

Years ago when the milling machinery was not so efficient, and when milling was carried out with stone rollers, the offal, after the flour had been extracted, was a very different commodity from what it is to-day. At that time quite a big percentage of meal was left in the bran and pollard and sharps, but to-day very little flour or meal is left after the extraction of the flour. The bran is the outside husk of the wheat grain or berry, and although we speak of bran and pollard to-day, there is very little difference between the two. Practically the only difference is that the pollard is ground very fine, and the bran is not so fine. About 72 per cent. of flour is supposed to be extracted from the wheat, about 20 per cent. of bran and about 10 per cent. of pollard, so the percentage of pollard is very small. I am quite satisfied that the mills do not get that percentage of pollard to-day. I have samples here and, if any member would like to examine them, he will find that what I have said is correct. Pollard contains a large percentage of bran, the only difference being that it is ground much finer; it has to be run through a much finer sieve than has the bran. To Clause 4 of the Bill is attached a proviso as follows:—

Provided that the Governor may by regulation amend the said schedule by altering any standard provided for therein, and the schedule as so amended shall have the same force and effect as if such an amendment had been enacted by this subsection.

If this House passed the Bill containing a schedule of the standard, with members perhaps not too well satisfied with the standard, it would be peculiar to give the Governor power directly afterwards to amend the schedule and bring the amended schedule into force without Parliament having had an opportunity to say whether it approved of the amendment or not. Subclause (2) of Clause 4 provides that the Governor may, by regulations—

require impurities to be removed from bran, pollard, and other food for stock by cleaning, scouring, or other process.

I do not know how on earth bran and pollard can be cleaned or scoured by any process whatsoever. However, there it is. These are matters which should be removed from the Bill. I do not wish to speak at length now, because the whole measure will need to be examined carefully in Committee. I am prepared to vote for the second read-

ing, hoping that the Bill may be got into shape during the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 3.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 17th October, 1928.

	PAGE
Notice of question	1257
Questions: Wooroloo Sanatorium; X-ray plant; Waterside workers, licensing	1258
Leave of absence	1258
Bills: Land Tax and Income Tax, 1a.	1258
Pearling Act Amendment, 3a, passed	1258
Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2a.	1258
Com. report	1258
Navigation Act Amendment 2a.	1259
Profiliering Prevention, Com.	1260
Water Boards Act Amendment, 2a.	1275

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

NOTICE OF QUESTION.

Mr. THOMSON: I give notice that to-morrow I shall ask the Premier: Will he request the Auditor General to indicate to this House what, in his opinion, is the correct amount that should be charged to public salaries on revenue account, as per his criticism on page 38 of his report of 1927?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think such a question should be put through Mr. Speaker.

The Premier: Leave it till to-morrow; I shall answer it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Auditor General is not under the control of the Government; he is under the control of Parliament, and if Parliament desires information on the lines suggested by the member for Kataning, Mr. Speaker should be asked to get into communication with the Auditor General.

The Premier: We might bring him to the bar of the House and cross-examine him!

QUESTION—WOOROLOO SANATORIUM, X-RAY PLANT.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: What is the approximate cost of an X-ray plant suitable for Wooroloo Sanatorium?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: The estimated cost of an X-ray plant suitable for Wooroloo Sanatorium is £1,200.

QUESTION—WATERSIDE WORKERS. LICENSING.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government given any attention to the legality or otherwise of the Federal Government's charging and accepting 1s. per annum for registering lumpers on the Fremantle wharf? 2, If not, will he immediately confer with the Solicitor General, obtain his opinion on the matter and give the information to the House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The Government have given the matter some consideration, but find that the subject is primarily one for the consideration of the parties concerned in the dispute. 2, It is understood that an opinion from eminent counsel is being secured in the Eastern States, and further consideration has been deferred until the result is known.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is no business of ours.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. North, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Mann (Perth) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—BUNBURY ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.38]: The Government take no exception to the passing of this Bill. The facts have been

presented clearly by the member for Bunbury. In 1911 authority was given to the council to borrow up to £15,000, and in 1924 it was increased by £10,000, and now the council is asking for an additional £10,000.

Hon. G. Taylor: By Jove, it is getting pretty high.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The accounts show that the proposition is a paying concern. There is an accumulated profit of £1,800 after meeting all charges.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is there a sinking fund?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. One regret I have is that the council intends to change over from coal to oil fuel. The new plant will be a crude oil process, as the council complains that the cost of coal, with freight added, is too high and that the charges will be considerably reduced by introducing a crude oil plant. That is a matter purely for the council, which has shown that it will be able to produce current much more cheaply with oil fuel. As the proposition appears to be a good business one, the Government have no objection to offer and the council should be able to make of it a good paying concern.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Mr. Withers in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the hon. member tell us if there is a sinking fund, what the amount is and where it is invested?

