matter would be dealt with by the State Government and the Minister concerned. The Minister would naturally weigh the needs of the two sets of people, and act accordingly. The hon. member talks of where the pipelines were to go under the comprehensive scheme. It was well understood by members last year that those proposals were not cast-iron in any shape or form. It was understood by the member for Mt. Marshall that alterations, where they could be shown to be justified, would be made, but the scheme as a whole was a complete one.

When the time came to deal with district or sub-district problems, the technical officers of the Public Works Department, and the Minister, would, in consultation, easily and quickly iron them out. Therefore it is not correct for the member for York to say, as he did in an earlier speech this afternoon, that the approval and stage by stage implementation of the comprehensive water supply scheme proposed last year would have had the effect of depriving some farmer, outside the scheme, of his

proper priority in regard to water piping. Whether it would apply to towns or to farmers does not matter. In consultation with his technical officers, the Minister would decide what should be done and what were the merits of the groups concerned. If a group outside the comprehensive scheme had more urgent needs than one within it, undoubtedly the Minister would decide in favour of the group with the better claim and more urgent needs. That is the point I wish to establish.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 8—agreed to.

Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—COAL MINERS' WELFARE.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 2nd December. Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 5 had been agreed to.

Clause 6—Establishment of Coal Miners' Welfare Fund by contributions by mine owners:

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That in line four of Subclause (1) the words "one penny" be struck out and the words "three half pence" inserted in lieu.

The original proposal, one penny, is considered as not nearly sufficient to meet the expected needs. Coalmining, like other industries, is well on the way to mechanisation, and we must retain and train in the industry workers to undertake the new class of mining. They must be properly trained. One of the essentials will be a school of mines, in which the younger generation can be educated in the new methods of mining.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Representatives of the coalminers interviewed the Minister about increasing the royalty to be set aside to cover amenities, and so on. He decided to allow the increase. I therefore do not propose the amendment.

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

Clauses 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Membership of the board:

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) of Subclause (2) after the word "he" the words "the President of the combined coal-mining unions committee and shall be" be inserted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As it stands the Bill provides that the committee shall be composed of three members to be appointed annually by the Governor, that one of them shall be the chairman, and that there shall be a representative of the miners and one of the mineowners. That board would represent all connected with the industry, and would draw together the employers and the employees. However, the miners' representatives have made it clear that they would prefer an alternative board, to consist solely of the leaders of the various unions. While I do not support the amendment, I will leave it to the Committee to decide.

Mr. MAY: I would point out the futility of appointing to such a position someone who has never shown the slightest interest in the welfare of the workers, and who is not likely to change his outlook in the near future. On many occasions the olive branch has been held out to the companies by the men but has not been accepted. It would be wise to appoint someone who is really interested in the welfare of the miners.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out and the words "the President of the Australian Coal and Shale Employees Federation Union of Workers, W.A. Branch, Collie" inserted in lieu.

This is in lieu of the provision that one member of the board shall be a person representing the miners.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out with a view to inserting the words "the head teacher of the Collie High School."

The amendment would have the effect of eliminating the provision for a person representing the mineowners.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	21
				—

Majority against .. 2

AYES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Triest
Mr. May	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Nulsen	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Murray
Mr. Bovell	Mr. Nalder
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Read
Mr. Doney	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hall	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Brand
Mr. McDonald	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The reason for there being no debate on the amendment just negatived was that a deputation from the union waited on the Minister for Mines last Friday and came to an agreement under which he approved of the amendments already passed as well as the one just defeated. Where do we stand? A deputation comes all the way to Collie, meets the Minister for Mines, and reaches an agreement on certain points. The Minister for Mines is in another place and his representative in this Chamber does not tell us what occurred at the deputation and the amendment is negatived. The Chief Secretary had better move that progress be reported so that he can ascertain the position. The Collie miners will not stand this sort of thing. It is ridiculous that Ministers in this Chamber should repudiate the agreement reached. Surely the word of a Minister is something that can be relied upon, and Cabinet should not repudiate its own Minister.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I was not present at the deputation and do not know what took place. In the circumstances I ask that progress be reported.

Progress reported.

**BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR
RESTRICTIONS) ACT
AMENDMENT.**

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist upon its amendment No. 4.

