

During the Committee stage, however, I will move an amendment to relieve the position of people resident in the Kimberley area and other portions of the North-West. I realise that they will be penalised under the measure, for the declaration of main roads there will be something in the nature of a Kathleen Mavourneen act. It may be years or it may be never; at any rate, the people using motor vehicles to cart goods up North will have to pay taxation without deriving any benefit in the upkeep of the roads for many years to come. In my opinion, the roads will be first constructed in the metropolitan area and the country districts.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.55]: The point raised by the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) is an interesting one. I note that the Minister informed the House that South Australia had already passed a Bill of a similar description. I understand that the other State Governments contemplate passing such Bills as well. It seems inconceivable that the Minister would introduce the Bill without having satisfied himself that the Federal Constitution would not be overridden. One hon. member stated that the users of the railways had to pay for the services rendered and that the users of the roads, including those driving heavy vehicles that cut the roads up so appreciably, should also pay for the services rendered them in the provision of good roads. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) declared that there was no analogy between the two classes. I consider it a sensible conclusion for anyone to arrive at when they suggest that those who cut up the roads should contribute towards the upkeep of those thoroughfares. Although the Minister objected to certain exemptions being granted last year, I am pleased to see that he has included them this year. Together with other members I have been rather amused at noticing the sudden opposition that has sprung up since the introduction of the measure. Last session we seemed to be in agreement that, provided the tax was imposed along proper lines, it was an equitable way of making those who use the roads pay for their upkeep. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Returned from the Council with amendments.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1925.

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ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT.

The Clerk announced that owing to the absence of the President through unavoidable cause, it would be necessary to appoint a Deputy President.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [3.1]: I move —

That the Chairman of Committees be appointed Deputy President during the temporary absence of the President.

Question passed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.5 p.m.

ADDRESS—DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

Telegram in Reply.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have to report receipt of the following communication from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Hon. the President of the Legislative Council. The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Council of Western Australia that he has this day received the following telegram from the Secretary of State

for Dominion Affairs:—"Your telegram dated 27th November, containing the terms of the address from both Houses of Legislature, has been laid before His Majesty, who commands me to convey his most grateful thanks for the expression of sympathy and assurances of devoted loyalty." W. R. Campion, Governor. Government House, Perth, 3rd December, 1925.

QUESTION—SEAMEN'S TROUBLE.

Fremantle Harbour Trust Claims.

Hon. H. SEDDON (for Hon. A. Lovekin) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that the Fremantle Harbour Trust authorities have rendered accounts for sums approximating £15,000 in respect to dues during the late shipping strike, and are threatening legal proceedings in respect thereto? 2, Will the Government supply this House with an estimate of the dues which would have been payable had the ships not been held up by the strike? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to profit unduly from the misfortunes of the shipping companies concerned?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Had these ships sailed from the port when their cargo work had finished as is the usual custom, the amounts payable in port dues and pilotage charges would have been £1,536 18s. 3d. It had been the practice to charge for periods of detention of ships the distress or duress rate of port dues, which would have amounted to approximately £3,600, in addition to the amount of full dues chargeable for the period the ships were actually working, but it has been found that this practice was outside the powers of the Trust Commissioners and illegal, i.e., being contrary to the regulations issued under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act. 3, The question of a rebate has not had the consideration of the Government, but it should be borne in mind that the ships have had the use of the harbour for which the Government have to pay heavy interest and sinking fund charges. The strike did not originate in Western Australia, nor was it due to any act of the State Government.

QUESTION—DRUNKEN WOMAN. TROTTING GROUNDS.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Was a charge made by the Police Department against a woman

who, on the Trotting Grounds during a trotting meeting some time in January or February of this year, was drunk and using vile and obscene language and exposing her person to the gaze of the assembled crowd for a considerable time before being removed by Constable T. Anderson? 2, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. The Commissioner reports that Constable Anderson did not consider himself justified in placing the woman under arrest, or reporting the matter to the officials of the Trotting Club. After receiving a report from a plain-clothes constable that a woman appeared to be drunk under the grandstand, he proceeded to the spot, but apart from the fact that the woman, who was sitting on a beer case, appeared dazed, he found no evidence of her being either drunk or disorderly. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, HARVEY WEIR.

Hon. H. SEDDON (for Hon. A. Lovekin) asked the Chief Secretary: Will he lay on the Table (1) copy of the letter giving the capacity of the Harvey weir, including the river flow, as appears on departmental file; (2) statement of the cost of the weir; (3) copy of the recommendation by Mr. A. E. Arney, dated 12th August, 1921, for raising the weir by means of a shutter; (4) copy of letter from Mr. O'Brien approving, dated 1st September, 1921; (5) copy of letter of endorsement by Mr. Thompson, ex-Engineer-in-Chief, dated 27th September, 1921; (6) copy of letter from Mr. O'Brien urging this work, dated 10th November, 1921; (7) copy of letter by Mr. Munt refusing recommendation, dated 19th November, 1921; (8) copy of Minister's refusal to the ex-Engineer-in-Chief's recommendation, dated 22nd November, 1921?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: It is desirable that the procedure of a motion that the papers be placed on the Table of the House should be followed in this and in similar cases relating to departmental files.

BILL -BROOKTON RECREATION RESERVE.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL--VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.*Recommittal.*

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, Bill re-committed for the further consideration of Clause 10.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10—Special rate for the destruction of vermin:

Hon. H. STEWART: Subclause 5 provides that this section shall not apply to any holding which does not exceed 160 acres in area. In the south-western portion of the State dingoes cause considerable damage and are killed in great numbers, and such an exemption in the heavily timbered country is too great. Many such areas are of a higher value than are profitable areas elsewhere. I move an amendment—

That in line two of Subclause (5) "one hundred and sixty" be struck out, with a view to inserting other words.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Stewart should say what words he proposes to insert. This question has received much thought, and the Government have concluded that it would be unjust to tax a man who holds no land in excess of 160 acres. Such a man could not carry sheep in any number. The area would have been acquired for cultivation, and hence the holder would derive no advantage from the operation of the measure and should not be taxed. If he were taxed it would be only to the extent of 4s. 2d., and it would be scarcely worth while collecting that. The object of the Bill is to confer benefits in return for taxation imposed, and it would be unjust to impose taxation on anyone who held less than 160 acres.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: On the argument of the Chief Secretary there should be many other exemptions. Many men with 1,000 acres have no intention of carrying sheep, because they are growing wheat. It is rather a boon to them to have the dogs. I do not know how the limit of 160 acres has been arrived at. The dingo pest should be a national burden.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I shall oppose the amendment unless Mr. Stewart indicates in what direction he intends to move afterwards. There ought to be exemptions up

to 160 acres. People on that area will have enough smaller pests to cope with.

Hon. G. POTTER: It is conceivable that four blocks of 160 acres might be in juxtaposition to each other and might represent a considerable breeding ground for vermin. I should be inclined to strike out the whole paragraph. No holder of 160 acres would object to throwing in his lot with other people who were paying for the extermination of the dingo.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The valuation of these blocks is much higher than that assumed by the Chief Secretary. Small farmers may go in for dairying, pigs and poultry, and their stock may be endangered by the presence of eagles, hawks, dogs and foxes.

