

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 24th September, 1925.

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BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act Amendment (Private).

Passed.

2, Electoral Act Amendment.

3, Entertainments Tax Assessment.

4, Entertainments Tax.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL — FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill. Unfortunately when the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act was passed in 1902, Parliament in its wisdom limited the number of free passes on the trams that could be granted by the board. This was not asked for by the residents of Fremantle, but apparently members of Parliament thought they knew more about the matter than did the people of the port.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You must not reflect upon Parliament.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am stating a fact, for I was present when the Committee dealt with the matter. The board cannot grant in any one year more than ten free passes. After the war a number of our soldiers returned unfortunately incapacitated in different ways. Some were limbless, others had been gassed, and there were those that had been injured in other respects. The Tramway Board followed the example of the Government, and granted a number of free passes to these men on the tramways. Sentiment at that time was very strong. The board had no legal right to grant these passes, but it was thought both advisable and necessary that the incapacitated soldiers, who had been injured whilst on service for the people generally, should be allowed free passes on the trams in the same way that had been done on the Government trams in Perth. Since then applications have been made for free passes for blind persons. A blind person must have someone to accompany him. It is, therefore, necessary to pay two fares every time a blind person has to

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

QUESTION—STATE SAWMILLS.

Selling Agencies.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Works: 1, What is the anticipated loss to the State Sawmills in view of the recent financial difficulties of the proprietor of the State agency at Narrogin? 2, Will he review the whole position of State agencies in order to prevent similar occurrences by granting agencies only to those in sympathy with State trading?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No financial loss to the State Sawmills is anticipated. 2, Every endeavour will be made to appoint the most suitable agency in the interests of the State Sawmills.

QUESTION—HOSPITAL FOR INSANE.

Conveyance of Passengers.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: Will he lay on the Table the papers in connection with the contract recently let by the Government Tender Board for the conveyance of passengers between Claremont station and Hospital for Insane?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: The papers will be laid on the Table of the House, if permission is granted, at the next sitting.

use a tram. This matter has been before the board on several occasions, and it has been decided that it is only fair that blind persons should be allowed to travel free on the trams. The matter is entirely at the discretion of the board. Since the trams have been running it has been the practice to allow policemen in uniform and officers, who have to travel from one part of Fremantle to another, to use the trams free in connection with their duties, although to allow them to do so is not strictly in accordance with the Act. It is thought that sentiment connected with the war has been somewhat whittled away, that it is not so strong to-day respecting our soldiers as it was a couple of years ago. There may be some persons, therefore, who will raise the question as to the legality of the action of the board. That is why the board are asking for special legislation in order to give them power, in their discretion, to grant such passes as they may think fit to give. The limitation is, in the case of incapacitated soldiers or sailors who served in the war, blind persons, and members of the police force. At the time the passes were given no objection was raised. None has been raised yet, but in order to prevent any busybody who may wish at any time to take action, this Bill has been brought down. I hope no one will be able to take action. The board has certainly been acting contrary to the provisions of the Act, and they have asked me to request Parliament to ratify their action. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam [4.43]): On this occasion at all events I am thoroughly in agreement with the Minister for Lands. The board ought to have power to manage their own affairs in their own way. Particularly am I agreeable to the Bill as proposed, in view of the limitations set out in it. I am glad the board has granted passes to incapacitated soldiers and blind persons. It is desirable that they should do so. As the Minister has said, sentiment will not always be so strong as it is now concerning the after effects of the war, and it may be that some persons will object to the granting of passes to incapacitated soldiers. It is not very much to do for those men, and I have no hesitation in supporting the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill to amend the Act passed last session. Its object is to overcome a difficulty that has arisen in connection with the pearling industry. Last session's measure did not alter the position of those engaged in that industry. At all events, those working within the three-mile limit were under the previous Act. There was, however, an alteration making insurance compulsory. Previously it had never been acknowledged that indentured labourers were under that Act, and no claim for compensation had ever been submitted by an indentured labourer. Labour of that class was covered by an agreement entered into with the pearlers through the Commonwealth Government and the Government of the country from which such labour was indentured. The agreement sets out the terms upon which the native shall be remunerated in case of sickness or injury, and what compensation shall be granted in case of death. However, the introduction of compulsory insurance under last year's Act meant that the pearlers would have to insure their indentured labourers. That means rather a heavy burden on the industry, and the amounts of compensation provided in the Workers' Compensation Act are altogether out of proportion to the earnings of the coloured men and particularly are disproportionate to the corresponding amounts when paid to Australians. The loss of a finger, which might mean £100, would make a coloured man, if compensated on that basis, practically a millionaire. It was put up to the Government that once it became known to the natives that they were entitled to the £100 for the loss of a finger, they would all be running round and chopping their fingers off. Again, the amount of £750 for total disablement would make a coloured man a multi-millionaire. I do not know how one would get at who was to receive the compensation in case of

death. In many cases there might be great difficulty in proving who were the dependants and therefore entitled to the money. Such complications and difficulties would arise if indentured labourers were brought within the four corners of the Workers' Compensation Act. I wish to emphasise that this situation was not created by the Act we passed last session. That measure did not alter the situation previously existing in this respect. It was only the imposition of compulsory insurance that awakened the pearlers to their responsibilities.

Mr. George: This is a further step in the White Australia policy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that. I hesitated for some time about bringing down this amending Bill. It is a question whether we should value the life and limb of a coloured labourer at a cheaper rate than the life and limb of a white man. It is a question whether that differentiation can equitably and logically be made. There are, however, many difficulties surrounding the employment of these coloured men—their standard of living, and the value of money to them in comparison with the value of money to our own people. Those factors complicate the position, and I think that under existing conditions the industry is being asked to carry a burden that is not warranted. Under the Bill indentured labourers while employed at pearl fishing on board ship—which is according to the wording of the Pearling Act itself—will be outside the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act. The Bill amends the definition of "worker" so as to exclude indentured labourers. I have been advised that the coloured men have been illegally employed, and have not been restricted within the four corners of the terms of the agreement under which they were brought to this country. It is stated that they have not been employed exclusively at pearl fishing on board ship, but have been brought ashore and engaged in packing shell and other classes of shore work which the conditions of the indentures did not contemplate. I do not propose by the Bill to exclude the coloured men from the Workers' Compensation Act if they are employed on land.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is rather illogical.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. If the law has been broken by the employ-

ment of these men ashore, the pearlers will have to take the full responsibility. I hope that means will be devised to enforce the law, and that white men will be employed for the work on shore, the coloured men being restricted to work on board ship.

Mr. Mann: It is necessary to take the indentured labourers ashore during the monsoon season.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not saying that they shall not come ashore. Their indentures, however, only permit them to be employed at pearl fishing on board ship.

Mr. George: There might be white men employed under agreement or indentures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill cannot apply to a white man, because he would not be indentured, nor would he be returned to another country. There is no fear of any white man being affected by the Bill. The white employers should not be asked to pay indentured labourers the same rates of compensation as are payable to our own people. The Pearlers' Association have made representations to me on the subject, with regard to which I have also been approached by members holding north-western seats. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.58]: I have some hearsay knowledge of the practice, and I understand that when a pearling lugger is laid up the crew are engaged in preparing the boat for its next trip out to sea, this being part of their job. Theoretically they are never allowed to leave the foreshore, but are supposed to remain in the camp, which is on the foreshore, and to be doing their work. That work, I understand, is not shared in by the chief member of the crew, the diver; but the rest of the crew are supposed to be employed in preparing the boat for its next trip. Although I do not know that it makes any difference, because probably the crew are covered by the exemption while engaged in that work, I would have liked to hear the Minister's view as to that point. If I am not correct, I might well be corrected by hon. members who are most intimately acquainted with the position. If the exemption is only as regards the men when actually on the pearling grounds, it seems to me not to go quite far enough. The Minister seems to feel the need of some logical reason why these coloured

people should be exempted, whereas, strictly speaking, all our laws should apply to all the people in Australia, whatever their colour. The logical distinction is that, theoretically, these people never land in the country, and therefore one might say they should not have the benefit of the laws of this country, when really their homes are never here and they themselves are merely engaged in an industry off the coast of Western Australia. That seems to me the logical distinction.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.0]: I hope the Minister will look into the question to ascertain whether the men employed on the land will be covered. The owner should know clearly where he stands. I have no objection to the Bill, but we should make it clear where the responsibility of the owner really ends. The Minister has told us that while the men are actually engaged on the boat at sea or in preparing the boat for a trip, they will not be covered. No doubt some are engaged on shore doing odd jobs. If the owner is to be responsible for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act he should understand what his position actually is. The Minister desires the Act to be made perfectly clear. We could agree to the second reading of the Bill and perhaps he may consider it necessary to look into this question.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.2]: In reply to an interjection I made the Minister stated that the Bill would not apply to men on land. I did not refer to pearl-ers. I gather that the intention of the Minister is to deal with those indentured for the pearling industry. There may be some people, however, who have discontinued their pearling operations and have entered other occupations.

The Minister for Works: But they are not permitted to do so.

HON. G. TAYLOR: In view of the explanation of the Minister I do not oppose the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [5.4]: In framing the Bill I copied the exact wording of the Pearling Act so that there would be no mistake. The measure will cover the men affected for the purpose of the work for which they were indentured. If men are

employed outside the scope of their indentures the Bill will not cover them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You want that to be perfectly clear.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I discussed the point that has been raised with the Crown Law authorities. I am informed that some of these Asiatics are employed doing shipwright's work. I do not propose to exempt the employers from their responsibilities if they employ indentured labour for that purpose.

Mr. Davy: But would not it be part of their employment in some circumstances to do that work.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, that would be outside the scope of the indentures. The whole case put up on behalf of indentured labour was that the ordinary Europeans could not do the work. Their physique would not allow them to stand up to it. It was on that score that indentured labour was allowed in Australia. On the other hand there is no argument as to whether Australians can do shipwright's work.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the work may be necessary somewhere along the coast.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That would be a case of emergency. I will not grant a general exemption to free the pearl-ers from their responsibilities under the Workers' Compensation Act if they employ Asiatics to do work that can be done by our own people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You don't want them to be fishermen at sea and carpenters on shore.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. If they are employed in getting the boats ready for sea, which is in accordance with the terms of their indentures, the men will be covered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then, you are quite certain about the position.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have taken the exact wording of the Pearling Act which covers the terms of the indentures and if the men are employed outside those terms they will not be covered. I discussed this phase carefully with the officers of the Crown Law Department and the Bill covers the position.

Mr. Sampson: Asiatics are the only people employed under indentures.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. If any Asiatic breaks away from his occupation and takes other work illegally, the Bill will not exempt him. It was suggested that

Asiatic cooks should be exempt. I will not be a party to that suggestion, because any number of Australians could successfully carry out the duties of cooks in hotels. It is said that some of the employers have these indentured Asiatics around their homes when they are not at sea. If that be so, they will not be exempt from the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. Such a course would be entirely outside the conditions of the indentures.

