

which is already under the control of the Workers' Homes Board. It will be remembered that the agreement with the Commonwealth laid the obligation on the State to ensure that adequate legislation existed to deal with slums. At present certain action to control such areas may be taken by local authorities and the Public Health Department, but there is a division of authority here which is confusing. The Bill proposes to remedy this by giving the commission power to request the Commissioner of Public Health to inquire and report as to whether any particular area is unfit for habitation. On receipt of an adverse report from the Commissioner, the commission may request the local authority concerned to take the necessary steps under the Health Act and, should this not be done, the commission may request the Commissioner of Public Health to take further action. The power given to the housing commission in this regard is considered essential as the commission will be responsible for improving the general standard of housing.

It is quite possible that occasions may arise when certain people such as students, old-age and invalid pensioners, or single persons, may find grave difficulty in securing accommodation. To help these persons the Bill gives the commission power to erect and manage hostels, which should prove a boon to those persons I have mentioned, and perhaps to others. The tendency today is to establish and encourage a community spirit, and one of the methods to achieve this object is the provision of what are known as community centres, places where people can meet and enjoy amenities at low cost. As the housing authority for the State, the commission is empowered by the Bill to acquire or set aside land for the purpose of providing communal facilities in any area where it is considered that such amenities are lacking.

In explaining the Bill which contains 77 clauses I have endeavoured to deal with its more important aspects. As I have mentioned earlier, it is mainly a consolidation of the Workers' Homes Act and it is therefore not necessary for me to touch on provisions which have been in operation for many years. If passed the Bill will co-ordinate all housing measures under one

Act, will provide the necessary machinery for the commission to carry out the provisions of the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, and will give statutory authority for certain action that is already being taken by the Workers' Homes Board, such as the conversion of Army huts for living purposes. That is a brief explanation of the Bill, which, I hope, will meet with the approval of the House. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.36 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 5th November, 1946.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Suburban Traffic Bridges.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Are traffic bridges over the suburban railways erected at the expense of the Government?

2, Was the traffic bridge over the railway at Cottesloe financed in this way?

3, Why was this bridge afterwards removed?

4, Since there is a demand that this bridge should be replaced with suitable grades, to whom should representations be made for the purpose?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Existing bridges have been erected at the expense of the Government.

2, Yes.

3, It was removed at the request of the Cottesloe Road Board.

4, The Minister for Works and Labour.

(b) *As to Types of Spark Arresters.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is there any spark arrester or other spark control device (additional to the D.D.H. arrester) now in use or shortly to be put into use, anywhere on the State railway system?

2, If so, will he name those devices and state the circumstances of their acceptance by the Commissioner?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes the cylindrical mesh spark arrester. Two further types are undergoing test.

2, Types under test are the "Cyclone" type and the "Master Mechanic" type. The former is that referred to by Sir Harold Clapp in his report on Standardisation of the Australian Railways. The latter is referred to by Mr. Justice Wolff in his report on Australian Standard Garratt locomotives.

(c) *As to Proposed Gauge Standardisation.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the reported intention (as intimated by Senator Collings in answer to a question) of the Minister for Transport (Mr. Ward) to visit this State after the elections for the stated purpose of "ironing out the difficulties that have arisen between Western Australia and the Federal Government in regard to the question of standardisation of rail gauges," will he advise whether this House will be afforded an opportunity of expressing itself upon this very im-

portant matter before the ironing out process commences?

The MINISTER replied:

Difficulties which arose at the last conference between the representatives of Western Australia and the Commonwealth representative were temporarily ironed out and later the conference collapsed due to difficulties arising between the States of Queensland and New South Wales.

It was then arranged that the Commonwealth should negotiate with the respective States individually with a view to arriving at an agreement.

When the Hon. Mr. Ward was last in Western Australia it was arranged that should he be re-elected as Minister for Transport he would visit this State, with a view to negotiating for a settlement in regard to the respective responsibilities of each Government for the purpose of instituting the standardisation of railway gauges.

It is therefore impracticable to submit any matter to the House prior to negotiations.

COTTON GROWING.

As to Lancashire Firm's Proposals.

Mr. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Has he seen the statement in "The West Australian" newspaper of the 30th October that an old-established Lancashire cotton firm intends withdrawing its cotton-growing industry from Egypt to somewhere in Australia?

2, Has the Government approached the Australian representative of the firm (the British Australia Development Pty. Limited) with a view to establishing the industry in Western Australia?

3, If the Government has not done so, will it give the matter consideration?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, No.

3, Yes.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Provision of Dental Service.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Health:

1, Is he aware that the needs of the North-West in regard to dental attention are still

not being met by private dentists or otherwise, and that residents have to come south at great expense for treatment?

2, Does he intend to again send travelling Government dentists through that area?

3, If so, when?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, When staff becomes available. Four dentists on staff—one on sick leave and one in the Army.

MIGRANTS.

As to Settlement in Perth-Bunbury Area.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Has he any knowledge of the proposal by the famous British bomber pilot Group Captain G. L. Cheshire, V.C., D.S.O., D.F.C., as reported in the "Adelaide Advertiser" on the 16th October, to purchase and settle immigrants on 58,000 acres of land between Perth and Bunbury?

2, Could he state where the land is situated and whether it is privately owned or Crown lands?

3, What assistance, if any, is the Government providing for this proposal?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2 and 3, It is understood that a large area of privately owned land between Williams and Perth has been purchased by a South Australian syndicate. The Government has not yet been approached in the matter.

EDUCATION.

As to Rockingham-Safety Bay School Site.

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Education:

1, Has the School Sites Selection Committee made any selection in regard to a suitable site for a central school in the Rockingham-Safety Bay area?

2, If not, could he state when such a selection is likely to be made?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, The matter will be given consideration by the School Sites Committee at its next meeting during this month.

THREATENED RAILWAY STOPPAGE.

As to Government Measures to Maintain Industry, Etc.

Mr. McDONALD (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the threatened dislocation of the State railway system, is the Government in a position to make a statement as to any measures it is taking or the public can take to maintain industry and employment and to alleviate loss or distress through any reduction of supplies and services?

The PREMIER replied: The Government is not in a position to make a statement at this stage.

BILL—CEMETERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES (No. 2).

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: During the war, for the purpose of ensuring that there would be adequate supplies of potatoes for civilian consumption, for the men and women in the Services, and for people overseas, it became necessary for the Commonwealth Government to introduce a system of growing potatoes under contract at a guaranteed price. The price was sufficiently high to stimulate production, with the result that the total area under the production of potatoes in Australia was approximately doubled. In some States, the increase was

even greater than that. For example, in Tasmania, the area under potatoes was actually trebled. Men who were previously engaged in the production of other commodities found the growing of potatoes more attractive, and gave up what they were previously doing in order to grow potatoes on a wholesale scale, with the result that the production in that State was trebled. The production in Victoria, another large potato-growing State, was more than doubled, and in Western Australia the area under potatoes increased from 7,000 acres to over 14,000 acres.

That stimulation of production has shown us just what can be achieved under a system with a guaranteed price. In normal times a market for the quantity of potatoes produced during the war is not available, and therefore we have to face the definite probability that at some time in the future we will have considerable over-production in potatoes with resultant very poor prices to the growers. It is true that there is not that limitation at present because strong markets exist. If we had the shipping available we could supply India with more potatoes than are at present being delivered there. As members will realise, shipping represents a big difficulty. We must realise that under normal conditions, therefore, there is not the market for the quantity produced throughout Australia during the war years.

On the 31st December of this year the National Security Regulations under which potatoes are at present being grown and marketed, will expire. The possibility of the expiration of those regulations has caused potato growers concern and they have asked that State legislation be passed to provide for a system of controlled production and organised marketing. When the representatives of the potato growers came to see me about the matter they stated that they were unanimous in their desire to have marketing legislation introduced. I understand that a short time ago a meeting of growers was held at Benger—I think there were about 20 in attendance—and those persons, while expressing a desire for organised marketing, carried a resolution setting out that a vote of the growers should be taken on the question. I was somewhat concerned about that as it had been indicated to me that there was unanimity

whereas it appeared that there was not, so I communicated with the Potato Growers' Association pointing this out and asking that I should be informed as to what the position really was.

I quickly received from the organisation concerned an assurance that the decision of the meeting had been arrived at because the growers were unaware—naturally they would be because it is not the practice to make information available about details of Bills to be presented to Parliament—of what the measure would contain and felt that the safest way would be to have a vote of the growers themselves. The association hastened to assure me that if the vote of the Benger meeting were likely to jeopardise the introduction of the legislation, it would quickly secure a reversal of the decision arrived at because the growers were certainly in the mind that they required legislation that would give them a scheme somewhat similar to the one already in operation, which had given such general satisfaction. A number of meetings between officers of the Department of Agriculture and representatives of the producers have been held to consider what should best be done in the interests of the growers, and I think the matter has been discussed at no less than three meetings of the Agricultural Council where each time the necessity for some plan was emphasised, and the general trend of opinion was that the States should endeavour to pass legislation on uniform lines so that the way would be open for an agreement between the States in order that marketing between the several States could be properly controlled and good prices guaranteed to the growers.

There is no intention whatever to exploit the consumers but rather to provide them with a good product at a reasonable price, at the same time preventing frequent fluctuations in prices, which are really of no use to the consumers and ruinous to the producers. The outcome of the various discussions has been that Victoria has had draft legislation prepared. I do not know just how far it has been proceeded with in that State. In Western Australia a Bill has been drawn up and is now before the House for consideration. It is for the purpose of controlling the acreage, and therefore regulating production, and of looking after the marketing of potatoes once they are pro-

duced. To continue the present scheme would probably be the most satisfactory method, where the grower can produce under a definite contract at a guaranteed price. He would know exactly how he stood, assuming that he would obtain a normal crop. However, that is not possible because the Commonwealth has no legal power to regulate production in a State or to regulate marketing interstate, so it must be done by means of separate legislation in each State—if it is to be done at all. I think it will be found that the potato-growing States will, without exception, introduce legislation for the purpose I have indicated.

