drains to take the water away. While we charge in the wheat areas rates for providing water, the people of the South-West are not charged rates for the drainage of water. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about having water rates here and some other rates elsewhere, but the water rates and the drainage rates will not apply to any one portion of the State, and so the burden, one might say, will be evenly distributed. I hope we shall be able to start the drainage of some portion of the South-West, and it must be started at once.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Hear, hear! Are you starting to-night?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That being so the owners of abutting land benefiting from the drainage should contribute towards the cost.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, let them pay for it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is all we are asking under this Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: I am supporting that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We want full power to protect the drains when they are made. The Leader of the Opposition dealt with land settlement in the South-West generally. To listen to some members of Parliament—I am pleased to say not in this House—one would conclude that very little more development work was possible in the south-western portion of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: They would stop everything if they had their way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If one took notice of those who have been speaking on the Forests Act Amendment Bill, he would think there was no possibility of opening up land between Clackline and the southern part of the State. I take very little notice of that sort of talk.

Mr. Teesdale: That is their value, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition is favouring the second reading, and I hope he will assist to get it passed. It is not a party Bill. So far as I am aware, no member of the party saw the Bill until it was introduced. The first time I saw it was a few weeks after taking office, when I found the draft as it was left on the file by the previous Minister.

The Premier: We took it up as it was and said it was all right.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.8 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 13th October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—ARBITRATION ACT, A.W.U. REGISTRATION.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Australian Workers' Union applied under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912, to register as a composite union? 2, If so, on what date? 3, Did their application seek to cater for any trades or vocations already provided for by registered unions? 4, Did any registered union or association lodge objections to the proposed registration? 5, If so, what organisations? 6, What was the decision of the court? 7, Are there any branch unions of the A.W.U. registered under the Act, and, furthermore, are there any other of its branches eligible to be separately registered?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, On the 25th November, 1921. 3, Yes. Workers eligible to belong to the West Australian Government Railways Employees' Union, the West Australian Branch of the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union, Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Metropolitan and South-West Engine-drivers and Firemen's Union, Australasian Society of Engineers. 4, Yes. 5, The unions of workers referred to above appeared in opposition to the application, and in addition the Master Builders and Contractors' Association Industrial Union of Employees and the Mas-

ter Butchers' Association Industrial Union of Employers also appeared to oppose the application. I understand the objections of the other workers' unions to the registration of the Australian Workers' Union were on the same grounds—that a number of objections were lodged against their registration under the Federal law. I am advised that the local branch of the Australian Workers' Union is prepared to give the same undertaking to the objecting unions as was given to the unions who objected to the Federal registration, and which caused them to withdraw their opposition. 6, The president of the court decided that it was not expedient for the society (the A.W.U.) to be registered as a union under Section 6 of the Industrial Arbitration Act, and the Registrar was directed accordingly. 7, The Australian Workers' Union Westralian Goldfields Mining Branch Industrial Union of Workers and the Australian Workers' Union Westralian Branch Pastoral and Agricultural Industrial Union of Workers are registered as unions under the Industrial Arbitration Act. I am not aware whether there are any other branches of the Australian Workers' Union eligible for registration separately as unions.

QUESTION—INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE.

Hon. J. E. DODD asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the Government any copies available of the reports of the annual conventions of the International Labour Office of the League of Nations? 2, If so, will they place them on the Table of the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, Auctioneers Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

2, Forests Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

3, Narrogin Soldiers' Memorial Institute.

4, Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.42]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will enable the Entertainments Tax Assessment Bill and the Entertainments Tax Bill to pass through all stages at the one sitting.

I have already explained the object of the motion. I can only repeat what I said on the previous occasion. The passing of these measures is an urgent necessity. The Commonwealth Government will evacuate this field of taxation on the 15th inst., and we desire to occupy it without delay. It is necessary in the meantime to have a large number of books of tickets printed and circulated. There is little time in which to complete that work, so I am anxious that finality should be reached to-day.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Definitions:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That the following definition be added:—"'Public hospital' means any institution or hospital controlled by the Commissioner of Public Health."

What constitutes a public hospital? Is it intended that the Minster shall use these funds for hospitals that are not generally accepted as being public hospitals? It is possible under the Bill for the proceeds raised to be spent on hospitals that do not come under the control of the Health Department. We should lay it down how these funds shall be used.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: The Minister may do what he likes with the money.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The only definition I can find of a public hospital is that which appears in the Hospitals Act of 1894, but even that leaves a great deal of discretion to the Minister.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are no hospitals controlled by the Public Health Department. They are under the control of the Commissioner of Public Health. If the amendment were carried only a certain number of the hospitals in the State would

be entitled to the subsidy. The hospitals it is proposed to assist are those that are controlled or subsidised by the Government. Power is given under the Act of 1894 to declare any institution a public hospital, but it must be an institution conforming to the ideas in regard to a public hospital, and must be either controlled or subsidised by the Government. There are 39 hospitals in the State subsidised by the Government, and 27 Government hospitals.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is not my intention to exclude from the provisions of this measure the 27 hospitals that come under the control of the Commissioner of Public Health. On the assurance that has been given by the Minister I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Admission to entertainments:

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Do agricultural societies come under this clause?

The Chief Secretary: The Bill refers to "any exhibition."

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Then they would come under the Bill.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Undoubtedly.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: They ought to be exempt because of their high educational value.

The Chief Secretary: If they are exhibitions they would as such come under the Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: An agricultural society must be run at a profit in order that it may keep going. It cannot have been intended that it should be taxed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Whatever the law is at present, it will not be affected by this Bill so far as the position outlined by the hon. member is concerned. It may well be claimed that an agricultural society is partly educational and partly scientific.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am glad to know from the Minister that the law will not be altered in this respect, from which it may be taken that funds raised for the building and upkeep of agricultural halls will not be interfered with. So long as we can rely upon this commonsense interpretation of the law being adhered to by the State authorities, no exception can be taken to the Bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have every confidence in the Minister, but he will not occupy his present position throughout the period the Act will remain on the statute book. Now, therefore, is the time for members to secure their position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Stewart desires to exempt entertainments that are in aid of funds for the erection of agricultural halls. If he desires to bring that about, he should move an amendment to Clause 8. At the same time, I inform him that if he does move such an amendment I shall oppose it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: This clause provides for a charge for admission. Instead of paying 1s. to go to the Manjimup Society's show, I secure a member's ticket and pay £1. Will I be charged on the first 2s. 5½d. of that £1, whilst the man who pays 1s. will be required to pay a tax of 1d. only?

Hon. J. Cornell: You are splitting a fine hair now.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The £1 ticket entitles me to go to the show ground. Another person enjoys the same privilege and pays 1s. Do I pay 2½d. against his 1d.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is a matter purely for adjustment by the Commissioner for Taxation. It seems to me that agricultural shows are exempt.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They are not exempt.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Agricultural shows are partly educational and partly scientific. Under the existing administration by the Federal authorities the agricultural shows are exempt.

Hon. E. ROSE: The Commissioner for Taxation administers the Act as he finds it; he has no idea what the intentions of Parliament may or may not be. We should set out clearly in the Bill what we intend. I do not agree with the taxation of an agricultural society merely because it seeks to make a profit to pay off its mortgage and to improve the show ground.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: All agricultural shows look to side shows for a certain amount of revenue, and those side shows cannot be regarded as scientific or educational.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Chief Secretary says that the practice of the past will be the practice of the future. I understand that agricultural shows have not been taxed in the past. I have been connected for some time with a Parents and Citizens' Association and that has not been taxed. It would be wrong for the Commissioner to depart from the practice that has been followed in the

past. If we start now to exempt one and the other, we shall have to exempt all. I have always found the Commissioner to be a reasonable man and he can be relied upon to correctly interpret the law.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill will be administered by the Commissioner for Taxation who was responsible for the preparation of the Bill. He, too, has supplied me with the information that I have given to the House. The wording of Clause 8 is precisely similar to that of the Commonwealth Act of 1915, and whatever has been the interpretation in the past, it will be the interpretation in the future if the Bill becomes law.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6 and 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Entertainments exempt from tax:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (a) after "charitable purposes," the following words be added:—"or for the improvement of agricultural show grounds."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I suggest that the hon. member's amendment should read: "or for the purpose of any exhibition or meeting by an agricultural society or for the purpose of erecting or maintaining or furnishing a public hall." That would then exempt the societies from taxation. Whilst the Commissioner may have interpreted the Federal Act in a liberal way, it is not fair to leave to him any difficult problem that may present itself. It will be much easier for the Commissioner to be able to read in the Bill that which I suggest should be put into it. Mr. Stewart's suggestion regarding public halls is worthy of consideration. Why should such voluntary effort be subject to a tax?

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about when we try to build a trades hall?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Is that a public hall?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Only unionists are admitted there.

The Honorary Minister: In many towns it is the only hall.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I hope Mr. Baxter will accept my suggestion.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot accept Mr. Nicholson's suggestion, because it would enable agricultural societies to run all sorts of entertainments.

Hon. H. STEWART: There can be no objection to making clear the intention of Parliament to the taxing authority. I suggest that Mr. Baxter withdraw his amendment in favour of a new subclause as follows:—"(d) That the entertainment is one promoted solely for the benefit of an agricultural society or for the building and upkeep of a public hall." Where a public hall is provided, it is used as a centre for entertainments to raise funds for other purposes which are taxed.