**BILL—CITY OF PERTH SCHEME FOR
SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENTS
AUTHORISATION).**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [9.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill of the usual nature introduced each session. I assure the House that these matters of closing roads or portions of a road have been carefully examined. Clause 2 deals with portion of Hawthorn-street, Perth, which is a blind end and which passed to the Crown in the year 1907 with the other roads in the sub-division. In addition, at the blind end there is a small strip of land $1\frac{1}{2}$ links in width which ran along the edge of the whole subdivision. It was not unusual in the earlier days for persons subdividing large areas to leave a small strip of a link or so to prevent the adjoining holder from having access to the roads in the new subdivision, but where these odd strips now crop up, as in this case, they can be treated only as reserves since the original owners ceased to be interested when all the blocks in the subdivision were disposed of. This particular dead-end path of Hawthorn-street, plus the $1\frac{1}{2}$ links reserve, is only 60.5 links wide—that is about 40 feet—and altogether the area is less than the minimum now allowed for a building lot under the town planning control, and consequently cannot be sold as an entity for a building for residential purposes. Provision is made in the clause to allow of the direct sale in moieties to each of the adjoining holders thus to increase the size of their properties and allow of the derelict land being put to use.

In connection with industrial development at Victoria Park, the lands on either

side of Suffolk-street have been acquired by separate companies which desire that Suffolk-street be closed. It is intended that a railway spur line be built on the land at present in Suffolk-street to serve the respective companies. The City Council, the Town Planning Commissioner, and the Surveyor General all concur in the proposal. The land in Suffolk-street is the property of the Crown and a sale price of £150 has been placed on it. Provision is made in the clause for a sale to a purchaser at the discretion of the Governor because at this stage it is not definitely known what arrangements the interested companies intend to make between themselves in regard to the provision and use of railway facilities.

The land on either side of that portion of Vaughan-street, North Fremantle, mentioned in the clause, is owned by J. Gadsden Proprietary Limited, who desire to consolidate their works. The company has undertaken, with the North Fremantle Municipal Council, to pay the cost of removal of electric light wires from that part of Vaughan-street, and their erection in Irene-street and will surrender a 25-link strip of its property to widen Irene-street and pay the cost of construction. The neighbouring owner likely to be affected by the closure of part of Vaughan-street (Caltex Limited) has given its consent. Several other similar road closures have been effected in the neighbourhood, which was originally surveyed in rather small sections and the requirements of modern business have outgrown the size of the blocks. The Town Planning Commissioner and Surveyor General have concurred.

A Class "A" Reserve has been declared over certain lands within the Subiaco Municipality, at Shenton Park, and on which is situated a "Lake." That reserve has been vested in the municipality. The municipality has purchased adjacent freehold lands for addition to the reserve, and the reversion of these lands and their addition to the reserve are being dealt with under the Reserves Bill. Between the existing reserve and the lands purchased by the municipality are a right-of-way and the adjoining part of Centre-street. It is necessary to close such right-of-way and part of Centre-street so that the contained lands, together with the freeholds purchased by the municipality, may all be

added to the Class "A" Reserve, and thus be brought to a common basis.

The Subiaco municipality originally owned Swan Location 2123 as a municipal endowment. In the year 1941, the council surrendered portion to the Crown for the use of the Workers' Homes Board, powers having been granted under the Reserves Act, 1939. Lots and streets were surveyed as part of the townsite of Daglish and the subdivision was "published" on the public plans of the Lands Department. This had the effect of creating the roads according to the plan of subdivision. Later, it was decided that the area was better suited for industrial sites, and it was arranged to hand it back to the Subiaco municipality. A Crown Grant was issued to the municipality in 1945 for the area excluding the roads which had become established by being shown on the department's plans. The municipality desires to have most of the roads closed for inclusion in a scheme of re-subdivision of the area for industrial purposes. It is necessary to secure Parliamentary authority to close such roads and grant the land to the municipality on the same footing as the lands already handed back.

The municipality of Bunbury acquired certain freehold lands for a new showground, including the intervening Port and Bufton-streets. As the municipality owns all the lands, including the streets, and desires that such shall be used for the purposes of a showground, closure of the streets in question is necessary. The Town Planning Commissioner and the Surveyor General both concur in the proposal.

The municipality of Busselton has recently acquired a number of lots for a housing scheme. The surveyed section of lots is divided by East-street, which itself has no outlet, continuing in its own direction nor is it likely to develop to carry traffic, and it serves no useful purpose. The land in the road would serve a greater purpose as two building lots within the council's scheme. The Town Planning Commissioner and Surveyor General concur.

A site for a high school is being provided at Narrogin, and it is necessary to close portions of Keally and Gray-streets and a right-of-way, within the area of the school reserve. The Town Planning Com-

missioner and Surveyor General and the Narrogin Municipal Council have concurred.

Portion of the Burakin townsite and adjoining country was taken for a water reserve. The boundaries of the townsite have already been amended to exclude the

Portion of the Burakin townsite and mentary authority is necessary to close the unwanted roads and rights-of-way now of no use.

The Railway Department has re-arranged its section-running and established barracks at Yellowdine. In this connection it was necessary to make some adjustments to provide an area of land deemed sufficient for such barracks, and this involved closing a portion of a road for which Parliamentary authority is now sought.

