

**ADJOURNMENT.***Death of Mr. T. J. Heron, M.L.A.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.41]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

It is my sad duty to move this motion, because news has just been received that a member of the Legislative Assembly (Mr. T. J. Heron) has died suddenly. We are all greatly shocked at the news. I can say no more at the present moment except to ask the House to carry this motion.

**The PRESIDENT:** In putting this motion to the House I should like to join the Chief Secretary in the remarks he has made. I am sure I am expressing the deep regret of every member when I say how profoundly shocked we are at the tragic death of a man whom we in this Chamber, always knew as a bright and genial personality. We know very little at present as to what happened, but I am sure all members will join with me in expressing the deepest sympathy towards the family of the late member upon the dreadfully sudden calamity that has overtaken them.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly,**

*Wednesday, 3rd October, 1923.*

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

**QUESTION—ABORIGINES, BROOME DISTRICT.**

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: What number of aborigines does he estimate are within one hundred mile radius of the townsite of Broome?

The **MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** replied: Approximately 1,200, including half-castes deemed to be aborigines.

**QUESTION—COMMONWEALTH BANK, INTEREST RATES.**

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: 1, Has he noticed in the local Press that the Commonwealth Bank, Savings Bank Branch, has increased the rate of interest on deposits? 2, Can he ascertain and advise the House of the total amount of deposits in this State with the Commonwealth Bank, including its Savings Bank Branch, as at the 30th June last? 3, Also the total amount of advances in this State by the Commonwealth Bank, including its Savings Bank Branch, by (a) loans to the Government of Western Australia; (b) by loans to local authorities; (c) by loans to private persons, companies, etc.; (d) other loans and investments?

The **PREMIER** replied: 1, Yes. 2, Average amounts of deposits in Commonwealth Bank for the quarter ended 30th June, 1923, as follows:—

Not bearing interest ..	£1,028,534	9	0
Bearing interest ..	£1,320,175	18	9
Savings Bank Deposits	£2,817,572	10	1

Total .. £5,166,282 17 10

3, This information is not available. It would have to be obtained direct from the Commonwealth Bank.

**ASSENT TO BILLS.**

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills—

1. Municipal Council of Collie Validation.
2. Electric Light and Power Agreement Amendment.
3. Supply Bill (No. 2) £1,250,000.

**WILLIAMS-NARROGIN ELECTORATE.***Seat Declared Vacant.*

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following letter from the member for Williams-Narrogin:—

Mr. Speaker, Dear Sir, I beg to resign my seat as member for Williams-Narrogin. Yours faithfully. (Sgd.) E. B. Johnston.

The PREMIER: Following upon the resignation of the member for Williams-Narrogin, I move—

Owing to the resignation of Mr. E. B. Johnston, the seat for the Williams-Narrogin electorate be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE.**

On motion by Mr. Panton, leave of absence for one month granted to the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnston) on the ground of ill-health.

**BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**

1. City of Perth Superannuation Fund.
2. Dog Act Amendment.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—BUNBURY ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.***Second Reading.*

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [4.40] in moving the second reading, said: The Bill is a short one and comprises a single clause. Hon. members may remember that in 1924 I introduced a Bill containing similar provisions, with the object of increasing the borrowing powers of the Municipality of Bunbury from £15,000 to £25,000. On that occasion I mentioned that it was anticipated the South-West power scheme would be proceeded with in order to supply electric current throughout the whole of the South-West. At that period certain extensions were required, irrespective of whether that scheme was proceeded with or not. Apparently the South-West power scheme has lapsed, and it has been decided by the Bunbury municipality to instal a new plant that will be more in keeping with the demands of the district. Since 1924, Bunbury has made much progress, but it has not been found

possible to reduce the cost of electric current to the consumers. That has been due to the fact that the plant is old and obsolete. With the installation of a new and up-to-date plant, it is hoped to provide the consumers with cheaper current. In order to do that, it is necessary to extend the borrowing powers. At present the electric lighting scheme in Bunbury is practically in funds. Of the total amount of £25,000 for the borrowing of which there is statutory authorisation, £16,500, less an amount paid back to the Treasury of £6,990, or a net total of £9,500, is now outstanding.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should arrive at a financial agreement with the Government and get your money back.

Mr. WITHERS: The Government have not lost any money on account of our scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, but you ought to try to get your money back, just as we are getting ours back under the Federal Financial Agreement.