Hon. J. Duffell: Suppose there was a picture show to raise funds for the payment of interest on the hall, would it be taxable?

Hon. H. STEWART: If there was interest to be met, it would be part of the cost of upkeep, but the matter would be one for the interpretation of the Commissioner.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Committee would be well advised to pass the clause as it stands. If we mention agricultural societies and leave out educational or scientific societies, we shall limit the exemption.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: If Mr. Stewart's suggestion were adopted, the proprietors of a hall might conduct picture shows or other entertainments to raise funds for the payment of the cost of a hall or the interest due on the cost. I agree with Mr. Holmes that the clause as printed should be given a trial, and I suggest that the operation of the measure be restricted to one year.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I agree with Mr. Holmes. In a town in my province the trustees of a mechanics' hall have entered into an agreement with the R.S.L. and the agricultural society to run picture shows, and I am afraid we shall make confusion worse confounded if we start specifying exemptions. An exemption might apply to the portion of the funds for the agricultural society and the mechanics' institute, but not to the portion of the profits that the returned soldiers would get.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the Committee make any specific exemption, it will limit the discretion of the Commissioner of Taxation. There are mechanics' institutes, miners' institutes, the Trades Hall and the A.W.U. halls that have an equal right to consideration, and probably would be considered by the Commissioner, but if we make specific exemptions, they will have to be very comprehensive to include all. This morning I received from the Commissioner of Taxation a minute in reply to the remarks made

by Mr. Stewart on the second reading as follows:—

Last year the Federal Entertainments Tax Assessment Act was amended by the Act No. 52 of 1924, which provided for exemption from taxation being granted to entertainments of the nature referred to by the Hon. H. Stewart. The department has, however, experienced considerable difficulty in determining whether the entertainments come within the strict letter of the law for the reason that many of the agricultural halls throughout the State are used for other purposes than for providing funds for the erection of buildings, furnishing, etc. For example, balls, picture shows, and other entertainments of a like nature are held for the benefit of parties and individuals that, in my opinion, should not be exempt from taxation. On the goldfields workers have organised picture shows that are held in the different halls under their control.

Hon. H. Stewart: I understand that the Commissioner exercises discretion and exempts entertainments that are considered worthy of exemption.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am afraid that the Commissioner might regard my amendment as an instruction, and that the clause might then work an injustice in other directions. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Would the Minister accept an amendment to grant exemption also to entertainments for recreation purposes. Should not the tennis clubs, and bowling clubs be exempt from tax? They do not attempt to make a profit.

Hon. H. Stewart: If they are not making a profit they will not come under the clause.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, they will, because they cannot be said to be established for scientific or educational purposes. We need money badly for King's Park and if we arranged an entertainment, which we shall probably have to do in order to keep going, we should be subject to a tax, although the proceeds were for a public park that was not working for profit.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: That would exempt all football matches.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If the Minister will accept such an amendment, I will move it; otherwise I will not press the matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If such an amendment were carried, there would be just ground for exempting football matches and so on.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The objec of the Bill is to tax sports of all kinds i order to provide revenue for hospitals.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 9 and 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Admission to entertainment i contravention of Act:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The proprietc might be quite innocent in the matter of th admission of a spectator to an entertainmer in contravention of this measure, and her is a clause fixing a penalty of £50 for suc an act, which might be due to the careless ness of an usher or a gatekeeper. The per alty is too stiff.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: You know it i a maximum.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The proprietor migh be fined a shilling.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: But the inducemer to a magistrate when he sees a large max mum penalty in an Act, is to fine somewha more heavily than if the maximum penalt in the Act is small. I consider that £5 woul be plenty as a maximum here. I move a amendment—

That "fifty" be struck out, and "five" in serted in lieu.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The clause, ev dently owing to some omission, reads al surdly—

If any person is admitted for payment t any place of entertainment in contraventio of this Act, the proprietor of the entertai ment shall each be guilty of an offence.

I presume that what was intended was tha the person so admitted and the proprietc should each be guilty of an offence.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Would I b in order now in moving the deletion of th word "each"?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I ask leave to with draw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move a amendment—

That between "shall" and "be" the wor "each" be struck out.

The provision is taken from the Federa Act, which by the corresponding section pro vides that the person admitted and the pro prietor shall each be guilty of an offenc and that the penalty in the case of the per

son admitted shall be a maximum of £5 and in the case of the proprietor a maximum of £50.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do not you propose to fine the person admitted as well as the proprietor?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Here it is not intended to penalise the person admitted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I again move my amendment—

That "fifty" be struck out, and "five" inserted in lieu.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the amendment will not be carried. An entertainment proprietor who admits a person in contravention of this measuse will be guilty of fraud, and £5 would not be an adequate maximum penalty in all circumstances.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Suppose his servant does it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I daresay the matter would be investigated by the Commissioner of Taxation, who might not even prosecute in such circumstances. However, there might be cases in which it would be necessary to prosecute, and in which the proprietor guilty of a breach of the law should be severely punished.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is a case where the proprietor of an entertainment may be prosecuted for the act of a servant, and found liable to a penalty up to £50. I think that is wrong. The servant might be criminally inclined, and might be taking the money himself and putting the tax in his own pocket. Then the proprietor is to be fined.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: He could be fined 1s.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I undersand £50 is the maximum.

Hon. J. Duffell: Would you fine the proprietor £50 if you were on the bench?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The thing might happen two or three times. The proprietor would not be taking the money and the tax, but the servant would be doing it every time. There is also the consideration that the proprietor would have to pay the tax as well as the fine.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 12—Fraudulent acts, etc.:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Does the Minister think this clause should provide for a fine as well? As it stands the clause provides for imprisonment only. There might be some excuse. I admit that the clause refers to attempts to defraud, but in many other cases attempts to defraud are punishable by fine or imprisonment. In this instance, too, the penalty should be at the discretion of the magistrate hearing the case.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Under the Commonwealth Act the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 13 and 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Regulations:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Under this clause the Governor may make any regulations and put them into force, and proprietors and others, as they do not read the "Government Gazette," may know nothing about them. The penalty under any such regulation might be up to £50. The penalties under the measure are far too harsh.

Hon. H. STEWART: In effect, this clause provides that the Governor may make any regulations for the purposes of the measure. Our Bills usually provide that the Governor may make regulations for the purposes of and in accordance with the measure. The Commonwealth phraseology, which is used here, strikes me as crude.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause is exactly parallel to the corresponding provision in the Federal measure.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The Governor might make a regulation imposing a fixed penalty of, say, £30 or £40, for the most trivial offence, and he would have complied with his clause.

Hon. J. Duffell: The regulations must be laid on the Table of the House.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Of course, but the mischief will perhaps have been done before anybody takes any notice. A regulation is laid on the Table here, and if within 14 days no action is taken it has the force of law, and then cannot be altered. Presently we wake up and discover that for a breach of some trivial regulation there is a fixed penalty of £30. I do not think we should agree to that. Vandalism occurs in King's Park, but all we can do is to have a regulation imposing a penalty up to £10. Under the Bill the Commissioner may make the penalty a fixed one at £30, or may make the minimum £5 and the maximum £20, and

such fines may be imposed for most trivial offences. It is wrong.

Hon. H. STEWART: A Bill that was brought before us this session includes a clause providing for the making of regulations which contrasts strikingly with the one included in the Bill. It reads as follows:—

The Governor may, on the recommendation of the board, make regulations not inconsistent with this Act, prescribing all things which by this Act are required or permitted to be prescribed or which it may be necessary or convenient to prescribe for the purpose of giving effect to the objects and purposes of this Act.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—LABOUR EXCHANGES.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.

In Committee, etc.

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

New Clause:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move—

That a new clause, to stand as Clause 5, be inserted as follows:—"This Act shall continue in force until the 31st December, 1926, and no longer.

The insertion of the new clause will enable us to review the position if during the intervening period it is found that the Act has not worked satisfactorily. The same clause appeared in the previous taxing Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY I trust the Committee will not accept the amendment. If the Committee agree to it, it will be impossible for the Minister in charge of hospitals to prepare a scale of assistance to be rendered to the various institutions. The Bill will be needed while we have hospitals to be catered for. There have been no difficulties since 1916, and the Bill will be under the administration of the same authorities. The Federal taxation people have controlled it since that year. The amendment would involve the Act being renewed year by year with the possibility of defeat, which would place the Minister in the position I have indicated.

Hon. J. Duffell: You may raise so much money under the Bill that you may not know what to do with it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no possibilty of that. With an increase in population there will be a greater demand upon our hospitals.

New clause put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and passed.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BANK ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE).