Mr. McLarty: That is, Victoria and Tasmania?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and Western Australia. It is recognised that under the stimulation previously given to the industry, there was such an increase in acreage that no man would voluntarily retire from it until he received a blow severe enough to push him out. That would be inevitable in the course of time under the old system of free marketing, under which no attempt was made to indicate the extent of the market available or to suggest to growers how much they should produce. There will always be difficulties under any system of organised marketing with controlled production because it becomes necessary when a product is in over supply, to reduce the acreages that growers have been accustomed to putting in. We find, naturally enough, some growers believe that as they have been in the business for a long time they should be permitted to grow all they desire and that any scaling down should be done by the other fellow. Generally speaking, the potato growers as a body recognise that it cannot be done in that way, and that if there is to be any reduction in production, which they know is necessary, it must be done on a fair basis under which each producer will have his acreage somewhat reduced to a figure calculated to provide the required quantity of potatoes.

In these circumstances, the Bill proposes to establish a potato marketing board, clothed with the necessary powers to regulate and control production and regulate marketing. The board is to consist of six members. There will be three representing the producers, so that they will have half the representation on the board. Two of those re-

presentatives will be elected by the producers and one will be nominated by the Minister. In addition, there will be two representatives of the consumers, one to be a man who has had mercantile experience with potatoes but is not interested in growing them. The other member will be the chairman. Members will be familiar with a board constituted on these lines, because it has been the pattern adopted for other boards which we have sought to establish this session. In giving the producers half of the representation and in providing that one of the representatives of the consumers shall be a man not interested in potato growing, but who has commercial experience in the marketing of potatoes, in my opinion the interests of the producers are being adequately safeguarded.

We have had some criticism before on the point that all the producers' representatives are not elective, but only two of the three. I have given reasons for that previously and will state them again. Where the produce of a large number of men is concerned, it is necessary to guarantee that the personnel of the board will be such as to ensure the capable carrying out of the business with which it is charged. In making that statement I am not in any way disparaging the ability of the producers to select the right person to represent them. I have had a long experience of elections of all kinds and have seen some freakish results and I feel that, where the product of a large number of growers is at stake, and where people might suffer because of incompetence, it is essential that the Minister—who is practically interested only in ensuring that the board will function satisfactorily—should have power to make certain the board will be comprised of competent persons.

Mr. Doney: Surely, if there is so large a number of growers as you mention, there should be a sufficiency of competent men among them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But they might not be elected.

Mr. Doney: I agree.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the trouble. If we could be satisfied that competent men would nominate and be elected there would be no need for this

safeguard; but competent men do not always offer their services on boards of this kind. Because of their competency they are too busy attending to the growing of the product that they wish to market and so are not prepared to give up the time that sitting on a board would entail. While I am quite prepared to admit that among the ranks of the producers there are many men competent to run the board, I cannot be sure that they will offer themselves for election. If they do not, they cannot be elected no matter how discriminating the producers might be who want to elect them.

Mr. Doney: You might consider the question of approaching them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To ensure that there will be men of the requisite ability on the board, I consider the Minister should have power to select from among the producers a representative whom he will nominate. That system has worked very well in the past. For example, I refer to the Egg Marketing Board. The producers' representative who was selected by the Minister for Agriculture for that board was well received by the producers and has given them every satisfaction. There is no need to fear anything in that regard; as a matter of fact, the argument is all the other way, as it is a guarantee that competence will find a place upon the board. I therefore intend to ask the House to agree to a board comprised in that way—and I have the opinion of people in the other States to back me up in this—believing that such a board will prove satisfactory. The proposed board will have power to decide what acreage a grower shall put in; in other words, it will have power to issue licenses for the growing of potatoes.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Why?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because it is essential, in any system of organised marketing, to be able to calculate what quantity of the product will have to be disposed of.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: There may be a drought next year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would expect the board to allow an ample margin should a drought occur, just as I would expect the board to see that there was no great fall in price because of a good

season resulting in an over-production of potatoes on the limited acreage.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: The consumers would get them cheaper then.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, they would not. That is a fallacy. Members will recall the legislation passed by this Parliament with respect to the marketing of onions. I quoted figures to show that the grower did not gain, nor did the consumer.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Because the onions were thrown overboard into the sea.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What happened was this: The onions were of poor keeping quality and the growers could not accept the risk of retaining them on their farms. As soon as they harvested the crop they were bound to dispose of it to the merchants. The merchants bought the onions at a very low price and stored them. The consumers did not get the onions at that low price, but at the price which the merchants expected to get. The merchants, in storing the onions, sustained considerable loss. They were not able to sell all the onions which they had bought, but they were recompensed by receiving a much higher price during the period when onions were not being produced and were in short supply. The consumer did not gain and the producer lost.

We are providing for a system, or a plan, to prevent the consumer from being exploited. That is why we have consumers' representatives on the board, in order to do what is possible to remove price fluctuations and give the grower a reasonable return for his labour in producing the commodity. In the long run, that will be found to benefit a considerable number of people and disadvantage very few. That is the reason for the scheme. Our wartime experience has been such as to make producers of all types of commodities anxious to get some plan that will enable them to know exactly where they stand. The old method of putting the crop in, watching it grow, calculating a return and then having heartbreak upon heartbreak because of the poor market price, has forced us to endeavour to find some method of obviating that by having an organised marketing system, which means controlled production. This seems to be the solution of the problem. We want to prevent

gluts, which mean waste, and we want the producer to get a reasonable return for his labour. He is not asking for any more, but he does set great store on a plan which will enable him to calculate how he is likely to stand financially and not be in doubt all the way through, wondering whether the market price will be good or bad.

I well recall an experience I had many years ago in the district of Hamel which, as members know, produces large quantities of potatoes and swede turnips. I lived near a grower who had a particularly fine crop of swedes. He sent a couple of bags to the market and received 10s. a bag, which was a very handsome return. As he had a lot of swedes, he decided to dig them speedily and get them to the market while the price was good. But a lot of other growers had noticed that swedes had sold for 10s. a bag, and the following market day they also sent in swedes and the price fell to 1s. a bag. So instead of that producer showing a profit, he sustained a considerable loss. That is a very bad business, and there are very few people who would justify it. Yet under the old method of taking a chance with the market, that is very likely to occur.

It is far better to have a plan which will regulate production so that the quantity produced will meet the demand of the market, and enable the growers to get a reasonable and fair return for the work they do and the commodity they produce. It is certain that the demand for the organised marketing of various commodities will increase, because growers know the value of a more or less guaranteed price. This Bill does not propose to guarantee a price to the grower, but it does give the board power to fix a price. The grower will be told how many acres of potatoes he will be permitted to grow and market with the board.

Mr. McLarty: That is for each season?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The board will have the power to issue permits to growers to sell their potatoes to others than the board if they so desire. That is in order to facilitate trading between neighbours and trading in small quantities where the board does not feel it necessary to take all the potatoes produced. The board will have power to issue permits and will know exactly what it is doing in that regard and will be able to withdraw any permit if necessary. It is not proposed to allow a

man to grow potatoes for his own use without a permit from the board. A man cannot state that he is growing potatoes for his restaurant or his store, and that therefore he does not require a license.

Mr. Needham: What about the home gardener?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The home gardener is not a commercial producer and will not be controlled, but the man growing potatoes in such a quantity as to make him a commercial producer will require a permit, if he wishes to grow them for a restaurant or a store; and if it is found that the permit is providing him with the means of getting his potatoes on to the market somewhere, the permit can be withdrawn.

Mr. Berry: What is a commercial producer?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This principle was adopted in the Egg Marketing Act for the same reason, and it appears to be working satisfactorily. I heard one member interject, "What is a commercial producer?" He is one who produces more than three acres of potatoes. The board will have power to trade and arrange for the storage and export of potatoes, and it will also have power to enter into an agreement with any board set up in another State. This is very important. While the Commonwealth could control the export of potatoes—it has power to do that—it could not control the marketing of potatoes interstate, and a difficulty could arise if there were a glut of potatoes in Victoria and a normal crop in Western Australia. We might find Victorian potatoes coming to Western Australia and upsetting all the calculations of the board.

Mr. Mann: This Bill is on all fours with the Wheat Stabilisation measure?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is very similar, except that it does not give a guaranteed minimum price. Power exists for the board in this State to enter into an agreement with boards in the other States for the purpose of regulating the production and marketing of potatoes interstate. That is very necessary to safeguard the interests of the growers in any one State.

Mr. Fox: That will not prevent growers from shipping potatoes over here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it will.

Mr. Fox: How?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board in each State will acquire all the potatoes.

Mr. Fox: They cannot prevent merchants from shipping them here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The merchants will not have them to ship.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The difficulty the member for South Fremantle believes he sees, does not exist; because if the necessary legislation is passed in each State, all the potatoes produced in a State will become the property of the board in that State and, if the boards have entered into an agreement between themselves as to what they will do, it will not be possible to ship potatoes from one State to another in defiance of the wishes of the boards. The boards will be able to control that situation all right, pre-supposing that the necessary legislation is passed in all the potato-growing States: and there will be no difficulty about reaching an agreement on that matter. The various Ministers for Agriculture have discussed the subject at the meetings of the Agricultural Council and have signified their intention of endeavouring to have uniform legislation passed for this purpose. No State can afford to stand out; because, whilst Victoria might have a surplus of potatoes this year and be in a position to ship to Western Australia, the boot might be on the other foot next year, and we could jeopardise the interests of growers in Victoria if they had a poor season and we had a good one.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: This is another way of passing the referendum.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This has nothing to do with the referendum.

The Minister for Lands: Western Australia supported the referendum anyway!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is a proposal to establish a plan for the production and marketing of potatoes, and I emphasise that it has been introduced at the unanimous request of the potato growers.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: All over the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am dealing with this State. The Government is very pleased indeed to endeavour to provide this marketing scheme because it conforms to the Government's idea of guaranteeing to the producer a fair return for his labour.

Mr. Doney: Does the Bill provide for an interstate agreement?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It gives the board power to enter into an agreement with boards formed elsewhere.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Passing the referendum in another way!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In view of the fact that the Bill does purport to establish a scheme which has been asked for, and as it is modelled on a plan which has already worked satisfactorily for other commodities, I confidently recommend it to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Willmott, debate adjourned.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th October.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [5.10]: I do not think anything would be gained by my making a lengthy speech on this Bill which, thanks to your indulgence, Sir, was, I think, fairly well discussed during the debate on the Country Areas Water Supply Bill. The majority of the remarks that I made on that subject can be taken as applying to this measure. I feel that this Bill is one that has the same difficulties that were associated with the other. It sets out to authorise the scheme as planned by the engineers. It does not seek, as the other Bill

did, to determine the methods by which water shall be paid for and distributed and the like. As the Minister for Works is here today and was not here during the debate on the other Bill, I would like to say to him that I hope he will give full consideration to certain points that were raised, particularly with reference to those of the farming community in certain areas—limited areas, I think—who contend, and I believe with justification, that they have their own water supplies which are sufficient for all their purposes.