Hon. G. Taylor: The employer will know the provisions of the indentures and he will not be placed at a disadvantage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, and if he takes the risk of employing the Asiatics outside the indentures, he will know where he stands.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But he cannot do that legally now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you do not want to provide for him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I have met the representations of the Pearlers' Association and others interested as far as I can. I think it is equitable that the Bill should be passed as it is drafted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [5.10]: I intend to be brief in speaking on the Bill. At the outset I wish to say a few words of praise in favour of the officials who have been responsible for initiating certain plans, some of which have been under consideration for some time. The officials have been waiting for a favourable opportunity to bring the proposals embodied in the Bill before Parliament. The Bill recognises that we are getting towards the limit of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme and that we should take advantage of Nature's rock catchments

for conserving water supplies and so using them that our lands far out may be worked. My speech will be in reality an introduction to the speech to be made by the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay), who has made a special study of water conservation and water supplies for the past ten years. He has a mass of statistics, weather reports, rainfall records including those of the sister States, and full information regarding the subject generally. If members listen attentively to him, they will secure much information that will be informative and may perhaps assist in securing slight alterations to the Bill that we consider necessary.

Hon. G. Taylor: A good deal of that information will not apply to the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If the hon member said that the particulars regarding Victoria would not apply, he might be on safe ground, but it must be recognised that South Australia has large areas with a light rainfall similar to much of our own. I have had placed in my hands recently plans covering about half a million acres of country lying to the eastward, and dealing with two or three schemes that are likely to be inaugurated if the Bill is agreed to. The country that has been surveyed is adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of my own electorate and there is a community of interests, in that some of the country in my electorate is similar to that which will be affected directly by the Bill. I would like to impress upon members the fact that in South Australia the provision of water supplies in the dry areas is looked upon as a national work. In areas where the rainfall is light, the settlers who are to be supplied with water, do not have to provide the sinking fund. The member for Toodyay informed me the other day that the sinking fund on the goldfields water scheme had been provided by the general taxpayers. The country that will come within the scope of the Bill is similar to the South Australian areas I have referred to and I hope the Minister will consider suggestions that will be made during the course of the debate. I believe the measure is a good and enterprising one. The utilisation of the areas away from the pipe line is a question worthy of serious consideration. Anyone who knows the country in those parts will agree that the settlement of those areas must be approached with a good deal of caution. The water supply is one of the first necessities in these light rain-

full districts. The Minister has recognised that and has admitted that one of the first things to be provided must be a water supply. The railways must follow and last, but not least, the right type of man must be settled there. I trust the rating clauses will be slightly altered to allow for the sinking fund to be held over in the initial stages of settlement, but I will leave that for other members to deal with during the Committee stage.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [5.15]: It is very pleasing to me that the Government have brought down the Bill, more particularly as it deals with my electorate to a greater extent than any other electorate in the State. It applies to my electorate because the No. 1 water scheme is to serve an area of 500,000 acres. It is a new departure in this State, inasmuch as the water is to be supplied from granite outcrops and laid on to the farms. We have had extensions from the goldfields water scheme, but this is the first attempt at the rock catchment system, on which to base district water supplies. I and the people I represent have been battling for many years to get a water scheme for the districts. We have studied the question closely, and are perfectly satisfied that our particular district will never attain full prosperity until rock catchments are used to give us a permanent water scheme. I listened carefully to the Minister's speech when he was moving the second reading. I have been advocating this scheme for seven years, and it appeared to me he had taken the best of my arguments while leaving the worst alone. He informed the House why these water schemes were necessary. He illustrated the fact that as we get into the far eastern portion of the wheat belt the areas of better class land are larger in the wetter portions and the country flatter, and in consequence in large areas of forest country the rainfall, although light is sufficient for wheat growing. But at the same time there is no run-off in light rainfall years. Because of that, the water from the scheme is necessary. When we come to discuss the financial side of the scheme some hon. members may say the cost is too much, and that the settlers cannot afford to pay the rate. The Minister said that a deputation had assured him the settlers were prepared to pay £50 per 1,000 acres. I have introduced various deputations to the Minister, and I can confirm what he says. Indeed I

have been a member of similar deputations for years past, and we have invariably stated that we were able to pay the rate. Under a scheme that the Minister for Works tentatively gave me some time ago, and which was to serve hundreds of thousands of acres in my electorate, the rating was to have been £57 per 1,000 acres. However, that scheme was abandoned because it was found that it would not be possible to provide sufficient water from the goldfields main. So we have this new scheme for rock catchments. The Minister, the other night, mentioned that South Australia has large areas of agricultural land supplied with water schemes at very low net revenue on capital cost. The Commonwealth "Year Book" for 1924 states that in 1923 country waterworks served 4,933,732 acres at a capital cost of £4,562,092. That does not mean open channels as some members suggested the other night, but means the ordinary reticulation to the farms. The capital cost was £4,962,092 or nearly £1 per acre, and the net revenue on the capital cost was .90. Personally I do not think those people in South Australia who are getting the water pay their fair share. I do not expect this country to establish an agricultural water scheme at the cost of the State; we who are to participate in the scheme are quite capable of paying for it, and I am not even asking that we should pay so little as .90 per cent. on the capital cost. I speak with some feeling on the subject of water. This particular scheme will not serve the district in which I live, but will go much further east. My district is in a slightly heavier rainfall. The country is more undulating, we have better natural runs-off, with not so big an area of forest country, and so we are in a better position to supply our own water than are the people to be served by the scheme. I have spent a lot more per acre for water than will those who are to be brought under this scheme, notwithstanding which I should be prepared to pay my full share of the cost of the scheme if the water were laid on to my farm. It is provided in another Bill that those who at present have water supplies on their farms shall be exempt. I can speak for the people in those districts. They have discussed this problem, and I know that none of them has what might be termed a permanent water scheme. And even if they had a scheme that would be effective in nine years out of 10 there must always come the odd year when water is required to be drawn

from outside sources. The rating is a matter of insurance. When we insure our crops against fire and hail we do not expect them to be burnt, so there will be very little objection from those who have water supplies of their own to paying their portion of the cost of the proposed scheme.

Mr. George: It is wonderful the ingenuity shown in raising objections to paying.

Mr. LINDSAY: There are many water schemes in existence to-day. We have extensions from the goldfields main supplying Toodyay, Goomalling, York, Beverley, and other places. Those districts are in fairly heavy rainfall areas and moreover, the majority of the farmers there have natural water supplies in the shape of wells. Yet when the permanent water supply was put into those districts everybody concerned was rated with little or no objection. On the Address-in-reply, when speaking to this subject, I quoted certain figures received from South Australia, including the Public Works report for 1924. Also I showed hon. members certain maps, which I have here now. On going into the financial side of that report I was surprised to find the very low rate struck—a maximum of 4d. per acre—and the very small percentage of interest paid by the users of the water. I also noticed that a Royal Commission had reported on further extensions of those water schemes. Wanting to find out all about it I wrote to the Commissioner for Public Works in South Australia for information on the subject. I have to thank that gentleman for the trouble he must have gone to in getting the information required. Here is his reply to me:—

Sir, The Commissioner of Public Works (Hon. L. L. Hill) desires me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 4th inst. conveying thanks for the information sent you in connection with the water supplies in the agricultural areas, etc. In compliance with the request contained in the last paragraph of your communication I am forwarding, under separate cover, copies of reports of the Royal Commission on Water Supply. These reports are spread over a period of years, from 1916 to 1918. It would appear that the first progress report dealing with Eyre's Peninsula supply and the seventh with respect to the rating system in this State, would be most helpful to you in your inquiries.

In dealing with that, the first problem I want to put up is why these water schemes should be installed. I have had to cart water myself. I have lived in those districts for many years and I know that for at least a few months in every year the majority of

the settlers have to cart water. Although we get water at railway sidings for which we pay half a crown per hundred gallons it is not the price that concerns us so very much. The fact that we have men and horses and wagons on the road carting water means that we cannot utilise the men and horses to farm our lands just when we want to do so, and in consequence our crops are frequently put in too late. Then there is the fact that we have not in those districts the water essential to the running of stock. It must be remembered that as the land becomes more fully developed it is necessary that we shall carry sheep in addition to growing wheat. The conditions of South Australia are closely comparable with those of Western Australia. In South Australia there are immense tracts where, for the prosperity of the State, it is necessary to grow wheat, sheep and wool. In Western Australia, perhaps, this necessity is not so great for we have our gold mines and also our timber forests. Nevertheless the time is approaching when we shall be dependent more and more on wheat production. South Australia has extended her farming areas into some very dry country and to keep those lands occupied she has found it necessary to provide water. Here is an extract from the sixth progress report of the Royal Commission on Water Supply:—

Settlers in the large area of country proposed to be served by these schemes have for years urged the provision of an extensive water supply in order to meet the fast growing requirements of the people, and to enable districts now inadequately supplied to have the water which is essential to the proper development of the country.

And again:—

The evidence before the Commission is strongly in support of the Government undertaking water conservation on a large scale, so that the residents of important towns and the large population represented by the settlers on the farming and grazing lands may have a permanent water supply.

This report deals with Mt. Remarkable and Spring Creek, with a rainfall of from 18 to 21 inches. So in that district a water scheme was necessary. The Government have since put that scheme into operation. This report dealt also with the water scheme for Eyre's Peninsula, an area of over 6,000,000 acres. We are proud of our goldfields water scheme, regarding it as a huge undertaking, the largest in Australia, but this scheme dwarfs it into insignificance. I do not intend to labour

this question, but I want to quote these remarks from the Royal Commission's report on Eyre's Peninsula:—

No other extensive portion of South Australia is so sorely and supremely in need of a permanent water supply as Eyre's Peninsula. Unless provision is made in this direction without delay disastrous results to settlement, especially in the hundreds which have been opened up of recent years, are inevitable. Through the absence of an adequate water supply the development of vast areas of agricultural and grazing land is being seriously retarded.

There is quite a lot more in the same strain, but I do not intend to quote further from it. In endeavouring to convince members who may be opposed to a proposal of this kind, one needs to know how much to say and how much to omit. The quotations I have given show that the Royal Commission in South Australia have clearly proved to the Government there that until the drier areas are supplied with water schemes, the country cannot be adequately settled. Let me quote from the seventh progress report dealing with the rating system to give some idea of the financial position. This is a report to the end of 1918, and it shows that while the area of the water districts was 4,307,169 acres, the capital cost was £5,899,443 and the percentage of net revenue to capital cost was 2.63, while the average annual loss for seven years was £69,771. The report also states—

The works are maintained out of revenue, but no provision has been made for the reduction of the capital cost by the establishment of a sinking fund. In consequence of the continuous annual losses on practically every scheme, no provision for a sinking fund can be made except at the expense of general revenue. Possibly, in view of the indirect benefits which the State reaps from water conservation schemes, there may be some justification for a contribution from the general revenue towards a sinking fund, but the community should not be asked to make up the whole of the deficiency on the water works, which up to the 30th June, 1918, after allowing for 3.75 per cent. interest for the last year, aggregates £1,852,997.