Second Reading.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a private Bill introduced in, and passed by, the Assembly on behalf of one of the oldest corporate bodies in this State—the Western Australian Bank. As it is a private Bill, we have the advantage of the investigations by a select committee appointed by the Assembly. The evidence taken before the select committee shows fully the objects and purposes of the Bill. In effect, the Bill seeks to give to the bank the same rights as are enjoyed by companies registered or incorporated under the provisions of our company laws. The bank is not registered or incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, but was incorporated many years ago by the usual method under a private Act. This is one of the anomalies of our companies law. Under Section 5 of the Companies Act of 1893 it is provided that the Act shall not apply to any company or partnership formed for the purpose of carrying on banking. That means that if a number of persons desired to incorporate a company under the Companies Act for the purpose of carrying on banking, they could not be incorporated. But, strange as it may appear, if those same persons went to England or to one of the other Australian States and became incorporated under the companies laws in force in those places, they could afterwards come here and, under our

Act, be registered and so carry on their business here. In England the law was altered in 1858, and subsequently it was altered in some of the other Australian States. Unfortunately, in this State it has remained unaltered in that respect. The preamble of the Bill shows the Bill's chief purposes. First there is the question of a branch register. Under an amendment of our Companies Act a good many years ago, it was enacted that companies carrying on business here should have a branch register. That was passed because, during the period of mining activity in this State, there were many companies carrying on business without any branch register of shareholders. They were compelled to send their share certificates for transfer either to the Eastern States or to England. To overcome the delays occasioned, the Companies Act was amended to provide that those companies should be compelled to keep a branch register. However, under the bank's private Act there is no provision for the keeping of a branch register. So, the Bill seeks to give the Western Australian Bank the same rights as other companies have in the opening of a branch register. Then there is a provision facilitating the transfer of shares, and another giving power to the bank to advance money on real and personal estate. Section 11 of the existing Act of 1896 provides that the bank can only take security by way of, say, a bond, and then collaterally secure that bond by way of a mortgage, a method in vogue in other places many years ago. Only two other banks have perpetuated that system here until a few years ago, namely the Bank of Adelaide and the Bank of New South Wales. It is a very roundabout way of performing a simple transaction. There are in the Bill provisions to overcome the difficulty. Clause 2 deals with the interpretation. Clause 3 provides for the opening of a branch register. Clause 4 will enable the company to more expeditiously deal with transfers. At present, when a transfer of shares is to be effected it is necessary for the person to whom the shares are being transferred to sign certain documents agreeing to be bound by the deed of settlement and the company's private Act and regulations. It is a cumbersome system, and the intention of the clause is to facilitate the process. Clause 5 repeats Section 38 of the Companies Act. Clause 6 covers the rectification of the register, while Clause 7 makes provision for lending money direct and enabling the bank to take a mortgage. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides for increasing the maximum rate for water from 5d. per acre to 1s. per acre upon extensions from the goldfields water supply scheme, and alternatively for rating on the unimproved capital value. I have used the words "maximum rate." This does not mean that in all cases such a rate will be charged. As a matter of fact, there is no intention to interfere with the existing rates. Under the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act, 1911, it is provided in the first schedule that a rate may be struck not exceeding 5d. per acre. At present this amount is too low. There are existing extensions on which it is not possible to supply water at a rate of 5d. per acre, and supplies are being given to farmers under special agreements, varying in amount up to as high as 1s. per acre, which amount is the maximum provided for under this Bill. A rate of 1s. per acre represents an annual charge of £50 upon a thousand-acre farm. The alternative is to provide for rating on the unimproved capital value, the amount of the rate being a maximum of 2s. in the pound. This seems very high, but there is a proviso whereby the amount of the rate in any one year shall not exceed £50. That is a similar maximum to the amount provided under the rating according to area. The Bill is brought down to enable the Minister for Water Supply to make further extensions from the goldfields water supply scheme. In the past, in order to make these extensions in connection with which a higher rate was necessary than that

provided by existing legislation, special agreements have had to be prepared and signed by every settler on the line of the pipes. It should be remembered that no extension can be made unless there is a two-thirds majority of the owners or occupiers of the holdings in the area defined in the application, the applicants being the owners or occupiers of not less than one-half the total acreage of the holdings comprised in the area. Consequently there must in the first place be a two-thirds majority of the owners or occupiers of the holdings in favour of the extension, and then not less than one-half of the total acreage of the holdings comprised in the area favouring the extension, before it will be made or before a tax will be imposed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. W. KIRWAN (South Province) [7.35]: This is a matter which concerns the constituents I have the honour to represent in this House. Agricultural settlement is gradually extending outwards along the railway and the pipe line to the Eastern Goldfields. Anything that gives the Minister increased powers of taxation, even though he may declare that he is not going to exercise them, naturally excites considerable concern amongst the people affected. In the Southern Cross district there is a large new settlement of agricultural farmers. These men are at present in the struggling stage, and are extremely concerned when they are told that there is a possibility of an increase in taxation. I have here a letter from the secretary of the chief local body concerned, namely, the Yilgarn Road Board. This body may be regarded, I think, as representing the settlers, at any rate in the Southern Cross district. It is a very strong protest against the Bill. It is addressed to me and reads as follows:—

Dear Sir, I have been instructed by my board to ask you to strongly protest against the proposed water rate of 1s. per acre on agricultural land, which is now before the House. This board is strongly opposed to it for several reasons, and considers it will not be of assistance in the development of the district, but will be the means of retarding its progress, as owing to existing financial positions, many of the settlers would not be able to meet their liabilities in this respect, and consequently the land would be surrendered and would revert to its former uncared-for condition. Some of these men who have taken up that land are under certain conditions, and will not be able to obtain loans from the Agricultural Bank, as stated by the Minister for Works, to enable them to meet their liabilities, and under these conditions it would only be heaping greater expense on them. My board desire your support in strongly opposing this increased tax.

Judging from what the Chief Secretary has stated, there is no intention to interfere with the existing rates.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: These were the exact words used by the Minister. If there be no intention to interfere with existing rates, why is this power sought Although that may be the intention of the present Minister, we know that a promise made by a Minister is not likely to be remembered when the time comes for a change in that particular portfolio. The concern felt by the settlers in question is, to my mind, a very real one. I should like the Minister to reply to the protest from this responsible body. The road board in question controls an area that forms a large portion of the district that it is proposed will be affected by the Bill. In the circumstances, I hope the Minister will give a satisfactory explanation. I should like to know from him whether the local people concerned were consulted before the Minister asked for this increased power.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [7.40]: Like Mr. Kirwan, I view this Bill with some alarm, because of the tremendous jump in the rate that is proposed. The present rate under which the department has been working, namely, 5d. per acre, has been in vogue for many years. I always thought there should have been a wide enough margin in that rate to enable the department to keep well within its means. If, however, owing to increased expenditure, and the increased cost of piping, it is necessary to extract a larger amount of tax from these settlers, it seems extraordinary that there should be such a big jump as that from 5d. to 1s. A great number of the people who did not wish to come under the goldfields water supply scheme, were brought under it by the Act of 1911. On that occasion there was a certain amount of opposition to bringing all the people along the pipe line under the Act. Many of these people had their own arrangements for water, and did not require to draw any from the scheme. The scheme was put through from Mundaring to supply the goldfields with water, and the railways running along the route, as well as intermediate towns. It was later decided to

run the water into some of the agricultural areas. As a consequence, we were asked, in 1911, to pass a measure giving the Government power to rate these people up to 5d. per acre. We were very concerned about this rate applying to all the settlers along the route. I well remember receiving an assurance across the floor of the House that no Ministry would dream of taxing these people who did not want the water. The question was raised as to those people around Northam, who were adjacent to the pipe line, being brought under the Act and their having their land made taxable, and then it was that it was stated no Ministry would dream of imposing that rate. The rate, however, has been imposed. When the pipe line was extended in order to supply water to the townships of York and Beverley, a rate was struck applying to the whole of the settlers along the pipe line. In very few instances did they require the water, but they had to pay the rate because of the Act that had been passed. We are now asked to give the Government the right to increase the rate from 5d. to 1s. or to 2s. on the unimproved capital value basis. I am concerned that such a wide margin should be allowed. I hope we shall have full information from the Minister as to why such an increase is to be made. The people are already rated very heavily; first of all they have to pay Federal land tax, and then there is the State land tax, and following that comes taxation by the local authorities. Then there is the water rate which, in many instances, settlers find it extremely hard to pay, even though it be only 4d. Now the Government propose to increase that by a considerable amount. I recognise that in a new area settlers in many instances will clamour almost at any price for water.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not so.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: They are in the position that, rather than go to any expense to provide water for themselves, they are prepared to accept anything that is offered to them. They are also in the position to pay a greater rate than the older settlers who, perhaps, have already expended a considerable amount of money in providing water for themselves. There should be some scheme for imposing a differential rate. Those who are on entirely new country, and who have gone to no expense whatever in providing water, should be made to pay more than those who have old-established properties and who have already incurred considerable expense. I hope the Minister will explain whether it is the intention of the department to increase all the rates in the eastern agricultural areas.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th October.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.48]: It is not my intention to take up any time in debating the second reading of the Bill because, as we have it before us, the Bill is practically the same as that which was introduced last session. It still contains some objectionable clauses; I refer particularly to the clauses relating to domestic servants and insurance agents, and the basic wage as well. The same arguments that were used last session against those clauses hold good to-day; therefore at this stage I do not intend to go over the ground that has already been traversed. I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, but will reserve to myself the right to move amendments in Committee.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, debate adjourned.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th October.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [7.50]: This Bill is on all fours with the measure on which I was speaking a few moments ago. I understand the Bill has been asked for by the people in the wheat belt and that it has been under consideration for a number of years. Settlers in the new areas experience great difficulty in securing any scheme for the provision of water, and they find it is futile for them to put down individual dams and tanks where the rainfall is unreliable. They have claimed that there should be an extension of the goldfields water scheme to their various centres, but the departmental estimates that have been presented show that the work would be too costly, and fur-