I would also like to make a point in regard to a question I asked the hon. gentleman the other night concerning the consumption of water in the metropolitan area. I gathered from the answer he was good enough to supply by letter that the average annual consumption per head in the metropolitan districts is approximately twice the figure contemplated in the estimates that have been made in regard to this measure. The Minister appears to be under the impression in the letter he sent to me, that the metropolitan figure is a high one; but I would submit to him that there is much more water consumed in the metropolitan area than is recorded by the Metropolitan Water Supply Department; and in consequence, as he has probably acquired his figures from the records of that department, I should say it would be quite obvious that the private sources of supply for use by so many homes in the metropolitan districts would relieve to a substantial degree the consumption from the Metropolitan Water Supply, and were they taken into consideration as part of the metropolitan consumption, would very definitely raise to a much higher figure that consumption per head in the metropolitan area. I refer to those many homes which contain wells and pumping plants or windmills producing, I am told, in one instance—an instance comparatively close to us just now—or capable of producing, 1,500 gallons of water per hour.

Suppose that sort of supply, which I know exists in a very substantial proportion of metropolitan homes, were added to the consumption of the metropolitan area, then the figure which the Minister gave me and which I gathered from him was considered to be relatively high, would be comparatively low; and that sets out more

sharply in my view the question of whether the projected consumption per head in rural townships, particularly in the run of years, will not substantially exceed the figure contemplated in the estimates. I did not bring this matter forward—I would not like the Minister to think I had brought it forward—in any spirit of carping criticism. It is merely that if we are to enter upon a project of this nature, of such a substantial character, for the purpose of supplying a great number of provincial towns, we should at least assure ourselves that our early estimates are not under-estimated by overlooking any aspect of consumption that may exist, and, while it is true that the temperature is high at various periods of the year in the metropolitan district, it is also true that the weather is much hotter in some rural neighbourhoods. The Minister suggested that the sandy nature of the soil in the metropolitan district would be inclined to increase the consumption.

The Minister for Lands: But we would not use the same volume of water if we had to pay 1s. per thousand gallons for it.

Mr. WATTS: That may be so, but it does not indicate to me that the total consumption in the metropolitan area, even if 1s. per thousand gallons had to be paid for it, would be as low as has been stated, if those supplies did not exist. That is what underlay my question to the Minister, in the first place, because it appeared to me that it was not reasonable to suggest that rural consumption, particularly in the course of time, would be only 50 per cent. of the metropolitan consumption today, taking into consideration all the known factors, so I would like the Minister, if he will, to give further consideration to that aspect of the matter, and also to the point I raised during the debate on the other Bill. With those comments, it is unnecessary for me to add anything further. I propose to support the second reading of this measure.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.17]: The Bill that has come before this House and which, if it is passed and becomes an Act, will validate a scheme for supplying fresh water to various areas of land in this State, which are set out in the Schedule attached to the Bill, and also to ratepayers and residents in towns also situated within

the same areas set out in the Schedule, deals with a large project. The estimated cost of carrying out the scheme is £9,230,000, and I am informed that that figure does not include any portion of the cost of raising the retaining wall at Mundaring or at the Wellington Dam, to increase the volume of water impounded. It is not suggested that this State could, safely or at all, face the financial burden of a work of that character, having regard to the many other requirements of an urgent character that must be dealt with. But it is suggested that the State should spend a sum of £500,000 per year for ten years, and that the balance of the amount—roughly another £5,000,000—would be provided by the Commonwealth Government in yearly instalments for the same period of time. I shall deal with that proposal in a moment but, before doing so, will refer to the fact that the estimates of the cost of materials required for this work and the cost of labour to be employed in accomplishing it, must have been the subject of a great number of detailed calculations, and must therefore have been arrived at some considerable time ago.

However accurate the estimates may have been at the time of their compilation, it is obvious—and a matter of common knowledge—that costs have changed to a great extent in the intervening period, and therefore those estimates are to a certain extent misleading today, and will become more and more misleading as every day goes by. In all probability, on a very conservative estimate, costs have risen by anything between 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. in the time that has elapsed since those estimates were formed. What does that mean? It means that instead of £10,000,000 being the cost of the scheme when completed—I remind the House that it is estimated that the work will be completed in ten years—it will have increased to at least £12,000,000, and of that £12,000,000, assuming that the Commonwealth Government contributes all that is expected—I will deal with that in a moment—the burden that will fall on the State will be £7,000,000, because it is not for one moment suggested that under any expectation the Commonwealth will contribute pound for pound, so as to contribute half the actual cost of the scheme. The only suggestion is that the Commonwealth Government will contribute a definite amount, which in round figures is estimated at £5,000,000.

I turn now to the suggestion—it is only a suggestion, and not only that, but a suggestion made by the intended recipient—that the Commonwealth will contribute that sum. Not only is there not even a shadow of a promise alleged, but what has transpired in the matter between this State and the Commonwealth is somewhat shrouded in mystery. As I understand it, and as the Minister for Works put it forward during his second reading speech, what transpired was that the printed case for the carrying out of the scheme was handed to Mr. Chifley, who was good enough to express himself as pleased with the matter handed to him. What else would he have said, and how are we to translate that into any sort of a promise to give financial assistance, and financial assistance of a very considerable amount? It is further alleged—and this, of course, has somewhat more bearing—that a high officer in the employment of the Commonwealth is shortly to come to Western Australia to inspect the possibilities of the land that will be served by this scheme, and to report on the land and on the practicability of the scheme.

Again, the Premier carried the matter slightly further, because he told the House, in the absence of the Minister for Works, that it has gone further than that and views have been exchanged between the parties, but he does not allege that a definite agreement of any kind has been arrived at. In fact, he does not carry the matter any further than did the famous French admiral who, when chased by Nelson, saw the harbour in sight, and told the crew that all hopes were permissible. Apparently in the exchange of views nothing hostile has been said, but that is a very different matter from a contract to enter into serious and large obligations. Even if it could be alleged that a definite promise had been made, which is very very far—if I may adopt the phraseology used by a popular Minister—from being correct, what would that amount to? At least four Parliaments would have to be elected in the Federal arena during the term covered by the promise, and not only would four Parliaments have to be elected, but possibly four different Governments would come into power in the Federal arena in that period, and no single one of them would be bound by any undertaking entered into by

its predecessor, which was merely of an executive character—

Hon. J. C. Willecock: They generally honour obligations incurred.

Hon. N. KEENAN: They are not even bound—if the member for Geraldton will allow me to complete my sentence—by the Acts of Parliament passed by their predecessors. There is not one Parliament that can bind another. The very least that could be expected from the point of view of the other party—by that I mean the people of this State—would be that an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament be passed, validating the agreement that had been arrived at between the Commonwealth Government and the Government of this State. That agreement would be one that would set out in detail the obligation to make certain moneys available to this State over a specified period of time for the purpose of carrying out certain work. Candidly, I cannot imagine a Bill of that character being passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, not because it would not be a right, proper and just measure, but because we know what intense jealousies exist between the States. When such a matter was dealt with in a Bill before the Commonwealth Parliament, all those jealousies would get to work to defeat it.

As the matter stands today, I find myself in full accord with the view put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, that it is entirely premature to discuss and decide this momentous issue on the information that we at present have before us. Such a course has never been attempted to be followed by this Parliament in any matter of like importance, nor indeed by any Parliament in the British Empire. To pledge this State to enter upon a work of such enormous financial magnitude on the mere expectation—to put it at its highest—that it would receive a sum, not a small and contemptible sum but one of great magnitude, £5,000,000, from the Commonwealth Parliament, when there is not a scintilla of matter to bind that Parliament to grant that money, is too fantastic to ask any Assembly to accept.

So I should have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have carried his view, which I share entirely, to the length of saying he would decline, as I do, to be

a party to binding the citizens of this State to entering upon any work of very great magnitude involving enormous sums of money from the point of view of a small State. Therefore, in the circumstances, this Bill should not be proceeded with.

Although my position as I have explained it is very well founded, I know that in all probability it will not prevail, but that the measure will be proceeded with and sent to another place. I therefore desire to add a few observations, though not on the merits of this scheme, which I leave entirely out of the question, because from my point of view the merits cannot be debated until we know how we stand as regards our financial ability to carry the scheme into effect. Whilst I desire to make no observations on the merits of the Bill, I should like to say that if I could convince myself by any possible reasoning that the measure was financially safe and one upon which we could embark without imperilling many other wants of equal importance, some possibly of greater importance—for is not the housing of our citizens a measure of greatest importance?—then I would be quite prepared to support a move in a policy of a bold and helpful character. But there are reasons that entirely debar me from viewing the matter in that light.

I have to add only a few remarks on a matter which was brought up by the Minister in support of the Bill and on which I congratulate him upon having referred to. The Minister made the point that the course proposed by him was in some considerable degree comparable with the bold policy of Sir John Forrest in 1900 and the years immediately following. But I point out that the circumstances in the present case as compared with the circumstances in those days are very dissimilar.

Mr. Withers: Where did Sir John Forrest expect to get the money at that time?

Hon. N. KEENAN: I regret that I could not hear the interjection. At that time about one-fourth of the whole of the people in the State were residing on the various goldfields and, of that quarter, a large majority were residing on what were known as the Eastern Goldfields. Moreover, the whole of the State was dependent at that time upon the expansion and successful pursuit of the mining industry. I am not exaggerating in the slightest degree when I say that

at that time the gamble of mining was a gamble for Western Australia. Had not the gamble been won, we should not be here today in the position we occupy representing a State of considerable importance.

The Minister for Lands: The gamble did not look too healthy at just about that time.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so. To start with, the circumstances were entirely different. No-one would suggest that, if the particular parcel of land which the Minister proposes to embrace in his scheme is not put to the use he anticipates, there is going to be any great disaster or serious loss to the State. In 1900 the position was that the people living on the Eastern Goldfields—the circumstances in other parts of the State were entirely different—where the principal mining development was taking place could be maintained and kept there only if fresh water was supplied to them. True, the mining industry at a certain stage of development could maintain itself and could, by condensing water on the mines, maintain a certain number of men, but to look forward to what Sir John Forrest contemplated, a great development in the mining industry without having a largely increased population was impossible, and to get that population, it was necessary to provide fresh water. I do not know anything about the water supplies in the areas to which the Minister is addressing himself, but I should not doubt that he could get water by sinking wells.