Mr. WITHERS: Perhaps that would be a good scheme. The new plant that will be installed, will cost something like £15,000, and with the money already borrowed but not repaid, that will represent about £24,500, or £500 less than the amount the municipality is authorised to borrow. It is not desirable that the municipality should be stinted, particularly if the plant costs a little more than has been allowed for in the estimates. For that reason we are asking for an extension of the borrowing powers by £10,000. That will enable the Bunbury Council to go on with the scheme, and have a small margin on which to work. When I introduced the Bill in 1924, I pointed out that if the Bunbury scheme had not been operating under a special Act of Parliament, the amending Bill would not have been necessary, as there was ample power under the Municipal Corporations Act to enable the council to finance the scheme. Under that Act the council could borrow up to ten times the amount of the annual income. On the other hand, as the lighting scheme was operated under a special Act, it became necessary to introduce further legislation to extend the borrowing powers. At Bunbury the profits have been used, during the time the scheme has been operating, for the purpose of carrying out extensions made essential by the progress of the town. The coun-

cil is in the fortunate position of being able to show a profit on the undertaking over working expenses. The profit for the year 1927 was nearly £128. This shows that the undertaking is not losing on its operations, after allowing for the sinking fund.

Hon. G. Taylor: What do they charge per unit?

Mr. WITHERS: In the case of light it is 9d. a unit. That is pretty expensive.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes; with coal at their very door.

Hon. W. J. George: But they do not get the coal cheaply.

Mr. WITHERS: The cost for current works out at 4d. a unit. In the case of some of the bigger concerns, this current was supplied at about cost. This largely accounts for the small profit. The cost of production is very high, but in order to encourage local industries the council allows current for power to be distributed at as low a rate as possible, almost at the cost of production. Those who are using the light have as a consequence to pay a little more for it in order that the industries may be established in the district. The power is supplied at merely the cost of production.

Mr. Stubbs: The plant must be obsolete for the cost of production to be so high.

Mr. WITHERS: It has been in operation for many years, I think before the Act of Parliament governing it was passed. Originally the plant was put up by a company, and was subsequently taken over by the municipality. I think some of the present plant is that which was originally installed. The Bill is necessary. If the new plant costs more than £15,000, the municipality will borrow up to its full capacity. We hope to be able to realise something on the old plant when it is demolished, and we shall get some help from that source. We do not wish to be stranded in the event of wanting more money and not being able to borrow it. I hope the House will favour the extension of the borrowing powers from £25,000 to £35,000. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

## BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES** (Hon. J. Cunningham-Kalgoorlie) [447] in moving the second reading said: This is a small measure. The necessity for its introduction has been brought about by numerous requests that have been made by small country towns for local water supplies, in cases where the people cannot afford to pay for a reticulation scheme. Requests have also been put forward by various agricultural centres that desire to improve their water supply. In years gone by a good deal of construction work such as earth tanks was done to enable the early settlers to carry on the pioneering of their holdings. Those tanks were constructed by the Government of the day. In those districts which have now passed the developmental stage the settlers wish to secure additional water supplies to enable them successfully to carry stock. Many of the settlers have had extreme difficulty in providing water supplies on their own holdings. It has been pointed out to me that in many districts, by enlarging and reconstructing the earth tanks and by lining or roofing them, and providing windmills, stand pipes and tanks, a great deal could be done to assist settlers more successfully to farm their holdings. Under the Water Boards Act of 1904 power is given to constitute water areas and water boards. Before any work can be constructed under the Act, the board must prepare plans and supply details of the proposed scheme. In addition, notice of intention to construct must be advertised, and persons who would be required to pay rates in the event of such works being constructed have the right to lodge objections against the proposal. Only after this has been done can the Governor authorise the board to proceed with the work. Under the Act, too, the Minister has power similar to a water board. In the event of its being desired to meet the needs of the community by providing water supplies, the Act, which gives the Minister all the powers and remedies of a water board, applies with equal force to him. When this legislation was passed, it was contemplated that only those persons who would come within the prescribed area would be liable to pay rates. At that time the question of reticulation to farms was not thought of. The application of the Act was confined