thermore a doubt has been expressed as to whether it would be possible to impose a further drain on the Mundaring Weir to supply all the areas that required water. A better proposal has been submitted by the department, and it is that rock catchments shall be availed of to a greater extent. We know that many of the inland centres have very fine rock catchments, and by having those catchments at distances of 10 miles apart, it is considered that a considerable amount of water will be impounded in the event of rain falling. Of course we may get a drought and it may not be possible to conserve any water. Up to the present time, however, the year 1914 may be said to have been the only one in which there was a shortage of rain. It is generally believed by the settlers that sufficient water can be obtained at the rock catchments to carry out the wishes of the various communities there. Here again it seems to me that the cost of the work is going to become a heavy charge on the settlers, because at the rate of 1s. an acre, the holder of 1,000 acres will have to pay £50 per annum. That charge seems to be pretty heavy, especially where the land is not first class. There is a considerable area of second and third class country, and the holders of that land will have to pay the same rate probably as the holders of first class land. It may be possible to pay £50 per annum on first class land, provided the rainfall is sufficient to grow enough feed to permit of the carrying of stock. We have to bear in mind that if we are relying upon wheat growing we are not going to have every acre of the 1,000 acres under wheat in every year. If one puts 1,000 acres under crop it means that the holder must have 3,000 acres, and he will have the second 1,000 acres in fallow and the remainder for stock. Unless stock is carried it is not possible to keep the land free from weeds. In the case of 3,000 acres, therefore, the holder will have to pay £150 per annum. The same argument applies to the holder of 1,000 acres. He puts only one-third of that under crop, and that third will have to bear the whole cost. Little return is obtained from the land that is idle. It may be that a portion of the holding is not yet cleared. The burden then is very heavy; it becomes a severe handicap. I have some misgivings as to whether it is a sound proposition to impose the charge of £50 per 1,000 acres. Many land owners have already spent a considerable amount of money on water supplies and pay a fairly heavy amount upon capital borrowed for that purpose. I suppose there are many who have spent the equivalent of £50 a year on the capital invested in that direction and I should like to see in the Bill a provision by which those people should be given some encouragement. If this be not done, there will not be any inducement for people in the future to go far afield and spend anything on water supplies. In fact, the tendency will be to sit down and wait until the Government come along with their water scheme proposals. We know that the Government are not in a position to provide water supplies in every direction, and certainly not until the settlers have proved that the country they have taken up is really worth developing. It would be an inducement to people to take up new areas if some exemption were granted on the outlays incurred by them for water supply. We made some such provision under the measure dealing with the vermin rate. To encourage people to spend their own capital in fencing their holdings, they were granted an exemption from the vermin rate, so that any individual who made his property safe from the depredations of the rabbit and dingo was exempted from the operation of the Act. It would be advisable to make similar provision under this Bill, because it is futile for anyone to take up land unless he provides a water supply speedily. A great deal of land has not been developed, simply because the owners have been waiting for a measure such as this. They recognised that until they got an adequate water supply, it was hopeless to attempt to do anything. It is a shame that no scheme has previously been devised to help them out of their difficulties. Promises have been dangled before the settlers for six or eight years. Deputations have waited on various Governments from time to time, and promises of one kind and another have been made, but no definite scheme has been suggested. I congratulate the Government upon having introduced this measure with the object of overcoming one of the greatest difficulties confronting settlers in the wheat belt. The rate will be a severe one, but the scheme is necessary, and we should avail ourselves of the opportunity to provide water for the settlers. Efforts in the past to provide

supplies in some localities have not been successful because of the poor holding quality of the ground. I am not at all afraid of the country once it is provided with adequate water supply. The land, however, is of very little use without water. Even if the State lost a certain amount of money in installing a big scheme at each of the inland centres where good catchments can be obtained, it would be money well spent. I regret it has not been done before, but there is no reason why we should not encourage the Government to go ahead and get this scheme under way. I hope members will bear in mind my suggestion to grant some recognition to those who have spent £1, £2, and even more per acre to provide water supplies of their own. It would be hard on those people if they had to bear the same cost as the man who has merely waited in expectation of a Government scheme being provided. Now that the Government have suggested a scheme, I hope it will be carried through successfully. I trust, however, that Government will not find it necessary to charge the rate mentioned in the Bill, but that they have merely allowed themselves a wide margin. I hope that when the work is carried out, it will be found possible to charge the settlers very much less. I support the second reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.6]: The Government should be congratulated on the step taken to supply water to districts where it is not possible for the settlers to help themselves. Portion of the supplies contemplated are to be provided in the province I represent. Numbers of settlers are so placed that it is impossible for them to provide water supplies of their own. It may be asked why they do not sink wells. The answer is that in much of the country the water is salt. Even where settlers have secured supplies, they are not always permanent. Many of the holdings are not favoured with a fall sufficient to fill an earth tank unless a very heavy rainfall is experienced, and we have many seasons when, although the rainfall is quite sufficient for wheat growing, it is insufficient to cause a flow of water on ground so flat. The Government intend to utilise rock catchments. These catchments will be like the roof of a house, as every little shower will be caught and diverted into the reservoirs. Consequently, even in seasons of light rainfall, there would always be a certain quantity of water. If the catchment area is large enough, which it will be in the 500,000 acres scheme, the settlers may rest assured that they will have a good permanent supply. Even the people in that district who have spent money to provide water are still in the unhappy position of not having a permanent supply. When we consider what has been done in South Australia, we might well wonder why a step in this direction was not taken years ago. Many of our settlers would be in a much better position financially and would have more valuable properties if water had been provided. Many of them have had to cart water; last summer some of them had to cart it for distances up to 20 miles. On one occasion I was travelling through a district at 4 o'clock in the morning and I came across a settler with his water tank half a mile from the supply. When he got there, he found it dry, and he had to drive on another eight miles. That man had to leave off harvesting in order to cart water. While the charge mentioned in the Bill appears to be high, it will be a much better proposition to have water supplied at that rate than to have a shortage of supplies. The rate will work out at £45 per thousand acres. While under the measure the Government will be able to charge up to 1s. per acre, I understand it is intended to charge only sufficient to cover interest, maintenance and sinking fund. I do not think any exception can be taken to that. For the poorer class of land the Government propose to levy a rate up to 2s. in the pound. So I take it the Government intend to relieve the settlers on the poorer land as much as possible. The poor land cannot carry a water rate of £45 per thousand acres per year. I feel, however, that the Government have every intention of meeting the position fairly. We are far behind the sister State in providing water supplies, and yet at this late hour we have an opportunity to provide water at a much more favourable cost. If members scan the costs of water supplies in South Australia, they will find that the majority of them are much above the projected costs of our schemes. The South Australian schemes are not paying; there is a national loss. That is a big question to be grappled with. If we can provide water supplies for our people, the productivity of whose land is equal to that of South Australia but the capital value of which is much lower, they will be in a much better position to pay

the rate than are the settlers in South Australia. When we consider how the farmers have been compelled to spend so much time and labour each summer in carting water, it is no wonder that we congratulate the Government upon having taken this step. Many farmers at present are unable to keep any stock apart from their working horses. In some of the outside areas where there is no catchment and no water supply, people almost grudge keeping a cow because of being so hard up for water in the summer time. For a number of years such settlers have been clamouring for water supplies and have told their Parliamentary representatives that they would be prepared to pay the necessary rates. When the supplies are provided, they will incur less expense for haulage and in many instances will save an extra team, while the time now wasted on carting water may be spent on their holdings. This will result in further improvements being made and a larger acreage being put under crop, while the State consequently will reap a larger revenue. The State will really be increasing its revenue at a low cost, because the schemes will pay for themselves. Numbers of settlers have been cropping their land for several years and thousands of acres of good feed have gone to waste because, through shortage of water, those settlers have been unable to carry sheep. It may be said that they have the wild dog trouble also to contend with. That prevails in every part of the State, and it could be overcome if necessary by yarding the sheep at night. Much revenue is being lost through the non-utilisation of feed. Again, it is impossible to crop wheat land successfully year after year unless sheep are run to keep down the weeds, and of course the running of sheep would mean more revenue to the farmer and to the State. There is an important point I wish to stress. In the early years of such a scheme, and more especially for settlers in the pioneering stage —this applies to perhaps 65 per cent. of the settlers—it would be a great relief if the Government charged them only 5 or 6 per cent. interest on the water supply and no other payments during the first 10 years, in order to permit of their becoming established. It may seem a small thing, but to a farmer starting, £5 in the first two or three years are worth as much as £50 ten or twelve years later. He needs encouragement and assistance in the early stages. I suggest a period of 10 years during which interest only should be payable, but possibly a lesser term would suffice. I feel sure the measure will be passed, because it means success where failure threatens to-day. During the past seven or eight years the price of wheat has been good, and sometimes more than good. To-day the wheat market is low, and if there is to be a fall to 4s. 6d. or less per bushel, it will be all the more reason for passing this measure. If people in the districts concerned have to face much additional expense, they cannot make wheat growing pay at 4s. 6d. per bushel. I congratulate the present Government on taking the first step to establish country water supplies on the lines adopted in South Australia. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [8.19]: The Bill concerns other provinces more than that which I represent. Except in its extreme eastern portion, the South-East Province is one in which the people can supply their own water requirements. Therefore I do not speak on this subject with the same intimate knowledge as on some general questions. I, too, congratulate the Government on bringing forward a measure to provide water for those districts in which the people have expressed their readiness to pay for it. At the same time one cannot look upon a Bill of this nature without calling to mind many drainage and water supply schemes carried out by the Government at very considerable expense which have been found most ineffective. Mr. Burvill knows how the people in the Torbay-Grassmere district have suffered from the drainage scheme carried out there by the Government. After heavy expenditure the position there is no better than it was when the Government were accustomed to advance £100 annually to enable certain drainage work to be carried out year by year. And there are other instances of the same kind. In connection with the water supply of Wagin there is a dam of sufficient capacity to supply the town; but after the engineers had unsuccessfully endeavoured to make it watertight, involving a total expenditure of £13,500, the dam was sold by the Government to the municipality of Wagin for about £6,000. To-day I do not think there are 200,000 gallons of water in it, whereas about 5,000,000 gallons are needed to carry the residents of Wagin through the summer. The Commissioner of Railways has stated that at present water is being trained from Collie to the