The Minister for Works: Quite easy at Narrogin to do it that way.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In the Kalgoorlie district, it is necessary to go through 75 feet of solid rock to reach water level and then the water is intensely salt, containing sometimes up to 25 per cent. of salinity. The precarious position of the Goldfields people was brought to the notice of Sir John Forrest by those interested in mining, and by none more so than a gentleman named Mr. Harper, who certainly carried on a correspondence of information with Sir John Forrest. This is proved by the fact that his letters were read in another place when that House was considering whether it would pass or reject the Bill to enable the Goldfields water scheme to be carried into effect. I have always thought

it was much to be regretted in respect to the controversy over the origin of the scheme that the part taken by Mr. Harper was not recognised, even if only to the extent of putting up some plaque or memento at No. 1 Pumping Station, which I think he well deserves.

As I have said, to maintain a large population on the Goldfields necessary to carry out a big future programme in mining, it was simply imperative to supply fresh water. The shutting down of extensive operations was imminent. Nobody on the Goldfields had any doubt about that, and there was no-one on the Goldfields that did not welcome the scheme for taking fresh water to the Goldfields. If that welcome was in any way restrained, it was simply because of the conditions attached to the taking of fresh water to the Goldfields. Under this scheme those who receive the benefits the Minister is prepared to provide, if the Bill becomes law and he has the money to carry it out, will pay only a reasonable and fair charge, and if that is not sufficient to meet all the expenditure, the balance will be met out of the national purse. In other words, this scheme is a national one, but that cannot be said of the scheme of 1900 for supplying fresh water to the Goldfields. Those people were called upon to meet the whole of the capital cost of the scheme, every penny of it, and every penny of working expenses, and moreover they were saddled with a sinking fund at a rate sufficiently high to return the capital cost in the limited period for which it was then supposed the goldmining industry would continue.

I do not need to be reminded of the fact that in 1911 the whole of that arrangement broke down. When the mining industry suffered a severe slump, it became impossible to exact from the people of the Goldfields the conditions that had been imposed with the greatest of ease in 1900. From that time onwards, a considerable proportion of the charges have been borne by Consolidated Revenue. But when the scheme was taken to the Goldfields, it was not as a present made to them by the people of Western Australia, subject to the payment of only reasonable charges, but it was a scheme for which the Goldfields people had to pay every penny, and there were many people, of whom I was one, who regretted bitterly that the opportunity was lost of cementing the people

of the Goldfields and the people of the coast into one united whole by showing that their interests were almost identical and not, as unfortunately was the case, that there should be drawn a distinction of a vital character.

All the time this was taking place, small works were being carried out on the coast, of which the Goldfields people were fully aware. These works included the construction of railways in various districts, starting from places certainly not of great if of any importance and frequently not having a fixed or definite end. They were described as railways starting at places of no importance and ending at places of no interest. I asked the Clerk to turn up a few of the estimates for those years and he did so. For one railway, the schedule showed that it was to start at a certain point and go to a red line on the map, an unknown or non-existent place except for the point on the map, and these were national works. I think that was the only reason why the Goldfields people were not openly grateful—they really felt very grateful—as they would otherwise have been when the Goldfields water scheme was inaugurated. Fortunately for the Minister, he is not confronted with similar troubles. He will not have to set up differential treatment for this part of the State as compared with any other part of the State. On that I am pleased to be able to congratulate him.

I should like now to return to the matter more strictly in order, namely, the consideration of the Bill. Whilst I am far from satisfied that there is any arrangement worth a red cent between this State and the Commonwealth Government for contributions by the Commonwealth Government to this State of moneys to carry out the scheme, and whilst that condition continues to exist, I see no ground for assenting to this measure. I therefore propose when the Bill is in Committee to ask the Minister to accept an amendment which will provide that the State is not to enter upon what one might describe as an orgy of expenditure, an expenditure of great dimensions, unless and until the moneys which it has been suggested the Commonwealth Government will provide are actually provided by Act of Parliament passed by the Commonwealth Parliament; in other words, until we are reasonably assured that our finances will not be unduly strained, entirely over-

strained, and that we shall not be placed in the position in which many works of importance just as great as those associated with this Bill will not have to remain in abeyance for goodness knows how many years.

Let members imagine, if this State had to spend £12,000,000 or £13,000,000 on the scheme what our position would be in respect of the carrying out of other works of great importance to the State and of an urgency just as great as the one which underlies this scheme. Another more modified scheme dealing with the distress of the towns could be substituted at lower cost and that would tend to meet some of the objections I have to this measure on the financial side, but I do not suppose the Minister would like his infant, which is not fully grown, to be reduced to any proportions smaller than he has presented it. It is not for a private member to do more than suggest that if there is not a definite financial basis on which the State can safely proceed with work of this enormously expensive, unavoidably expensive, character, it should be prepared to cut its clothes according to its cloth and put forward a smaller scheme which we can face without endangering the finances of the country.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [5.48]: I should think that every member who had the opportunity of listening to the speech of the member for Nedlands must have been disappointed at his general attitude to the proposed comprehensive water supply scheme for country towns and country lands. On the basis of most of his reasoning no Government in this State would ever put into operation any scheme of any consequence because it would always be palsied by the fear that this might not be 100 per cent. right, that something else might not be 100 per cent. accurate, and that something else might be slightly out of gear when the time came to put the scheme into operation, establish it, and subsequently perhaps develop it as it should be. From the point of view of progress the hon. member, for the most part during his speech, seemed to be very strongly in reverse gear. That, I think, is an unfortunate attitude for members of Parliament to adopt in this State at this particular period of our exist-

ence. We are now in the early post-war years and these post-war years will constitute a period during which each State and country will either put into operation large undertakings for the purpose of encompassing as much progress as possible in the next few years, or they will stand still, if there is any question of standing still, or they will go backwards, which I think is the only choice other than the acceptance of this legislation.

The member for Nedlands made quite an amount of play on the position as it now exists between the State and the Commonwealth Governments covering the request made by the State to the Commonwealth to render financial assistance to enable this proposed scheme to be established. He quite frequently used the words "alleged" and "allegations," which I think are very ill-chosen for a debate of this character because no allegation of any kind has been made on behalf of the State Government in connection with negotiations carried on with the Commonwealth Government. I told the House quite plainly that the State Government had presented to the Prime Minister the printed case in connection with the scheme, and had made a request that the Commonwealth Government should investigate it as early as practicable and as quickly as possible make a decision in connection with the State's request. I submit there was no allegation of any kind. There was, however, a very plain statement of what had actually happened as between the two Governments. The Prime Minister assured the State of his very deep interest in the proposed scheme, and undertook to have it investigated by a Federal committee, in order that his Government might receive recommendations based upon its close consideration by appropriate Commonwealth officers. Briefly put these are the negotiations which have been entered upon and these are the assurances received from the Commonwealth.

It is quite true the Commonwealth has not yet committed itself to making available any specific sum of money to the State in connection with the scheme. I think, however, in view of the policy of previous Commonwealth Governments in connection with large water supply undertakings in other States, there can be little doubt that the present Commonwealth Government will make a fav-

ourable decision in relation to this scheme. There can be little doubt, either, that any succeeding Commonwealth Government would regard itself as being absolutely bound by any such decisions made by a previous Commonwealth Government. If we wait before passing any legislation of our own until the Commonwealth Government has made its decision and passed its legislation, if it considers that legislation is required, this Parliament may not be able to approve of this scheme for many months to come and that would involve a period of delay of anything from eight to twelve months in commencing the scheme. That might not appear to be a matter of any consequence to the member for Nedlands, but it is, I suggest, a matter of great consequence to many people in the towns and country areas concerned, and also I should think to the representatives of those particular areas in this Parliament. The hon. member said he had no knowledge at all of the manner in which water might be obtained in the areas to be served by this proposed scheme.

Hon. N. Keenan: Fresh water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am sure he could have no knowledge in that direction, otherwise he would not have suggested that it might be readily possible for people to obtain their fresh water supplies by putting down a well here or a bore there, or something else somewhere else. I think it was the member for Katanning who, during his speech on the other Bill, described the conditions of the people in many of the towns to be served by this scheme as deplorable and pitiable. It might well be that before this summer is concluded many of the people in the districts to be served by this scheme would again be in that position. I think myself there is not an hour to be lost in taking all steps necessary to enable the Government to be in a position to start the work associated with the scheme at the earliest possible moment. The member for Nedlands made reference to the fact that this scheme was prepared some time ago, and suggested that the estimates in connection with it are therefore based upon a period when costs were lower than they are today and lower than they might be in any one of the ten years during which the scheme would be in process of being completed. He went on to indicate that before the ten-year period

had finished the financial burden upon the State and the people might be intolerable or become intolerable.

Here again we come up against the attitude, I think, of "do nothing." If we are going to look into the future and allow our imagination to have free play and to invent a lot of fearful possibilities, some of them perhaps well-grounded to some extent, I think, we will never in this State undertake anything worth while. We will be rendered inactive by doubts and fears as to what the future may bring forth. This scheme and the estimates associated with it were not prepared so very long ago. They are reasonably well up to date. I think it is to be expected that there will continue in Australia for some years to come a reasonable measure of control in regard to prices and associated matters. I do not think we can say that there will come a period during the next few years when there will be no regulation at all over prices and other things. If that period does come, of course, Australia will face all the evils, dangers and losses appertaining to inflation, and it will not matter very much whether the scheme is put into operation at that time or not because the position of the State and its people would be very parlous indeed.

Even, if the estimates in connection with the scheme are exceeded, the people to be served by it will not be penalised as a result of such happening inasmuch as the maximum charges to be imposed are already set out in the Bill, and any departure above those maxima will not be possible unless Parliament is again approached for the purpose of increasing the maximum as it applies to each particular charge to be imposed. Therefore if the fear that the member for Nedlands has in mind does, in fact, develop to a serious degree, it will have the effect only of increasing the extent to which this proposed work will be a national work. It will increase the financial burden of the general taxpayers of the State, and that will not mean a severe burden upon each individual taxpayer. There were, in the main three other important points raised during the debate on the other Bill. One was the suggestion that all the country towns proposed to be served by the scheme should be served, because there was no opposition of any consequence offered by the people in any of the townships. The associated point

of view was then put forward that the extension of the scheme to the farming lands should be left largely to the discretion of the individual farmers. I submit in all seriousness that there could be no scheme at all under a condition such as that.