Hon. T. MOORE: This paragraph will be a protection to group settlers. If Mr. Stewart were to suggest adding the words, "Unless the occupier or owner resided thereon" I would support him. No one should be allowed to hold 160 acres of land and do nothing with it.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is possible for a man holding this small area to have only a portion of it developed. I am in accord with Mr. Moore's suggestion. The tax will depend upon the value of the land. The Minister's estimate of 4s. 2d. is based on a value of about 14s., but many of these South-West holdings will carry 10 sheep to the acre and are worth much more than that. People are being brought under this Bill because of the general benefit that will be conferred upon stock owners as a whole, and upon these others also. That being the case, there must be a number of injustices. I am still of opinion that the area of 160 acres is too great. As regards the reduced area, I await expressions of opinion from hon. members.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The basis I calculated on, £1 per acre, was hardly too conservative. The valuations are on unimproved land. What is the value of unimproved land in the South-West? Perhaps 10s. per acre. And what is its improved value? Perhaps £25 per acre. The Government cannot sell first-class land at less than 15s. per acre.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But the unimproved value is assessed by the Taxation Department, and that is a different thing altogether.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On many a homestead farm there is no stock at all except perhaps a dozen sheep. A limit must

be imposed: otherwise hundreds of thousands of blocks will be taxed, some of them containing only three or four acres.

Hon. J. EWING: It is rather difficult to come to a decision, Mr. Stewart not having indicated the reduced area he would propose. The amount of the tax on small blocks would be extremely low. Throughout the South-West there are many orchards of 40 or 50 acres which would not be touched by the Bill. Why worry the owners of those orchards?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They will not be worried, as their areas are under 160 acres.

Hon. J. EWING: That is so. The words should remain.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The man with 170 acres would have to pay. Yesterday a man told me that his local board rated him at £250 on a block which he would be glad to sell for £50. He has appealed, but without result. That is the kind of thing which is being put upon people throughout the State. Abandoned homestead blocks of 160 acres are scattered throughout the State, paying no taxation whatever and operating as breeding grounds for rabbits, dingoes and foxes. The words suggested by Mr. Moore should be inserted.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	14

Majority against .. 5

AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. W. T. Glasbeem	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. Potter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. H. Seddon	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)
Hon. E. H. Harris	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Moore's suggestion as to occupancy of 160-acre homestead blocks should be adopted. The owner should be on the block to do his part in the destruction of vermin; otherwise he should not be exempt.

Hon. T. MOORE: Personal occupancy should not be essential to obtaining exemption. I move an amendment—

That to Subsection (5) of proposed Section 100a, the following be added:—"on which the owner or his agent resides."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the amendment be agreed to, it will cause no end of trouble to the Agricultural Department. It will mean that every unoccupied block, even of an acre in extent, will have to be inspected. Is it worth while?

Hon. J. Ewing: It will be very costly.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but it will have to be done. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Baxter could tell the Committee that during six weeks in the south-western portions of the State three men secured over 800 dogs. The South-West is as badly infested as any other part of Western Australia.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is the worst of all.

Hon. A. Burvill: But that refers to bush land, and you know it.

Hon. H. STEWART: Members should consider the Bill along broad lines. Only a few years ago we had the spectacle of Parliamentary representatives of the South-West giving illustrations of what the pest meant to them. One member took into the Chamber a dog skin and secured publicity in the Press in order to draw attention to the menace. Yet we have South-West members in this Chamber talking about the position of a man who may reside on the block next to his holding of 160 acres. I support the amendment. We have agreed to the area of 160 acres, but I was prepared to move that the area should be 100 acres.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Much as I sympathise with the amendment, as an ex-Minister for Agriculture I would sympathise more with the Minister in charge of that department and his officers if the amendment were carried.

Hon. J. Ewing: They could not give effect to it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Nothing much would be gained by it. For every pound collected from the tax it would cost the State about £120.

Hon. E. ROSE: Mr. Stewart suggested that the South-West was the breeding ground for dingoes. The Bill, however, provides for the taxing of Crown lands and timber leases and that is where the dingoes are bred, not on holdings of 160 acres.

In 99 instances out of 100, blocks of that size are in use, and therefore would not be breeding grounds for wild dogs.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I oppose the amendment. There are plenty of blocks considerably under 160 acres in the South-West upon which men are making a living. The men do not reside on those blocks, nor do they intend to, because, seeing that they are swamp areas, it would be impossible to live upon them all the year round. They live on township blocks handy to the holdings. Most of the dingoes in the South-West are bred on the unoccupied Crown lands and the timber leases. Already the holders of the 160-acre blocks have to pay a vermin tax, and I do not see why they should be required to pay the supertax.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Regarding Subclause 6, the anomalous position respecting valuations is apparent. From time to time Mr. Stewart has drawn attention to the great need of a uniform system of land valuation. The subclause refers to holdings not assessed or assessable—every block should be assessed or assessable—and sets out that the valuations may be made under the Road Districts Act, the Land Act Amendment Act, or the Forests Act. That emphasises the great need for some more effective and uniform system of valuation than obtains at present. I believe the Lands Department has endeavoured to effect some improvement, but I draw attention to the point at the present stage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree with Mr. Dodd and remember that about 13 years ago I introduced a Bill with that object in view, but it was rejected. I introduced it again in the following year, and it met with a similar fate.

Hon. H. STEWART: The amendment suggested by Mr. Moore hardly met the position and in order to test the feeling of the Committee I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to Subclause (5):—"Provided that holdings of over 100 acres shall not be exempted unless the owner or his agent resides thereon."

That will give exemption to all who have 100 acres and reside upon their holdings. Those who do not do so either personally or through their agents should not be exempt.

Hon. A. Burvill: If a man has a township block, why should he be required to reside on his swamp block?

Hon. H. STEWART: In some parts the man who has 160 acres would be regarded as a large landholder, and such a person could well afford to pay the tax.

Hon. A. Burvill: I do not agree with you.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You did not expect Mr. Burvill to do so, did you?

Hon. H. STEWART: No.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	..	13

Majority against .. 3

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. Potter	Hon. T. Moore

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. W. Hickey	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported without further amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [4.3]: I am sorry that this Bill must be introduced each year. The time has arrived when we should see the last of it. This measure was brought in as an emergency measure in 1914 and, at the outset, it did much good work in assisting settlers who were in difficulties through the drought, and so has been of considerable use in the development of the State. We have still on the board a number of settlers who are ham-

pered owing to the fact that they are carrying an increasing load of debt as the result of having passed through one or more bad seasons. To-day they are working on a pretty heavy overdraft, and are getting from the Industries Assistance Board just sufficient by way of sustenance to keep their families. In many instances it is a very meagre allowance, while the whole of the proceeds of their crops is taken by the board. The individuality of the settler is lost, and we are not getting the best possible results. It stands to reason that a man will not give his farm proper attention if he does not know exactly how he is to be treated by the board. I could state instances of men being given only half the sustenance sufficient to keep their families, notwithstanding which the whole of the proceeds of their crop is taken from them. This has led to trouble, men thinking that some at least of the crop harvested by them belonged to them, and in consequence selling it. Settlers being pressed by local storekeepers who supplied necessary stores, have sold sufficient of their crop to pay the storekeepers, and as a result have been brought before the court and held up as persons altogether undesirable. It is not the settlers' fault but the fault of the administration, since in many instances the settler is not given all that might be given him, and is continually being threatened by the Board with expulsion. Settlers have applied to have the whole of their debts with the Industries Assistance Board and the Agricultural Bank funded, so that they might work their own farms in their own way, treat with the people who are prepared to supply them with stores, and be able to sell their produce as they think fit. The idea is that, the debt being funded, a certain moiety of it, together with interest, shall be paid each year. The time has arrived when some such system should be introduced. It is wholly undesirable that the settlers should any longer be treated as they are being treated. I hope this will be the last time this measure is brought down, and that during the ensuing 12 months the board will find it possible to tell the settlers exactly how they stand and, where a settler is over-capitalised through no fault of his own, reduce his debt so that he may be in a position to successfully carry on. Then we could do away with the board altogether, except to the extent that it is being used to