country east of Wagin, along the Newdegate and Lake Grace lines. Thus, there is at present no possible solution of the problem of a water supply for Wagin. Such experience points to the need for the exercise of the utmost care and skill in seeing that when the work has been carried out the results shall be efficacious. The necessity for the present Bill is questioned by no one. Personally, I agree with Mr. Hamersley that people who have had the enterprise to provide their own water supplies should not be called upon to pay an annual tax under this Bill. A proviso to that effect should be included in this measure, and also in another measure relating to water supply now before the House. Members with an intimate knowledge of the position should take the necessary steps to ensure that farmers who have already provided themselves with water supplies may be equitably excluded. An annual rate of 1s. per acre on a farm of 1,000 acres means a capitalised value of about £1,000. If water can be conserved on a farm at all, that sum is more than sufficient to supply a first-class farm of 1,000 acres with the water it needs for all purposes, including the carrying of stock. Probably a water supply has in most cases been established for two-thirds or even half of the capital expenditure indicated. I speak from the experience gained during many years in putting down dams in paddocks for the purpose of carrying and watering stock. A man who knows the work can, as a rule, put down a dam with his own team at a cost not exceeding 2s. per yard. Certainly, he can do the work for less than a total of £1,000. If he has had the requisite enterprise, why should he be called upon to pay an impost under this Bill for water which is not necessary to him and of which he cannot make any practical use? Another aspect of the Bill needing consideration is the system of rating. In the eastern part of my province, although there are many districts comprising large areas of excellent land—Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, and Newdegate for instance—there are also immense areas of second and third class land, which sooner or later will be taken up. Although the Bill attempts to provide equitably for the rating of the less productive lands, yet the impost contemplated is liable to prove too much. A thousand acres of first-class land is supposed to be the limit of one man's holding under conditional purchase, and the limit for inferior grazing land, non-cultivable land, is 5,000 acres. There has been a good deal of talk regarding the 5,000 acres quota, but it has in many instances been fixed. Putting down the value of the 5,000 acres at 2s. 6d. per acre, a tax of 2s. on the unimproved value of the land would mean a rate of 3d. per acre; and this tax on 5,000 acres would represent more than the impost on first-class cultivable land. Therefore, it seems to me more reasonable if the tax on second and third class land were fixed at an amount not exceeding the tax on the corresponding area of cultivable land. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, and shall listen attentively to any comments that may be made on the suggestions I have offered.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [8.28]: I have listened with interest to the congratulations which have been offered to the Government on the introduction of this measure. I believe the Government have introduced it for the purpose of overcoming what has been a serious difficulty. I believe they intend to help settlers whose properties are remotely situated from, say, the goldfields water supply, to get those supplies of water which are so essential to successful farming operations. I am wondering, however, whether in the course of years some of these particular farmers will have cause to congratulate the Government on the Bill. I observe that Clause 3 of the Bill is identical with Section 8 of the Goldfields Water Supply Amendment Act of 1911. It seems strange that two measures should be enacted containing exactly the same provision. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary has observed the circumstance. There are other points of similarity between the Bill and the Act. The definitions are identical, and Clause 4 of the Bill is in parts identical with Section 4 of the Act. The explanation may be that the Government are seeking to confer upon the boards constituted under the Water Boards Act of 1904 the same powers as are conferred on the boards constituted under the Goldfields Water Supply Act. One would have thought the Government could have saved repeating the same powers in an almost identical measure. Be that as it may, this view presents itself to me, and I ask the Leader of the House to give consideration to it. If we have two boards established, one under the Goldfields Water Supply Act and another under the Water Boards Act, there may be a number of farmers whose properties will lie between

the areas controlled by the respective boards, yet they may not receive any supplies from either board. Under the provisions of the Goldfields Water Supply Act and under the Bill before us now any man whose property lies within ten chains of a pipe laid down by either board is liable to be rated at 1s. per acre, or as otherwise provided, and his land may be rated for a distance of 1½ miles back from the boundary. It would be possible for some properties to be equidistant between the areas controlled by the two boards, and those properties would be liable for rating by both boards.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The two schemes will always be kept separate.

Hon. H. Stewart: But the position of the man you refer to would be no worse than that of the settler who has already provided his own water supply.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I agree with the contention of Mr. Stewart. There is no provision for dealing with a man in that position. I know that the burden that will be imposed upon many of our settlers may be hard to bear, although at the same time I realise that the farmers must have water to successfully carry on their operations and that water cannot be supplied for nothing. The conservation of water in times of plenty has, perhaps, been neglected, and we cannot blame those who are taking steps in this direction now. But if it can be provided at less cost than is indicated in the Bill, there will be a greater tendency to encourage land settlement. We should not encourage a man to undertake that task and then overburden him with rates and taxes. A settler has a hard enough burden for many years without having it added to. Further, as Mr. Hamersley pointed out, the settler who has a thousand acres cannot farm more than one-third of that area. He has another third under fallow and the remaining third under grass. Thus it is that he has to depend for the whole of his income upon some 300 odd acres.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But the Bill will assist him in utilising another third of his holding with stock.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That all depends upon circumstances.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The settlers will stock up if they get water.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It will certainly help them to stock up, but there may be circumstances preventing them from doing so. I do not wish it to be thought that I oppose the Bill, but I should like to see the struggling farmer helped more than will obviously be the case if we give the Government power to impose taxation to the extent possible under the Bill. I would like to see the farmers encouraged a little more rather than to have their hopes dashed to the ground by imposing heavy taxation upon them. I do not oppose the second reading of the Bill.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [8.40]: Mr. Nicholson has no conception whatever of the position. If he had, he would not have made such a speech. He has given the House to understand that we intend to inflict hardships upon people who have been asking for this legislation for years past.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They have been clamouring for water supplies for years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There was a suggestion that these holdings should be connected up with the goldfields water scheme, but that was impracticable because the cost would be immense. Deputation after deputation has waited upon Government after Government, and petition after petition has been received asking for the provision of water from the rock catchment areas. Now Mr. Nicholson says the Government wish to impose a heavy burden of taxation! The Bill provides for a maximum rate of 1s. but, as a matter of fact, the rate may be merely 8d. or 9d., whatever the amount may be to cover interest, sinking fund, and maintenance. If someone has already provided his own water supply, I do not suppose the department will take a pipe line in close proximity to the holding of such a settler. But if a water supply is provided, then those whose holdings adjoin the pipe will be taxed, even if they have their own supplies.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And they will make use of the water, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government have no desire regarding the Bill, except to see that settlers are provided with water, and the taxation to be imposed will be merely sufficient to provide interest and sinking fund and maintenance charges.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 8th October.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 4, which deals with an amendment of Sections 18 and 19, is before the Committee.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I suggest that the Honorary Minister agrees to postpone the consideration of Clause 4 until after we have dealt with Clause 5, which repeals the discretionary power of a judge on the application of a litigant to order a special jury. The crux of the Bill relates to the abolition of special juries, and the question whether special juries shall be abolished or not comes up with greater force under Clause 5. If that question is settled, then the other clauses are more or less consequential, and I do not think the Committee will be delayed long in the consideration of them.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I agree that the crux of the Bill is contained in Clause 5, and I will fall in with the suggestion. I move—

That consideration of Clause 4 be postponed.

Motion put and passed.

