

coming totalisator-minded, and therefore the totalisator receipts may be expected to increase, I think if anything is necessary to compensate country clubs for what they may lose under the provisions of this Bill the Trotting Association should increase the subsidy by the amount required.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What if it will not do that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is the association's responsibility. With trotting on its present scale the association is making large profits. One of its objects is to encourage trotting in the country, and it is doing a good job in that direction. Mr. Baxter pointed out that the Bridgetown club received a subsidy of £272. If that is so it would not hurt the association to increase the amount by another £5 or £10 in order to cover what might be lost in fractions. This Bill proposes to reduce the fractions by approximately 50 per cent. It will not interfere with the six per cent. which is the ordinary revenue of clubs in this State from the totalisator. As I pointed out earlier, in other States of the Commonwealth the fractions go into revenue, while in this State 92½ per cent. goes to the clubs and 7½ per cent. to the Government. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I hope members will support the amendment. This piece of legislation could not have been framed in more appropriate terms if it had been designed to make it difficult or impossible for country clubs to carry on. If the Bill is passed in its present form it will make it more difficult for the parent body to subsidise country clubs, and, in addition, will accentuate the difficulties of those clubs, owing to the loss of the fractions. The country clubs are being carried on by people working in an honorary capacity, and this Bill, if passed, will only make it more difficult for those people to provide the sport the people want. The public generally are content to allow things to remain as they are.

Hon. G. FRASER: I have been trying to fit the amendment into the original Act and into the amending Bill, but it seems rather complicated. The amending Bill seeks to substitute "6d." for "1s." but Mr. Baxter's amendment seeks to strike out the paragraph that makes that altera-

tion, and to insert a new paragraph. I do not think the paragraph suggested to be inserted would meet the situation. There would probably be a lot of argument as to what it meant. I think he could overcome the difficulty by allowing the clause to be passed and moving a subsequent amendment later on, setting out that the provision should not apply outside a radius of 20 miles, for instance, of the metropolitan area.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think there is something in what Mr. Fraser has suggested. We should report progress and examine this matter further.

Progress reported.

## BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 17th October, 1946.*

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

## QUESTIONS.

### GAOL SITE.

*As to Report of Joint Parliamentary Committee.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

1, Has the inquiry into the proposed new gaol site yet been completed?

2, If not, when is it expected?

3, If so, when will the report be made available?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

1, and 2, Yes.

3, The report has not yet been considered by the Government.

### SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE.

*As to Estimated Increase in Attendances.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

1, Has a decision been made regarding the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 years?

2, If so, from what date is it intended that it shall operate?

3, What is the estimated increase in attendances of school children (a) in Government schools, (b) in private schools?

4, What will be the increase in the number of children in the affected classes?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, No. The possibility of raising the school-leaving age to 15 years on the 1st February, 1947, is being fully explored.

3, Estimated increased attendance—(a) Government schools—boys, 2,109; girls, 1,818; total, 3,927. (b) Private schools—boys, 389; girls, 497; total, 886. Total—boys, 2,498; girls, 2,315; total increase, 4,813.

4, Affected classes:—Class 4—Government: boys 21, girls 1; private: boys —, girls 5; total: boys 21, girls 6. Class 5—Government: boys 53, girls 27; private: boys 25, girls 9; total: boys 78, girls 36. Class 6—Government: boys 138, girls 67; private: boys 22, girls 3; total: boys 160, girls 70. Class 7—Government: boys 557, girls 304; private: boys 77, girls 88; total: boys 634, girls 392. Class 8—Government: boys 628, girls 672; private: boys 116, girls 234; total: boys 744, girls 906. Class 9—Government: boys 578, girls 363; private: boys 90, girls 73; total: boys 668, girls 636. Class 10—Government: boys 134, girls 184; private: boys 59, girls 85; total: boys 193, girls 269. Totals—Government: boys 2,109, girls 1,818; grand total 3,927. Private: boys 389, girls 497; grand total 886. Combined totals: boys 2,498, girls 2,315.

### WATER SUPPLIES.

*As to Larger Pipes for Summerville.*

Mr. LEAHY asked the Minister for Works:

1, Could he state whether a supply of water pipes is now available to complete the proposed increased water supply to market gardeners at Summerville?

2, If sufficient pipes are available, could not the work be proceeded with immediately?

The MINISTER replied:

1, It has not been possible to date to obtain the galvanised iron pipes required for the extension to the market gardeners at Summerville, but continued efforts are being made to do so.

2, Answered by No. 1.

### BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES (No. 2).

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

### BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

*Recommittal.*

On motion by Mr. McDonald, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 11.

*In Committee.*

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

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 138.

Mr. McDONALD: Members will recall that there was some discussion last night regarding paragraph (b) which deals with a week's notice being required for the termination of service. This morning I had the advantage of a discussion with the Minister for Labour and I now have an amendment which will meet his views and, at the same time, will achieve what I desired to bring about when I moved an

amendment last night. I move an amendment—

That at the end of proposed now paragraph (h) the following proviso be added:—“Provided that this paragraph shall not apply in the case of any person who is employed as a casual worker. For the purpose of this paragraph the term ‘casual worker’ shall mean a worker employed for less than six consecutive days.”

The amendment will help to avoid any confusion. A casual worker will function in accordance with the terms of the engagement and there will be less possibility of any misunderstandings.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: As the hon. member mentioned, we discussed the matter this morning. Last night I pointed out the difficulty owing to there being no definition of “casual worker.” I find that in country stores a number of young people are employed over the week-end, and we would not expect them to be given a week’s notice of termination of services. I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

## BILL—COUNTRY AREAS WATER SUPPLY.

### *Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes in effect to amalgamate the Goldfields Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act. In addition, the measure contains a small number of new features, two or three of which are of considerable importance. The Goldfields Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act have worked reasonably well over the years and, in the normal course of events, might have continued in operation for a long time to come without the drastic action—if I may so describe it—as set out in this Bill having to be taken.

It is necessary to bring about the amalgamation, with some new features, in order that a basis might be established upon which the proposed comprehensive scheme for the agricultural areas of the State

might be organised legally and, in the event of Parliament’s approving, be proceeded with as expeditiously as possible. If this Bill becomes law we shall, in effect and in fact, be saying goodbye to the Goldfields Water Supply Act as a statute. I am sure that nobody who has any reasonable knowledge of the background to the establishment of the Goldfields Water Supply scheme will be happy to know that it has become necessary for the legislation under which that scheme has operated to be repealed and to be incorporated to a large extent in a new statute.

It might be appropriate to traverse briefly the history of the establishment of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme so that a clearer recollection of the difficulties of those days might be brought to mind, and so that the public generally might be reminded of the extreme difficulties that existed in the goldfields districts before the scheme was established, as well as of the great benefits the scheme has conferred upon the people of the Goldfields and those in the areas between Mundaring and Southern Cross. Members who are old enough to remember and those who have read the history of our goldmining areas may recall that the Eastern Goldfields developed fairly rapidly in the nineties, population having come to this State from most, if not all, of the other States and from other countries of the world. With the aggregation of a large population in certain parts of the Eastern Goldfields, the question of a sufficient and safe supply of water for drinking and domestic purposes became an urgent necessity. Considerable efforts were expended by the Government and others in locating water supplies on the Eastern Goldfields. A large amount of boring was carried out and every method known at that time was tried in endeavours to locate underground supplies or supplies of any sort that would be sufficient to meet the needs of the day.

All those endeavours proved unsuccessful, as might reasonably have been expected, and consequently the Government of the day found itself with a first-class and growing problem upon its hands. The Premier of that time was Sir John (afterwards Lord) Forrest and the Engineer in Chief was Mr. C. Y. O’Connor. The Government called upon Mr. O’Connor to

investigate the problem and make such practical recommendations as he considered would be wise for the purpose of developing a scheme that would supply not only the immediate requirements of the population on the Eastern Goldfields, but also the requirements of the greatly increased population which, it was then thought, would develop quickly in that part of the State. Finally, Mr. O'Connor recommended that a reservoir be built near Mundaring and that a large pipeline be constructed from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie. When it is recalled that this recommendation was made some 50 years ago, I think it will be admitted that it was extremely daring—from the point of view of the layman, at any rate—and also that it was of an exceptionally noble character.

Time has proved it to be a recommendation which was entirely practicable, the carrying out of which conferred very great benefits not only upon the people of the Eastern Goldfields but also upon large numbers of people in the towns and farming areas between Mundaring and the Goldfields. It would not be possible to estimate the enormous economic value which the State has reaped from the carrying out of this recommendation. The scheme not only made it possible to supply water to the gold-mining industry and to the people engaged therein, but it also laid the foundation for the tremendous expansion that took place subsequently in that industry.