carry on the soldier settlers, for whom it is necessary to have some board.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.11] in moving the second reading said: In this Bill authority is sought for the closing of certain streets. Various municipalities and road boards have had requests made to them for the closing of roads and streets, but before those requests can be acceded to and carried into effect the sanction of Parliament must be obtained. The Bill proposes seven closures in various parts of the State. The first is in the city of Perth and relates to the small piece of land at Hyde Park that makes the corner of the park a square. The closing of this portion will straighten up the street and still leave the full width. The next closure is at Ocean-parade, North Fremantle. The land there, near the North Mole, has been made up and it is proposed to lease an area for the erection of storage tanks for oil. This will have the effect of carrying Ocean-parade nearer to the sea, but the same width of beach will be retained. By this closure the Government will be able to lease the land and thus permit of competition in the supplying of oil fuel to ships calling at Fremantle. There is a small area to be closed at Narrogin, at the rear of an hotel lately built by Mr. Brown. It is a triangular piece of land, the closing of which will not in any way interfere with the road. On this area it is desired to erect a septic tank. The closure is requested by the Narrogin Municipal Council. A little while ago the Cottesloe Municipal Council sold to the Government the electricity supply for the district. In one of the side streets a substation has been erected. As a matter of fact it was erected on a road. It has been there for many years, and it is proposed to close that portion of the road on which the substation stands and give the Electricity

Department the title to the land. The next closure is at East Fremantle. It is the continuation of Angwin-street to Bolton-street. On top of a high cliff where the ground falls away steeply, there is a road called Richmond Crescent. It is impossible to construct the road on account of its steepness. The road has existed from the early days, dating back to the formation of the municipality, and the property abutting on to it belongs to the Government. An arrangement has been made with the Land Resumption Office under which Richmond Crescent is to be closed, and the land will then vest in His Majesty. Angwin-street will be continued to Bolton-street to give ingress to and egress from the property there. It is impossible to make a road on top of the cliff, and consequently the land for the purpose of a road is quite unnecessary. The department consider that the street should be closed. There is a provision that it should be regarded as a street even though it is not 66ft. wide. That was done in order not to interfere with any building erected by the Government on the land. I understand that buildings have been erected on the land, and, except for this Bill, it would be stipulated that the street should be 66ft. wide and some of the buildings would have to be removed. It is also proposed to close the road through the land occupied by the Muresk Agricultural College. This land abuts on the north-east boundary. It is necessary for the Government to have power to close this road and other access has been provided. None of the local authorities has been consulted in connection with this, but the Bill provides that that portion of the measure shall come into force by proclamation. This will enable the Minister for Lands to consult the local authorities and make the necessary inquiries before bringing that portion of the measure into operation. The last clause provides for the closure of roads in the North Fremantle municipality. These, as a matter of fact, can scarcely be called roads; they are merely rights-of-way. North Fremantle is becoming an important industrial centre. Some time ago several large firms acquired a number of small blocks which were divided by rights-of-way. Excepting one small block, this land is now held by Dalgety & Co., the British Imperial Oil Company, Limited, and Kitchen & Sons. The existence of the rights-of-way interferes with the carrying on of the business of those

people, and it is desired that legislative authority be given to close them and in that way make one large block of the allotments and rights-of-way. So far as I can discover there is no objection to the proposal.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They are not streets.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am informed they are merely rights-of-way. The consent of all parties interested has been obtained. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LAND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. EWING (South-West [4.20]): I have looked through the Bill and have found very little wrong with it. In a few instances it may be necessary to make certain amendments which I hope will be in the direction of improving the measure. A good deal of taxation has been imposed upon the farmers during the last week or two, and something will have to be done to relieve them. There is a clause in the Bill that appeals to me as providing for rather high rating on the land to be drained. I congratulate the Government on having introduced the Bill. For many years the question of drainage has been a serious one in all portions of the State from the Moore River to Hopetoun where the agricultural lands are. Many areas will be benefited by the measure and I hope that when the Bill is passed, the Government will proceed rapidly with the work. The huge areas of swamp land make the Bill necessary. Every additional grain of wheat and blade of grass we can produce will make for the advancement of the State. That being so, it would be a matter for regret if the greatest possible expedition were not displayed by the Government to give effect to the measure when passed. Everyone who has been to the Peel Estate must realise the wonderful success of the pasture land. I took an Eastern States visitor there last year and he said he had never seen anything like it. I have never seen such subterranean clover as is grown there, and it is not grown on the swamp

lands. The swamp lands of the Peel Estate are said to be the best in the world for close cultivation, and that is saying a good deal. This opinion has been expressed by visitors from all parts of the world.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the other portions?

Hon. J. EWING: They are proving very satisfactory. I am of opinion that there is no poor land in Western Australia, because what was termed poor land years ago is capable of some production. When I think of the land extending from Fremantle right down to Bunbury—excluding the Peel Estate—I recognise how necessary is the Bill, and it will be necessary also for the areas right through the groups and down to Hopetoun. There are thousands of acres of swamp land that, when taken in hand by the Government, can be made productive. I do not think the people of this State recognise the value of the land between Pinjarra and Bunbury. When it is drained and irrigated, it will be a veritable paradise. In conjunction with drainage we shall have irrigation, and the facilities for irrigation in that part of the State are greater than in any other part I know of, except in the great North-West. Irrigation is necessary in the North-West and I appreciate the difficulties that exist there, but the time is not far distant when the beautiful rivers of the North will be harnessed, and when there will be produced under irrigation enormous quantities of fruit and produce that are not now produced. There is one phase to which I must direct the Minister's attention. I believe the Bill will give the Minister some power to make drains on property other than that of the Government. This might result in advantage to holdings whose owners will not improve them. My advice to the Minister is to try to persuade the Government, now that they have cheap money available, to apply some of it to the resumption of large areas and, after drainage and good roads have been provided, start a big, straight-out, orderly sub-division. Under such a scheme, we would achieve the greatest success. I congratulate the Government on having secured such a vast improvement on the first migration agreement made with the Imperial Government. The Leader of the Opposition paid a great tribute to the Government on that account, though he may take to his soul the flattering unctious that he was the first to conclude

such an agreement. As time goes on, naturally, improvements will be made. With the cheap money available, the Government would be able to resume large areas, drain the country, build roads and subdivide the land in the most satisfactory way. Not only in the South-West but in the provinces represented by Mr. Burvill and Mr. Miles, irrigation will bring immense benefits. This is the greatest national question before us, and we should see that the people who are to be settled on the land secure it at such a price as to enable them to make a living. I am sure every member will do his best to give the Bill expeditious passage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Interpretation:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I would draw attention to paragraph (d) under the heading of the definition of "owner." It is unfair to make the person who is only an attorney or agent liable as if he were the owner, and carry all the responsibility of an owner. I move an amendment—

That the words "attorney or authorised agent" be struck out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment is in the interests of the absentee owner, so as to enable him to evade the Act. Without this paragraph the owner could defy the authorities and leave his land in idleness. If a man is an attorney he can resign from the position if he does not wish to carry any responsibility.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: If this amendment is carried, who will be responsible?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The owner would be liable. The agent should not be responsible for carrying out the purposes of a Bill such as this.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Provision is already made for attorneys or agents to become members of the board, and assume the responsibility of owners. I see nothing wrong with the paragraph.