Clause 5—Repeal of Sections 26, 27, and 32:

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I hope the Committee will not agree to the deletion of these sections, which concern the retention of special juries. A special jury is the law in every State of Australia except Queensland. I do not think any good reasons have been given for the abolition of special juries. The whole of the jury system undoubtedly needs revision, and it would be wise if the Government were to appoint a Royal Commission to deal with the question. That commission could take evidence from judges and others engaged in the courts and revise the whole of the jury system. Recent decisions of juries have not inspired the confidence of the public in the jury system. In the meantime I hope the Committee will retain the provisions for special juries.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I support the suggestion made by Dr. Saw. Last year the Government endeavoured to introduce certain amendments that were rejected by this House, and now another, very much modified, measure has been brought down. Still, it will involve the abolition of special juries. I do not think we should be justified in abolishing special juries without such thorough consideration first being given the matter as could only be given it by a Royal Commission. I hope the Government will agree to refer the whole question to a Royal Commission.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If I could have my way I should have no juries at all. Still, there being provision for juries I suppose I must try to make the best of the system. I am in favour of the Government's proposal to have but one class of juror only and to pay him at any rate a living wage. But whilst holding that view, I propose to support the suggestion made by Dr. Saw and to oppose the clause, as a direction to the Government to refer the whole question of the jury system to a Royal Commission. What we want while we have a jury system is some mentality qualification for jurors, a monetary qualification being of no value whatever. If we cannot get a mental qualification the next best thing is to get a stability qualification and have jurors selected from the ratepayers on the municipal or road board rolls. However, in order that the whole question may be considered by those competent for the task, I will vote for the retention of special juries, intending my vote to carry the direction to the Government to appoint such a Commission as has been suggested by Dr. Saw. Trial by jury, whether special or common, not infrequently amounts to a farce.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will support the retention of the special jury, my reason being that a judge has to decide whether a case be one for a special jury or for a common jury.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You have the right to get a special jury.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But you have to apply for it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the judge thinks fit he can grant it but, alternatively, he can refuse it. Only with the consent of a judge can you have a special jury. There are civil cases in which special juries are necessary. Therefore I will vote for the retention of the clause, so as to continue to give litigants the right to apply for special juries, remembering always that the judge has power to grant or refuse such application.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Mr. Holmes is not quite accurate. I have been through the mill quite recently. Under Order 34 of the Supreme Court rules dealing with the mode of trial, a defendant may signify his desire to have the issues of fact tried by a judge with a jury, and thereupon the issues shall be so tried. Then there is another order prescribing that the parties may have a special jury. It is necessary to get the permission of a judge, but at all events in certain cases he has to give it as a right. In the recent case of O'Brien against the "Daily News" the defendant wanted a special jury, but the plaintiff's solicitors opposed it; whereupon the defendants went before the judge and were advised that they had a right to a special jury.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In a case of importance such as that, it would be so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not stand for two classes of jurors. I agree with Mr. Lovekin that the qualification for a juror should be one of intelligence rather than of wordly possessions. The Bill proposes not only to abolish special juries but also to amend the qualifications of common jurors. Therefore it is a double-barrelled measure.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It does not alter the qualifications of a common juror.

The Honorary Minister: No, it does not touch common juries.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then on that assurance I feel disposed to agree to the abolition of special juries. The common juror's standard of intelligence is just as high as that of the special juror. If the jury system required reviewing, some tribunal, such as that suggested by Dr. Saw, could be appointed for the purpose. The system, however, has stood the test of time, and generally speaking has the confidence of the community as a whole. Any departure from a well-defined procedure of age-long trial may be calculated to bring about a different set of circumstances and a different feeling with respect to our system of jurisprudence. I feel inclined to support the clause on the assurance of the Honorary Minister that it is not proposed to alter the present status of common jurymen.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not say that something in the nature of an investigation into the whole system is not necessary. This Bill, however, should be treated on its merits, and not taken as a direction to the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to deal with the matter. It must be recognised that the special jury system has outstayed its usefulness. There is no reason why in this matter, as in others, Western Australia should not break new ground, and lead the way in the matter of legislation of this nature. If the Bill is passed it will not affect any action that may be taken to appoint a committee of inquiry. I hope members will vote for this clause.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I hope the clause will remain as printed. If members desire that there shall be an overhaul of the entire system of juries, the matter can be gone into at a later stage.

Hon. J. Nicholson: We are all agreed there should be a variation.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is desired to abolish special jurors who must have a property qualification of £500, but it is also desired to retain the £150 qualification for a common juror. I see no particular virtue in the proposed change.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I did not say I favoured the retention of the property qualification.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You are prepared to leave it in the Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: For the present. After the Bill is passed the whole position can be reviewed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The retention of common jurors provides a legitimate basis upon which to compile a jurors' roll. If the qualifications are removed it will be difficult to compile one. I know that a man with £150 worth of property does not necessarily possess greater mental powers than a man possessing £500 worth.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Do you think we should have a wider choice?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, because that would give us greater scope in getting jurors with the required mental capacity. There are some instances where men with £500 are better qualified to judge than men possessing £150.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I would be more inclined to reverse the position, and to urge that the Bill should aim at doing away with common jurymen, those with the £150 qualification and to declare that the qualification of all jurymen should be £500. I am advocating that for the reason that the purchasing power of the sovereign to-day is so much less than it was years ago. I am satisfied that then we would have a better jury. A

man with a £500 qualification has a greater stake in the country.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Anyone could qualify by saying that he had £150. It might be a bad cheque for that amount, or anything. Then if one wanted such a juryman, it might not be possible to find him, and inconvenience would be caused. The practice, when selecting a jury of six, is to place 18 names in a box and for the respective parties to remove six each, leaving six to be summoned. If the qualification of those jurymen were to be £150 personal estate, it might be possible to find, when they were required, that some were in Timbuctoo. The result would be great expense and inconvenience to the parties by their having to go through the whole business again. That is not desirable. It should be possible to put our hands on people who have a stake in the country. There is every need for a commission to inquire into the matter so as to put it on a better basis.

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

Ayes	5
Noes	14
Majority against ..	9

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. R. Brown
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. A. Burvill
	(*Teller.*)

PAIR.

AYE	NO
Hon. T. Moore	Hon. J. Ewing

Clause thus negatived.

Progress reported.

BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [9.28] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill to amend the interpretation of the word "worker" in Section 4 of the Workers' Compensation Act, 1912-24. In the Bill passed last session reference was made in this Chamber regarding the exemption of the pearling industry in connection with indentured labour. I for one was not a scrap enthusiastic about that suggestion. I rather looked upon it at the time as something in the nature of special ligislation for a particular industry, and that to my mind was not in the best interests of the community. Since that time I have gone into the matter thoroughly and, as a result of my trip to the North-West, I have had an opportunity to discuss the ramifications of the Pearling Act Amendment and the Workers' Compensation Act Amendment with the pearlers, the R.S.L. and other people in Broome interested in the industry, as well as with people at Port Hedland and other parts of the coast. I have concluded that the pearling industry calls for special legislation, because it is an industry that can be carried out only by the aid of indentured labour. Under arrangements made with the Commonwealth Government, Asiatics are imported under a guarantee with their respective Governments and the master pearlers are responsible for their return. It has been found that the Workers' Compensation Act would operate harshly if applied to the pearling industry. Something in the vicinity of £12,000 was involved in insurance premiums under the Workers' Compensation Act, which was altogether too big a load for the industry to carry. One might be laying himself open to the contention that, if labour in the pearling industry is to be exempt from the Workers' Compensation Act, there is no reason why labour in other industries should not be exempted. It has to be remembered, however, that we are dealing with purely indentured labour, and though the Government are prepared to amend the Act to exempt indentured labour while employed on the boats, they do not agree that such labour shall be exempted when employed on shore or in other industries not connected with pearling. At Port Hedland it was argued that the Asiatic cooks engaged in the various hotels

and boarding houses should also be exempted. I turned that proposal down and refused to submit it to the Government, because there was no necessity for Asiatics to be employed in those businesses. The pearling industry is peculiar, because it is not a white man's industry. White men cannot be employed to do that work. If it was possible to employ white men in the pearling industry, I would not support any exemption. The Government will not agree to the exemption of any shore labour, and if the pearlers do not observe the provisions of the Act, they will have to take the full consequences. If men are engaged in repairing boats or in shell packing or other work connected with the industry, the Government will not exempt them, and it is only fair to say that I do not think the pearlers expect exemption for such men. I have heard Mr. Miles and Mr. Holmes mention that the Asiatic is somewhat of a fatalist, and that the compensation he would receive for the loss of a finger or a toe would make him independent for life in his own country. There is a lot to be said in support of those statements. The loss of a finger or a joint is not serious, and yet the compensation payable would represent quite a large amount in the coloured man's own country. Seeing that these men are valued at only £20 by their own Governments, the compensation of £700 is altogether disproportionate. While I was in Broome it was argued that the industry could not afford this impost. I pointed out that that was not a good argument, because the Arbitration Court does not consider it sound to contend that an industry cannot afford to pay the prescribed wages or comply with the conditions laid down. Comparisons have been made between the industry at Thursday Island and at Broome. At Thursday Island approximately 80 luggers are being worked and they are owned by nine men. At Broome there are 184 luggers and 79 owners, an average of 2½ boats per owner. There are several families dependent on one boat, and they find it difficult to make ends meet. I do not use that as a justification for the Bill, but it shows that the industry is not in a position to afford this impost. Apart from that, it is not right to burden the industry with this impost. Another point is that the Asiatics play up occasionally and are put in prison, and the responsibility rests upon the master pearler to keep the men and pay their wages while they are in prison. If they get sick, their wages have to be paid while they are in hospital. I was against the proposed exemption of these Asiatics in the first instance, but after considering all these matters, I concluded that it would only fair to grant exemption. I promised to confer with the Ministers for North-West and Labour on my return, and the result of the conference is the Bill now before members. I do not anticipate any opposition to the Bill, knowing as I do the thoroughness of the investigation made on behalf of the Government. It is only just and right to grant the exemption, and the Bill does not represent any special concession to which objection can be taken. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.40] : I support the second reading. I thank the Government for their prompt action in attending to this important matter. The Workers' Compensation Act provides further evidence of the difficulty confronting us in passing legislation to cover both the southern and the northern areas of the State. Broome was built up in the pre-war days on the pearling industry. North of Geraldton, it is the principal town. Since the war the town has been more or less up against things, and to pass the Workers' Compensation Act imposing upon the handful of people in the pearling industry insurance premiums to the amount of £12,000 per annum was an injustice that the Government realised as a result of the visit of the Honorary Minister to the North, and they have lost no time in introducing a measure to rectify the wrong. I wish other members would visit the North in order to acquaint themselves with the difficulties that the development of that portion of the State entails. Under the Workers' Compensation Act we provided, rightly or wrongly, that these Asiatics should be treated the same as other citizens. To begin with, they are not citizens; they are here for only a limited period, after which they have to be returned to their own country. We provided that in the event of the death of one of them, his dependants should be paid £750. I have before me a copy of the contract that each and every pearler who brings one of these men into the State has to enter into. It is made with the Government of the country from which these men come, and the value that the Government set upon each man in the case of death is £20 and not £750.