As years went by and the lands in the eastern agricultural areas were opened up, water was made available for domestic and stock purposes in those areas. But for the existence of this scheme, it is certain that the expansion of the agricultural industry in the eastern areas would have been but small. The fact that water was made available from the scheme made it much easier, much safer and much less expensive for those engaged in the farming industry there to establish themselves securely and, in the great majority of cases, to continue their farming profitably. Without going into a great deal of detail, the establishment of this scheme was indeed of inestimable value to Western Australia in every way.

It is not asking too much of us at this time to remember with very deep gratitude the benefit which the men responsible at the beginning of the century conferred upon the

people of their day and upon all of those concerned in the years that have since passed. The Goldfields Water Supply Scheme is at present supplying the requirements of communities in 34 towns. It also supplies water for the reticulation of approximately 975,000 acres of farm lands. It can therefore be seen that the scheme has played a considerable part in making it possible for towns to be created, for population in them to increase, and for the production of farm lands to be increased far beyond the stage that would otherwise have been possible.

As the new features of the Bill are mainly concerned with rating and the maximum rates and charges to be imposed, especially on country lands, it might be advisable briefly to explain the main rating systems that now apply both under the Goldfields Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act. At present the rates levied on country lands range from 2d. per acre to 6d. per acre.

Mr. Doney: Where would the 2d. rate apply generally?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At the 30th June of this year the rates that applied in the different districts were as follows:—

Per Acre Rating.	Acres.
2d. .. .. .	69,608
3d. .. .. .	691,030
4d. .. .. .	49,520
6d. .. .. .	588,047
	<hr/> 1,398,205

That includes the rating under both the Goldfields Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act.

Mr. Doney: What is the determining factor? Is it distance from the main?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A special temporary arrangement is in force with respect to a relatively small acreage declared by the Rural and Industries Bank to be in the marginal areas. Those marginal areas were established after the financial depression and were so established mainly because of the unreliable rainfall in those areas. The rating for water supply purposes in the areas concerned is 3d. for every cleared acre of land. This arrangement has given considerable relief to the

farmers concerned. They have in addition been granted relief by other Government departments.

Mr. Perkins: Is there not 1d. discount on the 6d. rate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All 6d. rates are subject to a discount of 1d. if an amount equivalent to one year's rates is paid within the currency of the rating year. The discount is allowed notwithstanding that arrears may still be owing by the ratepayer. In reply to the question asked by the member for Williams-Narrogin, the basis upon which the rating is made is the distance from which the properties are situated from the main. Therefore, the rating system has relationship to the expenditure that must be incurred in taking the reticulation pipes from the main to the various districts to be served. As members will no doubt readily realise, it has not been possible for the department to collect all, or nearly all, of the rates imposed on farm lands during the past several years.

Up till the depression period of 1929 or 1930 payments were reasonably good, but from then on until, say, 1939, payments were far from good and large arrears accumulated against the farmers, more particularly against those farthest removed from the pipeline, and therefore in districts with a rainfall that was not reliable in every year. Over the nine years ended the 30th June, 1946, the percentage on capital expenditure of surplus of cash collections over operating expenses was—Barbalin district, nil to 1.37; Kondinin, 0.07 to 2.07; Narembeen, 0.50 to 3.04. It will be seen, therefore, that the taxpayers of the State generally have been carrying a very substantial financial burden in the direct sense in connection with the water supply systems established in those areas, and the actual water supplied to the different farmers.

I suppose the farmers themselves, and perhaps many other people in the State, would try to console any Treasurer who was worried about this aspect by telling him that the indirect benefits were very considerable, and that therefore the taxpayers, although penalised in the direct way by having to meet these heavy losses, were more than compensated by the value of the indirect benefits to trade and commerce and in the provision of employment and of the

many other intangible factors which go to make up this term "indirect benefits."

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The talk about indirect benefits has whiskers on it, and should not be taken into consideration.

Mr. Perkins: If all the rates were paid, would the scheme be self-supporting financially?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am very interested to hear the member for Geraldton, an ex-Premier and Treasurer, say that this talk about indirect benefits has whiskers on it and should not convince or persuade Treasurers in the future as much as in the past. However, there is some merit in the argument that a considerable amount of indirect benefit does come to the State by the provision of water supplies and, through that, by the maintenance of people on the land and the production of wealth by them from the land.

Mr. McDonald: The member for Murray-Wellington agrees with that.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: We all agree.

Mr. Perkins: If all the rates were paid, would the scheme be self-supporting?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The policy in respect of country extensions from the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme has been to strike a rate not more than sufficient to meet interest and sinking fund and operating and maintenance charges on extensions, disregarding the cost of delivering the water at the point of take-off from the main. In other words, the cost of taking the water from Mundaring to, say, Doodlakine, is not charged against extensions supplied to farmers in the Doodlakine district.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is it charged to the Goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not charged to the Goldfields either, except in the bookkeeping and theoretical sense. It is finally paid for by the general taxpayers of the State. Separate balance sheets are not issued for farming services, the whole of the results financially being merged into the general account of the undertaking as a whole. In water supply Acts applying to country lands, provision is made for what is termed a fixed annual rate. This fixed annual rate is known more commonly among farmers as the holding fee. It is a rate charged in addition to the acreage rate. This

rate, or holding fee, is not popular with any farmer I have ever met. All farmers complain about it, and protest strongly against its imposition.

When the Water Supply (Farming Lands) Bill was introduced in 1911, the Minister concerned at that time said that this fixed rate was to constitute a payment by farmers for the water they would use for domestic purposes as against the water they would use for farming purposes. That was fairly logical; but it does not matter how much logic one brings to bear in any discussion one has with farmers regarding this holding fee, they still cling very solidly, and, in many cases, even viciously, to the belief that it is an imposition in fact, and one that should be removed at the earliest possible moment. In the drafting of the amalgamating Bill now before the House, consideration has been given to that aspect and, as I deal with the new provisions in the Bill, I will explain exactly what the Government has decided in that regard; and I feel sure that farmers will say that on this occasion at least the Government has done the right thing.

The first new provision I wish to explain is that of a new definition as compared with that in either the Goldfields Water Supply Act or the Water Boards Act. This new definition concerns rating zones. The purpose is to enable the department to be in the position in future to apply rating much more equitably, area by area and district by district, than has been possible in the past; in other words, if this provision becomes law, it will be possible to establish much smaller zones in future than it has been possible to establish districts in the past. Consequently, it will be within the power of the board to give greater consideration to more localised features and difficulties and, where it is considered fair and just, to establish differential ratings on a much wider scale than has been possible in the past under existing legislation. This Bill will give the department power to erect stand-pipes and to rate all land within a three-mile radius. Power will also be taken to specify the quantities which any person may take at any time from such stand-pipes, and to lay down conditions regarding the taking of water from them.

Mr. Perkins: It would not be the full rate charged on the land?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the rate to be charged would be much less than the normal rate.

Mr. Kelly: Would it mean the elimination of all free stand-pipes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It could mean that, but the position in that regard will be decided by the department in accordance with conditions in any particular locality. The department considers it must have power of this kind if these stand-pipes are to be continued. Under the existing system and under the existing law, we know that many stand-pipes are abused, as it were, by farmers and by others; and it is considered that the only way to prevent those abuses is for the department to have power somewhat along these lines in order that the establishment and operation of the stand-pipes may be carried out on a more systematic basis and be controlled with some discipline, at any rate, as against allowing the present undisciplined system to continue.

Provision is made in the Bill for alterations and amendments to rate-books to be made during the current year and for periods to a maximum of five years immediately preceding the current year. This is required so that rating omissions, errors, inconsistencies and so on may be provided for in a satisfactory way. Those members who know the provisions of the Road Districts Act well, will know that a provision similar to this one is to be found in that Act. That provision has proved of considerable use and value to road boards, and I am sure we will have the same experience with it if Parliament agrees to include it in this measure.

In the Goldfields Water Supply Act there is power to levy rates on any land situated wholly or partly within ten chains of the pipe-line. There is a proviso in this section of the Goldfields Water Supply Act which limits the land to be rated to a distance of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the pipe-line. If any land in any holding rateable under that Act extends  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the pipe-line, the balance beyond  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles is not rateable. In this Bill we re-enact that provision, but do not include the proviso. Therefore, if this provision, as re-enacted, becomes law, any holding of land within ten chains of a main will be rated for its whole distance, no matter how far the holding extends from the main itself. It is not thought that there would be many properties extending beyond

1½ miles from the main, but there are some, and it is considered that they should be rated for the whole of the holding. It is felt that some substantial benefits might arise therefrom, and that very little financial hardship would be imposed on the landowners concerned.