The scheme, as a whole, is an expensive undertaking—so expensive as to cause the State Government to make to the Commonwealth Government the approach to which I have already referred—and the State Government cannot undertake it entirely from its own financial resources. In the first place, the mains from the water storages at Wellington, in particular, and Mundaring, have to be taken over great lengths of country so that individual towns can be supplied with water. It would be unthinkable for any Government—this or any future one—to put in hand a scheme necessary to serve those townships with adequate continuous supplies of water and not at the same time rate all the land between one town and another. If that were to be the basis the scheme would never have been developed, and if for any reason Parliament, or any part of it, should try to alter the legislation to make that the basis of the scheme, this Government, or any other, would have no course open to it but to abandon the project entirely.

There was some discussion on the variable maximum rates for townships, as set down in the other Bill. One maximum is 3s., and the other is 2s. These two rates have been taken from the existing legislation and they propose to continue the present position that has existed for many years. It becomes necessary, in this legislation, to do that because we are providing for more than one water supply scheme; we are providing to cover all the country water supply schemes in the State. Therefore we are trying to include in the legislation the existing law as it operates in regard to several of the water supply schemes in different parts of our country districts. If members think the Bill should be altered to provide only one maximum rate, then I suggest it should be varied to impose a maximum rate of 3s. There would of course be no objection to that because it would mean that, in practice, any rate lower could always be struck according to circumstances, and according to what was considered to be a reasonable rate to impose in connection with one scheme as against another.

The Leader of the Opposition put forward the important question of the estimates of the total amount of water necessary to supply the country towns, and more particularly, the farms, under the scheme. He voiced a doubt as to whether the estimates prepared by the committee could be completely relied upon, and suggested that they would in practice be found to be about only half of the actual requirements. In other words, he intimated that the scheme would need to be able to supply double the amount of water that has been estimated as being necessary. I think there is something in that point of view; it might be found, as the years go by, that each farm, on the average will consume more water than the inter-departmental committee estimated. That will depend to a considerable extent upon circumstances, because we know that in the districts to be served the seasons vary from one year to another. They have good years, medium years and dry years. However, the inter-departmental committee based its estimates upon the practical experience that has been gained from the operations of the section of the G.W.S. scheme which supplies country dams. Therefore it can be said that the committee has adopted the only practical basis of estimating on the information that was available to it.

In addition to considering the actual experience of farmers in the G.W.S. areas, the committee also took into consideration, as far as it was practicable to do so, the areas that would be served by the scheme and the primary industries carried on therein. However, if it be proved that more water than has been estimated will be required in the areas to be served, no difficulty will arise. I mentioned, when moving the second reading of the Bill, that the retaining wall at Mundaring and the one at Wellington Dam, were to be raised substantially for the purpose of greatly increasing the quantity of water that each reservoir or dam could impound. The present holding capacity at Mundaring is to be increased about $3\frac{1}{2}$ times and that at Wellington Dam about five times. So there will be no shortage of water available at the sources of supply. If twice as much water, as has been estimated, is required, there will be no difficulty in supplying it, and the department, as the seller, will be very glad to supply it. It would be necessary, if a greatly increased supply were required over and above that

estimated, for more pumping stations to be established and for some sections of the main to be duplicated so as to carry the greater quantities to the districts where the water would be reticulated to those wanting it.

While there is probably a good deal of merit in the point of view submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, I give him the absolute assurance of the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas, and the other engineers concerned, that there will be no difficulty in supplying the increased quantity of water that might be wanted over and above the estimates made by the committee. I think I have covered the main points raised during the debate. On behalf of the Government I express appreciation to members generally for the progressive outlook they have adopted in connection with both Bills. The Government considers that this legislation covers a scheme which will prove, in the years to come, to be not only a great blessing to the townspeople in the towns concerned, but a great aid to all farmers who will be served by it; and, when we help the farmers by giving them assured supplies of good water, we assist them greatly to increase the wealth production of the State.

Mr. Triat: Hear, hear!

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some weird notions have been put forward in fairly recent years about how the prosperity of the people can be advanced, but the progress and prosperity of the people are affected today by the same circumstances as they were a hundred or even a thousand years ago. The proposed scheme, by assisting the farmers in all parts of the districts to be served, to increase their wealth production, will make a major contribution to the future of the people of Western Australia.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

As to Re-stating Question.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that

in the rush before the tea suspension, in putting Clause 1, I neglected to note that the member for Nedlands had on the notice paper an amendment which he desired to move. The member for Nedlands also missed the point. If no objection is raised, I am prepared to put Clause 1 again. As no voice has been raised against that course, I shall do so.

Committee Resumed.

Clause 1—Short Title:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided that such proclamation shall not issue until by an Act of the Parliament of the Commonwealth at least the sum of five million pounds is voted as a grant to the State in aid of the expenditure involved in the carrying out of the within scheme or any duly authorised variation thereof."

The Minister, in his reply to the second reading debate, said that the Government would not have contemplated this scheme without having an honourable assurance and certainly some strong reason for believing that it would obtain financial help from the Commonwealth Government. The sum involved is very large, and unless the Commonwealth is prepared to come to the assistance of the State to the extent of £5,000,000, which is the sum that has been suggested, the scheme will be beyond the resources of the State. The object of the amendment is to ensure that the Act shall not be proclaimed and come into force until the Commonwealth Government itself has become liable to find the money necessary to carry out the scheme. I assume that if the Commonwealth declined to make available the necessary funds, the scheme would be abandoned. Therefore, the amendment means nothing except that, should a Government of a reckless nature be in power—I do not refer to a Government such as the Minister for Works adorns at present—it would be prevented from wrecking the State because the Act could not be proclaimed unless the necessary financial aid were forthcoming. I hope the Minister will accept my suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I oppose the amendment, first on principle and, secondly, because of the impossible position that its acceptance could, and probably would, create. The amendment stipulates

that the Act shall not be proclaimed until the Commonwealth Parliament passes an Act authorising payment to the State Government of a sum of at least £5,000,000. The Commonwealth might not pass an Act for such a purpose but might do it by some other method. I do not know.

Hon. N. Keenan: Neither do I.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: However, the Commonwealth might grant a sum of £2,500,000, £3,000,000, or some other amount, but, because the amount so granted was not at least £5,000,000, the State Act authorising the scheme could not be proclaimed. The acceptance of the amendment would tie the hands of the Government in a way that would be entirely undesirable. If Parliament passes the legislation and the Commonwealth does not agree to assist the State financially to the extent required, the Bill will, of course, not be proclaimed. If the Commonwealth should agree to assist the State to an extent considered by the Government sufficient to justify it in proceeding with the scheme, the Act would be proclaimed and the scheme proceeded with. I do not think there is any risk in our passing the Bill in the way it is worded. The hon. member's proposed safeguard would not in practice prove to be such, but rather a very great hindrance and bring about delays that could have serious effects regarding at least some of the people to be served by the proposed scheme.

Mr. McDONALD: The amendment raises a matter of principle which has been mentioned before in this Chamber, namely, the extent to which Parliament is to have a say in the incurring of very heavy liabilities by the people of the State. The object of the amendment is very sound and is to ensure that if Parliament agrees to the people being required to accept a very heavy liability for an objective that we all endorse in principle, that project will not be proceeded with and the liability not be incurred unless the people are safeguarded by an assurance of financial aid from the Commonwealth. The Minister has given us a categorical assurance that goes some distance towards meeting the ideas of the member for Nedlands. He said that the Act would not be proclaimed until the Government had a satisfactory assurance that sufficient financial aid was forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government to enable the

State to undertake the liability involved in the scheme. I am glad to have that assurance, and I would add that unless the assurance is one which, beyond any doubt, involves a sufficient sum of money to make the proposition well within the compass of the State's financial resources, Parliament should be consulted before the Act is proclaimed or the State is committed to the scheme. We recognise that in minor matters it is the Government's prerogative and responsibility to undertake works that will involve a liability to be accepted by the people but, in major matters, such as those involving the expenditure of £10,000,000 and a potential liability of between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000 on a population of less than 250,000, Parliament would be simply abrogating all sense of its duty to the people if it gave a blank cheque to any Government, however honest and sincere it might be in its purpose.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I should like to explain that the sum of £5,000,000 appears in my amendment because that was the amount stated by the Minister himself as that which the State reasonably expected to obtain. It was to be contributed in ten equal yearly portions corresponding to the ten equal unit portions of the State. In the circumstances, there could be no question about the scheme going on whether the amount advanced to the State was £1,000,000 or £2,500,000—if the basis of the scheme is as submitted to the Committee, of which I am quite sure. Whatever I may as a critic say of the Minister for Works, he knows I never question his absolute accuracy. I am certain that £5,000,000 is the minimum amount, but it may also be the maximum amount. Without that money being forthcoming, the State has no prospect of going on with the scheme and therefore that was the amount I included in my amendment.

Another point I did not dwell upon in placing this matter before the Committee is that it deals with a period of ten years. It is not a matter of this year or next year, or even five years hence, but ten years, and during that period many circumstances may arise of which we may have no foreboding whatever today. We may have no reason to suppose that anything of the sort will arise, but ten years is a range of time that admits of many happenings and of disastrous possibilities. That answers the two

reasons given by the Minister. If the scheme were in part or in the main abandoned while the present Government was in power and the present Minister in office, no question of this kind would arise; but it might arise in the time of the Minister's tenth successor, and no-one can say what his opinion might be or what he might do. It is our duty to safeguard the taxpayer and to ensure that State funds are not endangered by being left open to misuse owing to the phraseology used in the statute that would permit of its misuse. I hope that on reconsideration the Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. SEWARD: I have some degree of sympathy with the member for Nedlands, but I cannot support his amendment as it would make possible the excising of a certain part of the scheme. I refer to the water supplies for country towns, many of which, as the Minister has said, are in an intolerable position. It would be possible to carry out a scheme which would supply the country towns, but not the country areas.

Mr. Watts: You do not want that?

Mr. SEWARD: Certainly not. We are all agreed that it is necessary to give the country towns a water supply. I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "by an Act of the Parliament of the Commonwealth at least the sum of five million pounds is voted as a grant to the State in aid of the expenditure involved in the carrying out of the within scheme or any duly authorised variation thereof."

I desire to insert in lieu of the words struck out the following:—"such time as satisfactory financial arrangements have been made by the State and Commonwealth Governments."

Hon. N. Keenan: Satisfactory to whom—Parliament?