A peculiar position has arisen. I do not think there has ever been a claim for £20 because it has not been possible to locate the dependants of a deceased man. A different set of circumstances, however, has arisen with the amount of compensation fixed at £750. There are lawyers and there are speculative lawyers, and since the passing of the Act there have been two deaths as the result of accidents, and I understand that one speculative lawyer at all events is out to see whether he can find the dependants of those men. I presume the amendment embodied in this Bill will operate from the passing of the measure. I am inclined to think we should make it restrospective to cover cases of that kind. These men have never been insured. Under the old Act they were not insured, and under the compulsory insurance provision it became a question whether the pearlers should take the responsibility of paying insurance premiums to the amount of £12,000 per annum, or seek the assistance of the Government to have the Act amended. In the interim the Government agreed first of all not to enforce the compulsory insurance provisions, but meanwhile two men have lost their lives. Apart from the £20 value set upon the lives of these men in the event of death, there are other penalties imposed by the Commonwealth Government that make the position very difficult. For instance, the expense of the return to the country of origin has to be borne by the employer. At the expiration of the term of service these coloured men have to be sent away. If they cannot be found, then there is £100 to be paid. In the case of illness, unless it is illness caused by their own folly, they have to be paid their wages. While in hospital they have to be paid their wages, and the employer has, in addition, to pay the hospital fees. If they are put in gaol, the employer has to pay for their keep there. An advance of £15 has to be made before these men leave their native country, and a further advance has to be made before they dive at all. The industry has to bear all these charges, and on the top of them this House in its wisdom passed a clause setting a value of £750 on the life of one of these coloured men, which the Government of the country from which he comes value at £20. In case of death, funeral expenses have also to be paid by the employer. In order that there may be no misunderstanding as to the position between the employer and the employee, the contract has to be written not only in the English language but also in the language of the country from which the man comes. There is no necessity to labour this matter, but on behalf of the employers I wish to point out that in spite of what is said of present day employers and the treatment of coloured people, the pearlers in Broome have been endeavouring for years past to save the lives of the divers. The records show that some few years ago the deaths for a single period of 12 months numbered 35. That was the maximum. By the aid of the compressor the mortality has now been reduced to one or two per annum. That fact, at all events, is evidence that these white employers in dealing with coloured people have taken an interest in their fellow men, just as the white employer does in the case of white men, although we do not hear much of that from some our friends opposite. If the measure had been allowed to remain as it was, then, although the mortality had been reduced to two, those two deaths, if they had occurred on one boat, would have meant a payment of £1,500 by the individual pearler. No individual employer could afford to run such a risk. The position would have meant a nice harvest for the insurance companies, but would have been disastrous to the industry. The Honorary Minister, when visiting the North, saw the difficulty; and in supporting the second reading I once more desire to thank the Government, and the Honorary Minister in particular, for having dealt with the matter so promptly.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Title:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I should like to have a proviso added that this measure shall take effect as from the date of the passing of the last Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I hope members will not support such a proposal. I explained the position to the pearlers in Broome, and they were quite satisfied. They understood that whilst the Government were

prepared, in the circumstances, to amend the compulsory insurance clause, they themselves must take the risk of any of their divers dying or being injured in the meantime. I do not think any hardship will be placed on the pearlers in this connection. Many of the amounts payable in case of death have never been claimed by the relatives.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: An amount of £750 would be claimed all right.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Government having gone so far, and the pearlers thoroughly understanding the position, it would be quite unfair to insert such a proviso as suggested.

Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [9.55] in moving the second reading said: This Bill provides principally for the insertion of a new part, IIIa., in the Electoral Act of 1907, for the purpose of joint rolls to be used at Commonwealth or Assembly elections or referendums. The Bill also provides for compulsory voting. Further, it includes several amendments for the improvement of the electoral system generally. The new part represents almost wholly a machinery measure, bringing our electoral registration procedure into line with that of the Commonwealth, as far as practicable. The question of having joint electoral rolls has been under consideration since 1908; but for various reasons it was not finalised until the present Government decided, in October last, to agree to the proposals of the Federal Government. In so doing we are following the example of Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. This is not in any sense a party measure, and it should meet with the approval of hon members. The new part will come into operation by proclamation and will affect Assembly rolls only. It will not affect the Legislative Council rolls. Part III. of the principal Act will hold good so far as Legislative Council rolls are concerned. The advantages of an arrangement with the Commonwealth for joint rolls are fairly apparent, but the convenience of the public is naturally the principal consideration. At present a person claiming enrolment must apply to two officers in two separate offices, and must sign two separate claim cards. In future, only one application to only one officer, and the signing of only one claim card, will ensure enrolment for both the Commonwealth Parliament and the Legislative Assembly. This will mean a great advance on our present system, and will remove all possibility of misunderstanding on the part of the public in regard to enrolment. Under the proposed arrangement the Commonwealth Electoral Registration Officer for the purposes of State enrolment will be under the control of our Chief Electoral Officer, thus rightly conserving the electoral independence of the State. There is also the advantage of economy, and it is anticipated that there will be an immediate saving of £500 annually, increasing possibly to £800 or £1,000 as time goes on. This saving will be due mainly to doing away with duplication of registration machinery, and duplicate printing of rolls, forms, and so on. As regards efficiency, the combined official resources of both State and Commonwealth will be available for tracing the movements of persons eligible for enrolment. In the metropolitan area, covering our 12 most populous centres, and in certain goldfields and country centres, the Commonwealth has a habitation index, which is periodically reviewed by the post office; and there is also a system of review by country postmasters and local agents. The State, of course, has the assistance of State and local government officers, and of the police; or in all something like 2,000 electoral agents. The joint rolls, therefore, should be accurate and up to date. The actual work of registration under the joint-roll system will be carried out by the five divisional returning officers and their clerks and 27 registrars, all of whose services, as well as those of the local Commonwealth administrative staff, will not cost the State anything. The Commonwealth will defray the whole of the expenses. The State will pay half the cost of the printing of the joint rolls and of all books and forms used for the joint purposes, together with the necessary materials for those purposes. The Commonwealth will pay the State for half the cost of the services of police officers used for joint electoral purposes. In the prepara-

tion of the first joint roll the State and Commonwealth electoral staffs will co-operate to the fullest extent possible, in order to assure that all existing Assembly electors will have their electoral rights fully safeguarded. In the preparation of that joint roll the Commonwealth will wherever practicable make the boundaries of their subdivisions co-terminous with our Assembly districts, and where necessary, special registration areas will be established until steps are taken to make all boundaries absolutely co-terminous. This is essential for the smooth working of the joint-roll system. Wherever the State electoral district does not overlap the Commonwealth division, one roll will serve for the Commonwealth and the State, but where our State districts overlap the boundaries of Federal divisions, it will be necessary to have special divisions in the State districts, and it may be necessary even to print a special roll. As cases in point, I may instance the electorates of Leederville, Canning, Guildford and Moore. In those electorates it may be necessary to have special rolls.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are there not other instances as well?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are others, but I have mentioned those four. I think there are about 14 altogether. If a Redistribution of Seats Bill is introduced in either the State or Federal Parliament, there is provision for cognisance to be taken of existing boundaries, and it is agreed that provision is to be made to have the boundaries co-terminous. The Commonwealth can have a redistribution of seats only after a census. The last one was in 1921 and an alteration of the Commonwealth boundaries was the result. There will be no further census until 1931, and therefore it is not expected that there will be any alteration of the Commonwealth boundaries until 1932. On the other hand, it is anticipated that there will be alterations in the electoral representation in Western Australia before that period, and therefore in any Redistribution of Seats Bill introduced here, cognisance has to be taken by the State of the existing electoral boundaries and we are to endeavour to fit in our boundaries with those of the Commonwealth electoral districts. There is no intention to alter our boundaries just to suit the Federal boundaries, but if we can conveniently alter ours to make them co-terminous with the Federal boundaries we will do so, but not otherwise. There is no necessity to alter our boundaries because of this provision where, for instance, we find that such alterations will affect one of our electoral quotas. Part III. (a) of the Bill, with the exception of Subclause 4 of Clause 19, is taken almost wholly from the Commonwealth Act, and is essential to the successful working of the proposed joint rolls, as the Commonwealth system of registration will then apply to both State and Commonwealth electors and must be uniform. The system does not materially differ from our own and is certainly not less liberal in its application. The great majority of the other amendments are of a purely machinery character and are made essentially for the improvement of our system generally without involving, so far as I can see, any controversial principles. In some cases, also, they are essential to the arrangement for joint rolls, but will apply generally. Clauses 38 and 40 to 43, together with 48 and 49 of the Bill, come within this category. Of the other amendment the principal are those contained in Clauses 42, 44, 62 and 63. Regarding Clause 42, it is proposed under the Bill to alter the residential qualifications of Assembly electors, and such an alteration is absolutely necessary if we are to have successful joint rolls. At present the qualification is six months' residence in Western Australia and at least one month in the electoral district for which enrolment is claimed. The proposed alteration is as follows: six months in Australia, three months of which is to be in Western Australia, including one month in a district or subdivision for which enrolment is claimed. This means that a British subject not otherwise disqualified, coming to Western Australia after a residence of four months in some other part of Australia, may be enrolled for the Commonwealth after two months' residence in Western Australia, provided that he has resided at the same address for at least one month. But—and this is most important—he cannot be enrolled for the State until he has resided for three months in Western Australia, including one month at the same address. As his name, however, will already be enrolled for the Commonwealth on the joint roll, it is difficult to see how the Commonwealth Registrar, who will also be the State Registrar, can conveniently discriminate between the two enrolments when there is one entry only in