only to towns. The Goldfields Water Supply Act was amended to provide for the reticulation of agricultural country from 30-inch mains. Under the provision of that Act the Minister was a water board. He had power to construct works for the purpose of linking up those who wished to be served with water from the 30-inch main. As the works were being constructed in accordance with the Act, such people would come within the rateable provisions of the Act. It was also provided that at least two-thirds of the people concerned in a certain area must first requisition for the service. In addition to that, they must represent at least 50 per cent. of the land to be served. There are certain restrictions under the Goldfields Water Supply Act which must be complied with before any work can be undertaken by the Minister in the direction of serving the water supply needs of the community. It was because neither the Water Boards Act nor the Goldfields Water Supply Act made provision for reticulation schemes other than those provided under the Goldfields Water Supply Act, that amending legislation was introduced in 1925, providing that schemes apart from the Goldfields Water Supply scheme might be constructed under certain conditions, and a reticulation system inaugurated to serve the people in the districts affected. It was also provided that two-thirds of the people concerned, representing at least 50 per cent. of the land to be served, and who were willing to pay a rate up to 1s. per acre plus £5 holding fee, should first requisition before such works could be started. Schemes brought into existence as a result of the passage of that Act include Kondinin and Narembeen. Both are rock catchment schemes. The Kondinin scheme was completed about 18 months ago. Besides serving the town and the railway needs, it serves upwards of 60,000 acres of farm land at a rate of 4½d. per acre per annum.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At what rate of interest?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The rate of interest on all these schemes is fixed at 8 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And we are paying 1 per cent., are we not?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The rate of interest is fixed at 8 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is the work not done with migration money?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: There is no differential rate concerning the lower rate of interest on the money expended. The rate is struck so that the works may return 8 per cent. on the capital outlay.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not need that if you only pay 1 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I am telling the hon. member what the rate is.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will tell you a bit about it later on. No wonder you are going on with these schemes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: That will cover interest and sinking fund and maintenance charges. The Narembeen scheme is just about completed. The rate will be 7d. per acre per annum. This scheme will serve the towns of Narembeen and Emu Hill, and also an area of agricultural land of upwards of 100,000 acres. Under the provisions of the amending Act the Waddourin water supply scheme is now under construction. I mention this, to draw the attention of the House to the works that have been put in hand as the result of the amending Act of 1925. Existing legislation provides only for water supplies to towns, reticulated water supplies from the goldfields main, and certain other reticulated supplies such as the rock catchment schemes I have mentioned. There is a never-ceasing demand from the agricultural areas for more water supplies. In many cases where the water supplies have already been provided the townspeople are urging that the works should be enlarged. In many of our smaller agricultural towns, tanks of varying capacities have been put down. The townspeople now believe they are in a position to pay for an improved scheme, such as enlarged tanks, with roofing and necessary equipment and a stand-pipe service for the supply of the town. In some of the agricultural areas the people desire that some of the old tanks should be enlarged. As I stated earlier, those tanks in years gone by served a useful purpose; but today the requirements of the farmers are such that in some cases it has been found necessary to enlarge the tanks, and to roof them in order to conserve the water stored and prevent wastage by evaporation; and further, in order to make the stand-pipe a success, so that farmers may be able to cart from those water stations, it has been found

necessary to provide some motor power, such as a windmill, to put the water into the storage tank. I desire to bring to the attention of the House some of the expenditure for water supplies throughout the State during past years. Where no reticulation exists, such schemes are necessarily non-revenue producing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: National works.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES:** They have been treated to date as national works. On the provision of tanks and wells to serve small country towns £42,775 has been expended. That is in itself a substantial sum, and as a result of the expenditure a useful service has been rendered to the minor agricultural centres of the State. Where there is no reticulation system, plainly there can be no revenue from the expenditure. A sum of £520,519 had been expended up to the 30th June last on the provision of tanks and wells in agricultural areas. That expenditure, again, is non-revenue producing. Those works were established in the early developmental stages of farming in the various districts, and so served a most useful purpose. In most cases, perhaps in almost every case, such water supplies have been placed under the control and authority of the local governing body. It has frequently been found that owing to tanks or wells falling into a condition of disrepair the Government are called upon to make money available for repairs and re-conditioning. It is interesting to note that a total of £119,872 has been made available for water supplies on stock routes. This expenditure also is non-revenue producing.

Hon. G. Taylor: Does that total include the Canning route?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES:** It includes all stock routes. Of the £1,604,325 expended on wells and water supplies on the goldfields, exclusive of the Goldfields Water Supply scheme, only £113,680 produces revenue. The revenue is but small, being derived from leasing some of the tanks and wells included in the cost I have just mentioned. For years it has been the policy of the Water Supply Department, where a well has served its purpose as a public water supply, to lease it to any citizen of the State to whom it is of use, in return for the rental asked by the department.