The Royal Commission made certain recommendations, including one for an increase in the price of water. At that time the rate was very low, most of the water districts being rated at 2d. per acre. The rate was afterwards increased to 4d., and the price of water was advanced from 2s. to 4s. per thousand gallons. The increased revenue thus obtained was £16,000 a year. Here is an extract from the "Government Gazette"

of last year dealing with the rating on country lands in South Australia—

Upon all lands abutting on the main or pipes of reticulation within the first mile, 4d. per acre per annum. Prices to be charged for water from and after the 1st July, 1924, for country lands 4s. per thousand gallons.

Notwithstanding the great losses on country water schemes in South Australia, the increase in the rates was not so great as one would have expected. I stated at the outset that although our agricultural lands must be opened up, I did not think the Government should be expected to extend water schemes into the farming districts unless the people were prepared to pay for them, if not in the early stages, at least in time. Some members might contend that the capital cost of these schemes is too high. The capital cost of the No. 1 scheme was £270,000, and I understand that 7½ per cent. interest and sinking fund is being charged on it. The Barossa water scheme in South Australia serves 670,982 acres, and the capital cost was £857,692, or considerably over £1 for every acre served. The Yeldulknie water scheme serves 527,936 acres, and the capital cost was £291,460. In another water district the acreage served was 477,000, and the capital cost was £866,000. I quote those figures to show that the capital cost of water schemes in South Australia is greatly in excess of the capital cost of the schemes suggested here. If we take the £270,000 scheme which is serving 500,000 acres, we have an average cost of approximately 11s. per acre, but the average cost of several of the South Australian schemes is over £1 per acre. One of the advantages of Western Australia over South Australia in the matter of water supplies is that nature has provided us with granite outcrops. Out in the drier part of the wheat belt there are fine granite hills at about every ten miles. For one scheme three of these granite hills have been utilised for dams, and the water is to be reticulated from those dams. If it is necessary to reticulate water from a central reservoir over long distances, large pipes are essential to carry it. This, of course, adds to the capital cost. Having the three dams, it is possible to use small pipes over the whole area. Thus, instead of supplying water to 500,000 acres from one reservoir, it will be supplied from three dams and the cost will therefore be so much cheaper. It may be questioned whether it is worth while

spending up to 11s. per acre on water supplies. My water scheme has cost me 16s. per acre, and even so I have not a satisfactory scheme. If people in those districts spent as much per acre as I have done, they could not get as much water as I have. Consequently a much greater expenditure would be necessary in their case. If the water mains passed my property, notwithstanding that I have spent so much to get a water supply, I would willingly pay the Government rate in order to have an adequate supply. There is only one objection I have to the scheme. A fortnight ago I passed through the Kununoppin district. The settlers had held a meeting that day, believing the cost of the water scheme would be £50 per thousand acres and they unanimously agreed to take the water at that rate. I told them that the rate would be £45 and not £50 per thousand acres. I do not think Western Australia should attempt to bear the huge loss that South Australia is carrying. I believe the value of the water to the land will more than compensate for the price charged for it, but in the early years of settlement until farmers get their land cleared, their fences erected, and their holdings stocked with sheep, they cannot use the water as they would do in later years. The only suggestion I have to make to the Government is that the Bill be amended to provide that, in the first ten years of settlement, farmers shall be charged the full rate of interest but no sinking fund. In making that request, I am asking nothing unreasonable, because we know that the Agricultural Bank charges only interest for the first ten years. Neither sinking fund nor repayment is asked during that period. The Agricultural Bank authorities recognise that during the first ten years a settler is struggling, and that his financial position is much better in the next ten years. Let me also show that a precedent has been established in connection with water schemes. In 1923 the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, stated that the general revenue had provided £1,700,000 towards the sinking fund of the goldfields water scheme, the total capital invested in the scheme at the time having been £2,700,000. That scheme was provided to keep the gold-mining industry going, and rightly so. The agricultural industry, however, is on a different basis, because the more the land is worked, the better the asset becomes. The soil, when worked, is a constantly increasing asset for the good of

future generations. When we build rail ways, roads, schools, hospitals, and water supplies for the goldfields, we know that we are providing for a diminishing industry which, unless new fields be discovered will eventually become extinct. It was quite right to do that in the early stages because the goldfields have done a great deal for Western Australia.

Mr. George: And Western Australia has done a lot for the goldfields.

Mr. LINDSAY: I agree with that. I am asking only that the farmers be given a reasonable opportunity to pay for water supplies. The Premier, when speaking of the South-West recently, said that if we came to the conclusion that we were going to lose one million, two millions, or three millions in developing that part of the State, we must look to the future and spread the loss over a long period of years. The Premier's remarks showed that the State is prepared to develop the South-West and to lose a lot of money in the first few years. I do not desire that any money should be lost on agricultural water supplies. If I thought money would be lost, I would not ask for it. When we undertake drainage in the South-West I believe that the main drains will be regarded as a national work, and that the settlers who derive benefit from them will not be required to pay for their construction and maintenance. The rabbit-proof fence was erected as a national work and was paid for by the general taxpayers. The people I am principally concerned about are outside the fence, and those who have lived outside the fence for many years have contributed their quota, as have other people. Really they have been paying to keep the dingoes and rabbits in their midst and have not complained. It is too much to ask settlers to begin to pay for water supplies straight away. No. 1 water scheme is to serve 500,000 acres and the rate to be charged is £45 per thousand acres. That rate was struck in order to meet interest, sinking fund and working expenses. An amount of £45 per thousand acres on 500,000 acres would give £22,500 per annum, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on £270,000 would give £20,250 per annum, leaving £2,250 for working expenses. If we reduced the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest and sinking fund to $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which I maintain is a fair charge for the first ten years, it would return on the £270,000 a sum of £14,850, and working expenses

£2,250, thus enabling the rate to be reduced from £45 to £30 per thousand acres. I maintain that, in order to assist in the development of the country, farmers should be asked to pay 5½ per cent. for the first 10 years, and after that they should pay the whole of the cost. The sinking fund that was provided in connection with the Goldfields Water Scheme, it was expected, would pay off the cost of that work by 1927. It was found that the sinking fund was accumulating so rapidly that the whole of the scheme would be paid for principally by the people who had benefited by it up to the year 1927. The sinking fund was paying off the scheme much too quickly. The position is that the man who is coming after us should bear a proportion of the cost. His property will increase in value probably 300 per cent. and he should be expected to contribute towards that sinking fund rather than the man who is starting out now. The farmer who is improving his property gets the benefit of the water from the scheme and for that reason it is not fair to ask those who are established to contribute the whole of the sinking fund payments. In conclusion, I wish to refer to rock catchments. In coming across one of these a little time ago, I said to a man who was with me, "That is a fine catchment, is it not?" He replied, "Yes, nature put it there and we must use it." I agreed with that. I have heard quite a lot in the past about monuments, but if the Government carry out the schemes that they propose, they will erect to themselves monuments which, more than anything else, will be regarded by the community to be served, as something done towards creating prosperity, and not merely monuments to be gazed upon and that are not of any practical value. Generations coming along afterwards will be able to point to them and say, "Here you have the work of statesmen." I repeat that nine-tenths of the people in the districts served by the scheme are in favour of it and of the price suggested by the department. We are prepared to pay that. My remarks have been made for the purpose of trying to get some reduction in the early stages of settlement. I have not discussed the subject with anyone outside, and no one has suggested that I should make an appeal for the reduction. I regard it as my duty to advance reasons in favour of a reduction. I hope that the second reading will be carried and that the Bill will become law.

MR. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.50]: I congratulate the Minister on bringing forward this Bill. The question of constructing tanks in order to equalise the distribution of water has been under consideration for some years, and I believe that the search for suitable catchments has also been going on for a considerable time. In the past the trouble in connection with supplying water from the goldfields mains has been that funds have not been provided by the Government for the use of the Minister to enable him to lay pipes of sufficient size. The people who have derived a benefit from the scheme are those who have been close to the source of supply.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The object now is to provide storage tanks.

Mr. GEORGE: People further along, of course, will not get on so well. If tanks are put in, arrangements will have to be made that so soon as the tanks are filled there shall be power to cut off the supply from a particular person whose tank may be full, so that it may be diverted to other tanks connected with the subsidiary main. Of course, there are bound to be some difficulties in connection with the affair, but what strikes me as important is the clause that provides that if an owner does not construct his tank, power is given to the board to put in and to arrange for the deduction of the cost in one year. The cost of a tank may run to £100, or even as much as £500. Some consideration should be given to the owner of a property.

The Minister for Lands: The cost might be merely £10 or £12.

Mr. GEORGE: A man must put in a tank of 3,000 or 5,000 yards. Anyhow, that is a matter for inquiry, and the Minister will probably find that there is something in it deserving of consideration.

Hon. J. Cunningham: I think you will find that there is a similar provision in the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act, 1911, and that it has acted very well up to date.

Mr. GEORGE: The question of the construction of tanks had hardly come into the domain of practical politics at that time. There are some very large holdings and an owner may want water for his sheep that may be a mile and a-half or two miles away. The payment of a rate of two shillings in the pound on the unimproved capital value seems to me to be pretty strong. I do not like the idea at all. A

man has to pay local rates and taxes and State and Federal taxes, and then by putting on another 2s. in the pound we are making him pay to such an extent that it will hardly be possible for him to get about.

Hon. G. Taylor: He is getting value in the water supplied.

Mr. GEORGE: The policy has been to settle people on the land; I am afraid the practice has been to convert people into rate-payers and taxpayers almost to the limit of their earnings.

The Minister for Lands: And that policy has resulted in a big deficit to the State.

Mr. GEORGE: It is also provided that an owner or occupier cannot be supplied with water unless he pays for the communication with the pipe. That seems to be an innovation.

Hon. J. Cunningham: That refers to the communication pipe from the extension.

Mr. GEORGE: Why should a man pay for the communication from the main to his boundary?

Hon. J. Cunningham: That provision is already in the existing Act and you have been administering it for years.