Hon. J. EWING: If the obligations of an owner are not met by reason of the land being left idle, someone should carry the re-

sponsibility, and that person should be the attorney or agent.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That in the interpretation of "works," in line four, after "land" the following words be inserted "or to prevent the overflow of water upon land of a lower level"

It is often necessary in connection with drainage works to assure that the water does not flow on to lower lying areas.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment is quite unnecessary, because the definition of drainage works includes drains, flood gates, walls and other defences against water for draining or "diverting water from land." The inclusion of those words amounts to the same thing that Mr. Burvill has in mind.

Hon. A. BURVILL: But when water is diverted from certain land, there is a possibility of it overflowing on to areas at a lower level. The amendment will safeguard that position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But the definition covers the power to divert water by preventing it from flowing on to land of a lower level. I have no objection to the amendment, but I think it is unnecessary.

Hon. J. EWING: In the South-West, at Coolup, for instance, there is a lot of low-lying land and in years gone by the drainage was ineffectively carried out, with the result that the holdings of many owners have been flooded. The amendment may be of some value.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I suggest that the definitions of "water course" and of "works" or "drainage works" should appear after the definition of "drain."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Minister may exercise the powers of a board:

Hon. J. EWING: What does this really mean? What powers will the Minister have?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister will be permitted to exercise the powers of a board until the constitution of the board for the district concerned or after the dissolution of a board as well as if a board fails to carry out its duties to the satisfaction of the Minister.

Hon. A. Burvill: The provision is similar to the one appearing in the Road Districts Act.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Constitution and abolition of drainage districts:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I propose to move an amendment that will radically alter the constitution of drainage districts as provided in the Bill. I have been of the opinion for years that the whole catchment area should be declared a drainage area and I am certain that the engineers agree with me. Sometimes a drainage area may really embrace 800 or 900 square miles. I do not think the Government intend that the whole catchment area shall be a drainage area. But the drainage district will be that part of the area to be declared, the control of which will be vested in a board and the area rated. There are two reasons why I desire to alter that position. One is that to date not one of the boards, nor have private people who have constructed drainage works, taken into consideration the conditions obtaining throughout the whole catchment area. This has resulted in the main channels not being constructed to a sufficient size, thus rendering the schemes inoperative in many instances. My amendment will compel the engineers to have regard to the whole position in a given area. Then again we have catchment areas where there are isolated swamps containing from 400 to 600 acres. The area may not be big enough to warrant the formation of a drainage board and it may not be necessary to include the whole catchment area. Therefore power is required for the Minister to administer the small areas, particularly where there may be a controversy among the few landowners regarding drainage matters. In order to overcome this difficulty, I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) the words "any defined portion of the State" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"All lands being within any catchment area or drainage basin of any river, lake, swamp, estuary, water course, conduit, or drain, or any proposed conduit or drain"; and in line two the word "district" be struck out, and "area" inserted in lieu.

I have consulted with the Engineer-in-Chief and also with the Engineer in charge of the Water Supply Department with regard

to a definition of "catchment area." While they do not necessarily agree with the proposals, they think the reference to catchment area is sufficient and I am indebted to them for the wording of the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. Mr. Burvill wants to go further than is proposed in the Bill and desires to embrace not only the catchment basin, but the drainage basin as well. If that were agreed to, it would mean that many people would have to pay taxation although their holdings might not require drainage at all. It will impose taxation widely upon some people who will derive no benefit whatever from the Bill.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have another amendment that will overcome that difficulty, and will move later to provide in Clause 12 that the Governor, by Order-in-Council, may constitute any defined portion of a drainage area a drainage district, and specify the boundaries of it and so on.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That proposal will not affect the position because power was given to the Governor-in-Council to declare a catchment area and all the catchments I have referred to will constitute a drainage district.

Hon. J. EWING: What Mr. Burvill seeks to achieve is to assure that all portions of a district will be taken into consideration when a drainage scheme is undertaken. That should be done by an engineer placed in charge of such a work, but the amendment is too sweeping. It is as well that Mr. Burvill has brought the question before the notice of the Minister in order that the Minister may consult with the Engineer-in-Chief on the point. I intend to support the Minister in this case. I know that in parts of the South-West drainage work has been carried out very badly; one man's property may be drained and that of his neighbour flooded. This has been going on all the time because there has never been a defined scheme.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you say that the same engineers have been doing this year after year?

Hon. J. EWING: I do not know, but I do know that it is not so much the fault of the engineers as it is due to the fact that the money has not been available. The

money that has been made available has consequently been wasted. We have a new Engineer-in-Chief, and he should be able to secure a grasp of the whole business. I am glad Mr. Burvill has drawn attention to the matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Ewing's remarks have reminded me that this morning the Minister for Water Supply (Mr. Cunningham) told me that I could give the House an assurance that the administration of the Drainage Act would be taken charge of by the new Engineer-in-Chief, and that what was to be done in the future would be done in accordance with that officer's advice. In view of that assurance, Mr. Burvill might withdraw his amendment.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am glad the Minister has taken notice of what has been going on. The Under Secretary, in reply to a query of mine, states that the department has no idea of the approximate total area of each watershed or catchment area as the case may be. I want to prevent that kind of thing from continuing. Each catchment area should be constituted a drainage area, not for taxation purposes, but so that the engineers may be compelled to take cognisance of such areas. I came across this minute from Mr. Arney, on going through the files recently. It is dated 23rd June, 1922—

It should be remembered that the construction of storage basins on the south-west rivers is going to play a large part in the solution of the South-West drainage problem. If the No. 2 reservoir were constructed, it would mean that the flow of the Harvey River could be so regulated as to go a long way towards overcoming the Harvey main drain trouble. It should be realised that the storage of water, and drainage of the flats, must go hand in hand to obtain the satisfactory solution of the South-West drought and flooding problems.

We should compel the administration to take notice of the catchment areas and the first thing to be done should be to make contour surveys to find out everything possible regarding catchment areas. Nothing like that has been done in the past. The Under Secretary tells us that the department has no idea of the approximate total area of the watershed. If it was at all possible to insert the amendment, it should be inserted if only to prevent the engineers from continuing to make the mistakes they have made in the past, mistakes that have ruined some settlers.

Hon. G. POTTER: I am afraid that Mr. Burvill has missed the point. The Bill is really designed to overcome the very difficulties he is complaining about.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Do you think the Bill will do so?

Hon. G. POTTER: I do. In my district numerous settlers suffered through lack of co-ordination amongst the drainage boards. The Bill will give statutory power to bring about the co-ordination that has been lacking. The amendment therefore is not necessary. If we give to the Minister and to the boards the statutory authority provided for in the Bill, we shall be completing our function and the engineers will be able to complete theirs.

Hon. T. MOORE: It is easy to find fault with engineers who are not present, but if hon. members looked over the files dealing with drainage in the South-West they would see that the engineers had pointed out the difficulties with which they were confronted. They pointed out, too, that what they required was money. We do not want it to go out that the engineers do not know their work. The difficulty has been that money has not been available and it was only possible for the engineers to carry out those works that they considered were vital. Then it happened in some cases that lower areas were flooded. The engineers wanted to start on the lower areas in the Busselton district—the Wonerup Flats—but they were not able to secure the money necessary to enable them to do what they wanted to do. The Bill will permit of money to be raised to carry out drainage works in a proper manner.

Hon. H. STEWART: There is proof on the files that necessary preliminary work was not done. It would alter the scheme of the Bill if Mr. Burvill's amendment were carried. A proviso, however, might be inserted to the effect that before a drainage district was declared there should be taken into account the drainage area. That would provide a safeguard.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have not said anything against the engineers or their work. I am well aware that the engineers were sent down to carry out certain work and they put up proposals that were approved. The trouble is that in the past drainage schemes have never been satisfactorily carried out because proper investigations were not made. By leave of the Committee I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 12—Governor in Council may alter boundaries of districts, etc.:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) after "districts," in line one, there be inserted "within the same drainage area."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Burvill gave us to understand that he had abandoned the idea of introducing catchment areas into this Bill.