Mr. Withers: I mentioned that when moving the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am aware of that, but I wish to be informed now.

The Minister for Works: The sinking fund amounting to £6,994 is in the Treasury.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suggest that the Bunbury council should make a financial agreement with the State Government somewhat on the lines of the one made by the State with the Federal Government, and then it would be able to get its sinking fund returned and avoid the need for borrowing. That would mean the

saving of a considerable amount of interest to the council. If it is good for the State to make a financial agreement with the Commonwealth, surely it would be good to apply the same methods to the Bunbury council in its dealings with the State Government!

Mr. Withers: I prefer to have the Bill passed in its present form.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But I should like to know how the hon. member views the suggestion.

Mr. WITHERS: If the Bill be passed, the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition can receive consideration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Government cannot refuse you.

Mr. WITHERS: I am grateful for the suggestion, and if it will be of benefit to the council, it will be worthy of consideration.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. J. Cunningham—Kalgoorlie [4.45]) in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this small Bill is to remedy a defect in the principal Act of 1904. Under Section 31 of that Act it is provided that owners of steamships must have their vessels surveyed by shipwright and engineer surveyors "appointed under the Act." When the amending measure of 1926 was before Parliament, the words "appointed under the Act" were omitted; and the effect of the omission is that owners of vessels contend they may call in shipwright and engineer surveyors appointed under Part V., Sections 65 and 67, of the principal Act. Those provisions were included to enable marine surveyors to practice for the purpose of cargo hatches and insurance, but not for the purpose of annual inspection of hulls, boilers, or machinery, or for certifying seaworthiness, since in most cases these surveyors are also interested parties from the shipowners' point of view. Under the ex-

isting legislation the department have no control whatever over these surveyors. The department work under the regulations made by the British Board of Trade, and those regulations are amended by the board from time to time. The amendments are sent out to the various State Governments with instructions that shipwright and engineer surveyors shall be appointed only by way of examination. It stands to reason that the department administering the Act, having no control over outside surveyors, find the position difficult.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We do not want to control the surveyors. We only want to know that they are qualified.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: A certain control is necessary for the reason already indicated, that shipwright and engineer surveyors appointed under Part V., Sections 65 and 67, of the principal Act are mostly interested parties from the shipowners' point of view. They are employed by the owners for the purpose of certifying the seaworthiness of vessels leaving our ports.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I see.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Hence the desirability and necessity of having surveyors appointed under the proper authority, to enable the department administering the Act to administer it in the best interests of all concerned. The regulations and instructions issued by the Board of Trade now comprise no less than 140 pages of printed matter. Shipwright and engineering surveyors appointed under the Act must have a knowledge of those instructions, and of the variations made from time to time.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Surely not 140 pages?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, 140 pages. It cannot be expected that shipwright and engineer surveyors appointed for the purpose of cargo hatches and insurance will be as well qualified as surveyors appointed under the Act by examination, whose duty it is to carry out the regulations of the Board of Trade. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 11th October; Mr. Luty in the Chair, the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Interpretation (partly considered):

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Appointment of commissioner of prices:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What is in the Minister's mind regarding the appointment of the commissioner? Is he to be a public servant with an all-time job?

The Minister for Justice: The clause says "from time to time."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But what has the Minister got in his mind about the commissioner? How do the Government propose to appoint the commissioner? The Minister must have thought about what is to be done, this being an unusual clause. He evidently does not expect to put the measure into operation, but, if he does, we want to know what will be done.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The commissioner's remuneration has not been fixed. Probably it will be a fee per day during the time he functions as commissioner. We have not definitely made up our minds.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Have you done so indefinitely?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Insofar that the commissioner may be a public servant, or more probably that he will be a magistrate, unless there is in the Public Service an officer who appears to be particularly qualified for the position.

Mr. Teesdale: Should it not be a business man of large experience?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: On the other hand, the Government might select a man able to dissect evidence, and so able to arrive at a proper decision on the evidence and not merely on his own opinion. A business man might have no idea of the proper method of conducting an inquiry.