his official roll, and there is, of course, one card only for State and Commonwealth registration. This position is created only in the case of persons who come to Western Australia from other parts of Australia, because a person coming from Europe to Australia would still have to reside at least six months in this State and one month in the district before he could become enrolled for either the State or the Commonwealth. It will be seen that the only way out of the difficulty will be for the registrar to endeavour to so mark his roll as will enable him to distinguish the few State and Commonwealth electors who come within the category I have referred to. Clause 63 adds a new section providing for compulsory voting for the Legislative Council and Assembly elections. This system is now in force in Queensland, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Spain and other countries and will be used for the first time at the forthcoming Commonwealth election. Wherever it is in force, it has caused the electors to take an interest in their most important duty, namely, the election of their Parliamentary representatives, whose decisions govern every phase of their lives. The voluntary voting system has been tried and found wanting. If we can do anything reasonable to overcome the electors' apathy in this highly important matter by the proposed enactment, we shall achieve something which must benefit our Parliamentary institutions.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is there any provision for compulsory enrolment for the Council?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But merely for compulsory voting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. It may be argued that it is iniquitous to compel an elector to vote for a candidate to whom he personally objects, or, in the case of infirm or aged persons, to expect them to obey such a law. Everyone knows, however, that there is compulsion for all people from the cradle to the grave, in matters of much more personal interest than voting. I would instance the registration of births, deaths and marriages, in regard to health, taxation, enrolment and other matters too numerous to mention.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Why do you not propose compulsory voting for a referendum?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is provided for in the Bill. Turn where one will, in matters of government it will be found that the only function that is placed on a purely idealistic and voluntary basis, is that of voting, which is, of course, the most important of them all. Aged and infirm people can and do vote by post, and in any case, the system of compulsory voting will be administered in a commonsense manner. If an elector objects to vote for any or all candidates, or is a conscientious objector, he can easily make his ballot paper informal, but the number of such people in our State must be insignificant. Apart from the standpoint of good citizenship, the inauguration of compulsory voting will also result in the economical and automatic purification of our rolls after election. In addition, it will enable the returning officer to decide, with almost mathematical precision, as to where a polling place should be established or abolished, thus resulting in economical management at election time. The cost of compulsory voting will be more than counterbalanced by the saving in the annual cost of purifying the rolls, which, in the case of the Legislative Council rolls is a fairly heavy one, amounting to about £250 per annum. The most potent argument in favour of compulsory voting would appear to be as follows: "If members of Parliament are elected for the purpose of making laws, compelling people to do or not to do, certain things, the people who elect members should be compelled to exercise the franchise." It should be regarded as a solemn duty. In every country where it is in force the percentage of voters has increased enormously, in Queensland to nearly 90 per cent.; in Belgium to 98 per cent.; in Holland to 88 per cent.; in Austria to 85 per cent.; in the Swiss cantons to 80 per cent. The Commonwealth Parliament has enacted compulsory voting and it will be enforced at the Federal elections on the 14th November. The majority of the people will be represented by the majority in Parliament, and so the people should have more respect for the law than sometimes is noticeable to-day.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What about those incompetent to exercise judgment in political affairs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Under compulsory voting, they will take more interest in political affairs.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But why force the incompetent to vote?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Why force the incompetent in many other matters con-

nected with the political and social life of the country? Why force them to get on the rolls. If you force them to become electors you should go a step further and force them to exercise the franchise. By Clauses 19 and 44 it is proposed that persons of the nomadic class with no fixed address, particularly men following pastoral occupations, shall not be unnecessarily deprived of the franchise so long as such persons remain in the electorate in which they are enrolled. Although moving about in their electorate they will be qualified to remain on the roll. Such persons, almost needless to say, do a big share of the productive work of the State and should not be deprived of their vote simply because their occupations compel them to move about from place to place in their electorates. Within this category are boundary riders, kangaroo hunters, seamen, shearers, wool classers, surveyors, survey hands and chain men. Such people of course are continually changing their addresses. Under the Bill they will not be compelled to lodge a new claim card upon every change of address within their respective electorates. Apart altogether from what has already been said, this is only fair to electors in remote districts, where there are not the same facilities for registration as are to be found in more populous centres.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Are you compelling them to vote?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, they must vote if on the roll.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They can all now vote by post.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Clause 62 provides for an elector whose name is not enrolled being able to vote in certain circumstances and subject to his making the necessary declaration. This concession is in force at the Commonwealth and Victorian elections and serves to correct possible errors made by the electoral registrar, for which the elector should not be penalised. No doubt many members have met with instances of persons who, on going to the poll, have found themselves disfranchised through no fault of their own. This clause will meet such cases and serve to minimise causes for complaint on polling days. This concession will apply to both Council and Assembly elections.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It is a very far reaching provision.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is in operation under the Commonwealth Electoral Act to-day. It is proposed that there shall be no postal votes taken on polling day. Most of the postal vote abuses have taken place on that day, when postal vote officers have gone around a district taking votes from people who were not really sick. This provision is in force at Commonwealth elections. It will remove many causes for complaint and will affect very few, if any, genuine cases of sickness. Provision is made that a blind voter desiring to vote by post may nominate some person to see that the postal vote officer records his vote in the way desired by the blind voter. This is merely applying the procedure in respect of a blind elector voting at a polling booth to the same elector voting by post. It is also desired to bring the present system of recording the votes of blind people voting in person at a polling booth more in accordance with the secrecy of the ballot. At present such electors go to a polling booth, ask the presiding officer for a ballot paper, and the presiding officer marks the ballot paper in accordance with the blind voter's desire in the presence of a scrutineer. The presiding officer then signs his own name to the ballot paper. Consequently the identity of the voter can be and is discovered. The signature is considered to be quite unnecessary, and as I have already indicated, it serves to identify the vote of a blind person when the papers are being counted. The Bill provides that the presiding officer shall do everything as at present, except sign his name to the ballot paper. At present, candidates at Assembly elections are allowed to spend £100 in electioneering expenses. Since the purchasing power of the sovereign is now much lower than it was in 1911 when the amount of £100 was fixed, it is thought that £150 will be a fairer amount to allow. The Bill provides for that.

Hon. E. H. Harris: You do not make such a provision for a Legislative Councillor.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Council may make provision for itself when in Committee. Clause 63 provides that instead of the Treasury officials taking the £25 deposit as required by Section 80 of the principal Act, the money shall be taken by the Chief Electoral Officer or an officer acting on his behalf. This will save time and ensure the returning officer receiving telegraphic noti-

fication of the deposit of such money, and will be more convenient for candidates than is the present system. The remaining proposed amendments are mostly of a minor character which it is thought advisable to introduce in order to create the machinery for the more satisfactory conduct of elections. If necessary these will be explained more fully when in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 13th October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—MINING, COMET VALE.

Mr. PANTON (without notice) asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has his attention been drawn to a report published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 6th October of an indignation meeting held at Comet Vale? 2, Is it a fact, as stated in the report, that with the expenditure of another £2,000, a valuable mine could have been secured for the State? 3, If not, will he make a statement as to the facts of the position?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: I shall make a statement to the House to-morrow.

QUESTIONS (4)—POLICE.

Police Manual.

Mr. SLEEMAN: asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Did Police Inspector M. O'Halloran publish in 1914 a book entitled a "Police Manual"? 2, Was the book published in a private or a public capacity by the inspector, and was it published with the approval of the Commissioner of Police?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Yes. 2, In his private capacity with the approval of the Minister.

Commissioner's Term of Office.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Justice: Did the Commissioner of Police, R. Connell, in 1919 or thereabouts, make an agreement with the then existing Government by which his services were to be retained for a period of years, and, in the event of his services being dispensed with during the currency of that agreement, he was to be compensated?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: Yes. An agreement was made with the Commissioner of Police which provided that should he be retired before attaining the age of 60 he should, in addition to a pension for the actual years of service, be paid an increased amount, as if he had served an additional 10 years, as may be done under Section 6 of the Superannuation Act.

Examinations, Inspectors, Gold Stealing.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Justice: 1, What official or person sets the examination papers for the police promotional examinations? 2, Who judges the answers and allots the marks given at these examinations? 3, How many inspectors of police are over 60 years of age? 4, What are their names and official ages? 5, Has he asked any or all of them to continue in the service after reaching the age of 60 years? 6, How many members of the force are employed on the gold stealing staff on