Mr. GEORGE: That is no reason for its continuance. The hon. member is my worthy successor and should correct the errors that I fell into. He should be able to avoid the pitfalls I encountered. However, the principle of the tanks is right and, provided the legislation is administered sympathetically, I am of opinion that the proposal will be of great service.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.55]: The idea of the Minister is to hold up water in rock catchments. He will have to be guided by his engineers as to the quantities to be held up. I am doubtful about tanks being constructed to provide enough water for the supplying of large areas of country. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has told us about water schemes in the other States. They are very different propositions because there a great deal of water is available, and it is conveyed very often in open channels, and in considerable quantities, to a large number of farmers. This, too, is done at a very cheap rate. Water supply is a national work. Members are aware that we cannot make many more extensions from the goldfields water main for the reason that the pipes are fully taxed now. The Minister will therefore have to look around for other means

of storing water. I entirely agree with what it is intended to do. As a matter of fact, the proposal now before us was under consideration a year or two before I left office; it was in operation to the extent that inquiries were being made. The difficulty has been to secure near the rocks holding-ground of sufficient size to give adequate storage. The Minister will probably tell us what happened at Yandegin Rock. I do not know whether the investigations have been completed. A good dam was put in at Wyalcatchem, and the Minister, I understand, has completed that work, but unfortunately this year there is not much water in the dam. Still, the dam is there and with a reasonable rainfall it will fill. The Minister is quite right in saying that without water a farmer cannot carry stock, and that if he cannot carry stock he cannot make the best use of his land. The Minister's desire to supply water to the farmers is a laudable one, and I will do all I can to assist him in achieving that object. That was our object for some time, but the trouble was to get supplies of water inland. Water has to be stored near Perth and pumped to Kalgoorlie. If it could have been stored on the other side of the range that would have been done. We have no great rivers, and no means of holding up large quantities of water anywhere but in the South-West, where it is not so much needed as it is inland, in the wheat belt and on the goldfields. The only alternative is that mentioned by the Honorary Minister of holding up water that is run off the rock catchments. I want to be clear on the point that before the tax is imposed it will be certain that the farmers who are to pay it shall get their water both in good and bad seasons.

Hon. J. Cunningham: That will depend entirely upon the rainfall. I do not know how we are to control that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister cannot control that. He cannot provide against extraordinary happenings, and no one would expect him to do so. He knows what the rainfall has been over the years that have passed, and can act accordingly. It is all a question of rainfall, the area of rock that is available, and the means of storing the water when it is obtained. We have had great trouble in getting water supplies for our towns along the Great Southern railway such as Katanning, Wagin and Narrogin. The rainfall is good there and we have large outcrops, but still we have

had difficulty. The Minister is also having difficulty. There is hardly a town along the Great Southern that is adequately supplied with water.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Some faulty work has been done down there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A lot of good work has been done there too.

The Minister for Lands: Has not the trouble been want of money more than anything else?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is the catchment that is the trouble.

The Minister for Lands: It is a question as to whether it pays.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The catchments are the trouble. These schemes were put in hand under the last Labour Government from 1911 to 1914 and 1915. We tried to correct the faults that remained through the years 1916 and 1917, and now the Minister will say he is trying to correct the faults that occurred during our period. The catchments and the holding grounds have been the trouble. I do not know that anyone is particularly to blame in the matter, but the fact remains that the towns are not well supplied. If we cannot hold up enough water for the towns I do not see how we can supply a large area of land which is to carry stock. I want the Minister to assure the House that before he levies this tax it will be absolutely certain that, given a reasonable rainfall, the water will be available in at least sufficient quantities to warrant the imposition of the tax. I do not know what the Minister proposes to charge, but he does propose to charge 1s. per acre plus £5 holding fee.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Not on all land. That is the maximum amount provided under the Bill. The rate of tax on the unimproved capital value depends entirely on the cost of the construction of the work.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know the Minister will levy a charge of 1s. per acre, because we have had experience of such work. We know it takes 1s. an acre, in some cases where water schemes have been laid on from the Kalgoorlie main under agreement, to meet the cost.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Only in one case, on an area covered by 42 miles of extension as against 600 odd miles of extensions that have been constructed. I refer to the Belka area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: For the most part only small pipes are being run out, and they are altogether inadequate for the work the land ought to do. In the case of Belka, however, an adequate supply of water can be obtained. There is also an extension to Goodmalling through a 6-inch pipe, and that also is a substantial scheme. Most of the other extensions are through comparatively small pipes. They were put down at a time when the water was urgently needed, and no other pipes were available. Further, the money could not have been found for bigger pipes.

The Minister for Lands: Money does play a big part in the matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. When some of the schemes were put in, it was a question of time. The water will not be available to the farmers to justify anything like a charge of 1s. an acre. It is ridiculous to ask people to pay 6s. a thousand gallons in order that they may water their stock. It cannot be done.

Hon. J. Cunningham: It is done to-day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The cost was reduced to 2s. 6d.

Hon. J. Cunningham: In connection with the new extensions which you undertook some years ago the charge is 6s. 8d. per thousand gallons.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: To what does the Minister refer?

Hon. J. Cunningham: They were put down during your term of office.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The rate was reduced. The argument was put forward that the farmers could pay this sum, but I held the view that they cannot pay anything like that amount for stock purposes. They contend that they can, and must have water, and in some cases they have paid this sum. I am not quite clear about the charge in every case, but I know the price was reduced from 6s. to 2s. 6d. per thousand for most of the schemes, if not for all of them. It is not a question of accusing us of charging either 6s. or 2s. 6d. I merely state that 6s. is too much in any circumstances, even if there were an abundance of water in season and out of season available from the Kalgoorlie main. The Minister is facing a different proposition. In a good season the farmers can store sufficient water in their own dams. The advantage of the Minister's scheme should be that he can supply water both in good and

bad seasons. He talks about a tax of 1s. an acre as a light thing, whereas it is a big thing. All these taxes retard production and interfere with the chance of employing people, and do incalculable harm unless the farmers get value for their money.

Hon. J. Cunningham: This is a service to provide them with water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister must be careful to see, before he spends large sums of money on the work and before he imposes a tax, that he can actually store the water. He must take the responsibility of providing the water before he imposes the tax. When the Minister undertakes to reticulate water from any rock catchment over a large area of land he is assuming a responsibility that he should undertake only after careful consideration. An area of 100 acres is not much from which to run a water supply over a large area of country. Nature has placed these rocks to be used for water catchments, and if the Minister can use them he will do something that will benefit the farmers. A tax of 1s. per acre, plus a holding fee of £5, plus the cost of connecting his farm with the scheme by means of pipes, will mean that the farmer will be getting very dear water. The Minister provides that there shall be a tax of 2s., with a minimum of 1s. per acre.

Hon. J. Cunningham: There is no minimum charge of 1s. per acre.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then it is a maximum charge of 1s. In the case of inferior land he proposes to put on a tax of 2s. in the pound on the capital value. I do not suppose anyone else in Australia has suggested such a tax for a purpose of this kind.

Hon. J. Cunningham: There is a maximum of £50 per thousand acres.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would remind hon. members that they are discussing Committee matters. They must discuss principles, not details.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is nothing to prevent us from referring to the charge that is to be imposed under this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not to debate it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What can we do?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must confine himself to the principles of the Bill, and should not deal with the details of the clauses.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am referring to the tax the Minister proposes to impose upon the people in return for the services he proposes to render. I am pointing out that there is to be a tax of 2s. in the pound on the capital value, and that this represents a very high tax.

Hon. J. Cunningham: On the capital unimproved value.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that when pipes are run through the country they must pass through both good and bad land, and that it costs just as much to run them to good as to bad land. We have to be careful before we saddle the people with more than they can reasonably be asked to bear. There is no question about the water being necessary and about its value. It is all a question of cost.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter which should be decided in Committee.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course. It is a serious question. If we can discuss only the question of when the Heavens will send down the water, how it can be stored when it is sent down, how it can be conveyed to the farmer, how the farmer can give it to his stock, how his stock can be fattened, and how the fat stock can be taken to market, we shall be limited indeed in the debate upon the second reading. These principles are all understood. The only doubt is as to whether the Minister can face the proposition within reasonable limits regarding cost. We know that in our dry areas a great deal more can be done in the direction of furnishing an adequate supply of water. If we could carry to our farmers large supplies such as is done in other countries, they could probably recover the cost of the service out of the irrigation of half an acre of land. That, however, cannot be done. We never shall have enough water to enable us to do anything of the kind. There are many reasonable provisions in the Bill with which one can very well agree. The principle underlying it is not so much the need for water supply, and the possibility of storing it, as the cost that the water will be to the man to whom it is to be supplied.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Before the Minister goes far with this proposal, which we all agree ought to receive earnest consideration, I hope he will take the fullest

opportunity of discussing it with the most eminent engineers, in order that we may be assured that we are embarking upon a sound proposition. I am satisfied that the Minister is fully alive to his responsibilities and desires to do justice to the people whom he is seeking to serve. However, the Minister being new to office, I may remind him that he will not always be there. This scheme of his can hardly meet the total outlay of money from the Treasury. Still, water supply can very well be in part a national work. Our water troubles in the wheat belt have been very real. They have been overcome partly by wells, and partly by dams, which have cost a good deal. In the early days of the inner wheat belt there was much trouble with regard to water. To-day on most farms in the inner wheat belt there is a good supply of water, and many stock are kept. The Minister's proposal is to charge the people the tax in the hope of being able to provide them with sufficient water to allow of their keeping stock that will not only pay the tax but also return a profit. I hope that laudable desire will be accomplished. Water troubles are inseparable from the work of settling country where the rainfall is less than 20 inches. If such country is not fed by streams, its settlement must always be a difficult matter. Whilst I shall vote for the second reading, I do hope that before we come to a vote the Minister will assure us that he intends to use every possible means to satisfy himself that once the farmer has the tax imposed on him he will receive the service for which he pays—a supply of water adequate for all agricultural needs, including stock. If our unstocked lands in the agricultural areas settled recently were stocked, we should probably have another few million sheep in this country. We cannot farm satisfactorily without stock, except for a few years after going upon the land. Therefore something has to be done to procure an adequate water supply. My one desire is that the supply should be given at the lowest possible cost in all the circumstances.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [7.37]: One of the schemes under this Bill is to be located in my electorate, I believe. In the Kondinin district the water position is acute during various periods of the year. The rainfall there is not so high as along the Great Southern railway. Frequently there is not sufficient rainfall, or the catchment is not suffi-

ciently good, and the dams do not become filled. Another danger is that the ground of the catchment area may be of a salty nature. In the neighbourhood of Lake Kondinin and the others in that chain of lakes, it is unsafe to put down a dam to any depth, as the water is apt to become salty. I hail the Bill with pleasure, because if it is successful it will greatly enhance the value of land in the Kondinin district. That land is now worth £5 or £6 per acre, but the figure will be greatly enhanced by the success of the scheme which the Bill proposes. Doubtless there will be a few complaints in some of the districts to be served, complaints made by people who have already provided themselves with water supplies. In some parts of the Kondinin district that is the case, and dams there have never been empty. Those people, I take it, will have to be rated under the scheme. The proposal, I understand, is to pump water into a reservoir in a high position, and to reticulate as far as the capacity of the dam will serve. All the land that can possibly be reached by reticulation must be taken in; otherwise the scheme will not pay. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) explained the South Australian system. In South Australia there are some great streams, such as this State does not possess. In South Australia dams or weirs are put across creeks, and a creek may extend over many miles. In connection with our scheme, the catchment areas consist of rocks, and the only way a rock catchment dam can be filled is by a thunderstorm. A storm might occur within two or three miles of a dam, but not touch the particular spot, which would be very hard luck. Even with a good rainfall, there is the danger that sufficient water may not be caught to fill a dam. I know the engineers have gone carefully into the matter, and have calculated how much water will be caught from a rock catchment. It is estimated that from a fall of 10 or 12 inches so many million gallons will be caught. The venture is a bold one, and the Government are to be commended for it. There is no other means of supplying the dry areas with water. During the last two summers water has been carted there over a distance of as much as 50 miles, and the cost has been from 2s. to 3s. per 100 gallons. When carted by teams and supplied to houses, the water has cost up to 4s. 6d. per 100 gallons. The financial part of the Bill pro-

vides that municipalities and townsites shall not be included in the maximum rate. Perhaps the Minister will explain whether there is a differential system of rating for municipalities and townsites. Kondinin itself is growing into a large town, and a great deal of water will be required to supply the people. Along the Great Southern railway the towns which have water supplies rate at about 3s. in the pound. All road boards are not rating on the unimproved value; some rate on the capital value. Finance is going to be a serious question. If the maximum rate of 1s. is to be charged, it will mean a perpetual burden on the people. However, I do not think they will complain about that, because an adequate supply of water will greatly enhance the value of their properties. There is another scheme in my district, though I do not know that it is included in the Minister's proposal. At Gorge Rock there is almost a natural hollow, across which a weir could be put at small cost. However, the area to be served by that supply is not great, and the people in the vicinity have adequately supplied themselves with water. There again complaints might arise. People who have an adequate water supply will contend that it is hard on them to be rated in order to make the scheme payable.