Mr. Teesdale: The last experiment in this direction was not a great success.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member sat behind the Government

responsible for that legislation, and did not oppose the measure.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did it meet with opposition from the Minister now speaking?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Put in the clause that the inquiry shall be made by a magistrate.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Then the Government's choice would be circumscribed, and a man with experience of both commerce and investigations might be disqualified. The Government do not intend to create a department in the shape of a commissioner going around and making all sorts of inquiries unnecessarily.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will be pressed to send out men to make inquiries.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Governments are pressed to do all sorts of things, and they generally make decisions in the best interests of the country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If that is the best the Minister can promise, we will not have anything to do with the Bill. Certainly the clause should be amended. We have been told that there is no need for such an appointment at the moment, and occasion to make the appointment may never arise.

The Minister for Justice: That is not the position.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Has occasion arisen for it?

The Minister for Justice: Occasions would have arisen if this legislation had been in existence.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the Minister said the other day that all was well.

The Minister for Justice: I said nothing of the kind. Someone misrepresented what I said. "Hansard" will show what I stated. I read the "Hansard" report subsequently and it is quite clear.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: One thing the Minister did say was that we might have had an inquiry into the price of meat.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, and bread.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But a Commission has been sitting to deal with the cattle industry so that no commission would be required to investigate the price of meat.

The Minister for Justice: As the result of the findings of the Royal Commission, we might require to have a commission appointed to inquire into the price of meat.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government will require a man possessing peculiar qualifications if he is to be called upon to make inquiries concerning all the various matters the Minister indicated.

The Minister for Justice: Your Government had no difficulty.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We dealt with special cases.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Under special circumstances.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister has no faith in his own proposal as such. He tells us that the commissioner who will be appointed, may probably be a magistrate. Apparently no one has thought about that subject. As there is no necessity for any appointment at the moment, we are asked to pass the Bill, and yet we are to have no definite information on this important point. If a commissioner is to be appointed from outside the ranks of the Public Service, what will he be paid? The Government cannot afford to pay enormous sums away in that direction. We have no information as to who the commissioner will be.

The Minister for Justice: You introduced 30 or more Bills during your time, but you never indicated to us what you had in mind regarding appointments, and so forth.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course I did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! These interjections should cease. We cannot continue the debate with continual interruptions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is strange that the Minister cannot say definitely who he has in mind for this position. It is highly unsatisfactory, but that is the way legislation is dished up to us now, and I suppose we shall have to be satisfied.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In view of the reply made by the Minister to the Leader of the Opposition, to the effect that the person who would be appointed would probably be a magistrate, it is interesting to note that the salaries of magistrates are already provided for. The clause makes provision for fixing the remuneration of the commissioner. I presume that provision is made to meet

circumstances that may arise should a magistrate be asked to make inquiries that are apart from his ordinary duties. I take it, too, that the provision is made so that should an appointment be made from without the service, the Government will be able to fix the remuneration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Any man that is appointed should be of outstanding character and discretion.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: For my part I do not see any need for the Bill at all. I think somebody in the Public Service should be able to fill the position, which will be a temporary one. The commissioner may not be required to deal with more than one commodity in 12 months or two years. I think the Minister has already indicated that there is no necessity for an inquiry now.

The Minister for Justice: Not for a general all-round inquiry.

Mr. ANGELO: I have been waiting for the Premier to move an amendment. A similar Bill was before this Chamber in 1919 and it provided for the appointment of one commissioner. The Premier, as Leader of the Opposition in those days, pointed out the danger of placing such power in the hands of one man, and at his suggestion the Committee agreed to provide for three commissioners. In common with the Premier, I am afraid of what may happen if we vest such huge powers in one man. He may do tremendous harm to the community.

Hon. G. Taylor: But three commissioners might do more harm!

The Minister for Works: Three times as much!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They might indulge in fishing expeditions.

Mr. ANGELO: If we provided for three commissioners, one could represent the consumers, one the sellers or producers, and the third, who would be the chairman, would be some independent man.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would be the chairman who would decide the issues.