Mr. SEWARD: As the member for Nedlands has pointed out, we are already giving the Government a blank cheque. We have no guarantee that the Commonwealth will contribute one penny towards this scheme. It would be quite competent for the Government to proceed with it at a cost of £10,000,000 and that sum might become the sole liability of the State. If the Commonwealth committee which is to investigate this scheme comes to the conclusion that only the towns should receive a water supply and that the agricultural

areas should be excluded from the scheme, we would not require the £5,000,000 which we are proposing the Government should contribute towards the cost.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Mr. SEWARD: I move—

That the following words be inserted in lieu of the words struck out:—"such time as satisfactory financial arrangements have been made by the State and Commonwealth Governments."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the principle of the amendment on the amendment. At the moment I am not sure whether the wording is the best that might be adopted, but should any alteration or improvement be considered necessary it can be made at a later stage.

Mr. McDONALD: With great respect to the member for Pingelly, I think the amendment on the amendment leaves the Bill as it was before. It can hardly be said to carry the matter much further. The Minister will score a tactical victory, which will restore to him his former position.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the member for Pingelly had suggested that the financial arrangements should be satisfactory to Parliament, then we would have achieved something and the rights of the people would have been adequately protected.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 2 to 7, Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair: the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. DONEY: I would like the Minister to give consideration to the definition of "District." We have country towns that are municipalities and we have also towns in road board districts where very often,

to quite a substantial extent, portions of the towns are built outside the townsite proper. There is, for instance, the town of Wickepin. The official townsite is on the northern side of the line but the actual town is built on the southern side. Pretty much the same position obtains in Gnowangerup. Quite a deal of the Gnowangerup town is outside the official townsite. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition say that the central ward of Katanning is not in the actual townsite at all but away out in the bush. So it is quite possible that portion of a town will find itself rated as country land instead of district land, or vice versa. It is on the cards that this may be adjusted by a proclamation, and I understand that in quite a number of instances it has been so adjusted. But I call the attention of the Minister to the fact that so far as my knowledge goes the three cases I have quoted, and probably quite a number of others, still need the adjustment to which I have referred. In any event, I think the position should be investigated and the Minister might favour the Committee with his views on the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There might be something in the point raised by the hon. member. I notice that in the definition of "townsite" there could be a similar application of the point he has submitted. I will arrange to have the matter discussed with the Parliamentary draftsman to ascertain whether it would be necessary, to meet the particular cases instanced, to have an amendment made to the definition of "district" in the one place and "townsite" in the other.

Mr. WATTS: In order that the Minister may discuss the matter with the Crown Law authorities with some certainty as to the position, I would like to confirm to a degree the observations of the member for Williams-Narrogin. In regard to the Gnowangerup township, the town has been built on land which I understand was not reserved for a townsite at all, but was originally private property and, so far as I know, has never been declared a townsite or whatever it has to be declared in order to comply with the law in that respect. There has been no need for that to be done. The land has been subdivided and rated for road board purposes as subdivided land. In Katanning, portions of the central ward are

hardly out in the bush, but they are in subdivided land and the water board area, which has been controlled by the water board, comprises the whole of the central ward. This ward is mostly covered with houses and yet is outside the recognised township. So there is substance in the point raised, to the extent that it needs clearing up as to whether the rating would not be put out by the absence of a proper definition covering cases of this nature.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Powers of Minister in relation to construction of water works:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (c) the words "through, across or" be struck out.

If the clause is left as drafted, it will give the authorities power to put a water main through a man's paddock and cut off the areas on each side of the line, thus preventing him from gaining access to a particular part of his property. I have seen instances of that at Clackline. Such circumstances would impose considerable hardship on the man, who might have to travel a mile or so in order to reach the isolated part of his property for cultivation purposes. If the pipeline could not be taken around the man's paddock, it could be put underground.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not able to accept the amendment. Anyone who knows the Goldfields pipeline will be aware that it is above the ground and has been ever since the continuous welding process was introduced. If in any instance a pipeline has to be taken through or across a particular property, it is only done because of engineering requirements. The department would not establish a pipeline through or across a property just for the sake of doing it, but it is conceivable that in many parts of areas to be served by the proposed scheme—or in some parts at any rate—it would be necessary to put some pipes through or across a particular piece of land. It is absolutely essential for that power to be available. There may not be much land involved, but it may be very necessary for this power to be exercised in certain instances. It is not a solution of the difficulty to say that the pipes could be put underground, because there might, by

that method, be created difficulties in regard to the gravitation of the water from one particular locality to another. This provision has been operating under existing legislation for at least 40 years—longer in some instances—and I think it has worked satisfactorily to all concerned. It is not a power that is likely to be abused but is one that might be found to be absolutely essential, in certain localities, to the proper establishment and functioning of the scheme.

Mr. WATTS: Will the Minister tell us what has been the procedure during the last 40 years in regard to pipelines put across private properties, which pipelines might have the effect, were not some action taken, of preventing access from one portion of the property to another? Has it been the custom, or can he give an assurance that it will be the custom for a trafficable crossing to be made so that it will not be necessary for a man to go around the pipeline? If we can get an assurance on that subject, I think the fears of the member for Pingelly may be removed. The absence of that provision in the case of a large property where a substantial pipeline has to be taken right across it, would be an effective encumbrance to the working of the property.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would say that the department, in every such case, would be prepared to treat reasonably with the person who would be detrimentally affected or might be so affected wherever it became necessary from the engineering point of view to lay a pipeline across or through a property above ground.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following proviso be added:—"Provided that no local authority shall be requested to contribute to the maintenance of any works constructed by or on behalf of the Minister, on, through or under any road coming under the control of such local authority, nor shall any owner or occupier of adjoining or adjacent land be required to do so."

I suppose there are more drains and channels in my district than in any other in the State; and as a result I know some of the difficulties that arise. As the Minister knows, difficulty does arise in regard to whose is the responsibility for culverts and the maintenance of certain drains. For a considerable time I have been trying to have the re-

sponsibility fixed in regard to access to land-owners' property. The local authorities say that a certain drain was constructed by the Public Works Department or the Water Supply Department whose responsibility it is, therefore, to give access to a certain property. The Public Works Department says it is the responsibility of the local authority, using the argument that as the result of certain works having been constructed by that department the value of the property has been enhanced and it no longer considers it should be held responsible for the construction of culverts. This argument has gone on indefinitely. I believe the Minister is now arranging for certain officers to visit my district in order to decide whose responsibility these works are. If agreed to, the amendment will fix the responsibility on the Minister for the works he is to construct in the areas mentioned in the Bill. If that is not done, the same arguments will arise in those areas as have arisen in the South-West.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As members are aware, this amendment is not on the notice paper. After reading it through quickly I see no objection to it in principle, but I would rather that it be examined in the light of the experience of the department, and by the Parliamentary Draftsman. If no serious objection can then be raised, I will be prepared to agree to it at a later stage.

Mr. McLARTY: In view of the Minister's offer to look into the amendment, I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—Notice to be served on local authority before breaking up roads:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 the words "forty-eight hours" be struck out and the words "seven days" inserted in lieu.

Forty-eight hours' notice seems somewhat short. If it were given on a Friday afternoon the work could be started on the following Monday morning, which would not give the local authority much time. The department should know beforehand that it is going to undertake work of that kind, and I think at least seven days' notice could be given.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As emergency cases will be provided for, I have no objection to the general notice being extended, as suggested.

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

Clauses 23 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Supply to rated land:

Mr. DONEY: This clause deals with the provision of stand-pipes in certain areas. It is a valuable provision. The stand-pipes are to be erected when reticulation is delayed, and when they are required by the majority of occupiers. Would the Minister consider giving occupiers the right, by a majority, to stay out of the general scheme and under the stand-pipe scheme, where they find it satisfactory? I would also like the Minister to tell the Committee how he intends to rate water from stand-pipes. During his speech he said the rate would be substantially lower than in the case of water reticulated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not hear the first point raised by the member for Williams-Narrogin. Water from stand-pipes of the kind suggested will be made available more cheaply than is proposed in the general rating set out in the Bill. I am not at present able to say at what price water will be made available from stand-pipes, but it will be rated as cheaply as possible, because the carting of water is costly, and, apart from the cost, it takes up the time of the person who finds it necessary to cart water. The Committee may take the assurance that the water will be made available to those using it, as cheaply as possible.

Mr. DONEY: It is stated in the Bill that the stand-pipe method is for use only when reticulation has not been completed. Will the Minister consider prolonging the use of that method in cases where the users find it satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The department would be prepared to consider continuing that system where it has been established provided—I should say—it were established only in the outer areas. The stand-pipe system would not be maintained in the middle of the Great Southern district, for instance, or of the proposed northern agricultural district.

Mr. Doney: On the fringe, and when required by the majority?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the boundaries, where this system might be found satisfactory and where the farmers by petition or some other method indicated their satisfaction with it, consideration could be given to its continuance.

Mr. LESLIE: I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause (2) after the word "any" the word "such" be inserted.

There is a considerable number of stand-pipes in my electorate, for which the Government has not created any water rate. Under the wording of the clause it might be possible for a rate to be imposed on water from those stand-pipes, which, as I understand it, is not the intention of the Minister. My amendment will exempt those stand-pipes already in existence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 30—Request for supply to rated land:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

The subclause stipulates that the Minister may require the occupier of rated land to provide at his own cost and to the satisfaction of the Minister such tanks and other appliances for the storage of water for his own use as may be necessary to facilitate the equitable distribution of the water available from the main between all consumers having the right to be served. This requirement appears to be harsh and, so far I know, has not been previously imposed. The onus for arranging for the equitable distribution of the water should be on the department, not on the consumer. Who could tell exactly what tanks or other appliances would be required on this or that farm? "To the satisfaction of the Minister" would mean to the specification of the Minister. I cannot understand why this expense, which may be fairly heavy, should be imposed on people in the outer territory of the water area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object is to try to ensure an equitable distribution of water where land of high altitude has to be served. Unless such power is given,

some consumers will get all the water they need but at the expense of other farmers who, particularly in summertime when an equitable distribution would be most necessary, would get little or none.

Mr. Watts: Where would the tanks be placed; on the top of the hill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They would be placed in positions as advised by the engineers. The tanks would be used to store water so that, in the peak period of draw, there would be a distribution equitable to all consumers on that section of the pipeline. The subclause will not benefit the department.

Mr. DONEY: What the Minister desires will probably be necessary in the summer months, but I regret that the cost should be imposed on the individual who, from the situation of his land, may have to shoulder an expense of £50 or £100. Would the department be prepared to bear some of the cost?