Mr. Perkins: They would need to have a lot of pipes to take advantage of the water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That would be so, if they wanted to run pipes to the farthest end of their property; but they would not want to do that. However, that would be entirely a matter for the farmer or landowner himself to decide. The maximum annual rate for country land under the present law is 1s. per acre. I think that up to 1911 the maximum was 6d. per acre, but, for some reason which I have not been able to ascertain, the maximum rate per acre that could be imposed was increased from 6d. to 1s. However, no rate is imposed higher than 6d. at present. Therefore, although the maximum rate impossible was increased in 1911 from 6d. to 1s., so far as I have been able to ascertain, no greater rate than 6d. has since been imposed. This Bill alters the maximum to be imposed from 1s. per acre to 5d. per acre, so the maximum that can be imposed today under the Act is to be reduced from 1s. to 5d. under this proposed new legislation.

Mr. Perkins: No-one is paying more than 5d. per acre now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Sixpence per acre is the present maximum, with a discount of one penny in cases of reasonably prompt payment of rates in the current year.

Mr. Watts: With the discount, the rate is 5d.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the discount will still be allowable under the proposed new maximum rate of 5d.

Mr. Watts: The Bill says 6d.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that be so, a late alteration made by the Government has not been included in the Bill, but it will be made in Committee.

Mr. Perkins: The maximum rate of 6d. will be reduced by one penny?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Doney: And will be further reducible by the one penny rebate, bringing it down to 4d.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. If members of the Country and Democratic League think that is too good to be true, and put forward amendments accordingly when in Committee, the Government will give such amendments careful consideration.

Mr. Watts: I am sorry there has been a misprint in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In explanation of that I would point out that 6d. was to be the maximum, but, after careful inquiry carried out by a special departmental committee, a recommendation was put forward that 5d. should be the maximum. The Government considered that recommendation only a short time ago, and approved of it, but evidently the necessary action was not taken to alter the maximum of 6d., as proposed, to 5d. per acre, and so the Bill contains the wrong figure.

Mr. Doney: Will there be a corresponding rebate on the rates lower than 5d.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can see that the member for Williams-Narrogin is aiming at getting water without cost for those on the lower rates, and I am afraid I am not prepared to commit the Government to go that far. If members have studied the Bill I think they will agree that the Government has gone a long way towards establishing a much more reasonable system of rating than has ever operated in this State in the past. It is not proposed in the Bill to reimpose the holding fee of £5 per annum, which I explained earlier. In other words, the existing holding fee of £5 per annum will be abolished and in its place will be established a minimum amount of £2 to be paid each year. In effect, where the rating as applied in the normal way to each holding would not return £2 or over, the minimum to be paid will be £2 per annum. This will apply only to country lands, and, of course, only where holdings are small or in districts where the land is poor in quality and the return by way of rates on an acreage basis would not be above £2 per annum.

Hon. N. Keenan: Will it provide any reduction in respect of the Goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the member for Nedlands is dealing with a matter that is not dealt with in the legislation itself, but in regulations made under the legislation.

Hon. N. Keenan: While in this generous mood, are you including the Goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All I would say in that regard is that the Government has under consideration proposals in relation to the price charged for water to people living in certain towns, but I am not making any promise. I am not even suggesting that any reduction will be made affecting any part of the Goldfields. The Bill will give the Minister the right to grant a concessional rate to farmers who have, at their own expense, established water supplies on their properties sufficient for their needs. The maximum concessional rate will be 3d. per acre and will operate for a period of five years immediately after this Bill becomes law.

That question has arisen largely because of the proposals developed for the establishment of the comprehensive water scheme for the agricultural areas. In those areas many farmers have, over the years, established water supplies of their own which seem to them, at all events, sufficient for all their immediate needs and which they think might be regarded as being reasonably sufficient for all their anticipated needs for some time to come. They argue, with some reason, that it would be unfair to impose on them the rate that might be imposed on adjacent farms where no sufficient provision has been made for water supplies.

Some farmers even argue that they should not be rated at all under the proposed new scheme and should not be brought under it in any shape or form. I will have something to say on that when we are dealing with the Bill that is to follow this. However, because the Government considers there is some merit in the contention put forward by those farmers, it has included in this Bill the provision to which I have just referred. At the moment I am not in a position to say whether the concessional rate of 3d. will be the maximum imposed but, even if it is, I think the maximum rate of 3d. per acre on such properties for a period of five years will be offering

them fair consideration. The fact that a scheme of this kind will be passing close to their properties will undoubtedly be of value to them, even if only as it affects the value of the land. The fact that a permanent and assured and ample water supply is available will enable them as time goes on to become linked with the scheme, thereby obtaining undoubted benefits.

Arguments similar to those mentioned have been put forward in other States of Australia in the past. I know of instances in South Australia where the Government developed proposals for large water supply schemes in the country and farmers in those areas, who had already incurred considerable expense in providing themselves with adequate water supplies, protested against being brought under the schemes, and complained bitterly, but when the schemes were in fact established and put into operation it was not long before most, if not all, of the farmers were linked up and were taking water for practically all purposes on their farms.

Mr. Doney: Will there be a review at the end of the five-year period with the object of continuing the reduction if conditions have not changed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The maximum period during which the concessional rate is to be imposed is five years. I am positive that before that period has elapsed every farmer enjoying the benefit of the concession will proceed to enjoy the greater benefit of being linked up with the scheme.

Mr. Doney: Was that what ensued in South Australia in the cases you have mentioned?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Undoubtedly it was. I think that is a very important provision in the Bill and I believe it will meet most of the objections put forward by farmers who have provided their own water supplies on their properties. There might still remain a few who will complain or protest, but in an undertaking such as that to be dealt with under the next Bill, I do not think Parliament would for a moment be justified in deciding not to go ahead with a scheme of the magnitude proposed, simply because a handful of farmers in different parts of the districts to be served

looked on it from a narrow point of view, and did not want it simply because they had to pay something under it.

Another few feature in this Bill is that it makes mortgagees liable in connection with the recovery of water rates. That provision has been in the Metropolitan Water Supply Act for many years and has been found satisfactory by the department concerned. As far as I am aware it has not imposed any hardship or difficulty on any mortgagee. The Bill provides for a discount of five per cent. on rates paid within two months of the commencement of the rating year. That is a new provision in this Bill, as compared with existing legislation. The Bill aims to provide a first priority for the recovery of water rates, with special provisions relating to the Rural and Industries Bank. Another new feature gives the department power to take possession of land and hold or lease it, where rates have remained unpaid for three years or longer. As to the maximum rates to be applied in townships, I would point out that the maximum rates set out in the Goldfields Water Supply Act differ from those in the Water Boards Act.

Therefore, in order to give members a clearer understanding of the existing position and of what the Bill proposes I would quote a short table that gives the information in clear form. Under the Goldfields Water Supply Act the maximum rate for a municipality or townsite is 2s. Under the Water Boards Act it is 3s., and under the proposed legislation it is 3s. except where the present maximum rate is 2s. In other words, we are re-enacting in this Bill the provisions on this point that exist in the Goldfields Water Supply Act and the Water Boards Act. We are able to do that because we are providing for a 3s. maximum to be applied except where the present maximum rate is 2s. Therefore the existing position will be re-established under this legislation and no district will be capable of having imposed on it a higher rate than it would have been possible to impose under the existing statutes. Where the annual rating is less than £1, the minimum to be paid under the Goldfields Water Supply Act is £1, and under the Water Boards Act it is capable of being prescribed by regulation. Under this proposed new legislation it will also be £1.

Briefly, therefore, that is an explanation of the new features in the Bill. There are some other points but I do not think they are of any considerable importance and members will be able easily to find them in the Bill. In accordance with the normal procedure, the clauses that have been taken from other statutes are clearly marked so that members can readily see which parts have been taken out of existing statutes and those that are new. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—COMPREHENSIVE AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.32] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks the approval of Parliament of what is called the Comprehensive Agricultural and Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. Members of both Houses are, I think, very well informed regarding the proposed scheme because many weeks ago copies of the document which sets out the essential features of it and many of its details were forwarded to each member of the State Parliament. If any member has lost his copy between then and the present juncture or, perhaps, has handed it to a local authority or some person or organisation interested in the matter, I can inform the House that there is a limited number of copies still available, and I would be pleased to make additional ones available in such circumstances. However, as I say, the number of copies still in the hands of the department is limited and it would not be possible to make further supplies available to any great extent.