The land along the sea front at Rockingham, situated between Hymus-street and the western end of Class "A" Reserve 21487, is of varying and, in some places, extensive width, but is at present all "road" and is known as part of the Esplanade. For the better control of the area, it is deemed advisable to define a road one chain in width along the surveyed frontages of the abutting lots and close the balance of the "road" and declare such closed portion a Class "A" Reserve for recreation and vest it in the Rockingham Road Board. The portion of the sea front immediately adjoining and continuing to the remaining old jetty, at Railway-street, has already been similarly treated.

The proposals under the present legislation will thereby establish a common basis for all the sea front from Hymus-street to Railway-street. From Railway-street the water front right round past Kwinana to the Commonwealth Naval Base Reserve, is similarly reserved reaching back to the main road to Rockingham (Marine-terrace)—except lead-in roads and two areas granted last year for the Crippled Children's Home and the Children's Orthopaedic Hospital. The society has now moved to a new site and it is desired to revert to the original status by re-opening the portion of Brown-street and returning to the society the land it had given for the new road.

Amongst the proposals in a town planning scheme for Narrogin is the provision of a park and swimming pool which will

embrace an area which includes several individual reserves, some railway lands, freehold properties acquired by resumption, and also several existing roads. Arrangements have been made with the Railway Department for adjustment of boundaries of railway lands. It is necessary to close the roads mentioned in the Bill to consolidate the areas concerned into two portions separated only by the existing Kipling-street which carries the traffic into and out of the town in the direction of Wickepin, and which will remain open. The Narrogin municipality's proposals are supported by the Town Planning Commissioner and the Surveyor General.

In the original plan of subdivision of portion of Fremantle, at Beaconsfield, suburban blocks up to 7 acres in extent were surveyed and, in some cases, with streets in excess of one chain width. The State Housing Commission has prepared a plan of re-subdivision of land in Yalgoo-avenue, which latter is 150 links wide. For better planning, it is desirable to include in the new lots, 50 links of the street, thus leaving it one chain wide, which is deemed sufficient. The Fremantle Council, Town Planning Commissioner and Surveyor General all concur in the proposal.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You had better move to lay the plans on the Table of the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, I will do that. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [10.13]: I am prepared to allow this Bill to go right ahead. As is customary, the Minister for Lands provided me with a copy of the notes of his speech, and also the plans which are the subject of the various clauses in the Bill. Many of them are familiar to me because they have been a long time in negotiation. Some of them have been two or three years developing to the stage of agreement between all the parties and the Town Planning Commissioner. In all of these cases, as the Minister has indicated, the Town Planning Commissioner has been brought into conference where the interests of municipalities have been affected, and in such cases as that of the Busselton showgrounds. Having had the opportunity of previously examining these proposals—quite distinct

from the Bill to follow, on which I will make some comment—I have no objection to this Bill going straight into Committee if that suits the Minister.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Assembly.

BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PARKS AND RESERVES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [10.18] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill to amend the Parks and Reserves Act in order to make provision for better traffic control and parking of vehicles within parks. A prosecution was recently instituted against a motorist for driving along a footpath in King's Park but because the wording of certain bylaws and definitions was not sufficiently clear, the case was lost. It is desirable that the parent Act be amended in accordance with this Bill so that additional bylaws can be made the better to control traffic and the parking of vehicles within the park.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Are they not going to allow the park to be used for parking?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I think a reasonable attitude will be adopted towards parking in King's Park, but some people defy the bylaws.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: There is no time limit in these places.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: No. I would not agree to a time limit, but it is essential that the authorities should have power to control parking in order to protect their lawns and gardens. Some people who drive motor vehicles are foolish enough to defy authority. We are all proud of King's Park and it is essential that those in control of it should be empowered to see to the efficient parking of vehicles, and also to ensure that the people who offend against the bylaws are dealt with in our courts.

Mr. Marshall: What was the serious offence committed in the park and to which you have made reference?

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The parking of a vehicle on the lawns where parking was prohibited.

Mr. Marshall: The parking of a vehicle?

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: Yes, a motor vehicle. Through a weakness in the Act the ease was lost, and it is therefore essential that the Act be amended so that provision may be made for proper bylaws. I move:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-48.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 2nd December. Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Agriculture, £197,070 (partly considered):

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [10.42]: The Agriculture Estimates are of such importance to the State that it is only right that those who represent entirely rural constituencies should take part in the debate. I am pleased to notice that the salaries in the Department of Agriculture have been increased by £13,483. The staff position of that department is critical, as in recent years and months we have lost some excellent officers, men such as Dr. Teakle, and Messrs. Underwood, Samuel and others who grew up in the department and were trained in this State. We cannot afford to lose men of that class. On looking at the Public Service list I notice there are many others who have left the department, in spite of the fact

that we are short of men of the right type to do that important work. This appears to be due to two main causes.