Hon. A. BURVILL: It would be an advantage to unite certain drainage districts which are in the same catchment area and have parallel works.

Hon. G. POTTER: The difficulties in my district originate from the principle Mr. Burvill proposes to introduce here. The carrying of the amendment would give opportunity for the revival of factions and for obstruction to the operations of the engineers.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The carrying of the amendment would cause endless complications and would result in disunity. The question is whether it is desirable to unite drainage districts irrespective of whether or not they are within one catchment area.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as paragraph (b):—"Abolish any district."

The qualification is necessary because in many of the present districts there is no proper provision for the drainage which already exists.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am unable to follow the amendment. It does not read.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as Subclause (3):—"Where a main drain or watercourse extends through the whole or part of a drainage district, the construction and maintenance thereof shall be undertaken by and at the cost of the Minister, and any works in a drainage area or district appertaining to an outlet to the sea shall be undertaken at the cost of the Minister."

Sometimes the main watercourse in a district is a river, and that river may widen out into a swamp, as on the Peel estate; and a swamp, of course, is not a defined watercourse. I consider that main drains and watercourses represent too great a burden on a district of, say, 4,000 acres, or 5,000 acres, or 7,000 acres. Further, the outlet to the sea should be a work for the Government. The subsidiary drains will be quite as much as settlers can undertake during the present generation. They have, in addition, the side drains to construct, and their clearing and fencing to do, before any return can be obtained. Some of the lands are rich, but occasionally they cost from £25 upwards per acre to clear. In districts where the land is easily cleared once it has been drained, there are large numbers of subsidiary drains to be constructed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment means that all the financial burden of the construction of main drains and watercourses shall rest on the general taxpayers of Western Australia. Why should that be, since it is private property that will be improved by the drainage? Alternatively, if it be not improved, the drainage is not justified, and should not be undertaken. But if the land is drained with the approval of the settlers, and by reason of their action, they should be obliged to bear the cost, except under certain circumstances, provision for which is already made in the Bill. In the proviso to Clause 115 will be found everything that is necessary; at all events the proviso goes as far as we should go. If there be a feeling that a certain work should be nationalised, the drainage board can present their case to the Government, when it will receive full consideration.

Hon. J. EWING: This is a most important amendment. It emphasises what I said on the second reading. Under the Bill people who own the land have to pay all the cost of drainage. I see no provision for nationalising the work. I contend that main drains, like main roads, are national works. It should be mandatory on the Government to construct all the main drains necessary. Of course when a main drain greatly improves some private land, the Government have their own remedy: they can buy the land at a reasonable price, subdivide it, and sell it again.

Hon. A. BURVILL: It is of vital importance that main drains and works per-

taining to outlets to the sea should be constructed and maintained by the Minister, and should be national works. The Chief Secretary says that Clause 115 supplies the remedy. That may be, but it is not mandatory, and I want the amendment so that we shall not have to go for relief to the Minister, who in most cases will prove to be the engineer in charge of the work. It is right that settlers should pay for their own subsidiary drains, but not that they should pay for drains that, clearly, should be national works.

Hon. G. POTTER: Whilst the amendment is of vital importance, its proper place is within the financial clauses of the Bill. For, after all, it is a financial matter, the question of who is to find the money for the construction of main drains and other works. Settlers in the vicinity of Fremantle have suffered by people draining the higher land down to the lower land. I have been in close touch with those settlers recently, and I find that they are not in the least alarmed at the prospect of having to meet the cost of their own channels and drains, although it will be a very considerable amount. They say that everybody in the district will benefit from the scheme, and so they do not fear the cost that will be entailed. I understand that, instead of their being able to get only one crop per annum, as at present, when the district is thoroughly drained they will be able to get three crops.

Hon. J. EWING: The people mentioned by Mr. Potter are wonderful, and not many of the kind are to be found in the State. We must regard this as a national question. The cost of main drains that are absolutely necessary to convey the water to the rivers and to the sea should be borne by the people of the State. It is said that the burden of the expense would fall largely upon the people of the metropolitan area, but was not that the position when the goldfields water scheme was constructed?

Hon. G. Potter: The position is slightly different.

Hon. J. EWING: This is almost a parallel case. We have to develop every acre of land we possibly can. Let us open up the areas with main drains and then let the settlers do what is necessary to provide subsidiary drains and keep them in order. The great aim should be to nationalise the main drains because the people generally will reap the

benefit. Let us give the settlers a chance and not over-burden them. I support the amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Burvill has raised an important question, but if effect were given to his idea it would alter the whole structure of the Bill. The Bill was designed to enable boards to carry out these works. Clause 12 provides that the Governor "may" do any of the things therein specified; there is nothing mandatory about it. If Mr. Burvill's amendment be inserted, no matter how it is worded, it will not be mandatory, either. The proper place to insert the amendment would be in Part VI. of the Bill dealing with construction and maintenance of works. The measure does not contemplate the Government undertaking such expenditure unless they consider certain work should be regarded as national work. Clause 62 provides that, although power is given to the board to carry out certain works, the Minister may construct and maintain works in any district. That, obviously, was inserted with the object Mr. Burvill has in view. If the Minister, in the exercise of his discretion under Clause 115, considers that a work should be carried out as a national work, he may carry it out. He may even do it if the board fails to do it. I sympathise with Mr. Burvill's object; the principle is quite fair. Certain works should be treated as national works, but the amendment would involve the re-casting of the whole of the Bill. It would be better to leave it optional with the Government to undertake such works as national works.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Potter thought the amendment a splendid idea if it could be carried into effect. Doubtless it would be from the standpoint of those who would derive benefit from it. It would involve an expenditure of half a million of money, and men with large properties that are valueless to-day would find their land worth £25 an acre when it was drained.

Hon. G. Potter: A hundred pounds an acre.

Hon. J. Ewing: Why do not you buy such properties?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When a measure containing any semblance of taxation is brought before this House, it is severely criticised, and yet the amendment proposes to remove taxation from a number of individuals who will benefit by the drain-

age and impose it on the general community. No parallel can be drawn with the Coolgardie water scheme. That was constructed to preserve the most important industry ever started in the State, and was not for the benefit of individuals. Mr. Burvill's proposal will benefit only about a couple of hundred private owners of land.

Hon. E. ROSE: Under other clauses of the Bill, the Government will have power to make drains and debit them up to the people concerned. Many of the rivers will be straightened, deepened and widened. This will not particularly benefit the people adjacent to them, and should be looked upon as a national work. Wherever dams are constructed across rivers for irrigation purposes the settlers within the immediate neighbourhood could be charged with the cost. If it is possible for the amendment to be shaped in some other form, I would be disposed to support it.

Hon. A. BURVILL: It rests with the Government to declare the drainage districts. I have in view drains that have already been constructed or are under construction. In many cases the construction of these drains will throw a great deal of water upon lands situated lower down, where the drains will not be large enough to carry off this extra water. The settlers on such lands should not be called upon to enlarge those drains at their own expense. If the amendment is not carried, the Bill will be useless in many directions.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Burvill's amendment would place the Government in an awkward position, and further amendments to the Bill would be necessary. Under Clause 60, when drainage works are contemplated by the board, plans are prepared and their intentions are advertised. If no objection is lodged by the ratepayers within a certain time, the work can be proceeded with. Under the amendment, the board may commit the Government to a huge expenditure without having first obtained their consent.