Before proceeding to stress the great need of the proposed scheme or to explain the main features of it, I would like to pay a tribute to the Director of Works, Mr. R. J. Dumas, and all the officers who assisted him in the department in this project in the engineering aspect and those other aspects which, of course, are essential parts of the scheme as it has now been developed. Members who have closely read the document that was issued in connection with the pro-

posals will know that the preparation of them placed upon the shoulders of the Director of Works and his officers not only a considerable volume of work but a very great strain in the technical sense. Particularly is this so when it is remembered that the proposals were developed during wartime. Thus it will be appreciated that the activities of the Director and his assistants represented a work of considerable magnitude, one for which they deserve, I am sure, the thanks of every member of Parliament and also, I would think, of the general community.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There is the work that they did for the Commonwealth Government, too, at that stage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This proposed water supply scheme will cover, approximately, 12,000,000 acres of agricultural country in the Great Southern districts and also in the north-eastern agricultural areas. It will also provide a good water supply for many towns, some of which are well supplied today by a local scheme, others of which are indifferently or badly supplied by local undertakings and the remainder of which are not supplied by schemes of any kind. As I indicated previously, the undertaking is to be known as the Agricultural and Goldfields Water Supply Scheme and will be known as such for two reasons. The first is that the Government feels that it is only fair to retain in the title the word "Goldfields." The second is that the raising of the wall at Mundaring by 35 feet will, in part, enable additional water to be stored for use by the goldmining industry as it expands.

The wall of the Mundaring reservoir is to be raised under this proposal not only because of this new scheme. In fact, in recent years the Mundaring reservoir has at times been in a critical condition with regard to the quantity of water stored and the meeting fully of the needs of its present-day consumers. During the summer before last restrictions regarding the use of water from the reservoir had to be imposed because the total quantity of water impounded in the reservoir that summer was not sufficient to allow the department safely to continue enabling consumers to draw water to the full extent they desired. Had the rainfall in the succeeding winter been light then last summer very

severe restrictions would have been necessary with regard to the draw upon water from Mundaring. Therefore, even if no new proposals had been developed it would have been necessary for the Government to have put in hand work for the purpose of raising the retaining wall at Mundaring very considerably.

Then again under these proposals it will be necessary to raise the retaining wall of the Wellington Dam, which is situated near Collie. There again it would have been necessary to raise the wall even if this new scheme had not been formulated, because of the development of irrigation in the South-West and, with more land being brought under irrigation from time to time the storage capacity of the Wellington Dam would have been too small to have met the growing needs of irrigationists. Consequently the Government would have been under the necessity of expending a considerable amount of money there to enable the retaining wall of the Wellington Dam to be raised.

Mr. Doney: When it is raised as intended, will the reservoir catch all the rainfall or will there still be an overflow in normal years?

Mr. McLarty: Of course, there will be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In my view it would have been necessary to raise the retaining walls at both Mundaring and Wellington to meet the expanding needs of the districts the reservoirs serve, but the cost of carrying out this essential work is not being made a charge against the proposed new scheme to serve 12,000,000 acres of additional agricultural land and a considerable number of townships. That will enable the estimated capital cost of the new scheme to be reduced considerably, and at the same time it represents a great contribution towards the project.

Mr. McLarty: But is not that usual in connection with most water schemes? Headworks are not a charge against the undertaking.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The retaining wall at Mundaring is to be raised by approximately 40 feet and accordingly the quantity of water capable of being stored there in the future will be from three to four times greater than can be held there

at present. As a matter of fact, the capacity of the reservoir today is 4,600,000,000 gallons and when the wall is raised to the height I have mentioned, its capacity will be increased to in the vicinity of between 15,000,000,000 and 16,000,000,000 gallons. The present storage capacity of the Wellington Dam is 7,500,000,000 gallons, and its new storage capacity when the retaining wall is raised from 40 to 50 feet, will be between 38,000,000,000 and 42,000,000,000 gallons.

Members will therefore appreciate that these proposals represent works of very great magnitude, which seek to increase the storage capacity of the water available to the Government by approximately 400 per cent. In effect, we are going to increase our existing reservoirs four times over at least, and that will represent a very great step forward in connection with the conservation of water in Western Australia. I think that probably the Governments in most of the States of Australia today would place the conservation of water in a very high priority. As regards a long-range policy, most Governments would give it top priority. I appreciate that under present-day conditions with so acute a house shortage, Governments would be more inclined to give housing No. 1 priority; but, as I say, looking ahead and adopting a long-range policy, I think most State Governments would regard water conservation as a matter of first priority in the future. In Western Australia a policy of that kind is essential because our State is not endowed by Nature with favourable circumstances for the conservation of water.

Huge sums of money have to be expended here to enable water to be stored in large quantities. Because of that different Governments—not only this but others in the past—have been seized with the importance of conserving water to the greatest possible extent so as to make the benefits of water supplies available to an increasing number of the population.

I want now to deal with the necessity for establishing the proposed new scheme to afford regular and ample supplies of water to the districts that it is being developed to serve. The rainfall in the total area to be served varies considerably. In some portions it is fairly substantial, but not in

others. As between the most favoured areas and the least favoured in respect of annual rainfall there is a great variation. But even in the favoured districts within the boundaries of the proposed scheme most of the rain comes in a comparatively short period, and that leaves even those areas unfortunately circumstanced for the greater part of each year. Therefore I think there is a good and strong argument as to why this scheme should be developed in such a way as to include all of the most favoured districts within its boundaries.

It is extremely difficult for farmers to battle through the whole of 12 months if all the rain, even if they get 25 inches of it, falls within a period of, say, five months or less because during the remaining seven months they have a hard struggle unless they have adequate water supply systems established on their properties. The need for water on the farm has increased as the years have gone by. That need has been greatly intensified by the change that has taken place in the farming industries of the State, especially those located in the areas to be served by this scheme.

Before the 1929-33 depression wheat-growing was carried out extensively in most of the areas proposed to be covered, and wheatgrowing was, in many instances, practically the only source of income of the farmers concerned because they did not, at that time, carry any or many sheep. Wheat had been sufficient for their needs, financial and otherwise, and consequently they devoted practically the whole of their activities to the growing of that commodity. Farmers who were engaged wholly or mainly in the growing of wheat did not find it necessary to have great quantities of water available on the farm. The trade depression, with the substantial fall in wheat prices and those of other primary products, had the effect of causing farmers to put their eggs into more baskets, as it were, so as to have more than one source of income. The result has been that more and more sheep have, from time to time, been placed on the farms and, as the farmers have changed from wheatgrowing to mixed farming, their water requirements have largely increased.

In many districts today, the ability of farmers further to develop their properties is severely limited because there is either no water available to them, except what they

can conserve on their properties, or there is not sufficient water available. I think, therefore, that the proposed comprehensive scheme is essential to any further substantial development of the farming areas, of 12,000,000 acres, which the scheme will serve. If the proposed scheme is not established and its incalculable benefits made available to the farmers in those districts, then I think there will be not much prospect of their developing beyond the present stage.

If the scheme is put into operation it is not easy to estimate, with any degree of accuracy, the amount of additional development and progress that might be made by the farmers and the districts concerned. A special inter-departmental committee investigated that phase and put forward some estimates which I will refer to at a later stage. By and large, however, it is underestimating to say that the establishment and operation of a huge water scheme of this description would lead to great development, and practically every farm would be served by it. Also, it might easily re-establish many farming areas which went out of production during the depression, and even after the depression. It should, too, have the effect of encouraging people to bring into production land that has not so far been developed to produce wealth.

I come now to the question of the towns to be served by the scheme, and I think there is no doubt in the mind of anyone, nor could there be, as to the value of an adequate and safe water supply to any community. I am sure that some of the members who will speak on the Bill will be able to tell others just how bad some of the existing local water supply schemes are, and just how difficult and unsatisfactory is the position of the people in those towns. It has been suggested, from time to time, that there is no need for a comprehensive scheme of this kind, but that large reservoirs could be established in each locality—for instance, one at Wyalkatchem, another at Dowerin, another at Koorda and so on—and that such small local schemes could conserve sufficient water to meet the requirements of the local farmers and the town population.

Mr. Doney: They would still be at the mercy of the fluctuating rainfall.