Juniors in the Department of Agriculture appear to be well catered for as regards salaries, but when men advance to a certain stage there is not a great deal of inducement for them to remain in this State, as they do not receive salaries commensurate with the work they do. They are forced to go to other States or other departments where they will receive better remuneration. Another contributing factor is that for many years in this State we have not had a Minister for Agriculture with a truly rural background. Those who have administered that department in the past had other duties that kept them occupied, so that the department to a great extent came under the complete domination of the Under-Secretary or Director of Agriculture. That has been bad for agriculture in Western Australia. I do not wish to criticise the Under-Secretary in saying that he has gathered to himself the whole of the policy and direction of that department. I believe 19 men out of 20, placed in his position, would have done likewise. The result has not been good.

We have experts in that department comparable with any in Australia, and now that we have a Minister for Agriculture with a rural background, he should be there to direct the policy of the department and ensure that the Director or Under-Secretary carries out that policy, and that the heads of the various branches are able to give expression to their undoubted abilities. No man can be expert in all things, and that applies as much to the Under-Secretary for Agriculture—who is primarily a dairyman—as to anyone else. The standard of the department has been high, but we have lost valuable men. If the heads of branches are given more responsibility and scope to expand their talents, and salaries in keeping with the work they do, the rot that has set in will disappear. There is a growing tendency among the agriculturists of this State to lean more and more on science. That trend should be fostered, and we should make available to them the services of the experts in St. George's-terrace. Those officers should be encouraged to travel as extensively as possible throughout the areas where their services can be usefully employed.

This State has passed the pioneering stage, but our country is not rich in plant foods and our land must be farmed scientifically. In the last 20 years, and particularly since the depression of 1930, we have been depleting our soils of their natural fertility. That has caused the onset of erosion in Western Australia. I believe in freehold tenure of land, but I feel that the agriculturist, who holds the title deeds of a property, holds them for posterity, and has a duty to unborn generations to improve the soil and leave to his successors in a better state the farm that he considers to be his own today. It is only by science and the use of the very best officers that that can be done. Regarding erosion, I think that the legislation introduced into this State some years ago is eminently satisfactory. It has given to the Commission powers to do very drastic things and also power to co-opt those who use land rather than employ force. First with Dr. Teakle and later with his successor, Mr. Burvel, that policy is being carried out with advantage to all concerned. The experts gained the confidence of the people who are trying very hard to follow the lines suggested to them.

There is only one thing wrong with the department. It is numerically too weak. I believe we have seven officers attached to the Soil Conservation Branch, two of whom are engaged in the salt problems and four in the erosion section. Those men cannot possibly cope with the work that the people in the country districts are crying out for them to do. I hope that the Minister will find it possible to get additional men to assist in this very important work.

I notice that there are more than 20 vacancies in the department and several of them are in the veterinary branch. I understand that recently we have been able to obtain some veterinary surgeons, but some of those who had been in the State only a few months resigned and went elsewhere because the inducements were not sufficient for them to stay here. Veterinaries are wanted from one end of this country to the other, more particularly in the dairying industry where they have to cope with T.B. and the contagious abortion troubles, but throughout all the agricultural areas and stock raising districts, these men are needed very badly. It is to be hoped that the de-

partment will be in a position to offer inducements to encourage people skilled in veterinary science to come to this State and take up the work which it is so necessary should be done.

I should now like to turn to the subject of light lands. Some 20 years ago the bulk of light lands in areas from 12 to 16 inches of rainfall and upwards were considered to be quite useless. Today, the whole conception is altering. We have instances where men prefer light lands in the 15 inch rainfall to the heavy forest country, because they are finding them more productive. With the introduction of nitrogen-collecting fodders, these soils are producing far greater crops as well as feed than are the heavier types, and I am firmly of the opinion that, within the next ten years, the department will alter its policy of advocating fallow and will advocate rotations without fallow which alone causes such loss of plant food, but will recommend the storing of nitrogen in the soil to the betterment of the fertility as well as the productive capacity of the land.

We have such large areas of light land in this State that it is necessary to extend our experiments on this type of country. The light lands experimental station at Wongan Hills has done a wonderful service and members who have had an opportunity of attending a field day there in recent years have some conception of how the values of land in this State are changing. Whereas that farm is suitable for treatment as light land which can grow cereals profitably, we have to consider the tremendous areas of light lands which, because of their heavier rainfall, do not show very much prospect in this respect.

There is an area of 2,000,000 acres of this land in close proximity to a railway line and having a rainfall of 16 to 32 or 33 inches. Although low in fertility I believe, like lots of others, that it would be of immense value if we could find out just how to treat it. There has been a suggestion that, in the tract of country stretching from Gingin to Dongara, there should be a series of small blocks of experiments. I hope that the Minister will not consider that that is the right way to treat these lands. I believe that, as an adjunct to experimental stations, they can be quite

useful, but by themselves they will not prove anything. It needs a man who is trained to that sort of work and also the most careful compiling of statistics and analysis of the land by chemists, so that people can work with their eyes open instead of in the dark.