Hon. G. Taylor: That will have to be done in every other place.

Mr. BROWN: Probably. If the scheme, as I hope, proves successful, it will be the greatest of blessings for the dry areas. Nature has placed rocks in our dry areas for a purpose, and our present Minister for Water Supply has discovered that purpose. I assure him that if the scheme succeeds, his name will go down for ever more as that of the man who had the pluck and determination to solve the water difficulty. As Kondinin grows, an important railway junction will be established there; and that cannot be done without an adequate water supply. Merredin, which is on the goldfields pipe line, and thus is already supplied with water, has become an important railway junction, and Kondinin is bound to become one also. The Honorary Minister's scheme is a bold experiment, and it is quite possible that if dams are constructed this year a quantity of water will get into them because the year has not yet gone, and one big thunderstorm would almost fill the catchment in a rock area. Again I con-

gratulate the Minister, and I appeal to members to pass the Bill.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [7.46]: I congratulate the Minister on having brought forward the Bill, and I hope the scheme will prove successful. Some members on this side seem to be very much concerned about the provision for rating. For my part I pay less attention to that than to the question whether the scheme has been well thought out. There are several conditions to be considered in securing water in the manner contemplated in the Bill. We are dealing with rock catchments, a totally different proposition from the ordinary conservation of water by dams. When constructing a dam it is necessary first to get a good catchment area and then to consider the holding capacity of the ground. From my experience on the goldfields I know that it is difficult to find good holding ground in the immediate vicinity of rock outcrops, for such ground is usually very porous. Then, even if the ground holds well, the engineers advising the Minister must be satisfied as to the evaporation. On open waters on the goldfields evaporation is calculated at about 8ft. per annum. If it be anything like that in the area where this scheme is to be put into operation, those advising the Government will have to consider whether or not the rock catchments will require to be covered in order to minimise evaporation in the reserve tanks that are to be erected on the various holdings. Should the farmer neglect to make that provision, power is given in the Bill to the board to do it for him. That is a wise provision notwithstanding that it has been opposed by members on this side of the House. Such provision must be made if we are to get the full value of the scheme. From my experience of water conservation in Queensland and in New South Wales I say we require to know that we shall be able to use all the water impounded; and we can only do that by making every landholder husband the water sent to him. For he will be paying, not by the thousand gallons, but on his acreage and consequently he may not be so very particular as to how much water he uses or to what use he puts it. All these conditions will have to be well weighed and well watched. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) who knows intimately one of the districts where this scheme is to be put into operation, says that in that district they have those granite

outcrops eight or ten miles apart. That being so, there will be no danger of scarcity of water there. A rock catchment means that every drop of water falling on it is conserved. On the goldfields we had experience of the building of dams. Some 23 years ago one was built midway between Mt. Malcolm and Leonora, to supply the railway. In the last 20 years that dam has never once been empty. The water there is thrown back for miles. Yet when that dam was being constructed people of seven and eight years' knowledge of the goldfields declared that it would be a white elephant, that there would never be sufficient rain to fill it. Still, as I say, for 20 years now that dam has not been without water. It depends on catchment from creeks, whereas under this new scheme the conservation will depend on rock catchments where, as I say, all the water that falls will be caught. So, if the Minister insists upon exhaustive tests as to the holding capacity of the ground, we need have no fear of the result. If dams could be puddled by sheep, in less than three years they would hold like cement. That has been the experience in the Eastern States during the past 50 years. In the absence of that, the Minister will need to be careful as to the holding capacity of the ground before he does very much excavating. I hope that in his reply he will tell us something of the holding capacity of the ground around those rock catchments. I will support the second reading.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [7.53]: I am very well pleased with the reception the Bill has had. One of the most urgent needs of the State is water supply. From the remarks we have heard on the second reading I am satisfied that members representing agricultural electorates, together with those that have had experience of water conservation, are fully alive to this great need of the State. Most of the points raised can be dealt with very well in Committee as, for instance, those points dealing with rating and as to whether sinking fund shall or shall not be charged from the beginning. As for those who have stressed the need for seeing that proper tests be made before the works are definitely entered upon, I can assure them that the investigations already made have been made very thoroughly and that no construction whatever will be undertaken without the fullest possible inquiry. Where

many hundreds of thousands of pounds are to be expended on water conservation, it is essential that the fullest possible information be secured before the works are launched. As I say, almost every point that has been raised can be dealt with in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Message.

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

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Hon. J. Cunningham (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The definition of "holding" includes conditional purchase lease and pastoral lease. Does the Minister propose to arrive at the value of pastoral land in the same way as he will arrive at the value of conditional purchase land?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Where road boards make their valuation on the unimproved capital value, that will be taken into consideration in assessing the rate under this measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Insertion of a new section after Section 61:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The proposed new section empowers the board to require owners and occupiers to provide tanks and appliances. What sized tank does the Minister contemplate? On very hot days when everyone is drawing water from small pipes, the man at the end of the main is unable to get any. If the Minister's proposal is to fill the dams when they do not fill naturally, that is another matter, but from many of the rock catchments, it would be impossible to fill many large tanks such as were referred to by the member for Murray-Wellington in his speech on the second reading. If an owner fails to provide the necessary tank, the board may provide it at the owner's expense. We know that departmental excavations cost a terrific

amount, and the Minister should tell us just what kind of tank he has in mind.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It is not proposed to ask landholders to expend large sums on tanks. It may be necessary to prescribe a tank sufficient to carry two days' supply—an ordinary 2,000 or 3,000-gallon tank. In some cases a galvanised iron tank would be suitable. The departmental engineers will not insist upon the construction of tanks that will impose an unnecessary burden on struggling settlers.

Mr. GEORGE: If a man had sheep, horses and cattle, it would not require many of them to use up a few thousand gallons of water. I think that tanks ranging from 100 cubic yards or more will be required, because the reserve supply must be sufficient to enable settlers to carry on. The department will not be able to instal pipes sufficiently large to supply water to every farmer at the one time, and at least a fortnight's supply should be provided. Even a 10,000-gallon tank on some holdings would not carry the settlers over.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: There is no provision to compel a landholder to provide a large tank or to prevent him from providing what he considers adequate storage. The object of providing for storage tanks is that the whole of the people connected with the main may have a sufficient reserve to meet their requirements. If the whole of the people drew on the main at the one time, those farthest from the source would at times have a very restricted service.

Mr. George: They would not have a trickle.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The size of the tanks will be governed by the quantity of water requisite to keep a landholder going, but it is not intended to impose additional financial burdens on the settlers.

Mr. LINDSAY: People on the higher levels would not be able to get water during hot days and it would be necessary for them to have storage tanks that could be filled at night. I take it that this is all the Minister desires to ensure under this clause. The water would be too dear to store in earth tanks because of the evaporation and seepage. When the member for Murray-Well should remember that these schemes are for lington talks of a 10,000-gallon tank, he farm and not for pastoral holdings.

Mr. George: Then why have so much machinery to ensure the provision of tanks?

Mr. LINDSAY: Of 500 consumers, no more than five might be required to provide tanks. A man occupying an elevated position at the extreme end of the main would have to provide a tank in order that he might draw water at night when other people were not drawing it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The board may require a settler to instal a tank of any size. We can use only small pipes on account of the cost, and when small pipes are used, reserve tanks are necessary. Small pipes will render double the service if tanks are provided.

Mr. George: If settlers have to pay a rate of £50 and they take only 1,000 gallons of water a week, it will be pretty expensive water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Tanks of a limited size are necessary. I am satisfied with the Minister's explanation.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Insertion of new section after Section 92:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is the rating clause. So far water from the goldfields scheme has been supplied to farmers under agreement. That is a very good system, and if the Minister had been content to supply water from the rock catchments under agreement, it would have been better than this proposal. Small schemes must be costly. The farmers will be saddled with a fairly heavy burden, and they should not undertake it without serious consideration.

Hon. J. Cunningham: You mean people situated more than 1½ miles from the main? It will rest entirely with the people themselves.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will consult the people fully before entering upon any considerable expenditure. The board will have power to levy an annual rate not exceeding 2s. in the pound on the unimproved capital value, in lieu of the rate of 1s. per acre. Evidently that is intended to apply to light land, as a rate of 1s. per acre on light land would be an impossible burden.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Of course the returns from light land would not be anything like so great as the returns from first-class country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The maximum of 2s. in the pound on the capital value would be too great in the case of light lands.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Many of our light lands are now exempt in connection with the extensions from the 30-inch main. I refer to bog and sandplain country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are not as simple as the Minister thinks we are. This is a Bill to provide that they shall no longer be exempt.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The desire is to make a differential rate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is right, but the Minister wants to impose a high rate. Before I move to reduce this rate from 2s. to 1s. I should like to hear more about the question.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill provides that the people concerned shall be consulted, and the work will not be undertaken unless at least a two-thirds majority, representing 50 per cent. of the land held in the district, agree that the extension should be made. The whole question rests with the people themselves; otherwise no action will be taken. There is much land that is valued at £5 an acre and there is other land valued at from 5s. to 10s. per acre. The real object of the taxation is to give those who hold inferior land an opportunity to utilise it by means of a water supply. It is altogether unjust to charge a flat rate to all persons within a given area. A water supply would considerably enhance the unimproved capital value of all the properties affected. Equal opportunity should be given to all the settlers, whether they have the best country or only second or third-class country. Seeing that the desire is to relieve the man who holds inferior land, no rate that is likely to reach £50 per thousand acres will be struck in their case. We hope to supply water at the cheapest possible price to those who are facing hardships. In 1911 the Leader of the Opposition stressed the hardship that would be inflicted if a flat rate was imposed upon all land holders. The method proposed is the only one by which we can provide the necessary relief.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I quite agree.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: These taxes will be governed solely by the area of land that will be reticulated from the source of supply. In the case of water supplies that are dependent on rock catchments, the service can be rendered only within economical

limits, namely, only to those lands that can be served by gravitation. Such an area must supply the necessary revenue to cover sinking fund, interest and maintenance charges.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No more than that

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I do not know that it is desirable to ask for any more.