Mr. Leslie: That suggestion has not come from the areas that you have just mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I was careful to try not to identify the suggestion with any particular locality. There are many answers to that contention, but the most conclusive is that we must, first of all, get the rain from Heaven and so control it when it falls that it will run into our reservoirs. It is not of much use trying to establish reservoirs in areas where the rainfall is insufficient in most years, and extremely insufficient in some years. What we have to realise is that local reservoirs of the type suggested by a few people would fail in the very periods when water would be most needed in the districts concerned.

The Minister for Lands: They always have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I therefore suggest that the only scheme capable of supplying the needs of the farmers and the townspeople in this huge area of country is one established where the rainfall is sure and sufficient.

Hon. N. Keenan: Where is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For the purposes of this scheme there are two such places, namely, Mundaring Weir and Wellington Dam. I do not know of any rainfall failure at Wellington Dam either before or since it was constructed. It is true that in very dry years the catchment area behind Mundaring Weir has not brought down sufficient water to fill the dam, but in the 40 odd years that the Mundaring reservoir has been in existence it has, in only four years, not been filled. In all the other years it has been filled and, as members know, great quantities of water have flowed over the retaining wall to run to waste, ultimately into the sea. Therefore it will be agreed by everyone that the storage facilities proposed by the new scheme are the best that could possibly be chosen or discovered in this State.

The fact that there is already a main from Mundaring as far as Cunderdin will also be a great aid to the north-eastern section of the scheme, because it will enable some of the water required for the scheme to be taken as far as Cunderdin in certain periods of the year, but will not, of course, obviate the necessity for duplicating the main line between those two points. The existing pumping station at Cunderdin would also be valuable for the north-eastern section of the scheme, as will several other features of the

present scheme between Mundaring and Cunderdin.

I have already informed members of the proposals for the raising of the retaining walls at Mundaring and Wellington Dams. If this legislation is approved and the scheme is proceeded with, it will serve approximately 12,000,000 acres of farming country and, in addition, 35 country towns. The area to be reticulated is shown on the large map I have tabled, which is to be hung on the wall of the Chamber. It is also shown in the plan contained in the document, a copy of which has been in the possession of each member for several weeks. The area to be covered will extend from Dalwallinu in the north to Borden, near Gnowangerup, in the south, and from Northam in the west to Burracoppin, near Merredin, in the east.

Apart from the economic need for proceeding with the scheme, about which I imagine there can be no argument, there is the question of the living and social conditions of the people on the farms and in the country towns. No doubt every member at some time has visited farms and stayed for some days and nights, and there is no need to say that where no water supply is available on the farm, the living conditions for the farmer, his wife and their children are far from what we desire to see available to every man, woman and child in the State. In more recent years, there has been a growing movement throughout the world to provide better living and social conditions for the people. This movement has developed very solidly in Australia by virtue of the policy of succeeding Commonwealth Governments. They have aimed at improving living conditions and social conditions for the people, their legislation having included widows' pensions, child endowment, liberalisation of old-age and invalid pensions, as well as a number of other matters, including assistance to people through an organised scheme for health and medicine.

The State Government feels that a great measure of social improvement will be afforded to the people in the towns and to a great many people in the farming areas concerned by the installation of this large-scale water scheme. I do not know whether those farmers who claim to have sufficient water conserved on their farms fully appreciate the great advantages accruing from having a really ample supply. I should say that,

even on the best of the farms, greatly improved living and social conditions could be created if they were linked to a comprehensive water scheme of this sort.

Mr. Watts: To take advantage of the scheme, a considerable capital cost would be involved. That is the trouble.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; there would be capital cost to establish a reticulation service on the property, which, of course, would have to be borne by the farmer, but even so I should say that the undoubted benefit of being able to turn on the tap at any time and be assured of an ample supply of high-quality water for all purposes would be worth the outlay of a few pounds of capital expenditure.

Mr. Leslie: Provided the farmers, when they turn on the tap, can get water. A lot now turn on the tap and do not get water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree with the hon. member, but he knows the reason why that state of affairs exists.

Mr. Leslie: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In many farming areas served by the Goldfields scheme, the supply is not always certain. This is not due to there being normally any insufficiency of water in the Mundaring Reservoir; it is due to the fact that the local reticulation system has been installed for so many years and has deteriorated so badly as to make it extremely difficult at times to get any water at all. In some of these localities, the reticulation system was installed when the farmers were engaged almost mainly in the growing of wheat. Consequently, small pipes capable of giving only a small quantity of water were used. With the great development of the carrying and raising of sheep in those localities, farmers now need ever so much more water, with the result that the draw has been so substantial as to cause the farmers further out to be in difficulty during the hot weather in getting any water for their needs. However, that difficulty will not arise under the new scheme.

We propose to establish the scheme on the basis of meeting the needs of a farmer carrying up to a certain number of stock, including sheep. The pipes will be new, and therefore all the difficulties existing in some of the reticulation systems off the G.W.S. will not occur under the new scheme. So I emphasise the important social

benefits that will accrue to a large number of people if the scheme be put into operation. It will be possible for people on farms and in towns to have at all times sufficient water for all purposes. Those who have lived on farms, even if for only a short period, know how bad the conditions of living can be when there is no adequate supply of water, especially for domestic purposes. I think it may be said with every degree of justification that living on farms and even in country towns where reasonable water supplies are not available has been responsible for the gradual growth over the years of a strong disinclination on the part of many people to continue to live in the country.

Mr. Seward: Not nearly so much as the bad housing conditions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore, I think I may claim that the new scheme will have a very far-reaching effect in making living conditions in the country much better than they are today. I can imagine that the womenfolk particularly find the lack of a decent water supply a cause of great worry and irritation to them. After they have lived in the country for a time, they may not be keenly conscious of the fact, but they must feel all the time the worry and strain of having to work and struggle along without the decent amenity of an adequate water supply.

I agree with the member for Pingelly that housing is another vital factor affecting people living in country towns and on farms, but that factor is not dealt with in this measure. As far as circumstances will permit, it will be dealt with from another angle. The area proposed to be covered by the scheme will embrace approximately 60 per cent. of the wheat farms of the State. The sheep concentrated in the South-West Land Division now represent 70 per cent. of the State's entire sheep population, and most of the 70 per cent. will be in areas to be served by the new scheme.

Mr. Seward: Of course, the South-West Land Division starts away up north, near Geraldton.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. On the question of the incidence and intensity of rainfall, I point out that the precipitation ranges from about 20 inches on the western edge of the area to be covered by the scheme to 11 or 12 inches on the

eastern boundary. As I mentioned earlier, most of the rain falls in the winter and in the cooler months of the year the proportion being 70 to 80 per cent., which means that, outside the cooler months, the rainfall in those areas is only from 20 to 30 per cent. of the total for the whole year.

Mr. Watts: That is only periodical.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and it applies only to certain districts. Following the heavy rains of the last two winters, there has been an unconscious inclination on the part of many people to place less value, or no value at all, upon the need for our doing something of a substantial nature quickly in order to conserve additional supplies of water.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before tea, I was referring to the fact that some people had, because of the last two very wet winters, become much less water-conscious than they were 18 months or two years ago, when we had some dry winters, with a consequent shortage of water in many districts affecting not only farmers but some of the town schemes. I remember that in the summer of 1944-45 the Government was called upon to have water carted by motor trucks to several farming districts. The services of the Army were enlisted at that time and the emergency was to a large extent overcome. The Army made available trucks and, in some instances, drivers. A large quantity of water was carted to many districts. I readily admit that many of those districts will not be included in this proposed scheme, but some of them will be. The conditions in the towns of Narrogin, Brookton and Pingelly—to mention only some—during the 1944-45 summer were very bad indeed. They are, of course, still bad at Pingelly.

Mr. Seward: They are always bad there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The existing scheme at Pingelly is of very little use, as the water cannot be availed of except for the very roughest of domestic purposes. In other towns, such as Narrogin, supplies had to be drastically curtailed, thus imposing hardship on the people concerned. At Narrogin the people not only went short of water for domestic purposes; there was no water for their gardens, for

which Narrogin had a great reputation, and deservedly so, prior to that summer.

Mr. Doney: I am not commenting at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The conditions to which I have referred were not brought about by the inactivity of past Governments; because within the limits in which they could act to remedy a situation of that kind, they did so. It might be interesting to members to know that the sum of £8,750,000 has been expended by the Governments of this State in the past to establish water supplies in country districts.