Mr. WATTS: This is really the first amendment of major importance that has been proposed. The scheme will involve the expenditure of £9,000,000 or £10,000,000 to provide reticulated water, and the water is to be paid for at substantial rates. A 1,000-acre farm will pay something over £20, and a 2,000-acre farm, which is more likely to be the average, will pay about £40 a year for water rates, plus the cost of reticulation on the property. When water supplies are provided for large centres of population, we do not tell people it is hard to get water up the hill and that they have to provide a large tank at their own expense to be filled so that consumers in the vicinity may be served in equitable distribution. If the subclause be retained, everyone will not receive equal consideration, but those who happen to be located in a more difficult position geographically will pay double or treble for the reception of the water. This would be a most unfair load to place on the individual. The farmer is not to be asked whether he would like to put in a storage tank or whether it would be of service to him. If the Minister thinks it necessary, the farmer can be required to pay for it. Such a burden should not be imposed on the ratepayer.

Mr. LESLIE: I believe this provision has been included because the engineers anticipate a continuance of the difficulties already

experienced in other areas. From the scheme in my district, farmers are unable to obtain water when they want it because others closer to the supply are drawing at the same time. I had hoped that a similar difficulty would not occur under this scheme and that the injustice of today would not continue. Yet the Minister appears to be adding injury to injustice. Farmers will have to pay the rate and, in order that they may not be able to complain at not receiving water, they will have to provide equipment in order to be able to draw water at the department's convenience. Who is to instal the tank, the man who cannot get water when he wants it or the man who is nearer to the source of supply and therefore in a more favourable position? The subclause will perpetuate the existing difficulty. It reeks with injustice and is one of the greatest disappointments I have found in the measure. The best way to make sure that there will not be someone paying for water that he is not getting is to say, "You will get your water by incurring additional cost and putting in extra tanks." I hope the Minister will see the reason of our point of view.

The Minister for Works: I must admit I am about 49 per cent. convinced.

Mr. Watts: Make it 51 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will have some further consideration given to the point raised and would not be surprised if I did become 51 per cent. convinced. If I do I will be prepared to have this part of the clause suitably amended. In the meantime I suggest the Committee pass the clause on the clear understanding that, if need be, some reasonable amendment can be made.

Mr. Watts: If the Minister will be good enough to deal with it in this Chamber that will be satisfactory.

The Minister for Works: I agree.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister might also consider whether there is any need to make clearer, as between owner and occupier, the obligation to pay for these storage tanks. There is some suggestion that the two parties might agree, but then again they might not. There is also provision that an occupier might incur the cost himself and deduct it out of the rent. He cannot de-

duct more than one year's rent, but the cost might exceed one year's rent. Some examination of the matter might help to make the position clear to those involved.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 to 33—agreed to.

Clause 34—Water may be cut off from unoccupied premises:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (b) the word "seven" be struck out and the word "thirty" inserted in lieu.

The Minister for Works: I agree to the amendment.

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

Clauses 35 to 38—agreed to.

Clause 39—Minister may supply water by contract:

Mr. DONEY: I am a little dubious as to what is involved here. The Minister might say to whom the sale is to be made. Water may be sold to a city council or a town council or a road board, at a low rate, and resold at a profit, or it might be sold to a mine or a factory. What is to be gained by this method, and who is to gain the profit?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not intended to sell water in bulk to any organisation that would in turn sell the water to someone else at a profit. The intention is to be in a position to sell water in bulk to a goldmining company or to any industry that might find it necessary to use large quantities of water. If a wood pulping and paper making industry were established here it would use tremendous quantities of water.

Mr. WATTS: Even in those circumstances is there any justification for Subclause (2)? I do not object to the Minister's contracting with a company for the sale of water, as he has suggested, and it might be necessary in connection with the other industry that he mentioned, but Subclause (2) gives rise to the belief that such contracts as have hitherto been entered into in regard to electric current, may be repeated in regard to water. When such a clause was put into the Electricity Act the Minister in charge of the Bill, if he had been asked to express an opinion as to whether a contract such as was subsequently made, could take place,

would have said, "No Minister would do that." Subclause (1) gives the Minister power to do what he wants and which can justifiably be done, but it is not necessary to include paragraph (a) of Subclause (2), and I doubt whether paragraph (b) is a reasonable proposition. We ought not to allow the whole of the provisions of Subclause (2) to remain in the Bill because it does give an opportunity for a sort of trading in water at some future date.

The Minister for Works: I have no objection to paragraph (a) coming out.

Mr. WATTS: That will suit me. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) of Subclause (2) be struck out.

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

Clause 40—Supply of water not compulsory:

Mr. DONEY: It can be seen from the clause that if the Minister falls at all he falls on a pretty soft cushion. I want to alter that by adding a proviso. I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—
 "Provided that in any case where water has been supplied to any person and the Minister fails to continue such supply at any time for a period longer than one month, every such person to whom such supply has been discontinued shall be entitled to a rebate of the rates paid by him. The amount of such rebate shall bear to the total of such rate the same ratio as the number of days on which the supply was discontinued bears to a full year."

That is a fair and businesslike requirement. There is a contract between the Minister and each occupier, and it is to be assumed that the occupier has his rights, but it is plain that the clause gives him no rights. There is an obvious bias in favour of the Minister. There is the point, too, that the Minister may be able to supply or may not be able to supply. He might not be able to supply for one month or for six months, but whatever it is there is to be no rebate. The rate notice will be sent out in precisely the same way for the full amount, charging for the water that has been supplied and that which has not been supplied, and the occupier is legally bound to pay. No-one would claim that is giving a fair deal to the occupier.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am prepared to accept the amendment, which

will go a fair distance in affording protection to consumers in the event of any failure to supply. As this is a new scheme, it should be possible to maintain a continuous supply to consumers once they are connected up. In practice we may hope it will not be necessary to make use of this provision.

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

Clause 41—Duty to keep fittings in repair:

Mr. PERKINS: I do not think the clause is very clear. It sets out that every person supplied with water shall keep the service and communication pipe and all prescribed fittings within or attached to his land in good repair so as effectually to prevent the water from running to waste. As the clause stands, it might mean that the consumer would have to shoulder responsibility that should be undertaken by the department. In any case if the consumer allowed water to waste, he would have to pay for it at so much per thousand gallons and in the circumstances I cannot see that it matters greatly to the Minister whether or not the water is wasted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is every necessity to ensure that the consumers shall prevent wastage of water irrespective of whether the pipe concerned is on one side of the meter or the other. If wastage of water were permitted, it might be found that at times when there was a peak draw some people would not get any water at all.

Mr. SEWARD: There is another aspect. The clause refers to fittings "attached" to the consumer's land. There is a connection from the pipe into the consumer's property and to require him to keep that in good order when it was actually the department's pipe, would not be right. I do not think that is the intention, but such a construction could be placed on the clause as worded.

Mr. PERKINS: I am not at all satisfied with the clause. Portion of the department's pipes could be on a consumer's property and, although the department has never interpreted it in that way, it could be construed as placing the responsibility on the consumer to keep that piping in good repair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The intention of the scheme is for the department to provide the service to the boundary of each separate property, and the department will be completely responsible for the maintenance of the service to the boundary of each farmer's property. Once the service is extended beyond the boundary, the farmer himself will be responsible for the maintenance. Members can be completely assured that the possible risk they foresee will not exist, and certainly will not be allowed to exist in practice.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 42—Fittings not to be connected or disconnected without notice:

Mr. PERKINS: The clause provides that a farmer will not be able to connect a pipe or any other fitting or to disconnect a pipe or fitting unless he has given the prescribed notice of his intention and has received the consent in writing of the Minister or a departmental officer. I do not see the purpose of any such provision. To police it would be absolutely impossible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This provision has worked out satisfactorily in practice. There might be cases where it would be necessary for the terms of this clause to be enforced, but that would be only in very extreme cases. This is for the protection of consumers generally, and it will be administered in the same way as a similar provision in the Act has been dealt with in the past.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not happy about the position at all. It would be all right if the Minister were to authorise any action taken under this provision but, should a departmental officer decide to do so, he would not worry about the intentions of the Minister. Some such provision might be quite necessary in regard to townsites, and perhaps the Minister will consider the matter with a view to excluding farm lands.

The Minister for Works: I will give consideration to that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 43 to 45—agreed to.

Clause 46—Penalty for using unauthorised fittings:

Mr. PERKINS: If the power included in the clause were used on all occasions with

discretion, little exception could be taken to it. Paragraph (b), however, refers to any person supplied with water by the Minister who permits any pipe or fitting used in connection with the supply of water to him to be out of repair without repairing it within a reasonable time. I know this provision has been taken from the old Act, but it would be quite possible that a pipe could not be repaired and an officer of the department could take action against the consumer who would be liable to a penalty of £50 as well as the other penalties prescribed later on. I regard that as rather severe.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause is one of the most vital in the Bill and I would certainly oppose any move to amend it. I give the Committee an assurance that no departmental officer will go out in search of finicky branches for the purpose of mulcting a farmer in a fine of £50 or any other sum.

Mr. WATTS: This is the type of clause that, unfortunately, is to be found in one form or another in legislation of this nature. If administered in accordance with the strict letter of those provisions, they could cause nothing but confusion. Provisions of this nature have been included in the Water Boards Act for many years. No-one has ever taken steps to prosecute, unless there has been some flagrant attempt to spoil a water supply or damage it. At the same time the member for York was justified in pointing out to the Committee that this clause is not one to be used lightly or inadvisedly, but only when a water supply scheme has been seriously interfered with so as to make the water unpotable or otherwise injurious to the public health. I have no doubt the practice of the past will continue; if not, we shall have something to say about it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 47 and 48—agreed to.

Clause 49—Valuation:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (c) the word "seven" be struck out and the word "five" inserted in lieu.

We must expect some difference of opinion on this matter. The Minister is evidently doing his best to secure the greatest possible amount of revenue for the department.

The Minister for Works: I will meet you half way—6½ per cent.

Mr. DONEY: Members on this side are in a mood where we are not disposed unduly to dispute points with the Minister. Since the Minister is not likely to go any further than £6 10s. per cent.—

Mr. Leslie: Try to convince him.

Mr. Watts: The Minister could almost justify £6 10s., though not £7 10s. per cent.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think the Minister is giving away much. There are three methods—firstly, the capital value as arrived at by the road board; secondly, the rental value, which is the net amount which the owner would receive after deducting rates, taxes and other outgoings for the purpose of putting the land in a position to command a rental. I point out it would be extraordinary for a rural property to show a return of £6 10s. per cent. after paying outgoings.