Mr. LINDSAY: Third-class land should be served on the unimproved capital value basis. With respect to the particular scheme in which I am interested, there will be a certain amount of difficulty with regard to third-class land. The first-class land is valued up to £2 an acre, and the third-class down to 3s. 9d. If there was a fair sized area of poor land to be served, it would add greatly to the cost of the better class of land. On the unimproved value as shown on the books of the local governing body, probably the first class land would pay ten times as much on the unimproved value basis.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: And that land would be ten times as valuable as the other.

Mr. LINDSAY: Land that is called second class is often as good as first-class, but we have proved the value of the first-class land, and within the next 10 years we shall prove the value of the other land. There should be a minimum rate according to the quality of the land. From the plan I have seen of the scheme in which I am interested the light lands have a better opportunity of getting the water than the first-class land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When it comes to a question of paying more than the rate of 1s., there must be a petition lodged by two-thirds of the owners, representing half the area concerned.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: None of the schemes will be put into operation without a petition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That refers only to cases where the charge goes beyond 1s. Up to the maximum of £50 per thousand acres, the decision rests with the Minister, who can put up a scheme without first consulting the owners.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: That is not the intention.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is what the Bill says. The Minister had better have the clause re-drafted if it does not convey his intentions. I do not like agreeing to a clause that does not meet the Minister's expressed wishes.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, it does.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably it is futile for me to move an amendment. The light lands cannot bear such an impost. The trouble has always been to induce people to take up light lands. Those lands ought not to be called upon to pay more than 6d. I move an amendment—

That in line one of Subsection (2) of proposed Section 92a, the word "two" be struck out.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The carrying of the amendment would destroy the whole Bill. The rate will be struck on an acreage over a given area, as I have already explained. There is a certain quantity of water to dispose of to a stated number of farmers, and sufficient revenue must be obtained to provide interest, sinking fund, and maintenance charges. Much of the country is valued at 10s. per acre, and on some of that land, under the unimproved value system of rating, it may be necessary to impose a rate of 2s. in order to produce the £50 per 1,000 acres.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On sandplain country?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Much of the country originally classed as second class has since, on further inspection, come to be regarded as first class. Moreover land that when classified was remote is coming within easy reach of communication. One must take into consideration the catchment area, the area that can be reticulated, the cost of construction, and the amount of revenue required to meet interest, sinking fund, and maintenance. I hope the amendment will not be pressed. Great trouble and confusion would arise from any attempt to impose differential rates on an acreage basis.

Mr. GEORGE: Much of the nervousness in connection with this provision would disappear if the Minister stated in the Bill what he has stated here. In the law courts references have been made to statements in Parliament, and the judges have said, "If Parliament meant that, Parliament should have said so in the Act. We cannot take notice of what is said in Parliament." After the Opposition Leader's amendment has been disposed of, I shall ask the Minister to accept this addition to the clause: "Provided always that the total annual charges to be made shall not exceed the amount required to pay interest, maintenance, and sinking fund on each separate scheme."

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	..	25

Majority against .. 14

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Barnard	Mr. North
Mr. Davy	Mr. Sampson
Mr. George	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Latham
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Millington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Heron	Mr. Taylor
Miss Holman	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Hughes	Mr. C. F. Wansbrough
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Chesson
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Thomson	Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Denton	Mr. Troy
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Wilson

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Now we come to the provision that fixes the rate. I do not know that it would be much use to move an amendment. However, we are here dealing with light lands, poor lands.

Hon. J. Cunningham: With the whole of the lands.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is not justified in arguing that because he wants revenue he is entitled to rate poor land in the way he proposes. The rate would eat up the total unimproved value of the land in 10 years. It is necessary to encourage people to make use of sand plain and light lands. By no stretch of imagination can it be said that they are encouraged to do so if the rate is to be as the Minister proposes, 2s. in the pound. It seems that he has hardly given sufficient consideration to the question.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The tax has not been fixed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But it may be 1s. The Minister's proposal is not a sound one. The value of water for a

good acre is far more than the value of water for a poor acre, and the Minister ought to recognise that. I warn the Committee that land will be forfeited if people are to be subjected to this tax.

Mr. Lindsay: The scheme is not intended to serve poor land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But there may be a hundred schemes. We are giving the Minister power to put in a scheme anywhere. I know of sandplain land rated by the road board at 10s. per acre. At Bruce Rock and in other agricultural areas we reduced the price of land to a maximum of 15s. To-day the Taxation Department are valuing it at £2 and over. The Minister proposes to take the road board rating, which in some cases is 10s. per acre on pure sandplain. Under the Bill that land will be rated the same as good land.

Mr. Lindsay: You cannot discriminate; you cannot rate good land on the capital value of the land and poor land at so much per acre.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Under this the rate can be made less on poor land than on first class land. But if land worth £4 per acre is rated at 1s. per acre, then the 10s. land will be rated at 1s. also. That is wrong. Nobody should pay a water rate of 1s. per acre on 10s. sandplain.

Hon. J. Cunningham: It is not intended to rate per acre and also on the unimproved capital value.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then we shall have to make the Bill fit the requirements of the people who hold good and bad land. The Minister explained to us that he had devised this as a means of relieving poor land of the maximum rate. It would be ridiculous to have the two systems unless it is intended to relieve somebody. The Minister very properly inserted this provision, but I complain that he fixes the rate too high. It is the poor country that has to be relieved under this provision. I move an amendment—

That in line eight of proposed new Subsection (2), "two shillings" be struck out.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I cannot understand the viewpoint of the Leader of the Opposition. It is provided that the tax on the unimproved capital value shall not exceed £50 per thousand acres. If the Leader of the Opposition will look at subclause (2) he will find that the valuation is to be made

on the current valuation of the local authority. He will stick to the rating per acre, whereas it is to be on the unimproved capital value. It stands to reason there can be no flat rate for the unimproved capital value. The object is to afford relief in accordance with the unimproved capital value of the land; if it were not so it would be just as well to let it go at a flat rate of 1s. per acre. The unimproved capital value may be spread over four or more acres. The intention is to rate on the unimproved capital value and so afford relief to those who need it. It is not the desire of the Government that we should impose a tax for water supply in excess of £50 per thousand acres.

Mr. LATHAM: There are many land valuations in this State; there is the valuation by the Lands Department, the valuation by the Taxation Department, and the valuation by the local authority. In good agricultural districts, where the Minister proposes to have these water boards, land is valued as high as £2 10s. per acre, and the Minister has made provision for a maximum rate of 1s. For the lighter lands he proposes to introduce a tax of 2s. in the pound on the unimproved capital value. Light lands are valued by the Taxation Department at 15s. and 18s. per acre. So they will not get any relief under this 2s. tax on the unimproved value. If the 2s. were a maximum—

Hon. J. Cunningham: It says "not exceeding 2s."

Mr. LATHAM: It would be better to have it 1s. I am anxious to see every acre of our light lands utilised. Nothing should be done to prevent people selecting that land and using it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have received word to-night that rain is falling in the agricultural areas and the Honorary Minister, on hearing that, might well relax a little. The tax proposed is too heavy to put upon light land.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The 2s. is the maximum amount, and it will enable the Minister to strike a rate sufficient to produce the necessary revenue. The Minister must be sympathetic in his administration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister does not fully grasp the situation. He will have the same rate against land worth 10s. as against land worth £2 per acre, and that is not right.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	22
Majority against				14

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. George	Mr. Latham
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)
Mr. North	

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Collier	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Miss Holman	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Chesson
Mr. Lamond	(Teller.)
Mr. Lindsay	

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Thomson	Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Denton	Mr. Troy
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Millington
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Wilson

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. GEORGE: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided always that the total annual charges to be made shall not exceed the amount required to pay the maintenance, interest and sinking fund on each separate scheme.”

We should state in the measure exactly what we mean. Judges are guided not by “Hansard” but by the wording of an Act, and in order that there may be no mistake, I ask members to accept the amendment. The Minister has told us it is his intention, so let us express the intention in the measure that future Ministers may not make any mistake.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The proviso is unnecessary and useless. No Government would levy a rate to produce revenue for any other purpose. What would be the object of getting a revenue in excess of the amount required to meet maintenance, interest, and sinking fund? Any Government that collected an excess of revenue could be charged with profiteering. The Minister is controlled by Parliament and, if unduly

high rates were imposed, members would quickly protest.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the amendment will be carried. The measure will apply to water boards as well as to Ministers. I am prepared to trust the present Minister, but I may not be so ready to trust any Minister who may follow him. I do not know whether farmers will be given water after the passing of this measure, but they will certainly be given something to think about when they come to pay the taxation it will entail.

Mr. GEORGE: I cannot understand the attitude of the Honorary Minister. He tells us his intentions coincide with my views, and all I desire is that his intentions shall be clearly stated in the measure. What harm is there in making the measure state clearly his intentions? Let us make the Act one that he who runs may read.

Mr. Teesdale: They are not allowed to accept anything that emanates from this side.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not believe that of the other side.

The Premier: You cannot find a provision of this kind in any Act.

Mr. GEORGE: Then let us make a start, so that the judges will understand that the Act expresses our intentions.

Mr. LINDSAY: I take it that financial statements will be kept of individual schemes, and that each will be self-contained. What I said was that I expected them to pay every penny, but that in the first 10 years they should not be asked to pay sinking fund. The Leader of the Opposition now says I am in favour of a clause providing for the payment of interest, sinking fund and working expenses. I cannot vote for the amendment. When the schemes are paid for and the profit has been made no doubt the Government will see that the rate is reduced.

The Premier: Let posterity pay.

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not say that. I do say that no sinking fund should be paid by the settlers for 10 years.

Mr. GEORGE: Apparently the member for Toodyay would like the words “sinking fund” left out of the amendment. In all schemes of this sort it is the correct form of finance to provide a sinking fund.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The amendment will have an effect opposite to that which is intended. If it is carried it will

be a direction to the Minister that in computing the cost he must take all the factors into consideration. If the amendment is not embodied in the Bill, it is possible he will not impose these penalties. It is a dangerous course to take. The hon. member is trying to impose further penalties upon the producers.