So concerned am I with this problem that recently I took it upon myself to call upon the Midland Railway Co. and point out that it was far more interested in proving the productiveness of this part of the country than was the Government. That type of land extends along the whole of the western section of the Midland Railway line.

The Attorney General: How far out from the railway does it extend?

Mr. ACKLAND: Right to the coast, but the whole of that land, except that near Dandarragan, is the type of country I am speaking of. I am certain that the Midland Railway Co. is prepared to assist the Government in ascertaining how best to use that land; in fact, the general manager offered to give the Government a farm on which to carry out its experiments, but the offer was not of any real value, for the simple reason that the company does not own any of the class of land which we desire to work. When the land was surveyed many years ago, the eyes were picked out of it. The only land which is of this poor quality is owned by the Government, and it is that poor land we want to experiment with. I am convinced that if the company were approached, it would be quite prepared to subsidise the Government in any expenditure incurred in connection with the project. I do not wish to take up a great deal of the time of the Chamber. I had hoped to be able to speak at greater length on purely agricultural matters; but earlier in the consideration of the Estimates we had a contribution to the debate by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: His was a good speech.

Mr. ACKLAND: It was a splendid speech, if it were a fact.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What does that infer?

Mr. ACKLAND: I entered this Chamber with the hope that I would not be drawn into purely Party political issues.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You have not succeeded very well.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have not, because on the two occasions I have spoken I was forced to speak in a way which I consider should be unnecessary. I believe that every section of Western Australia is entirely dependent on every other section; that there should be an understanding that the prosperity of one section is reflected in the prosperity of all other sections; and that the only hope for a prosperous Western Australia is the co-operation of all the people. When we are discussing agricultural matters, it is my opinion that we are discussing the most important phase of Western Australian life. Not for one moment do I want to belittle secondary industries. We need them, we need every one of them; but, fundamentally, Western Australia, with its vast area, its rainfall and climate, will always be first an agricultural country. In a debate such as this, I think it is greatly to be deplored that one should have to enter into what I might call Party squabbles. The contribution of the member for North-East Fremantle was indeed a real disappointment to me. I believe he set out deliberately to misinform the people of Western Australia. It was an instance of propaganda of the most objectionable type.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You have not much of an opinion of him.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have not much of an opinion of his contribution to the debate. It was a distortion of facts. As I already said, it sprang from a desire deliberately to misinform the people. Listening to that debate, my mind went back to a speech I once read of the wonderful Disraeli. He said—

The Right Hon. gentleman has spoken for 2½ hours. There was not an ounce of solid matter in it. He was suffering from a diarrhoea of words.

That aptly describes the remarks of the hon. member about the Government's handing over to Co-operative Bulk-handling the installations at Fremantle. There is not an ounce of solid truth in the remarks made by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. Triat: Give us some proof.

Mr. ACKLAND: I will, as I promised the other night. I am pleased in one respect. It showed not only the wheat farmers but all the primary producers in Western Australia

exactly where the ex-Minister for Agriculture stands. The Western Australian Labour Party's attitude was well illustrated by the support which he got from the members of his Party during his speech. I have shown that they are opposed to self-help and self-reliance. They are opposed to reduction of costs; they are opposed to reduction of handling charges and they most certainly uphold bureaucratic control. This was made evident throughout the whole of that speech. They want regimentation of the producers of the State. I have been asked to give proof. I shall be pleased indeed to quote from the speech of the hon. member. The following is part of it:—

The action of this Government in this regard makes very sorry reading, that assets which belong to the country could be with great haste handed over to the company without any agreement being signed in regard to responsibility or obligation or anything else. It was done against the advice of Government officers, responsible men who would know what was best to be done in connection with these assets.

Not one of those men has had any experience or the slightest conception of how to handle wheat in Western Australia or anywhere else. The only man competent to help the Government in this respect was the chairman of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, Mr. Macartney, a man who is not opposed to the installations being handed over to Co-operative Bulk-handling, but who is opposed to the building of what is called the working house, the silos and big railway yards close to the wharf at Fremantle. I shall go on to read further from the speech of the hon. member; he is now speaking of the loading at Fremantle—

I propose to show how little credit can be given to the company for what was achieved. The efficiency of the stevedore and his men are the controlling factor. The spouts go into the ship's hold and the wheat is forced through those spouts and has to be trimmed by those working the ships.