Hon. G. Taylor: In the past, the Government have annexed many wells sunk by prospectors.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES:** That was due to the prospectors sinking wells on Government reserves, or to reserves being constituted after the wells had been sunk. In such cases the Government naturally had the wells sunk free. However, some of those wells have been equipped with windmills, tanks and troughing. When a well is leased, the agreement contains a proviso that the public shall not, because of the rent paid, be denied the opportunity of obtaining supplies of water from the well. There has been little if any friction, and the whole arrangement appears to work well. Thus there is a sum of £1,490,645 expended on the supply of water in connection with mining development, from which supply no revenue is obtainable. The gross amount expended on non-revenue producing water supply is £2,173,811. This sum does not include any expenditure connected with the main capital loan or any subsequent loan for the goldfields water supply scheme. The expenditure of £2,173,811 is apart altogether from that scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It represents expenditure for the last 40 years.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES:** Ever since the inauguration of responsible government, so far as I know. It includes all those lesser water supplies which were established to assist settlers in the early development of their holdings. Now, as our wheat lands progress and closer settlement increases, there is a greater demand for water supplies throughout the State. Some 18 months ago the Government approved of the construction of, and constructed, a water supply in the district of Wilgoyne, north-east of Muckinbuden. In that particular district there was a rock catchment area which could be utilised for a water supply to some 37 settlers, many of whom were carting water for miles. This water difficulty hampered them considerably in carrying on the ordinary occupations of farming. A sum of £7,935 was expended on that work. At the outset it was believed by the department that the people of the district would be prepared to pay a rate per acre to return the annual amount necessitated by the capital outlay. However, the settlers were

not agreeable to do that. Finally they entered into agreements to pay so much per holding. The amount worked out at £12 per annum for holdings close to the stand-pipe service, and at £8 for those slightly further removed. The rates were determined in accordance with the distance the settler would have to cart from the stand-pipe. Those further removed from the stand-pipe would necessarily occupy more time in carting water than those closer to the supply. As a result of the agreements with the settlers the situation has been rather disappointing from a revenue aspect. In some cases a holding has changed hands; and once the man who has entered into a special agreement with the Water Supply Department parts with his land, he is relieved from further responsibility for rates, and the Government have no agreement with the newcomer who takes over the holding.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You can make him pay if he wants the water.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Undoubtedly the Wilgoyne scheme will pay eventually. The settlers in question were most fortunately situated. Nature had been kind to them in regard to the class of country they acquired for farming purposes, and also in providing such a splendid rock catchment. The provision of a water service at £12 or £8 per annum by the Government constitutes an insurance against drought conditions. The settlers in question, therefore, were most fortunate, and they should have paid without hesitation. However, it was a new district, and most of the settlers were carrying on against considerable odds. I hope that before long settlers will realise their responsibilities and pay their accounts. The money is needed. Such a work cannot be carried on, nor can new works be constructed, unless the settlers are prepared to abide honorably by agreements entered into. In the light of the facts I have mentioned, and of the difficulties by which the Water Supply Department are at times confronted, it has been decided to introduce this amending legislation. The Bill provides for the establishment of water supply stations, including underground tanks which may be lined or roofed, or both, and will be equipped with a pump or a windmill and an overhead tank with stand-pipe, concrete tanks which will be filled from rock catchments and provided with stand-pipe and trough-