Mr. George: No.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not want anything that is likely to cost me more than is proposed by the Bill. When we have the schemes we can do our best to influence the Minister in making the charge as low as possible.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We know we cannot influence the Minister. The late Government never imposed such taxation as is proposed here.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We did not use the full 5d. that we provided for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The farmer always pays for anything he gets. Let me persuade the Committee to insert this limitation.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is a special impost upon the cockies, not a limitation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No one with a grain of sense would suggest that the amendment is an invitation to impose additional charges. It is designed only to act as a safeguard in view of the heavy taxation already proposed. The last vote of the Committee imposed penalties upon the cockies that will tune them up, but this amendment limits the charges that can be levied.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am surprised at the hon. member moving such an amendment. It is an insult to the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This Bill is an insult to the farmers.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Government would be only too pleased if they could get interest and sinking fund.

The Premier: Of course we would.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is not the policy of this Government to try to get it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Crush the farmers out of existence.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am surprised at the member for Murray-Wellington putting forward such a proposal. It is equivalent to saying that the Minister would charge more than is necessary for supplying the farmers with water.

Mr. George: That is not intended.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our past actions have shown an entirely different effect. I remember when one night I rose to support the hon. member, who was a Minister at the time—

The Premier: In a weak moment?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. I thought he was right. He was attacking the Country Party because the farmers were not paying their dues. The then member for Avon gave him a dressing down. The Minister replied, "The farmers will not pay unless I take some action to make them pay. We are supplying water at a lower rate than it is costing the State." Some 24 hours later he reduced the charges.

Mr. George: I do not remember that. I will have to look it up.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I may be exaggerating. A few hours after that he reduced the charges. He turned right round. No doubt his chief said he must do something to satisfy their supporters. The member for Roebourne sent me a telegram saying that the charges had been reduced.

Mr. George: You have too good a memory for me.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All that the Government have to raise is 10s. per £100. What is that going to represent to each farmer? It is ridiculous to take the matter into consideration. There is no fear that any Government will charge more than is absolutely necessary. None of the reticulations in the agricultural areas has paid yet. Indeed, those reticulations have never been expected to pay. If we were on the other side of the Chamber, we would never dream of moving such an amendment.

Mr. GEORGE: I extremely regret that the Minister for Lands should regard the amendment as in any way insulting. One object of it is that the Bill shall state what the Chamber intends. My experience tells me that when once a scheme is proposed to farmers, all sorts of objections will be brought forward. If two or three more millions of gallons than are being pumped can be pumped and disposed of, every penny received from the extra water brings the State nearer to the point of recouping its expenditure.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister for Lands has spoken of 10s. in £100. When I was speaking of sinking funds, however, I was thinking of what is usually allowed on

water schemes. I understand the sinking fund on water schemes to be 2 per cent. I am quite prepared to accept a rate of one-half per cent. That rate would mean a reduction of £10 in the rate of £45 per 1,000 acres charged in respect of a water scheme in my electorate.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7, 8, 9—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [9.38]: I do not know that this Bill need be debated at any length, as the proposals under it are much the same as those under the Bill just dealt with, except that in the case of the present Bill the expenditure by the Government has to a great extent been already incurred. As regards all lands adjacent to the existing pipe line, there is no need for any expenditure by the Government. Now the Minister wants us to give him power to vary the conditions upon which water is supplied under agreements. Those agreements were entered into by landholders with the Government years ago for the laying down of pipes and the supply of water at a fixed rate. I admit that the agreements have expired; but does not the Minister see that if the charge he now proposes had been the rate originally asked, the people would never have entered into agreements and would not have had the water laid on? Having got them in the Government's clutches, and having secured the right to rate them, the Minister proposes to depart from the arrangement which has existed so far. That is the power which is being sought by this Bill. If a man has land adjacent to the goldfields main, separated from it only by a few feet of earth, the Minister wants power to impose a rate of 1s. on every acre of land

so served. The pipe has been run out at the request of owners on the basis of a rate not exceeding 5d., and the Minister now asks for power to rate at 1s. He may also rate on the capital value of the land, which is a new principle in connection with water supply. The House should not permit the Minister to go on with the Bill, but should reject it absolutely. Some owners have approached the Government and asked them to put in a main on the basis of a rate of 1s. I do not object to that. The Minister ought to have power to make such agreements. The method in question is quite satisfactory. No other method should be approved by this Chamber. We have gone along very satisfactorily in the past, and the Minister knows that his interest bill on the Goldfields Water Scheme will be considerably reduced in 1927. Therefore the charges then will not need to be so heavy. I know some people do not object to whatever taxation is imposed so long as it does not touch them. However, we are here to do what is best for the country, and to legislate for the whole of the people. Our duty is to say to this proposal yea or nay. I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that the second reading of the Bill should not be carried.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9.43]: I have a few words to say on this measure, though not by way of condemnation. I want an assurance from the Minister as to what his intentions really are under the Bill. Does he propose to increase the rate on existing extensions, or will the measure apply only to future extensions? I can see nothing confining the proposals to future extensions. In connection with existing extensions great injustice has been done to quite a number of landholders, more particularly those who did not use the water, and did not want it, but in the process of some area beyond them being served had to foot bills rendered by the Government, bills in some cases exceeding £100. Even to-day such landholders have not a tap on. Whatever may be the value of the Bill to some localities, those settlers that have already incurred considerable expense in putting in water supplies should be protected. It is wrong that, because someone beyond me wants a water supply when I already have one, I have to pay £100 per annum because the pipe goes past my holding.

The Minister for Lands: You do not believe in co-operation.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I believe in fair treatment. Then there is another phase of the question: In the Avon district, under special agreement an extension was put in, and to-day many of the people participating find it a heavy burden, because they are not in a position to carry stock, and until they can do so it is impossible for them to secure the full benefit of the water supply. I am not prepared to give the Minister power to increase the rate to 1s. on existing extensions, and indeed I very much doubt whether proposed extensions can be made to pay on that basis.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [9.47]: Since we have now a maximum of 5d. per acre under the rating provisions of the parent Act and that maximum has not been reached, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Beverley need have very little fear that the lands already rated will have their rating increased beyond 5d. The real object of the Bill is to bring within the ordinary rating provisions of the Goldfields Water Supply Act extensions now under consideration. In the past we have had laid down extensions that have been rated outside the provisions of the Goldfields Water Supply Act. It is undesirable to continue in that direction, for it means that special agreements have to be entered into, individuals must be interviewed and individual agreements made. We want to make the conditions applicable to all extensions. The Bill is long overdue. In 1911, when a Labour Administration was in office, the Bill was necessary, but the Minister found every possible opposition when he desired to do the right thing in respect of extensions to agricultural areas. The very people who are opposing the Bill to-night opposed the Hon. W. D. Johnson's Bill in 1911. Since that time those settlers who have been fortunate enough to have a permanent water supply made available to them through these extensions have never regretted their request to the Minister on that occasion. Looking over the history of the goldfields water supply, more especially during the past 12 years, I find that whenever it has been proposed to broaden the scope of the supply for the benefit of the settlers, the party opposite have put up every possible opposition. Only when a Labour Administration has been in office have extensive water supplies been made available.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They never have been made available.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Even when the Leader of the Opposition was Premier, less money per annum was spent on water supplies than was spent last year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And a great deal more done with it. Why did not you say all this when moving the second reading? I cannot reply to it now.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The same opposition is manifested whenever water extensions or conservation is under consideration; the very people one would expect to use every effort to increase the water supplies have done all they could to obstruct such extensions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That's a rotten thing to say.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It is true, and you have but to look through "Hansard" for proof. During the regime of the Labour Government from 1911 to 1916, £193,107 was spent on agricultural water supplies. During the regime of the United Party, extending over eight years, £86,144 was expended on water supplies.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: More than that was spent on the Kalgoorlie scheme in one year.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The year before the present Leader of the Opposition left office, only £5,600 was spent on agricultural water supplies, and in his last year as Premier the hon. member spent only £11,587, whereas this Administration expended £20,724 last year.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are not supposed to break new ground when replying to the debate.

Mr. Teesdale: We over here would have been stopped 20 times.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The Leader of the Opposition's arguments against the Bill have no solid foundation whatever. During his last 12 months of office as Premier he authorised the construction of certain work, but he did not have in mind a maximum rating of 5d. per acre. Moreover, extensions that were approved by him were left to this Government to carry out:

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What are you there for?

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: We are here to do the job, and we are doing it. Those propositions carried a rate of from 4½d. to 10d. per acre.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: By agreement.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The purpose of the Bill is that, instead of carrying out extensions by special agreement, they shall all be brought under the ordinary rating conditions of the Goldfields Water Supply Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Now we have the truth.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I have never denied the hon. member the truth. It is very necessary that this amending legislation should be passed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is rotten legislation.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: Everything is rotten. Last night it was the Primary Products Marketing Bill; now it is this Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is very true.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I am confident the House will pass the Bill. There is but one clause in it, and that can be dealt with in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Hon. J. Cunningham (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of first schedule of Act No. 50 of 1911:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister introduced new matter when replying to the second reading debate. If he had supplied the information when moving the second reading it would have saved trouble in Committee. I have had no chance to check the figures he used, but I believe they are not correct. In any event, he has let the cat out of the bag. He ought not to impose a tax beyond 5d., except by agreement. It will be an absolute breach of faith if we agree to the clause. The Government will not have to spend another penny on the pipe line. The goldfields were not asked to pay anything like the full cost of the work and, rightly, the general taxpayer contributed to the sinking fund, which amounts to a great deal over a million pounds.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Sinking fund is charged up against the extension.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This deals with land adjacent to the pipe line, from Kalamunda to Kalgoorlie. The proposal involves a distinct breach of faith.

The Minister for Lands: Why?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Because the settlers were induced to take the water at a special rate.

The Minister for Lands: This does not say the rate is to be increased.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it does. The Minister is not so simple as he would have us believe.

Mr. Latham: The intention is to strike out 5d. and insert 1s.

The Minister for Lands: Not exceeding 1s.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Why put it in if it is not intended to take advantage of it?

The Minister for Lands: Why is it put in any rating measure?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If it is not to be used, why put it in? We should not give the Minister the right to tax up to 1s. The tax at present is limited to 5d., and extensions can be made at the request of people at such cost as in the opinion of the Government may be necessary.

The Minister for Lands: That can be done under this measure.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It will not be done. We should not pass a taxation measure unless the tax is to be imposed.

The Minister for Lands: That is done in all rating.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Many people living near the scheme are paying rates, although they provided water supplies for themselves years ago.

The Minister for Lands: Those who are living near the railway and the water supply are getting all the benefits, and the poor devils outback get none.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is generally very fair. Does he pay his neighbour's rent? Of course not. It is enough to pay for what one gets. It is enough for the farmer to pay for what he gets. Because a man owns a farm at Katanning he should not be asked to pay for water for a man at Beverley. Because a man happens to live near the pipe track and the railway line, he should not have to pay for a man 20 miles away.

Hon. J. Cunningham: Who suggested that?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister for Lands.