Hon. A. Burvill: And probably throw water upon property 16 miles away.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: These main drains may be miles in length. The whole difficulty would be overcome if the board first asked the Government to join with them in constructing these main drains, so that the subsidiary drains might be put in more satisfactorily.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Burvill would have the Government drain all the land for the benefit of those who own it, and ask the general taxpayer to bear the cost. Private individuals would reap an enormous benefit from such work.

Hon. J. Duffell: I suppose the Government would resume the land before draining it.

Hon. J. Ewing: I hope so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The amendment is of too sweeping a character, and will cover all the drains in the State. I hope it will be defeated.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 to 16—agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 17—Constitution of board:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Subclause 1 refers to boards consisting of such number of "elective" members. I referred the term "elective" to the Crown solicitor and suggested that the inclusion of such a word would be taken to mean that there were to be nominated members. The Crown Solicitor informed me that it was taken from an old Act and should have no place in the Bill. I move an amendment—

That in line two of Subclause (1), the word "elective" be struck out.

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

Clauses 18 to 30—agreed to.

Clause 31—Each elector to have one vote:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That in lines two and three the words "give one vote and no more to each of as many candidates as are required to be elected" be struck out, and the words "such number of votes, in respect of his qualification, to each of as many candidates as are required to be elected, as he would be at an election of members of a road board under the Road Districts Act, 1919," be inserted in lieu.

I consider that an elector in a drainage area should have exactly the same voting power as for a road board election. I do not agree with the principle of one elector, one vote. If that principle were to be applied, the man who paid a few shillings in rates would have an equal voice with the man who had to

pay £20 or £30 on the same rate in the £. That would not be fair. Under the Road Districts Act, the maximum number of votes allowed to a ratepayer is four.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment. The Government consider that all holders of land should have an equal say in the election of members of a drainage board. It is possible that the owner of a small holding may fully develop his block and he would have a greater interest in the drainage district than a man who owned a large area and produced nothing at all.

Hon. A. Burvill: But the owner of the large holding would have to pay his rates.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Quite so, but such an individual could block the development of the district. In the South-West there are a number of large holdings and some of the owners do not seem to care whether drains are constructed or not. I am told there are blocks containing 1,000 acres of rich country that would be productive if drained, while there are many blocks of 150 acres in a similar position. Those holdings are not utilised and are undrained. Probably there is no desire on the part of the owners to drain them at all. Plural voting might result in blocking the small men with productive holdings from securing the drainage of the district, and the man who is producing should not be overshadowed by the voting power of a minority of large landholders, who are doing nothing with their holdings. The principle is no new one and while it is not in operation in Western Australia it is time we started. In South Australia the District Councils Act, 1914, provides that where a district is not divided into wards, the elector shall have one vote, but where the district is divided into wards there shall be one vote in each ward in respect of the property held in that ward. In New South Wales the Local Government Act, 1906, provides that the elector shall have as many votes as there are candidates, but not more than one vote for any one candidate. New Zealand has legislation similar to that of New South Wales and in Queensland the elector is limited to one vote only.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I agree with the amendment. The probability is that the man with a thousand acres is doing more development out of his own pocket than is the man holding only five acres and who is developing his property with the aid of Government funds. The expenditure of private money is of far greater importance

to the State. We can rest assured that a man with five acres will vote for the expenditure of money and that the man with the bigger acreage will be called upon to pay the taxes. The suggestion that the voting power should be similar to that existing under the Road Districts Act is reasonable and fair.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Leader of the House should not hesitate to accept the amendment. The voting intended is for the election of members. The Leader said that if the same right of voting were given to electors under this Bill as was given under the Road Districts Act, the effect would be to block work. As a matter of fact it will not do anything of the kind. If works have to be carried out it will be necessary for a petition to be signed by a majority of the ratepayers; it will not be determined by the number of votes each ratepayer has. Mr. Burvill is only seeking to give the electors the same powers as would be given them under the Road Districts Act. That is fair.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The voting power appoints the board and the board undertakes the construction of works; consequently the whole of the power rests with those who enjoy the franchise.

Hon. H. STEWART: They do not have a free determination.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Every elector should have an equal say in the appointment of the board.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then why not have that in the Road Districts Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That should have been done.

Hon. G. POTTER: The Chief Secretary said that the owners should have an equal voice in the appointment of the board. I agree with that, but the equality should be found not numerically but in the responsibilities that have to be discharged towards the work when it is completed. It is not a question whether the works will be carried out or not, but who are to be the parties entrusted to carry out the work. Surely those who have the greatest financial commitments, after the work has been completed, should be the people to elect the officers of the board to attend to the requirements of the district.

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not agree with the one ratepayer one vote principle, but I do not think the amendment will achieve what is desired. There is a Bill now before

another place in which it is sought to abolish plural voting. That will come to this House in due course. I intend to support the amendment. Success depends upon having a representative board, and if the votes are given in accordance with the responsibilities of the ratepayers there will be a more competent and representative board, and the result will be greater efficiency.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	5

Majority For .. 10

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 32 to 57—agreed to.

Clause 58—General meeting of ratepayers:

Hon. A. BURVILL: This clause is merely a copy of the corresponding section in the Road Districts Act. The number of ratepayers, 20, required to call a special meeting is too great, as some of the drainage boards represent only about 18 electors. The proportion should be one-tenth of the total number, with a minimum of five. Perhaps the Minister will look into the matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This provision is taken from the Road Districts Act, and I see no need for any amendment.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Chief Secretary's reply is not satisfactory. In a road district there are hundreds of ratepayers; in a drainage district there may be only 10, or 20 or 30. Therefore 20 is too large a minimum for the calling of a special meeting. I move an amendment—

That "twenty or more," in line three, be struck out, and "one-third" inserted in lieu.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If drainage boards are to consist of only 10 or 15 electors the thing will be a failure from the

start. There should be at least 200 or 300 electors in a drainage district.

Hon. J. EWING: Otherwise it would not be worth while.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Generally speaking, there should be something like 500 members in a drainage district if the Government spend the money proposed. We do not want general meetings called every month.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Mr. Stewart's proposal might rebound. In the case of, say, 300 electors, the task of collecting 100 signatures, being a third of the total, would be considerable.

Hon. H. STEWART: I mentioned a percentage on the spur of the moment, and at the suggestion of members. The Minister's reply is utterly unsatisfactory. Many drainage schemes have been carried out here with nothing like even 100 participants. I am prepared to let the matter go for the present.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The more one looks into the clause, the worse it seems. The proportion required should be one-tenth. I know of one drainage area comprising 610 acres, and there cannot possibly be 20 ratepayers. Other drainage areas of 3,000 acres, 7,000 acres, and 5,000 acres must have very small numbers of ratepayers. Under later clauses it is possible for a road board to take over a drainage board initiated by the Minister. In such a case the electors of the drainage area should have some control over the road board. The whole thing is going to be unworkable.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: A board of its own volition can call a general meeting whenever it likes.

Hon. H. STEWART: I will not press my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 59—agreed to.

Clause 60—Construction and maintenance of works:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (4) all words after "shall," in line four, to the end of the subclause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"refer the proposal to a committee consisting of three members, one of whom shall be appointed by the Minister, and one shall be nominated in the petition by the owners of rateable land; and these two members shall

appoint the third member of the committee as umpire. The committee shall report to the Minister whether the works should be carried out as first submitted, or resubmitted in an amended form, or whether the proposal should be abandoned. The Minister's decision shall be final."