ing, wells, which are put down at considerable expense and provided with windmill and other equipment. The concrete tank represent a new feature of water supply introduced into this State within the last two years. Portion of the rock catchment area is used as a bottom for the tank, and the walls are reinforced concrete. One of these tanks is in the Kalgarin district. The area of rock catchment is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres and the capacity of the tank about 200,000 gallons. There is also a concrete tank at Zantippe Rocks in the East Pithara district. Its capacity is 170,000 gallons, and the tank has been of great service in connection with development in the district during the last two or three years. Other tanks of a similar nature are now under construction, one at Jilakin Rocks east of Lake Brown. Its capacity, when completed, will be 3,000,000 gallons. It will represent a joint water supply, serving both the Railway Department and the settlers. Early in May I had occasion to travel through the country east of Ballidu and towards Lake Mollerin. A well sunk there by the Government ten or 15 years ago was pointed out to me. It had enabled the settlers to obtain supplies during the early stages. To-day, however, one farmer in the locality is using the well to water his 1,500 sheep. I understand that he has watered them there for the greater part of last year, and that other settlers have also been drawing on that supply for their sheep. It will be generally admitted that once settlers are in a position to run stock, they should do something themselves in the direction of providing water supplies. On the other hand, if they cannot secure an underground supply of water, they avail themselves of the provision made by the Government. Then it is that we say the time has arrived when they should be called upon to make contributions to permit of the reconditioning, with proper equipment, such wells as those I have referred to, so as to enable all settlers in the vicinity to have the same privilege and the same right at the lesser cost borne by the individuals to whom I have referred.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You want to see that they get nothing for nothing.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: To-day the farmer is prepared to pay the rate: he is quite willing, should this legislation be enacted, to comply with the conditions set out because it will pay him to do so.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: How do you know?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I have consulted the people and also their representatives in Parliament. I have met the people themselves in their own districts and it is because of their requests for water supplies that this legislation is being introduced. If the Bill is enacted its provisions will not apply to unprotected tanks. Now that we have provided silt pits at many of our tanks, we have them scoured out. Of course, it is a function of the road board to remove the silt that flows into tanks, and also, as far as possible, to keep the tank in a proper state of repair. Many of the tanks in the districts, and also the wells, will not be brought under the provisions of the rating clauses of the Bill when it becomes law. The Bill makes it clear that by Order-in-Council any water supplies may be declared a work within the meaning of the principal Act, notwithstanding the fact that the settlers will have to go to the source of supply for the water they require. The area can be constituted by the Governor authorising the Minister to exercise the powers of the board within such area. The areas will necessarily vary in size according to the conditions and the requirements of the districts. The Bill also provides for levying an annual rate on all lands within the area. For instance, lands outside a townsite can be rated only to a maximum of 3d. per acre, that being one-quarter of the maximum which can be levied when water is taken by pipes to the holding, and differential rates may be levied up to, but not beyond, 3d. per acre. Those settlers who would, owing to location, be required to carry a long distance, would pay less than the settlers who might be only a short distance from the source of supply.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: All must get water, of course.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: We provide the receptacle to catch the water that falls from the heavens. If water does not fall from heaven, the Leader of the Opposition will agree that that will not be the fault of the Government.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Or the farmer either.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No, and it is no use the Government blaming the farmer, or the farmer blaming the Government, or even the

Leader of the Opposition blaming me. The 3d. per acre will be the maximum. It may be found that a halfpenny per acre will bring in sufficient revenue to meet the requirements of the department.

Mr. Sampson: Will it be a uniform rate or will it be according to the value of the land?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The Bill provides for a differential rate. Each water station will stand alone and each scheme will have its own rate. The differential rate will be imposed, as I have pointed out, in respect of the settlers who are nearer the source of supply. They will be called upon to pay a slightly increased rate as compared with those further removed from the source of supply. That is only right because they will receive a more direct advantage. In addition, provision is made for the rating of small country towns which cannot afford a reticulation scheme. Such rate, however, must not exceed 9d. in the pound, that being one-fourth of the amount provided for in the original Water Boards Act as amended in 1919. In those cases the water is taken to each household by means of pipes. That 9d. is just one-fourth of what is now charged in the towns that have been drawing from a reticulated scheme. The maximum amount provided under the Water Boards Act is 3s. in the pound; that is for a reticulated scheme. This will not be a reticulated scheme: it will be a stand-pipe scheme and the maximum rate will be 9d. in the pound.

Mr. Thomson: The man in the town gets a reticulated scheme and the other poor beggar has to cart water.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: These water supplies are established only in small country towns that cannot afford to pay for a reticulated scheme. It is all that they are asking for and all that they can afford to pay. The stand-pipe scheme brings the source of supply right into the town and the people go there and take the water they require. This work is carried out where people are prepared to pay the rate. The people in the small towns have all been consulted, and if they are not prepared to pay they do not get the service.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Are you making provision for a referendum?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: There is provision

for that already in the Water Boards Act. We have found it necessary to progress with this class of construction even ahead of settlement, and I am asking, under the provisions of the Bill, for the right to rate in these localities. I have already referred to the enormous sums of money that have been spent to provide water supplies throughout the agricultural areas, and there are many that are to-day, and never have been, revenue-producing. That state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not want to go back to the old schemes for collecting rates.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No, but where the old schemes have been reconditioned, and additional expense has been incurred, then it will be necessary to rate. In connection with those schemes that are now in progress of construction, and where stand-pipe services are necessary, or where motive power is needed, a rate will be struck to bring in a required annual revenue. It is usual to say that the rate to be levied will be only sufficient to bring in a certain amount of revenue each year. There is a matter that perhaps may agitate the minds of members and it is that by jumping in and providing certain water supplies such as I have referred to, settlers may be discouraged from making their own provision for conserving water. Nothing will be done to discourage settlers in that respect, but I think it is generally admitted by members who have travelled throughout the agricultural areas that there are centres where farmers found it difficult to provide their own water supplies. I have met settlers who have spent considerable sums of money in attempting to provide storage by way of earth catchments, but owing to the porous nature of the country it has not been possible to make the dams hold water. Also, owing to the flat nature of the country in some instances, it requires a substantial rainfall to get a flow off to permit of the conservation of a supply. In such cases the people are asking the Government to make provision for a water supply to enable them to carry on.