Mr. ANGELO: The commissioners would deal with the evidence presented to them. Personally I think it would be an improvement if three commissioners were provided for.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: When a magistrate is asked to carry out duties that are entirely outside those he ordinarily undertakes, an allowance is always paid to him in consideration of that fact. For that reason, provision is made in the Bill to enable

us to remunerate whoever is appointed to the position of commissioner.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Administration of Act:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause provides that in the administration of this measure, the commissioner shall be subject to the direction and control of the Minister. What does that mean?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It means that when the Minister in charge is satisfied as to the necessity for an inquiry—

Mr. Thomson: Who will satisfy him?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Minister will adopt the course that is usually followed. When the Government consider, on the evidence submitted, that there is necessity for an inquiry, they will cause it to be undertaken. Four or five months ago there was a lot of discontent regarding the price of bread, and had this legislation been on the statute book, I think even those who were hostile to such a measure, would have admitted the necessity for an inquiry. The Minister will direct the commissioner to make an inquiry into the price of some particular commodity and if necessary the Minister must have power to control the commissioner. A man appointed to undertake the inquiry might desire to travel to the other end of the State, although it might be quite unnecessary.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you would not pay him his expenses.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But the application for payment would be made after the expenditure had been incurred. It is necessary to have power to control a commissioner from this standpoint.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is an extraordinary clause; why did you put it in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Because the Minister must have power to direct the commissioner to make an inquiry concerning a particular commodity as desired from time to time. There might be considerable dissatisfaction at Northam and the Leader of the Opposition might approach the Minister with a request that an investigation should be made regarding prices charged there. The Minister would then direct the commissioner to go to Northam and conduct an inquiry.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The commissioner will be a very busy man if he has to make inquiries every time the Government receive a request.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Minister will exercise his discretion. The clause is a commonsense one and is necessary to enable the provisions of the measure to be effectively carried out.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If without reading the clause one were to accept the Minister's explanation, there would not appear to be much ground for complaint. But the clause provides that in the administration of the Act the commissioner shall be subject to the direction and control of the Minister. One requires to consider how far-reaching that is. How far the Minister's control would affect the method to be adopted in sifting evidence or the grounds on which the commissioner would adjust prices, we do not know. The Minister suggests that in the event of certain prices being unduly high in given towns, the Minister would merely direct the commissioner to proceed to such towns and inquire into the cause of the prices. If that is all that would happen, the clause is quite in order. But does it not give the Minister greater powers than that, and is there not a possibility of the Minister exercising all the powers he can? I do not think we are justified in giving all the proposed power to the Minister. Once the commissioner enters upon an inquiry, the control of the Minister ought to cease.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause ought to be amended. Why should the Minister have so much control over the commissioner? Under the Railway Act the Minister is not allowed to interfere with the powers of the Commissioner of Railways. Neither can he fix the rates of freight. The Railway Department would never allow the Minister to interfere with the detail work of the department. It is for that we have the Railway Act, which does not say the Commissioner is subject to the direction and control of the Minister. If the Minister has power to direct the prices commissioner to go here and there and conduct inquiries, the Minister does not need any further control. In any case, it will be an uncomfortable position for the Minister, for he will be interviewed by all sorts of persons requiring adjustments in the prices of commodities. The Minister will find himself bombarded on all sides, even by men who think their tailors are charging them too much for their suits. In respect of 99 per

cent. of the commodities there will not be much control over the prices charged. A maximum will be fixed, beyond which a price will not be allowed to soar. In the ordinary course the member for Gaseoyne would be called upon to pay a little more than other men for his suits. But under this Act he would not be allowed to pay above the maximum.

Mr. Angelo: I could borrow the clothes of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And probably they would fit you. All price-fixing, wherever tried, has been a failure.

The Minister for Justice: No, no!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It has been tried time and again, and always it has been a failure. When fowls refuse to lay and eggs are 3s. a dozen, housewives will go to the Minister and ask that the price be reduced. But before the Minister can agree to that, he will have to order an inquiry. The Minister is bringing considerable trouble on himself. Men wanting to build houses and get married will complain to the Minister of the high price of timber.

The Minister for Justice: Applicants will have to make out a good case before any inquiry is held.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They will make out good cases, and the Minister will have to respond.

Mr. Thomson: The Royal Commissioners that inquired into prices reported that such a Bill was not necessary.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This tribunal, of all, will be absolutely under the control of the Minister. That is a wrong principle.

The Minister for Justice: It is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We do not want the Minister mixed up with this sort of thing. Men holding stocks of sugar will come to the Minister and ask that the price be increased, while others in want of sugar will petition the Minister to reduce the price. The Minister's life will not be worth living. I should like to move to strike out the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can vote against it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the words "and control" be struck out.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Latham	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thomson
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Richardson	Mr. North

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Millington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munstle
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Rowe
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Judicial notice.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the Minister explain this clause?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If there is a prosecution as a result of action taken by the commissioner, the signature of the commissioner will be judicially noticed by the judge in the making of any order.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8—Duties of the commissioner as to investigations:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This clause goes further than the Minister himself would wish. He will knock all the life out of trade. No one will be able to buy wheat for fear that it may go up in price. By these methods we shall be throwing more and more people out of work.