Under the clause as printed the board, in conjunction with the engineer, may put in a scheme of drainage works. But it is possible for a majority of the ratepayers to object, in which event the board shall not carry out the proposed works and so the drainage in the district is completely stopped. My amendment furnishes a remedy. The method therein contained is copied from the Drainage Act of New Zealand.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There may be a deadlock, but if so it will be due to the action of Mr. Burvill in destroying the principle of one man one vote. The hon. member started out with the object of protecting the property owners. Now, by his amendment, he is handing them over to the tender mercies of the Minister. In the clause power is given to the property owners to block any scheme by petitioning the Minister; but Mr. Burvill, in his amendment, provides that the proposal shall then be referred to a committee, who shall report to the Minister as to whether the work shall be carried out, amended or abandoned. No matter what the committee may recommend, the Minister's decision shall be final. As I say, in the amendment the whole thing is to be left to the Minister and so the property owners' petition, provided for in the Bill, is nullified. I suggest the clause be allowed to remain as it is.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I realise the truth of what the Minister has said. But what is going to happen in the event of a deadlock set up by a majority of the ratepayers voting against the proposed work? I was merely trying to provide a remedy for that.

Hon. G. POTTER: The boards are to be appointed to do drainage, not to stop drainage. The property owners will not be content to see their land remain under water. They will want the land drained, so we can scarcely conceive of a majority of the property owners saying that the work should not be carried out, when obviously the work will be to their interest. However, the amendment will certainly employ a great deal of circumlocution, which might re-act upon those whom the hon. member wishes to benefit.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 61 to 63—agreed to.

Clause 64—Board may authorise owner to construct branch drains:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Sub-clause (1):—“Provided that when the land of any owner or owners is within a drainage area, but not within the boundaries of a district, the application for leave to make a branch drain as aforesaid may be made to the Minister, and in such case the provisions of this section, and the following sections of this Part, shall have effect as if the words ‘or the Minister’ were inserted after the word ‘Board.’”

Hon. J. Nicholson: Will not Subclause (1) give you all that you want?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I do not think so. There are many difficulties. There is nothing in the Bill under which one owner can compel another to do his share of the drainage. I know a district in which two adjoining owners steadfastly refused to enter into a joint undertaking. In the course of time one of the two properties changed hands, and still the adjoining owners could not agree each to do his share of the drainage work. In another instance three individuals own a swamp. One does not want to do anything towards the drainage and the other two cannot undertake it because the job is too big for them. There are no means to compel the third man to join in the work. Three members would probably be too few to form a drainage board. There are other instances where small areas outside a district but within a catchment area could be dealt with. The Minister should have power to settle such disputes. The individuals concerned would have all the benefits of the Act without having to form a drainage board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot agree to the proviso. What power would the Minister have to enforce a request? If the Committee had agreed to the hon. member's previous amendment, there would have been power, but the Committee wisely rejected it.

Hon. A. Burvill: Then you agree that the catchment area proposition should have been passed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree that this amendment would have been in order if the catchment area proposal had been passed.

Hon. H. STEWART: When irreconcilable people hold up productive land, it would be a good thing if the difficulty could be overcome. If the hon. member can suggest an acceptable provision to define a drainage area covering a catchment area that will enable the Minister to act, it might be advantageous.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suggest that we pass the clause as printed, and then I will hold over the Bill for recommendation if Mr. Burvill will get an amendment drafted to accomplish what he seeks, without introducing the catchment area proposition on the lines he previously suggested.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I accept the Minister's suggestion and ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 65 to 71—agreed to.

Clause 72—What shall be rateable property:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The existing Drainage Acts will be repealed by this measure. At present the meaning of rateable property is the same as under the Road Districts Act, Section 212 of which excepts from the definition land used for public purposes, belonging to any religious body, used exclusively as a public hospital, used and occupied exclusively for charitable purposes, vested in any board under the Parks and Reserves Act, or in trustees for agricultural or horticultural show purposes, zoological or acclimatisation gardens, used for public resort and recreation or as a cemetery. Land used for those purposes is not liable to rating under the Road Districts Act. Although certain portions of that Act have been imported into this measure, those exceptions have not been included. Perhaps it was thought that the exceptions should not apply under this measure. Whether that is sound, I leave it to members to consider. In many cases these are not ordinary trading institutions. Country show grounds and recreation grounds should be exempt from rating, as well as cemeteries. I move an amendment

(taken from Section 212 of the Road Districts Act, 1919)—

That the following paragraphs be added to the clause:—(3) Land belonging to any religious body, and used or held exclusively as or for a place of public worship, a Sunday school, a place of residence of a minister of religion, a convent, nunnery or monastery, or occupied exclusively by a religious brotherhood or sisterhood or land used exclusively as a public hospital, benevolent asylum, orphanage, public school, private school being the property of a religious body, public library, public museum, public art gallery or mechanics' institute. (5) Land used and occupied exclusively for charitable purposes. (6) Land vested in any board under the Parks and Reserves Act, 1895, or in trustees for agricultural or horticultural show purposes, or zoological or acclimatisation gardens or purposes, or for public resort and recreation. (7) Land held or used as a cemetery: (a) Provided that any land exempted by Subsections (3), (4), and (5) of this section shall be deemed rateable property while the same is leased or occupied for any private purpose.

If any of the bodies that are exempted are leasing the land they would be liable for the rates.

(b) Any land used or occupied for any other purposes mentioned in Subsections (4) and (5) of this section shall be deemed to be rateable property if such property is held under lease or rented from any owner except the Crown: Provided, further, that no exempted land shall become liable to be rated by reason of such land being used for the purposes of any bazaar or as a place of meeting for any religious, charitable, temperance, or benevolent object or for a polling place at any parliamentary or other election.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall be glad if the hon. member would withhold his amendment until I have consulted the Minister concerned. I do not think it is intended to tax trustees of cemeteries.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. G. POTTER: In the Bibra Lake-Coogee and Jandakot districts there are many acres of endowment lands. Miles of roads have to be constructed through these lands, on which no rates can be collected. These lands will also have to be drained. The settlers will, therefore, have a double burden thrust upon them.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The trustees of endowment and other similar lands do not derive any revenue from them.

Hon. G. POTTER: In the districts of which I speak the endowment lands represent a large proportion of the country side.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 73—Basis of assessment:

Hon. H. STEWART: I am opposed to the basis of valuation being laid down in this Bill. A book should be compiled showing the valuations of all the properties in the State, and this should be referred to for all rating purposes. It should not be necessary for boards to make valuations. Respecting the principle I am advocating, I have the sympathy of the Leader of the House who has already told us that he had introduced two Bills without success in an endeavour to achieve the same object. I doubt if there is necessity to incorporate in the Bill any system of valuation in connection with drainage areas. It seems peculiar that alternative systems for assessing valuations are provided, in that the rates may be imposed either on the unimproved capital values or on an area basis. I consider that one or other basis, if that course is necessary at all, should be provided, but not both. The Minister might meet the wishes of some hon. members by reporting progress upon the clauses dealing with valuations.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause merely provides alternative methods of rating. It will be left to a board to decide which basis shall be adopted. Varying conditions in different districts may make assessments on one or other of the bases the more desirable. Alternative bases are also provided in the Municipal Corporations Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I drew attention to this question during the second reading debate and I agree with much that Mr. Stewart has mentioned. It may be possible for a board to impose such a burden on owners of land as will drive many of them off their holdings. I trust the Leader of the House will reconsider this question, and I suggest that the clauses be agreed to now and be further dealt with on recommitment.

Hon. J. EWING: More time would be gained if we reported progress, rather than by recommitting the Bill to deal with this question again. We have argued the principle and if the Bill is recommitted we will merely argue the matter again. Some further explanation should be made by the Minister, and we should report progress at this stage.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nothing can be gained by reporting progress. The rates are stated in the Bill in Clause 88, and

Clause 97 provides for appeals on grounds specified.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 74—agreed to.