In speaking about the trimming, the hon. member said it was a matter of seven per cent. One would have expected him to know the answer, but it was a horrible guess. Later on he asked the member for Irwin-Moore to tell him what the position was. Before I sit down I hope to do just that. I should like to know the motive behind the attack on Co-operative Bulk-handling. The truth is that Opposition members by instinct are State traders; they believe in bureaucracy and have, from its inception, opposed

the farmers' co-operative self-help organisation particularly since it has shown such capabilities for bringing its undertaking to a wonderful success. The charge of the member for North-East Fremantle that there was undue haste to hand over to Co-operative Bulk-handling this wonderful State asset, irrespective of terms, is utter rubbish. That is clearly shown by a letter to the Solicitor General from the company's solicitor on the 10th June, which suggests that the company should covenant with the Government. I would like to read extracts from that letter—

(a) At all times during the period of the license to operate and control the installations for the purposes and in performance of its duties and obligations under the said Act.

(b) To pay to the Government for the period of the license the interest and depreciation on the capital cost of the plant, the respective rates of such interest and depreciation being agreed upon between the Government and the company. Such payment to be made in equal annual amounts.

(c) At all times during the period of the license to undertake and carry out at its own expense all necessary maintenance.

(d) To carry out or execute all necessary improvements or additions to or extensions of the installations approved by the Government for the Government at cost, the sum paid by the Government for such improvements or additions to or extensions of the installations to be added to the capital cost, the company to be entitled without approval to carry out or execute on such basis during any year of the license period improvements or additions to or extensions of the installations up to but not exceeding a total cost of £1,000.

Mr. Triat: Was that signed?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes. I have a copy here. It was on the file which the hon. member perused. I saw it on the file at Co-operative Bulk-handling, and that is where I obtained my copy. The hon. member stated—

The improvement which occurred after Bulk Handling facilities were passed to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., was not due to any particular efficiency on the part of Co-operative Bulk Handling; it would have occurred no matter who was operating the State galleries. . . It was solely due to the better performance of the stevedores and their men that an improvement was effected. . . I want the member for Irwin-Moore to show in what way Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd was responsible for it.

In the first place, I would like to state that in no way do I wish to depreciate the work of the stevedores and the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If that company had received the support from the bulk-handling committee that it has received from the Fremantle Har-

hour Trust, the position would be very different today and this country would not have gone in for a lot of quite needless expenditure. The improvement at Fremantle is due entirely to Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd., firstly because when they were allowed to handle the wheat at the port they were able to make improvements in the rate of loading, which were very expensive, and, through the co-operation of the stevedores themselves, were able to show those men how much better their energies could be employed on the ships. I have here the loading rates, and I shall be very glad indeed to give them to the member for North-East Fremantle, of the four ships which were loaded by the Fremantle Harbour Trust just prior to the Government handing the company those installations. Those four ships loaded an average of 302.4 tons per hour. Since then we have loaded 10 ships.

I have here the list of the nine ships that were loaded immediately afterwards. The tenth is not on the list. Those 10 ships loaded an average of 404 tons per hour, an increase of 33.37 per cent. The ship that was loaded a few days before we took over was one that was loaded five weeks later. It was the Cressington Court. When loaded by the Fremantle Harbour Trust, it loaded at the rate of 302.2 tons per hour. The same ship, just a few weeks later, loaded 388.5 tons per hour, an increase of 28.5 per cent. But there is this about it: Because the stevedores knew how to do the job on the ship, they were able to put a considerable quantity more wheat into it than had been done previously, because of improvements in the handling of the trimmers. It has been said here before, that in the Commonwealth Government's gallery the flow of wheat can be speeded up to 600 tons an hour. In that State Government gallery there are two belts each capable of handling approximately 450 tons per hour. But under the old set-up of the people who did not know how to handle the machinery, there were constant blockages and other troubles because they were unable equally to divide the flow of wheat.

Under the new set-up, for an expenditure of less than £50, our engineer within a few days put in an alteration to the dividing of this wheat, which makes it so that any flow of wheat can be put on to either of these two belts and so into any hold at any given

period. On a ship there are usually five holds, and they vary in capacity. It is necessary that loading should be done intelligently. That engineer has been able so to regulate the wheat that blockages have been prevented, whereas previously one belt would take too much at any given period. That, in conjunction with the co-operation of the stevedores, is responsible for what has happened. The hon. member read reports signed by Mr. Dumas, and in each instance they deprecated Co-operative Bulk-handling and its management. I would like to tell members that every member of that committee is a bureaucrat, the head of a Government department. They are all entirely steeped in red tape, as they cannot help being.