Mr. Thomson: If a man had a supply of his own, would he be exempt from rating?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Most of the farmers who have their tanks full of water at the end of winter take supplies. Even

last year, when there was a meagre rainfall throughout the wheat belt, demands were made as early as January for assistance in the direction of providing water supplies with which to carry on. Very few settlers are in the position to say that they have an adequate water supply. In the same districts two or three settlers were more fortunate than others had supplies from wells and they were hostile to the provision of a supply in their district. They objected strongly to the levying of a rate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Perhaps they were justified, too.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: After all, we consider the greatest good for the greatest number, and we cannot hold back development in the interests of one or two individuals. If anyone holds a vacant block in Perth he is called upon to pay water rate. Why should people in agricultural areas, irrespective of whether they have a well or a windmill on their block, be exempt from paying a water rate? Why, in the event of works being constructed in the agricultural areas, should a differential system be adopted there?

Mr. Mann: You are penalising the enterprising man.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No, we are not.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is absolutely unfair.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Some settlers have been more fortunate than have others in that they have secured old natives' soaks on their holdings.

Mr. Mann: And some of them have sunk wells at considerable expense.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: As a result of their good fortune, they have, in some instances though not in all, adopted a dog-in-the-manger attitude. Some of them are hostile to the inauguration and construction of water supplies that would mean so much not only to their own districts, but to the whole State. I do not know that I can give any more information on the second reading. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

**BILL—WHEAT BAGS.***Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. H. Millington-Leederville) [5.32] in moving the second reading, said: The proposal to insist upon the branding of wheat bags is not a new one. It was in operation during the part of the time that the compulsory wheat pool was in existence.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell. I have not heard of it.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I know from my own experience.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Was it an Act or a regulation?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I think it was embodied in an Act; if not, it was done by regulation. Anyhow, the branding of wheat bags was made compulsory on that occasion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was never the law of the land.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** It was, to the extent that it was obligatory on the part of wheat producers to brand their bags.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Only if they put their wheat in the pool.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am referring to the time when all wheat had to go into the pool. I was farming at the time, and I know we had to brand our bags. Wool bales have to be branded and there is a distinct advantage in having them branded. Fruit cases have to be branded, and under our modern trading methods it is the practice to brand the packages of almost all merchandise. Before a measure of this kind was introduced, there would have to be an urgent request for it from the people particularly concerned. This Bill has the backing of the producers. Persistent and urgent requests for it have been made by producers and agents, and the principle has been affirmed by the Royal Agricultural Society and a conference of agricultural societies.

*[Debate Interrupted.]*

**ADJOURNMENT.**

*Death of Mr. T. J. Heron, M.L.A.*

**MR. SPEAKER:** I have just been informed that the member for Leonora (Mr. T. J. Heron) has suddenly passed away.

[40]

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. P. Collier - Boulder) [5.40]: I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 5.40 p.m.*

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*Thursday, 4th October, 1928.*

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

**OBITUARY—MR. T. J. HERON, M.L.A.**

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.32]: I have to submit a motion. The necessity for doing so occasions me very deep regret. We were all shocked yesterday by the sudden and unexpected death of Mr. Thomas John Heron, the member for Mount Leonora in the Legislative Assembly. Some of us, myself included, had been in his company only an hour before, when he appeared to be in perfect health. I was acquainted with the late Mr. Heron for only about 4½ years, but I saw sufficient of him in that time to enable me to form a very high estimate of his character. He was an honourable man and in his conversations he seemed to be one of those who strove to find virtues rather than faults in his fellow men. While true to his own political principles, he had full respect for the political opinions of those who thought differently from him. In other words, he was one of those who could appreciate an opponent's viewpoint. He was of kindly, forbearing disposition, and malice or vindictiveness never entered his soul. The circumstances of his death have impressed us with a feeling of sadness. He passed away while discharging his Parliamentary