Mr. Doney: Including the Goldfields scheme?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Substantial efforts were made by past Governments to establish water supply schemes to meet, as far as was possible under the then existing conditions, the needs of people in country districts. The fact that approximately £10,000,000 will be expended upon this proposed scheme indicates that, on a financial basis of comparison, it will at least equal all of the water supply schemes established in our country districts in the past. That comparison will, I think, give members a clear idea of the magnitude of the scheme and its ability to serve the needs of the people. I wish now to run quickly through the towns to be served in what will be known as the northern section of the scheme. This section will draw its supplies from the Mundaring reservoir. The particulars are as follows:—

Town.	Population.	Remarks.
Dalwallinu ....	300	No existing reticulated supply
Pithara ....	100	do. do. do.
Ballidu ....	200	do. do. do.
Wongan Hills ..	400	do. do. do.
Koorda ....	200	do. do. do.
Wynakatchem ..	600	do. do. do.
Dowerin ....	400	do. do. do.
Goomalling ....	950	Reticulated from G.W.S. Scheme
Norham ....	5,700	do. do. do.
York ....	1,600	do. do. do.
Beverley ....	1,000	do. do. do.
Meckering ....	450	do. do. do.
Cunderdin ....	500	do. do. do.
Tammin ....	200	do. do. do.
Kellerberrin ..	1,250	do. do. do.
Doodlakine ....	200	do. do. do.
Merredin ....	2,100	do. do. do.
Nungarin ....	1,000	do. do. do.
Bruce Rock ....	600	Existing reticulated town water supply scheme.
Quairading ....	500	do. do. do.
	18,250	

In the southern section of the scheme, which will draw its supplies from the Wel-

lington Dam, similar particulars are as follows:—

Town.	Population.	Remarks.
Brookton ....	500	Existing reticulated town water supply scheme.
Pingelly ....	1,000	Existing reticulated town water supply scheme (not suitable for human consumption)
Narrogin ....	3,500	Existing reticulated town water supply scheme
Wagin ....	1,300	do. do. do.
Katanning ....	2,200	do. do. do.
Broomhill ....	200	No existing reticulated supply
Tambellup ....	300	do. do. do.
Gnowangerup ....	300	do. do. do.
Dumbleyung ....	400	do. do. do.
Wickepin ....	300	do. do. do.
Corriga ....	500	do. do. do.
Kojonup ....	300	do. do. do.
Kulin ....	200	do. do. do.
Narembeen ....	500	Existing reticulated supply from district water supply
Kondinin ....	550	do. do. do.
	12,050	

The population in the southern section is 12,050, and the total population for both sections is 30,300. As I mentioned earlier, several of the existing local town supply schemes have proved inadequate for several years past in regard to conserving sufficient water, even after a winter such as the last or the one of the previous year. I have some information regarding the basis used in connection with this scheme to measure approximately the water requirements in regard to farms. The design is based on a unit of 1,000 acres, carrying a wheat crop, 300 sheep, and 10 cattle, and also provides for the needs of the farmer and his family. The average daily quantity allowed in summer is as follows:—

	Gals.
300 sheep at 1 gallon per head ..	300
10 cattle at 10 gallons per head ..	100
Domestic requirements ..	300

Total .. .. 700

From a study of the performances of existing agricultural reticulation systems, the maximum daily rate of supply is assessed at 900 gallons per day. It is on the figure of 700 gallons per day that the total quantity to be supplied is calculated, and on the figure of 900 gallons per day that the diameters of the distribution pipe lines depend. The average daily quantity allowed for the winter period is:—

	Gals.
Domestic requirements .. ..	300
10 cattle at 10 gallons per head ..	100
Total .. ..	400

The total annual quantity required per 1,000-acre unit therefore is 200,900 gallons. In connection with town supplies, a study of consumption records for existing reticulated towns shows an average daily consumption of 40 gallons per head with a maximum daily rate of supply of 60 gallons per head. This has been allowed for in the scheme, together with an increase of population of 25 per cent. in the northern area towns and 100 per cent. in the southern area towns. In other words, the scheme has been drawn to provide for the needs of the existing population in each town in the northern areas and the southern areas, based on practical experience in towns already served from the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme; and that has been plussed up by 25 per cent. in the northern areas to meet the estimated increase in population and 100 per cent. in the southern areas. The member for Williams-Narrogin looks as though he doubts whether the population in the towns in the southern areas will increase 100 per cent. in the future.

Mr. Doney: No; I thought you were under-stating it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope I am very much under-estimating the position that will develop within the reasonably near future.

Mr. Leslie: What about providing for the establishment of local industries in any of those districts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Provision has also been made to meet the probability of industries being established in some of the districts to be served by the scheme. I mentioned earlier that careful consideration had been given to the design of the scheme with the object of utilising to the fullest extent possible the existing facilities of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme, and I pointed out that the existing main from Mundaring to Cunderdin would be used for the northern section and that all pumping stations and existing summit tanks would also be used in connection with the proposed northern section.

Mr. Watts: What is the consumption per head per day in the metropolitan district?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not that figure at the moment, but if the Leader of the Opposition would like to have it I will undertake to obtain it for him.

Mr. Watts: I would like to have it if it is available.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already told members how the existing water supply storages at Mundaring and Wellington are to be used as reservoirs, in effect and in fact, for the proposed new scheme. In connection with pumping stations, it is anticipated that before the extra necessary capacity in Mundaring reservoir is available, electricity will also be available from the new power station now being constructed at South Fremantle. It is therefore intended entirely to re-build and electrify the existing No. 1 pumping station at Mundaring Weir. The ultimate duty of these pumps will be to lift 14,000,000 gallons per day against a total lift of 730 feet. These pumps will deliver direct to the existing No. 3 pumping station at Cunderdin and the existing No. 2 pumping station will no longer be required. The No. 3 pumping station at Cunderdin will be re-built on an electrical basis and will obtain its power from the metropolitan power scheme.

It will be necessary to instal a booster pump near Kellerberrin to enable maximum day requirements to be passed from the existing No. 3 pumping station to the existing No. 4 pumping station. The Goldfields main pipe line will naturally form the main backbone from which branch pipes will be taken to the northern areas. From Cunderdin an auxiliary pumping station will lift water through rising mains, one running north and one south and delivering to service reservoirs located on commanding heights from which distribution to the farms, etc., will be by gravity. On the north running rising main a second pumping station of a Diesel type will be required at Minnivale. Seven small pumping units will be necessary to deal with local high areas. Pumps and mains have been designed to carry the maximum day's supply and all service tanks to provide five maximum days' storage.

In the southern or Wellington section, the design provides for the raising of the impounding wall at Wellington Dam to the extent I have previously explained. The bulk of this increased storage at Wellington Dam will not be used for this southern section of the new scheme, but will be used for irrigation purposes; but all of the water required

by the southern section of the scheme will, of course, be drawn from the Wellington Dam. The broad outline of the design in connection with the southern scheme is shown on the plan marked "drawing No. 10" in the document in the possession of members.

The main pipeline will run from Wellington Dam to the existing Narrogin storage reservoir, which has a capacity of 77,000,000 gallons. That capacity will enable the pumping rate to be decreased considerably below the maximum daily rate required by the area. The diameter of the pipe from Wellington to the Narrogin reservoir will be 28 inches. It is anticipated that power will be available from the proposed South-West power scheme, and the tentative proposals for pumping are: One station at Wellington Dam electrically operated and another about 30 miles east of the dam, also electrically operated. The duty for each station will be approximately 5,600,000 gallons per day, against 500 ft. total head.

At the Narrogin storage reservoir, a third pumping station, also driven by electricity from the South-West power scheme, will deliver, through rising mains, northerly to a hill about five miles away, from which water will gravitate as far north as Brookton, and easterly to a hill near Wickiepin, 22 miles away, from where water can gravitate over a very large area, and as far as Narembene and Kondinin, where branches will be connected to the existing district supplies for augmentation of those supplies in years of need. From the Narrogin reservoir—one would almost think this scheme had, at this stage, been drawn up by the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The Premier: He is looking more pleased than I have seen him for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As I was about to remark, from the Narrogin reservoir also a south-running main will take water by gravity to near Wagin where another pumping station—electrically driven from the South-West power scheme—will lift it through a rising main delivering to service tanks on commanding hills and terminating at Holly, south-west of Katanning. As in the northern area, small pumping stations—three in number—will be required to cope with small local high-level areas. From the service tanks, distribution will be by gravity to the farms.

It will be appreciated that the availability of electric power will result in a reduction in cost, both capital and operating, of the water supply scheme as a whole, and if the water reticulation, with its incidental amenities, is extended to farms, the development of the power scheme will be accelerated. Therefore, the two schemes are complementary, and the installation of one will substantially benefit the other. In connection with the progress to be made with the scheme, in the event of Parliament passing this measure, I would draw the attention of members to the information set out on pages 21 and 22 of the document dealing with the scheme.