Clause 75—Unimproved value:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This clause is taken from the Road Districts Act, but the preliminary words "except as hereinafter provided" are not included. The inclusion of those words at the commencement of the clause would make the position clearer. I move an amendment—

That at the commencement of the clause the words "Except as hereinafter provided" be inserted.

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

Clauses 76 to 87—agreed to.

Clause 88—Board authorised to strike rates:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This is the companion clause to Clause 73 to which Mr. Stewart referred. I hope the Minister will give further consideration to it.

Hon. J. EWING: I consider the rates set out, namely, 2s. in the pound on the unimproved value of rateable land, and 5s. per acre where the rates are assessed on the area basis, are too high even though those rates are the maximum. Did I understand from Mr. Nicholson that the Bill is to be recommitted? Would it not be better to deal with the question of the rates now by striking out the provision for 2s., for instance, with a view to providing for a maximum rate of 1s. on the unimproved value of rateable land.

Hon. H. Stewart: You are at liberty to do that now.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Burvill was anxious to have an amendment drafted, and I suggested that we should go on with the Bill and then recommit it. Later Mr. Nicholson submitted a new principle and I suggested that when the Bill was recommitted, the amendment could be moved. In the meantime I would have an opportunity of making some inquiry into the matter. The subject referred to by Mr. Burvill, however, has been fully considered, and it has been decided that the amount of 2s., which will be the maximum, is necessary and must remain. It does not follow that that maximum will be imposed.

Hon. J. EWING: I move an amendment—

That in line two of Subclause (2) the word "two" be struck out, and "one" inserted in lieu.

It is dangerous to allow the board to have this power of taxation, and as has been said here frequently, farmers are already heavily taxed.

Hon. H. Stewart: In this case they are taxing themselves.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The matter has been fully considered and in the opinion of the Government it is necessary to have this maximum of 2s. If the amount should be reduced to 1s., and it was found that the 1s. rate was insufficient, the work would have to be closed down. If the rates are regarded as excessive, there is provision for appeal.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Who is going to determine the unimproved value? The Taxation Department has fixed the unimproved value of certain swamp lands at £5 per acre and in other instances at 35s. That would make the drainage rate such that the land would not stand it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The board will impose the rate and the board will be elected by the property owners. There is provision for appeal to the board and after that an appeal to the local court.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Only for excessive valuation, not against the amount of the rates.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 89—Differential rating:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause (2):—"For the purpose of this section lands shall be graded as follows:—(a) Lands that will receive full and direct benefit from the construction of the works. (b) Lands that will receive less benefit therefrom. (c) Lands that will receive only an indirect benefit therefrom; and (d) Lands that will receive an indirect benefit therefrom, but which on account of the situation or physical condition thereof should not, in the opinion of the Board, be graded under paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section.

This has been taken from the New Zealand Act of 1915. In the drainage areas different benefits are derived, and it will therefore not be right to impose a uniform rate. The Committee should agree that those

lands should be rated as is proposed in the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The objection to the amendment is that it will prove cumbersome. The time that it will take to determine the basic wage under the Arbitration Bill will be nothing as compared with the time that will be required to carry out all the directions set out in the amendment. The board would have to sit and take evidence, and there is no knowing how far the amendment would extend. Provision already exists in the Bill for differential rating.

Hon. A. BURVILL: A system of grading should be set up. In New Zealand they have been gradually improving their legislation and their country is not nearly so large as ours. First they had three grades, and now they have adopted four. If they have found this provision necessary where their drainage works have been in existence for sometime, we certainly should have it here. Differential rates have already been provided for in the Bill. I have done nothing but add four specific grades, which I think will meet all cases. It was the absence of differential rates that caused some of the trouble in connection with the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme. I must persist in the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The proposal is suitable to New Zealand, which has reduced drainage to a fine art, having experimented with it since 1902. Here the proposal would prove extremely cumbersome.

Hon. E. ROSE: The Chief Secretary's remarks go to show the advisableness of Mr. Burvill's amendment. We should benefit by the experience and the mistakes of other countries. New Zealand is more like Western Australia than Queensland is, and we frequently have the legislation of Queensland quoted to us as a guide. The board should have something to go on in classifying and rating land.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Another point is that there will be power to carry out drainage under the Bill. Nearly every drainage board will take advantage of the differential rating, and will grade. One board will grade on one system, and another board on another system; and upon appeals being made to the court things will be found very mixed. It is best to provide a definite system of grading.

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

Ayes	3
Noes	13

Majority against	..	10
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AYES.	
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. E. Rose	(Teller.)
NOES.	
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 90 to 96—agreed to.

Clause 97—Grounds of appeal:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That the following be added, to stand as subparagraph (6):—"That the land or part thereof should be graded under Section 89, and the rates so fixed as may be just."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This amendment would be all right if Mr. Burvill's amendment to Clause 89 had not been defeated. The present amendment was drafted with a view to the previous amendment being carried. Therefore the present amendment is out of place.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The present amendment depends directly on Clause 89. I consider that it is perfectly relevant.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill says that grading can only be done by the board with the consent of the Minister. This amendment is inconsistent with Clause 89, inasmuch as the amendment directs that the land shall be graded. The amendment is not necessary.

Hon. A. BURVILL: Hon. members will see the dilemma the ratepayer will be in when he cannot appeal to some provision in the Bill. That is the reason for my amendment. The ratepayer should be able to appeal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are all agreed that there should be grading. Then why say later on that the land should be graded under Section 89? It is further provided that not all the land will be graded.

Then later, we are to say that it shall all be graded. There is no consistency about it.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I will withdraw the amendment and see about resubmitting it when the Bill is recommitted.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 98 to 177—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1925.

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

ADDRESS—DEATH OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

Telegram in Reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following communication from His Excellency the Governor:—

The Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia that he has this day received the following telegram from the Secretary of State

for Dominion Affairs:—"Your telegram dated 27th November, containing the terms of the address from both Houses of Legislature, has been laid before His Majesty, who commands me to convey his most grateful thanks for the expression of sympathy and assurances of devoted loyalty." W. R. CAMPION, Governor. Government House, Perth, 3rd December, 1925.

QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM.

Transfer of Patients.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Hon. S. W. Munsie (Honorary Minister): 1, Is it correct that certain inmates of the Wooroloo Sanatorium are to be removed to the Infectious Diseases Hospital site at Subiaco? 2, If so, which class of patient is to be removed—those in an advanced stage, or those slightly affected? 3, On whose recommendation is the change, if any, to be made? 4, On whose recommendation, if it be a fact, was Subiaco chosen as a suitable spot? 5, If a change is to be made, will it apply to ex-miners?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, Yes, when necessary renovations, etc., have been carried out at West Subiaco. 2, Advanced cases of tuberculosis. 3, That of a departmental committee, consisting of Drs. Everitt Atkinson, R. M. Mitchell, and John Dale, and Messrs. H. C. Trethowan and F. J. Huelin. 4, Of the officers previously named. 5, Any change made will be directed by the type of case (see answer to No. 2) rather than by the question of previous occupation.

QUESTION—LIQUORS, CHIEF INSPECTORSHIP.

Mr. J. H. SMITH asked the Premier: 1, Is the Chief Inspector of Liquors leaving the Government service at the end of this month to take a position as Chief Inspector of Liquors in New South Wales? 2, Do the Government propose to call applications to fill the vacant position? 3, If so, will they avail themselves of the services of Inspector McHenry to examine applicants as to their qualifications, knowledge of liquors, etc.?

The PREMIER replied: 1, He is resigning as from 31st December, but it is not known to what position he is going. 2 and 3, The question of filling the vacancy will be considered at a later date.