I am not going to suggest that men like Mr. Dumas are not good engineers; I believe they are and that he is. But I assert that many of the foremen who work for that company could run rings around him when it comes to handling the golden grain. Those people are more concerned in keeping up the departments. They are jealous that this company has been able to put up such an excellent performance, and on one or two occasions they have called in the only man who could help them. But he has been called in only when it suited them, because he was opposed to the set-up at Fremantle, as the previous Government really wanted it. I will read a letter signed by Mr. Macartney, general manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. It is dated the 16th May of this year and addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, and is as follows:—

With reference to your letter of 13th May in connection with the operation of the State bulk wheat conveyor and shipping gallery at the North Quay, I desire to say that the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners gave consideration to your invitation to comment in this connection at their meeting this morning, and as a result directed you be informed that should the Government wish any other authority than the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners to undertake this service on behalf of the Government, such procedure would not cut across the Commissioners' policy in the exercising of their monopoly right to the handling of cargo upon the wharves, involving the employment of labour and the manipulation of wharf machinery and rail traffic upon the quays. They would regard the operation of an orthodox silo for transferring wheat from some position ashore to directly aboard ships as similar to the operation of transferring fuel oil in bulk aboard vessels by means of pipes, which service is performed by the Oil Companies themselves.

Here we have members of a political party quite prepared to let a private company or companies handle their own commodities, but there are 7,000 shareholders who want to handle their own produce and that is to be denied them on the advice of this committee comprised of departmental heads. I would now like to refer to a letter which was signed by Mr. Dumas, and addressed to the Minister for Agriculture. It is dated two days previously, the 14th of May. This is the paragraph in which I am particularly interested—

It can be anticipated that after experience extending over perhaps some little time a satisfactory trimmer will be evolved at Fremantle, but this may be, and probably will be, an entirely different piece of equipment from that manufactured by the Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd.

Members may be interested to know that these trimmers, which are an invention of the company, have been sought after all over the world. During the war they operated in the Eastern States. Today Victoria is paying us a royalty for making more. The wheat in Western Australia could not have been handled in these big silos without such machines. They have been sent to Canada to be used by the grain companies there. Everyone here will agree that we brought an eminent man to Western Australia when we brought Mr. du Plessis from South Africa. He was so struck with these machines that he is taking the blue-prints and the right to manufacture them back with him so that they can be used to handle the maize of that country in bulk. Here we have a man so jauncied against this company as to say, "It will probably be an entirely different piece of equipment from that manufactured by Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd." This body also recommends a further expenditure of £270,000 at the Fremantle wharf.

We know that already £70,000 has been spent by the Commonwealth Government against the advice of the Western Australian company and after a vigorous fight by the Western Australian representatives on the Australian Wheat Board. The State Government rushed in and spent another £100,000, and it contemplated spending a further £270,000 making a total of £440,000, or nearly half a million of capital expenditure. I am talking of the previous Government and not the present one. The

committee which recommended that never turned a hair. It was not interested in the economics of the position and had no thought of such things as interest, sinking fund, depreciation, maintenance and all annual cost charges. These things do not matter apparently. The members of that committee were going to build a great engineering monument at Fremantle. They were going to build up a department which would add to their prestige, but they never considered approaching the only people in the State who knew anything about the matter, and who were prepared to hand over to them the blue-prints of an ideal scheme for this State, that would have cost £118,000.

Under this scheme they could have saved money needed in different works from one end of the State to the other. In recommending their report, they said that from 1930 to 1940 the average shipment of grain from Fremantle was 15,300,000 bushels. They did not mention how much of that was bagged-wheat and how much bulk. It will always be necessary to send a certain amount of bagged-wheat to top up ships. I find on looking at the Government Statistician's report that the amount of all wheat sent from Fremantle during that period was 13,694,851 bushels, both bagged and bulk. The saleable crop of 30,000,000 bushels in Western Australia must be divided up according to its use and disposal. Working on the basis that 2,000,000 bushels will be used for flour in Western Australia, 4,500,000 bushels exported overseas as flour, 1,500,000 bushels used as stock feed within the country, 4,500,000 bushels exported as wheat from Geraldton and 4,300,000 bushels exported as wheat from Bunbury, it leaves at the most, 13,200,000 bushels to go from Fremantle.

Any sane Government will work very hard to reduce the quantity of wheat being exported as grain from this country. It will try to send as much flour as possible. We need offal for our stock, our poultry farmers, our dairy men and pig feeders. In addition, in the milling of that wheat we find employment for our own people. So, there is a limit to the amount of capital expenditure justified at Fremantle, or any other point. Had this expenditure been persisted in at Fremantle we would have been spending 1s. 10d. in capital costs

instead of a fraction of a penny over 9d. under the cheaper scheme. The member for North-East Fremantle stated that the Commonwealth Government was not prepared to let this company do the maintenance of installations at the ports. Towards the end of his speech he said the Commonwealth Government would not let Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd. do the maintenance of its installations in Western Australia. The suggestion was that that maintenance had reference to the hospital silo at Fremantle.