The Minister for Works: The clause states "not exceeding."

Mr. McDONALD: Rural lands, on world-wide experience, produce low rents when compared with urban rents. I think the authorities on values put down rural lands at 4 per cent. They capitalise the land at 25 times the amount of the rent.

Mr. Doney: The reference is to both urban and rural lands.

Mr. Watts: Yes.

Mr. McDONALD: The rate of £6 10s. per cent. seems to me to be a high basis on which to rent rural lands.

Mr. WATTS: When I interjected just now that the Minister might be justified in charging 6½ per cent., but not 7½ per cent., I was referring entirely to rural lands. The clause provides that the annual value may, at the option of the Minister, be determined in one of three ways. If a property is worth £1,000, then 6½ per cent. rateable value would mean £65 per year, a matter of £1 5s. per week. Probably in most rural towns that would be the full amount of the rental value at present, as rents are pegged at the amount which was paid on the 31st August, 1939. The other system is to take the yearly rent, less a rebate for rates and taxes. This would be more favourable to the taxpayer in those circumstances, as the rental would probably be brought down to

about £50. The value fixed by the local authority would probably be based on a calculation such as I have been making. Therefore, 5½ per cent. could be justified for a property worth £1,000, after making allowance for rates, taxes and insurance. It would reduce the annual value to £55, which would be 5½ per cent. However, I think it wise for the member for Williams-Narrogin to accept the compromise and get some way towards his destination.

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

Clause 50—agreed to.

Clause 51—Rate book to be made up in each financial year and to be open to inspection:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 to 6 the words "financial year as prescribed in respect of a rating zone from time to time by by-law made by the Minister under this Act" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

This seems to me to be a cumbersome way of doing something that could easily be done by a simple method. The Minister could prescribe a year running from October to October, or from March to March, or February to February.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have to remember that this Bill will cover all country water supply schemes. At present, the financial year of various schemes is fixed by statute. For instance, the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme's year runs from the 1st January to the 31st December. I think the Water Boards Act provides that the year shall be from the 1st July to the 30th June in the next following year.

Mr. Watts: But does not the next sub-clause cover that point? You can make an adjustment and then carry on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Watts: Would it not be advisable to have one financial year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has not been found desirable up to date. I suggest to the member for Williams-Narrogin that he leave the clause as it stands, because then the existing practice could be continued. At the same time, the clause would give power to alter the year of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme to the 1st July to the next following 30th June.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister has made the position a lot plainer to me. I must confess I thought this had something to do with the arrival of water in the respective zones at odd times during the next ten years and that, because the water arrived at, say, Mukinbudin, on the 1st October, the financial year would start on the 1st November, and so on. In view of the Minister's explanation, I am not worrying whether the amendment is carried or not.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 52 to 58—agreed to.

Clause 59—Grounds of appeal against assessment:

Mr. DONEY: In effect, Subclause (1) seems to lay down the dictum that a local authority cannot possibly be rating too high. I think that is a very questionable assumption. A local authority is just as likely to rate too high as to rate too low, though I admit that generally local authorities rate quite reasonably. Frequently, a local authority engages an outside valuer, and just what ground the Minister has to assert that such a valuer, or even a local man, would not assess too high, I cannot understand. I know that this provision is in the Goldfields Water Supply Act, but I still insist the method is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: People concerned have the right of appeal against the valuation of a local authority. If they do not take advantage of that opportunity, it should be taken for granted that the valuation made by the local authority is reasonable. Therefore, if our valuation does not exceed that of the local authority, that valuation should be held to be reasonable, and no appeal should be permitted. If we allowed appeals to be lodged no matter what the valuation was, we would open the way to frivolous appeals, and would probably find ourselves faced with a lot of unnecessary work and bother.

Mr. WATTS: I can see the Minister's point of view, and it is true that there is a right of appeal from valuations of local authorities; but there is a distinct chance of anomalies cropping up. We are not going to have the water rating year necessarily between the 1st July in one year and the 30th June in the next following year. The

majority of local authorities, however, issue their valuations and rate assessments in July or, at the latest, early August, and there is a limited time within which a person may appeal. I suppose it would take one to the end of September in a road board district. The Minister's valuation may be made at some other time, based on the figures of the local authority before they were appealed against. Then later, when the one month allowed for notice of appeal to the Minister has passed, the local authority's valuation is reduced by the court. Which valuation will the Water Supply Department take?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 60—agreed to.

Clause 61—Appeals to the Minister:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (3) after the word "Minister" the words "one-half of" be inserted.

The Minister for Works: I agree to this.

Mr. DONEY: Very well. There is no need for any further explanation.

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

Clause 62—Appeals to Local Court from decisions of Minister:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the word "ten" be struck out and the word "twenty-one" inserted in lieu.

The Minister for Works: I agree.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (3) the word "ten" be struck out and the word "twenty-one" inserted in lieu.

The Minister for Works: I agree.

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

Clause 63—Hearing of appeal:

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (2) after the word "appeal" the words "by the Minister or the appellant" be inserted.

The reason for this amendment is the experience gained in regard to drainage appeals. It is very seldom that a magistrate will allow costs to a landowner who appeals, even though the appeal is successful. Magis-

trates seem to have the idea that they should not award costs against the Crown. If a landowner proves his case and is able to show that his claim is just, surely he is entitled to costs! If these words are inserted, it will be clear to the magistrate that he is at liberty to grant costs to the appellant if he thinks his case just.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: These words are not really necessary. I know of more than one instance in which a magistrate has awarded costs against a Minister. But if the hon. member will feel more assured and happier through specific reference being made in the clause to the Minister, I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 64—Advances to householders for the purpose of improvement of the standard of dwelling houses:

MR. PERKINS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following proviso be added:—“That no portion of the holding distant more than 120 chains shall be ratable.”

Under the old Goldfields Water Supply Act only the portion of the holding within 120 chains of the pipeline was ratable, but that provision has been taken out. The Minister did not go into detail as to why that action was taken, but I think it was unjust. In an extreme case a landholder might have property running back 10 or 15 miles from the pipeline, and to serve the whole of his property from the scheme he would have to reticulate it with his own pipes, which would cost him a good deal. He would be in a much worse position than the property holder whose land was adjacent to the scheme, and who therefore required only a short length of piping. I think the proper provision was that contained in the Goldfields Water Supply Act, under which only land within 120 chains was rated. If the property owner reticulated his holding and used more water, he paid for it on a gallonage basis, just as would anybody else who used excess water. That placed the Crown in no worse position than if there were a number of small holdings, only the nearest of which to the scheme was reticulated.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government considered this matter when the Bill was being framed, and I do not pro-

pose to accept the amendment. The Government believes that where land is within ten chains of a main or other pipe, from which the department is prepared to supply water, the whole of the land in the holding should be subject to rating. There would be but few cases where the land ran back a great distance from the main. I think the effect of the clause could easily be to cause large holdings to be subdivided, which would be a good thing from every point of view.

MR. PERKINS: That is not a satisfactory explanation of the provision. I take it that the Government is bringing this scheme down in order to supply water on an equitable basis. It would be undesirable to differentiate between one type of consumer and another. I was astounded to hear the Minister say he is going to use this Bill to attain the objective of closer settlement. Closer settlement is desirable, but should be attained by proper means, rather than through the provisions of a water supply Bill. Even though there might be some subdivision, as the Minister suggests, it would be more likely to take place through dummyming. If there were a holding of 10,000 acres it might be divided up, one member of the family taking the 1,000 acres nearest to the water supply main. The other 9,000 acres would then be exempt from water rates. That would produce an absurd position and give an advantage to the sharper type of individual, who could benefit from any such loophole. The 120 chains limit that I have suggested is based on the fact that that is about the maximum distance that sheep can be expected to travel to water in the summer months in the agricultural areas.

If stock are travelled longer distances to water they are liable to lose condition, and it does not make for economical stockraising. The Minister has been ill-advised to make this departure from the Goldfields Water Supply Act. If the amendment were agreed to, the department would not lose much revenue. Stockowners having large properties would find it convenient to take advantage of the water and they would pay for it through the gallonage rate. In the eastern areas, the consumption is exceeding the rebate allowed under the rate per acre. Therefore the rate per acre in the case of properties making full use of the scheme

becomes of less importance. Without the amendment, injustice might be caused to some individuals and opposition that otherwise would not be so vigorous might be engendered against the scheme.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	23

Majority against	6
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AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Perkins
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Read
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Mann	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Owen	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Cross	Mr. Needham
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Smith
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Triat
Mr. Holman	Mr. Wise
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Withers
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Leahy	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. Millington

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 65—Separate water rates may be made for each rating zone:

Mr. DONEY: The Acts referred to in the margin provide for separate rating only where the land is separately owned or used as a separate farm. Will the Minister explain why the Bill provides for a separate rate for part of a holding?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The aim is to give authority to vary the rates within a rating zone or even in respect of one holding or part of a holding. This would permit of different holdings being rated on a variable basis. It is necessary to have discretion to make the rate in one locality greater than the rate in another locality. There would be justification for applying the provision in the district of Mt. Marshall, where the texture of the land changes quickly and its value varies on account of substantial variations in the rainfall. We

must have discretion to enable us to provide for the different conditions in various localities.

Clause put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY (HOUSING OF EMPLOYEES).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [10.0] in moving the second reading said: It is well within the recollection of members that a Bill almost identical with the measure now before us was introduced in this Chamber last session by the Minister for Lands, who gave a very full explanation of it. That leaves the Bill now before us essentially a Committee Bill, as there is no need for me to repeat the reasons given by the Minister for Lands when introducing the Bill of last session. Members will recall that after the member for Sussex had spoken to the Bill last session it was referred to a Select Committee, which was afterwards converted into an honorary Royal Commission. The members of the commission made a full and extensive inquiry into this matter throughout the timbermilling areas of the State. It has placed before the Government a full report with recommendations to meet the position. The report has been laid on the Table of the House and members have had the opportunity during last week to peruse it. As I said, the Bill before us is the same as the Bill introduced last session with the exception of a few minor amendments and alterations which were recommended by the Royal Commission. The recommendations were not unanimous; a minority report was made by one member. The recommendations can be fully considered and debated when we reach the Committee stage. Any amendments which might be thought necessary to the Bill can be better considered and more fully debated in the Committee stage than at present. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.4 p.m.