Mr. Doney: You have not found it necessary to vary that data at all, have you? \*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The document that I have mentioned states, at page 21—

Proposed stage by stage order of construction—

First year:

- Purchase and lay 52 miles of Wellington-Narrogin main.
- Purchase and instal main pumps for above.
- Replace 24-inch elements in G.W.S. main conduit between West Northam and Cunderdin with 36-inch.
- Enlarge York-Beverley main.
- Instal Kellerberrin booster pump on G.W.S. main conduit.
- Instal Kodj-Kodjin pump at Kellerberrin and lay reticulation.
- Instal Belka reticulation.

I expected to see the member for Mt. Marshall jump out of his skin at this stage, but he has not even moved! The report continues—

Second year:

- Complete Wellington-Narrogin main.
- Purchase and instal Narrogin pump.
- Lay Narrogin-Brookton main and reticulate therefrom.
- Lay Narrogin-Corrigin main.
- Enlarge G.W.S. main conduit between Cunderdin and Kellerberrin.
- Purchase main pump plant, Mundaring Weir.

Third year:

- Lay part reticulation off Narrogin-Corrigin main.
- Instal main pump, Mundaring Weir.
- Electrify existing No. 3 pump station at Cunderdin.
- Purchase and instal auxiliary pump (in part) at Cunderdin.
- Lay rising main, Cunderdin to Minnivale.
- Enlarge main conduit—lay 44-inch ex Mundaring Weir and other requisite sections.

**Fourth year:**

Complete reticulation off Narrogin-Corrigin main.

Instal reticulation off Cunderdin-Minnivale main.

Lay rising main—Minnivale to Kokardine and branches.

Purchase and instal Minnivale pump.

Enlarge main conduit—requisite sections.

**Fifth year:**

Extend reticulation to Dumbleyung and district.

Lay part reticulation north of Minnivale.

Enlarge main conduit—requisite sections.

**Sixth year:**

Lay main to Holly.

Purchase and instal pump at Woodanilling.

Lay reticulation north of Minnivale.

Enlarge main conduit—requisite sections.

Instal auxiliary pump (south) at Cunderdin.

Instal rising main (south) at Cunderdin.

Instal part reticulation off rising main above.

**Seventh year:**

Lay reticulation (southern area).

York and Beverley main.

Lay reticulation (northern area).

**Eighth year:**

Lay reticulation (southern area).

York and Beverley main.

Lay reticulation (northern area).

**Ninth year:**

Lay reticulation (southern area).

York and Beverley main.

Lay reticulation (northern area).

**Tenth year:**

Lay reticulation (southern area).

York and Beverley main.

Lay reticulation (northern area).

Members might like to have some information as to the financial features of the proposed scheme. The estimated capital cost is £9,330,000. The estimated cost of annual charges includes—

	£	£
(a) Operating expenses (including pumping costs and administrative charges) ....		184,000
(b) Sinking fund at .674 per cent. to redeem loan expenditure in 53 years ....	62,914	
Less sinking fund contribution by Commonwealth at ¼ per cent. ....	23,333	39,581
		<u>223,581</u>
(c) Interest at 3½ per cent. ....		326,655
Total ....		<u>550,236</u>

The estimated annual revenue comprises—

(a) Farm lands:	£	£
1. Rates chargeable on total area not already served, viz., 9,602,600 acres at 5d. per acre ....	200,050	
2. Additional service fees at £1 each ....	8,000	
3. Meter rents at 10s. per holding ....	4,000	212,050

(b) Town lots, including additional revenue to be derived from Town Water Supplies at present inadequately served and on the basis of a progressive annual increase of 4 per cent. during next ten years:

1. Rate at 3s. in £ on net annual value of properties with a minimum rate of £1 ....	21,700	
2. Non-rateable town lots, i.e., Government buildings, churches, etc., which may be served with water ....	350	
3. Meter rents—3,000 at 10s. ....	1,500	23,550

**(c) Other Revenue:**

1. Annual sales to Railway Department ....	2,500	
2. Excess water sales generally ....	10,000	12,500
Total ....		<u>248,100</u>

If the whole of the estimated annual revenue is collected each year, it will be sufficient to meet operating and sinking fund charges totalling £223,581, and provide about £24,500 towards the annual interest charge. If 90 per cent. collections are achieved, there will be approximately sufficient to meet operating and sinking fund charges only. Based on an estimated life of 90 years for the main pipe-lines and service reservoirs, and 30 years for the main pumping stations and distribution pipe systems, an annual sinking fund investment of £62,658, earning interest at 3½ per cent. per annum would be sufficient to cover depreciation charges.

As I have already indicated, it is thought that approximately 10 years will be occupied in carrying the total scheme to completion. It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that with the added benefits of water, electricity and sewerage, together with migration to the districts concerned, the annual revenue will, at the end of the first 10-year period, have increased materially. The revenue estimate in relation to farm land is based on experience in the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme districts. In those districts the amount of water rates on farm lands, including fixed rates for each separate holding, plus excess water charges actually collected during the 10 years prior to the 30th June, 1944, averaged approximately 4¾d. per acre per annum.

It is considered that the farm lands proposed to be served by the new scheme will be able to pay an annual water rate of 5d. per acre, in which, of course, will be included

the £5 holding fee, as it were, that is imposed under existing legislation. The annual revenue from farm lands has been estimated on the basis mentioned, although it might be desirable to adopt a zone system of variable rating which will, in total, return approximately the same amount of water rates each year. I referred earlier to the farmers who have already made provision on their properties for their own water supply requirements, and pointed out that some of them were opposed to being brought under this scheme at all. Others were opposed to paying the full rate per acre that might be imposed and considered that they should be granted a concessional rate.

On the basis of making a charge of 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons for water made available by way of rebate for rates paid, and also for excess water supplied, a farm with 1,000 rateable acres would be entitled to receive 166,700 gallons per annum if a rate of 5d. per acre were to be imposed. Calculated on a sheep-carrying capacity of 250, the charge would be equal to 1s. 8d. per sheep per annum, and on a 300 sheep capacity it would be 1s. 5d. per sheep per annum, while on the basis of 350 sheep it would be 1s. 2d. per sheep per annum. That is, of course, debiting the whole of the charge against the sheep and not allowing for any charge that should be quite rightly debited to water used for domestic and other purposes.

Mr. Perkins: You mentioned 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. The present rate is often 4s. per 1,000 gallons.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I mentioned a basis of 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons for water supplied by way of rebate and excess, with the results that I gave.

Mr. Perkins: The 2s. 6d. is not mentioned in the Bill. Is it proposed to use that figure?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not say that 2s. 6d. will be the charge. I am giving an example of what the position of a farmer would be if a price of 2s. 6d. were fixed for water made available by way of rebate for rates paid, and water supplied in excess of rates paid. The price to be charged for the water will not be included in the Bill but will be decided ultimately and made applicable by way of by-law or regulation.

Mr. Perkins: The farmers will want to know, beforehand, what the charge per 1,000 gallons is likely to be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In all seriousness, I say it is difficult at this stage to decide absolutely what the price will be. I might mention that the price would be 2s. 6d., but ultimately, as the result of work done in the construction of the scheme, it might be either less or more. Looking at the whole thing on the basis that we have so far developed, it does appear that 2s. 6d. might be the charge, but I do not think the Government should be committed absolutely to that figure at the present stage, when no actual work on the scheme has been done with the exception of the preliminary work involved in the raising of the retaining wall at Mundaring reservoir.

Mr. Leslie: A low rate is no good if the charges are too high.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, obviously, it is not. The committee that investigated the consumption of water on farms estimated the annual consumption on a 1,000-acre farm at 201,000 gallons. That would result in an excess consumption of 34,300 gallons over and above the amount supplied by way of rebate, which at 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallon would amount to £4 5s. 9d., and could be regarded as the charge for water made available for domestic purposes. From those figures it will be clear that the annual charges likely to be imposed on farmers and the amount of water to be supplied in return for those charges, are reasonable. I do not think there would be a farmer anywhere who would not be happy to lay out some £20 per year if he could be guaranteed a supply of 166,000 gallons of water in return—

Mr. Leslie: Do not forget that he has to bear the initial cost.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —especially when he would know that the water would be of first-class quality, suitable for all requirements, and that it would be available whenever he needed it. I admit that, as the member for Mt. Marshall suggested, at the beginning the farmer would be involved in capital expenditure in the putting down of the reticulation system to carry the water from his boundary to various parts of the farm. Under the scheme it is proposed to take the water to

the boundary of each property to be served, so that the farmer will be under the necessity only of providing the reticulation system on his own property.