Both the hon. member and the Leader of the Opposition know that Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd. had nothing to do with the hospital silo until the present Government handed it over to that company. However, we spent a considerable sum of money in building bulk installations in various parts of the State. In the early stages of the war the company received considerable sums of money from the Commonwealth for storage. We repeatedly approached that Government with the suggestion that it was spending a lot of money uselessly in that regard, and we offered to build storage throughout the State, and more particularly at Fremantle and Bassendean. Altogether we spent nearly £430,000 on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. Members know that two of the silos built at Bassendean never held any wheat, as the railways could not haul it, but we saved the Commonwealth—

Hon. A. H. Panton: Who were "we"?

Mr. ACKLAND: The company. We saved the Commonwealth £780,000 odd in those years. The bins that have been dismantled and the materials sold realised more than their original cost, owing to the rise in the cost of materials. The member for North-East Fremantle said that the Commonwealth Government was not anxious to enter into an agreement regarding maintenance. We had the opportunity of doing the maintenance on the bins throughout the State, but the condition was imposed that the Australian Wheat Board should supply men to buy the material necessary for the work. We found that the work could not proceed as it should, and that the cost of maintenance would be excessive. We told the Australian Wheat Board that unless it let us do the work and get the material as we need-

ed it, the board could do the work itself. As to the board being dissatisfied with us, I will read a paragraph from a communication addressed to the Secretary of Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd., and signed by the Secretary of the Australian Wheat Board on behalf of that body. It is dated the 2nd of October, 1947, and reads:—

We take the opportunity of expressing our appreciation for the general efficiency with which you have handled the bulk-wheat in your State, and for the several occasions upon which you have helped us in emergency. As soon as I obtained a draft of the hon. member's speech I got in touch with the manager of Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd. and asked him for an explanation as to why we had had trouble—of which I had never heard—with the Commonwealth Government over maintenance. We contacted the manager of the Australian Wheat Board in this State. He said he had never at any time written to the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, and had never at any time had any communication with him.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you deny that the maintenance of buildings and machinery was taken from the company in 1943?

Mr. ACKLAND: I deny that the maintenance was ever taken from the company, because we refused to do it unless we did it in a way that would be completely efficient.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you deny that the manager of the Australian Wheat Board took away from Co-operative Bulk-handling Ltd. the maintenance of buildings and machinery?

Mr. ACKLAND: I have no recollection of such a happening.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is a fact, and is public knowledge.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is not a fact, as far as I am concerned. I will read some extracts from a recent speech by the Premier of Queensland. I am quoting from a Queensland publication of the 13th November, 1947. The Premier was opening a co-operative cannery in that State and the report reads as follows:—

In this enterprise, he said, was expressed industry in its most democratic form, in that the people who grew the primary product were organised to receive the full fruits of their labours through this modern cannery.

He paid a tribute to the management of the C.O.D. in the matter of finance. He was treasurer at the time the Government guarantee was sought. Not only had a State Government guarantee of £300,000 been extended, but it had also been approved that £400,000 be guaranteed by the Government for a trading account to cover working expenses of the canery. He stated that the work and the enterprise of the C.O.D. was a fine testimonial to the success of a well-considered enterprise, and an example that could be followed by other sections of primary producers.

There we have an illustration of a Labour Government in Queensland being prepared to support the primary producers to the extent of nearly £750,000 to help the enterprise. Here in Western Australia we have a company of farmers who, without any assistance from anyone, erected a plant that cost nearly £600,000 and has made tremendous savings for the people of the State. This year alone there will be kept in the State one-and-a-quarter millions of money that would have gone out to buy jute but for the operations of the company. Here we have a Labour Party that since the inception of the company has never failed to work against it as a self-helping organisation.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is a lie. Who introduced the Bulk Handling Act?

Mr. ACKLAND: The Leader of the Opposition knows as well as I do that what I have stated is a fact.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is a lie. You are narrow.

Mr. ACKLAND: In the first instance we were refused sites on which to build our bins.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Where?

Mr. ACKLAND: In various parts of the State.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not true.

Mr. ACKLAND: I know it is a fact.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course, everything you say is a fact!

Mr. ACKLAND: I know that the Leader of the Opposition was partly responsible for keeping us out of the Fremantle hospital silo. We practically forced the Labour Government to appoint a Royal Commission.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You are a humbug.

Mr. ACKLAND: There was such an outcry from one end of the wheat-growing districts to the other that the Royal Com-

mission brought in a verdict that forced the Labour administration of the time to introduce the Co-operative Bulk Handling Bill. The Labour Party had no wish to allow us to handle the wheat, but preferred to have a body of bureaucrats—I cannot find a better word—heads of departments, handling the affairs of the farmers rather than permit them to handle their own without a farthing of expense to the country. I say that the statement made by the member for North-East Fremantle had no substance in fact and that the position is as I have presented it to the Committee.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.24 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 10th December, 1947.

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