The Minister for Lands: I did not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Though I had no success in my attempt to amend the previous measure, I shall divide the Committee on this question. The Honorary Minister is defeating his expressed desire to tax light land at a lower rate than first class land. He says he has no intention of increasing the tax.

Hon. J. Cunningham: I have no intention of increasing beyond 5d. the maximum to those who are rated under 5d.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad of that assurance; the Minister's intention is good, but the way to a certain place is paved with good intentions. It is an outrageous proposal to impose a rate of 1s. on men adjacent to the Kalgoorlie pipe track. That pipe line was laid entirely to serve the gold-fields, and for years the farmers were not permitted to take water from it. When it was found that Kalgoorlie no longer needed the full quantity, customers were sought in the agricultural areas to help to pay interest and sinking fund on the scheme.

The Minister for Lands: It was no trouble to get customers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in line four, the words "one shilling per acre" be struck out.

Mr. LATHAM: I know that the Minister's intention was to legalise the payment of certain rates struck on land to which extensions have been made in the last three or four years, but the Minister cannot vouch for what future Ministers might do, and we have no right to give power to a Minister to more than double the rate provided under the existing Act. The Act provides that the maximum rate shall be 5d. and the Minister wants it increased to 1s. If he had asked us to agree that all new extensions under agreement should carry a maximum charge of 1s. per acre, there would have been no difficulty. It is unwise to alter the rate for all existing services. There would be nothing to prevent any Minister in future from increasing the rate by 7d.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Act provides that the rate shall not exceed 5d. In every rating measure a maximum is stated. There are very few local authorities who are charging anywhere near the maximum rate—

Mr. Latham: But they do not control water supply.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And if it is stipulated that this rate is not to exceed

1s., it is not to say that the 1s. rate will be struck.

Mr. Latham: No, but there will be power to strike the 1s. rate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Numbers of people some distance from the line urgently require water, and to convey the water to them a higher charge must be made.

Mr. Latham: Make special provision for them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is impossible to do that, because the Act states that not more than 5d. may be charged. The argument of the Leader of the Opposition and of the member for York means that the farmers near to the pipe line can get the water because it can be supplied for 5d., while those far back must do without it, because to supply them would cost more than 5d.

Mr. Latham: Extensions have already been made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The man who is privileged is all right, but the poor devil outback is to be allowed to sink deeper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could make an agreement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We cannot. An agreement against the Act will not stand. If the law provides that we cannot charge more than 5d., we have no right to charge more.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are charging 1s. now, and contracting outside the law.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is said that this rate is provided in order that the Government may increase the charges upon those who are already getting water. The Minister, however, said he had no intention at present of increasing the rate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He did not use the words "at present."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nor is there any such intention, but we do not know what may happen. If the Minister charged an excessive rate, he would not have the support of his own party.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You would not get one member on your side of the House to support him.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be dishonest for any member to cast his vote in favour of the Government if he honestly believed that they had been making an excessive charge or robbing the poor devils on the land. I do not believe members on this side would vote for such a thing, even to save the Government. This Bill is required

to provide extensions from the main on a legal basis. The Leader of the Opposition seems to be suspicious concerning it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I ought to be.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: After these bounteous rains he ought to be optimistic. Because the Bill provides for a charge of 1s., it is not to say it will be imposed; but in some cases it may be necessary to impose that charge if people a long way from the source of supply are to get any water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: How many water extensions have the Government made? The Totadjin scheme was arranged for before the Minister took office. I thought it was perfectly legal to make an agreement for water supplies. If it be not legal, no one who has signed the agreement, would question its legality. The Minister should introduce a Bill to legalise all these agreements.

Hon. J. Cunningham: The agreements are all right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are valid?

Hon. J. Cunningham: They are all right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose other extensions have been made under agreement. If they are valid, every other agreement would be valid and there is no need for this clause. If people have to pay more than 5d. their consent ought to be obtained. I do not mistrust the Government, but I would rather trust the Act than any Government. People resent these additional burdens that are placed upon them, and will certainly resent this unjust provision. If this rate is allowed to remain it will be imposed upon light lands as well as on good lands.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister says the Government have never yet taxed up to the full amount of 5d. per acre. He also says that outlying districts are in need of water. Although the Government have made agreements for supplying water at 1s. an acre, they want to put that price in the Bill. They desire to avoid making other agreements. The Minister says he will not impose more than the 5d. tax on all those who are already taxed up to 5d., but the Bill does not provide for that. If we give him the right to tax up to 1s. an acre, some other Minister may come along and take advantage of it, though he himself has said he will not do so. It would be much better if the Minister would introduce a Bill to validate the agreements between the Government and the farmers and to give

power to treat for new agreements. I voted with the Minister on the previous Bill, which empowers him to tax in respect of a new proposition. But in this matter we have had years of experience, and except in outlying districts the maximum rate has never yet been reached. I cannot support the Minister on this occasion. Let us carry the Opposition Leader's amendment, and let the Minister bring down a Bill as I have suggested.

Mr. MANN: The Minister for Lands said that the Opposition Leader desired that those who were close to the water supply should get their water cheaply while the poor devil outback should pay dearly for it. If the Government decided to extend the main 100 miles further on the Eastern Goldfields, would the Boulder mines be asked to pay a higher rate then, or would the higher rate apply only to the new mines supplied?

The Minister for Lands: That is what is desired here.

Mr. MANN: Then why not put it in the Bill? The Minister's proposal is as though a traveller from Perth to Northam were asked to pay the same railway fare as a traveller from Perth to Kalgoorlie. Water conveyed only 100 miles will not be so expensive as water conveyed 150 miles.

The Minister for Lands: You propose to prohibit the man outback from getting any water.

Mr. MANN: The man who comes late into the field and selects outback is unfortunate, but surely he cannot expect those who came in years ago to bear his burden in respect of water supply. By way of compensation, the man now selecting receives assistance which the man who selected years ago within 100 miles of the main did not enjoy. The man who has a fixed price should not have that price raised on him.

Mr. Marshall: You have been told a hundred times that it will not be raised on him.

Mr. MANN: The Minister would be well advised to accept for once the amendment moved by the Opposition.

Mr. LATHAM: I think it unfair on the part of the Minister for Lands to assert that we are not anxious to help the man outback to a water supply.

The Minister for Lands: That is what it means.

Mr. LATHAM: It is not true.

The Minister for Lands: I could make you withdraw that.

Mr. LATHAM: From our point of view it is not true. We have no intention whatever of stopping the man who is not near the pipe line from getting a water supply. The Opposition Leader, when on the other side of the Chamber, was the first man to make an extension of the pipe line into the wheat areas. That was done by agreement with the farmers. In 1911 the rate was 5d. per acre. When further extensions had to be made recently, the cost was much greater, and the Government of the day overcame the difficulty by entering into special agreements. If the Minister now asked for power to charge more for new extensions, he would get it. We want to safeguard extensions made on the basis of 5d. per acre. We want to protect those people, not to give statutory rights to any Government to charge them 1s. per acre. We require to give the users of the water some security. We over here want to see as much as possible of that water used for the benefit of people living at a distance from the pipe line.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill has been introduced for the purpose of bringing within the scope of the Goldfields Water Supply Amendment Act extensions from the main. Under special agreements new extensions have been put in outside the provisions of the Act. The Bill will not invalidate those agreements. They must run their full term before being brought within the provisions of the Bill. But there are under consideration new extensions, some of which will cost as much as 10d. and 1s. per acre. The desire is to bring them under the rating provisions of the Act, and that cannot be done until the maximum rating has been increased from the existing 5d. to 1s. There is no intention to increase the rating on lands already rated. If the amendment be carried, the Bill goes by the board. Strike out the 1s. and you defeat the whole object of the Bill. I will oppose the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	19
					—
Majority against	..	..	..	..	10
					—

AYES.			
Mr. Angelo		Mr. Latham	
Mr. Barnard		Mr. Taylor	
Mr. Mann		Mr. C. P. Wansbrough	
Sir James Mitchell		Mr. Teesdale	
Mr. Sampson			(Teller.)

NOES.			
Mr. Angwin		Mr. Marshall	
Mr. Collier		Mr. McCallum	
Mr. Corboy		Mr. Munsie	
Mr. Coverley		Mr. Pantou	
Mr. Cunningham		Mr. Sleeman	
Mr. Heron		Mr. A. Wansbrough	
Mr. Hughes		Mr. Willcock	
Mr. Lambert		Mr. Withers	
Mr. Lamond		Mr. Chesson	
Mr. Lindsay			(Teller.)

AYES.			
Mr. Thomson		Mr. Kennedy	
Mr. J. M. Smith		Mr. Wilson	
Mr. Denton		Mr. Troy	
Mr. J. H. Smith		Mr. Millington	
Mr. Maley		Mr. W. D. Johnson	
Mr. Davy		Miss Holman	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided that the rate at present charged on any land rated shall not be increased.”

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I oppose the amendment. The Leader of the Opposition desires to get below the maximum already provided in the Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You said you would not increase it.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: The maximum at present is 5d. and the hon. member wishes to reduce it to 3d.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have already pointed out that many extensions have been made under agreement. As interest on the big debt will cease very soon, we should be able not only to maintain the present rate but to reduce it. Consequently the Minister should accept the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	18
					—

Majority against .. 10

AYES.			
Mr. Angelo		Mr. Teesdale	
Mr. Barnard		Mr. C. P. Wansbrough	
Mr. Mann		Mr. Latham	
Sir James Mitchell			(Teller.)
Mr. Sampson			

NOES.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. A. Wainbrough
Mr. Heron	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Chesson
Mr. Lindsay	(Teller.)
Mr. Marshall	

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Thomson	Mr. Kennedy
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Tray
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Millington
Mr. Maley	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Davy	Miss Holman

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th September, 1925.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the under-mentioned Bills:—

- 1, Real Property (Commonwealth Titles).
- 2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
- 3, Transfer of Land Act Amendment.
- 4, Land Tax and Income Tax Act Amendment.

5, Public Education Endowment Act Amendment.

6, Ministers' Titles.

7, Roman Catholic Geraldton Church Property.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE.)

Report of Select Committee.

Mr. North brought up the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the Western Australian Bank Act Amendment Bill.

Report received and read and ordered to be printed.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.
 - 2, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.
 - 3, Water Boards Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Honorary Minister—Kalgoorlie) [4.43]: I move—
That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.44]: I must oppose the third reading of this Bill. The Honorary Minister has not given sufficient attention to this matter. Last week we argued it in Committee at great length, but since then I have been to my electorate, and find it will be impossible to get through the pipes sufficient water for the landowners in return for the tax it is proposed to put on to the land. The Bill raises the tax from a maximum of 5d. to a maximum of 1s. per acre. This is a tremendous and unnecessary increase. We are no longer paying sinking fund on the big loan borrowed in connection with the goldfields water supply. This increase will make itself felt from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie, and will affect all land that comes within range of any pipe that may be laid down. Everyone interested in that portion of the State is greatly concerned about the measure. The