As to the certainty of increased productivity, the committee to which I have referred has prepared the following information. In the year 1939-40 the acreage sown under wheat was 1,274,401 and the total yield 17,505,796 bushels, or an average of 13.7 bushels per acre. During the same year the farming lands in the whole of the areas carried approximately 2,400,000 sheep, 36,000 horses, 19,500 cattle, and 40,000 pigs. The committee considers that the designed basis of this scheme, with each 1,000-acre unit carrying 300 sheep in addition to crops and other animals, is sound, in which case the area will be able to carry 3,500,000 sheep, which would represent an increase over the 1939-40 figure of 1,100,000 sheep.

Given security of water supply and the resultant amenities of life, it is thought that farm labour will be more easily obtainable in those districts, and that the improved amenities and the better conditions of living on the farms will have a very great effect in the direction of keeping labour there permanently. This, of course, will depend to a large extent, as the member for Pingelly suggested earlier, upon reasonable housing accommodation being provided for farm labourers, especially where married couples are employed. If more farm labour is available and can be held upon the farms, it is reasonable, provided market conditions are right, to expect an increased production of wheat and other crops.

I mentioned earlier that the existing storage capacity of Mundaring had proved to be insufficient to meet all the demands in summer time. Until additional water can be impounded at Mundaring, the revival and further expansion of the goldmining industry will, to some extent, be restricted. Therefore it can be claimed that the construction of this scheme will lead in the years to come to a large increase in the quantity of gold produced in the Eastern Goldfields district.

The defence aspect also comes into consideration. During the recent war, the Army authorities and the Government had to develop a plan for the evacuation of large numbers of people from the metropolitan area to country districts. Although what appeared to be satisfactory plans for mass

evacuation were worked out on paper, I tremble to think what would have happened if those plans had had to be put into operation and great numbers of people from the metropolitan area had been under the necessity of being transferred to country districts and remaining there for any considerable period. I am inclined to think that the problem of water supply might easily have frustrated most of the plans and to a large extent have prevented any large group of population from remaining in the country districts for any considerable time. The construction of this scheme will undoubtedly be of tremendous value if any such danger threatens us in future which, of course, everyone hopes will not happen. However, in the event of such an emergency arising again, the scheme would be of tremendous value in assisting to maintain a large number of the metropolitan population in the country districts.

Mr. Abbott: It would be very vulnerable, would it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Anything is very vulnerable in wartime, but the further away from the coast people and schemes of this description are, the less vulnerable they would be as compared with their remaining densely packed in the metropolitan area where they would be subject to attack, not only from the air, but also by invasion from ships.

Hon. N. Keenan: But the supply could be cut off.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not necessarily.

Hon. N. Keenan: Mundaring is in the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am aware of that, and I am aware that the Wellington dam is not far from the coast in the Bunbury area. Nevertheless, I suggest that, in a time of threatened or actual invasion, great groups of population from the metropolitan area would be much safer in some of the districts to be served by this scheme than they would be if they remained at Fremantle, Claremont, Cottesloe, Nedlands and other suburbs.

The various aspects of the scheme, including the economic, wealth-production, the provision of more amenities for people in country towns and on farms, and the defence aspects have been presented by the State

Government in a case put up to the Commonwealth, in which the Commonwealth has been asked to make substantial financial assistance available to the State. The case for presentation to the Commonwealth was, in the main, prepared by an inter-departmental committee consisting of Messrs. B. Crimp, representing the Country Water Supply Department; R. Brownlie, representing the Rural and Industries Bank; R. Roberts, representing the Department of Agriculture; G. Cock, representing the Public Works Department; W. McCulloch, representing the Railway Department and G. Hammond, representing the Goldfields Water Supply Department. The case as prepared by the committee was scrutinised and altered in some respects by the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas, and the then Under Secretary of Works, Mr. Andrew. It was finally checked over and altered somewhat by the Government, and when completed and printed, was presented to the Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley.

On the presentation of the printed case, the Prime Minister expressed his very great interest in the scheme, and said his Government attached tremendous importance to the additional storage and reticulation of water in the Commonwealth. He thought his Government would be prepared to make financial assistance for the scheme available to the State, and agreed to set up a Commonwealth departmental committee to enable an investigation of all phases of the scheme to be made so that the Commonwealth Government might obtain a report and recommendations. This committee has been formed.

The chairman, Mr. Loder, of the Commonwealth Works Department, was in Western Australia some two or three weeks ago on an all-States and Commonwealth conference on roads. He visited Narragin and on that occasion had a conference with representatives of the local governing authorities of the Great Southern district. Mr. Loder, with the other members of the committee, will arrive in Western Australia towards the end of this month or early next month. They will visit many districts to be served by the scheme for the purpose of meeting with local organisations and individual farmers. I am not suggesting the committee will visit every district and meet every person, as that would be a physical impossibility; but it will, I understand, en-

deavour to visit as many places and meet as many people as possible during its investigations of the scheme.

Mr. Leslie: What about sending them outside that area, too?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The State Government is anxious that the Commonwealth committee should complete its work as quickly as possible, because we desire the Commonwealth Government to make its decision, if possible, before the end of the year, and thus enable us to proceed with the preliminary work of the scheme in January of next year; provided, of course, that Parliament approves of the Bill and gives the Government the necessary legal authority to proceed with the construction of the scheme.

There is no need to emphasise the magnitude of this scheme; it has already been given a considerable amount of publicity. In addition, members have received a copy of the document explaining the scheme, a summary of which document—and a fairly substantial one—was published in "The West Australian." Consequently the people of the State have had a reasonable opportunity to become fully acquainted with the main features of the scheme and the objectives which it is designed to achieve. It can be said, even at this stage, that the people favour the scheme. As a result of the additional knowledge which will be made available to them by the debates which will take place in this House and later, I hope, in the Legislative Council, a great number of people will become better informed, because I am confident the more informed the people become, the more solid will be their support for this undertaking.

Naturally, there will be some opponents to the scheme right to the bitter end; but I should imagine—indeed, I believe—their number will be extremely few. They will be those few people here and there who, from purely financial and personal considerations, believe they can do without the scheme. They will believe they can struggle along successfully with whatever water supply scheme they have on their own properties. That might be true, but their number would be very few. The vital point for consideration by members of Parliament is not the few that might be able to get along without the scheme, but the great majority of farmers and townspeople who

will not be able to get along successfully, or even reasonably—either from the point of view of wealth production or from the point of view of living conditions—without the scheme.

Hon. N. Keenan: I believe you have read Sir John Forrest's speech.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I frankly confess that I have not read any of his speeches in recent years.

Hon. N. Keenan: I do not mean in recent years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have not read any speeches in recent years except those of the member for Nedlands, which I always read and very much enjoy. The Government places this Bill before Parliament with every confidence. We believe Parliament will take the opportunity provided of approving of a scheme of great magnitude, one that will prove of incalculable value to the people of the districts concerned. In the confidence of that belief, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

## BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £2,200,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 8.37 p.m.

## Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 22nd October, 1946.

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

## QUESTION.

### WOOL.

#### *As to Freedom of Movement of Purchases.*

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Is the Minister aware of the statement as published in "The West Australian" dated the 17th October, 1946, re wool sales at Newcastle—"That no further wool will be bought or sold in Australia until conditions return to a stage when buyers are sure of freedom of movement of wool purchased"?

2, Has the Minister verified such statement?

3, If the above statement is correct, is the State Government taking steps to guarantee such movement of wool in this State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, 2 and 3, The statement quoted emanated from a meeting of brokers, buyers and shipowners and had particular application to New South Wales.

## MOTION—WAR FUNDS REGULATION ACT.

*To Approve of Proclamations for Transfer of Assets.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.36]: I move—

That under the provisions of Section 5, Subsection (4) of the War Funds Regulation Act, 1939, this House approve of the issue of proclamations authorising the transfer of the assets of the Australian Comforts Fund (Western Australian Division), the Naval Welfare and Comforts Fund and the R.A.A.F. Comforts Fund, in the terms set out in the proclamations.

This motion deals with assets in the nature of cash and goods held by the Australian Comforts Fund, the Naval Welfare and Comforts Fund, and the R.A.A.F. Comforts Fund, comprising three of the major war fund organisations registered in this State under the provisions of the War Funds Regulation Act, 1939. That Act provides for the constitution of a War Funds Council to supervise the operations of individuals, committees etc., raising moneys for purposes connected with the