Mr. Thomson: This will assist the big storekeeper and crush the small one.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The miller will have to buy his gristing requirements from day to day and from week to week.

The Minister for Justice: He does that now from the pool.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have had more experience than the Minister. The miller buys some of his requirements from the pool, but most of them from the farmers. The pool could not hold wheat for a miller for several months, unless it had been purchased.

The Minister for Justice: He must come to a decision in August.

Mr. Lindsay: He has to buy from the pool under the agreement.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This will lead to dearer wheat and dearer bread. Does the Minister for Justice want to prevent people from selling their wheat if they think the price is likely to come down?

The Minister for Justice: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is what this absurd clause would seek to do. One set of people may speculate with impunity, but others may be pulled up for doing so. It would not be safe for anyone to buy store sheep for fattening purposes.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, it would.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is intended that that kind of speculation should not be indulged in.

The Minister for Justice: No, it is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No one would buy stock for fattening purposes if the commissioner were to have control of the subsequent sale of that stock.

The Minister for Justice: There will be nothing like that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Bill covers almost everything except Tattersall's tickets. It would not be safe for a timber merchant to buy six weeks' supply of weatherboards. He might have paid £10 for the timber, and might be forced to sell for £9.

The Minister for Justice: That sort of thing would not be justified.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister might be justified in giving protection to people who could not protect themselves, but it is a different matter when it comes to all these strangling provisions. The Minister ought to explain why he wants all these powers. He will be in complete control of the commissioner.

The Minister for Justice: The Minister ought to control his departments.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What does he mean by paragraph 5, which refers

to speculation? Apparently he wants to prevent the cornering of any commodity.

The Minister for Justice: That is what the clause says.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. People who speculate do so for a rise.

The Minister for Mines: No one has a right to speculate in foodstuffs.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This Bill covers everything.

The Minister for Mines: My only objection to it is that it does not go far enough.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Apparently everyone who speculates is looked upon as a rogue and vagabond.

The Minister for Justice: I do not suggest that; I do not even think it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It cannot be suggested. He would be a plucky man who would buy stock or wheat if the Minister could, through the Commissioner, force him to sell at a loss.

The Minister for Justice: No one would dream of forcing a man to sell at less than a commodity cost him.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The clause is altogether too far reaching. Will the Minister explain why he wants to strangle everyone who has any enterprise?

Mr. THOMSON: I opposed the second reading and I am going to oppose this clause because I do not consider it is necessary. The clause proposes to give the commissioner, when required to do so by the Minister, power to investigate and report upon all or any of the following matters.

The Minister for Justice: We have had that three times already.

Mr. THOMSON: It is worth reading again to show the absurdity of it and the extraordinary power it is intended to give to the commissioner. If the Minister had been able to give some examples of profiteering, there might have been some justification for such a clause, but, as I have already pointed out, in 1926 the Prices Regulation Commission went exhaustively into the subject and submitted a statement to the effect that there was no evidence of excessive profit-making, at any rate in the preceding few years. On that Commission there were two members of this Chamber, the members for Subiaco and Menzies. Any attempt at the restriction of trade is not in the interests of the State and, while it may be considered to be an advantage to say to the producer that he shall sell his commodity at a

given price, and we may compel him to sell it at such a price, if he finds that it is not profitable to produce the commodity, he will cease to do so, and then we shall have to import the article. The result would be an even higher cost to the consumer. One of the troubles in Russia, so far as the fixing of the prices of wheat and other commodities is concerned—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is now making a second reading speech. We are dealing with Clause 8 and he must confine himself to that.

Mr. THOMSON: In Clause 6 it is set out—

The CHAIRMAN: We are dealing with Clause 8 and not Clause 6.

Mr. THOMSON: One is justified in drawing attention—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not dictate to the Chair. I ask him once again to confine his remarks to Clause 8.

The Premier: The hon. member is showing gross discourtesy to the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no wish to take extreme action and therefore I ask the hon. member to obey the Chair by confining his remarks to the clause.

Mr. THOMSON: With all due respect to you, Mr. Chairman, I do not know of any Standing Order that debars a member from putting his case before the Committee. I am not making a second reading speech—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not argue with the Chair. I ask him once again to confine his remarks to the clause and not wander all round it and to Russia and other places.

Mr. THOMSON: In dealing with a clause that confers on the commissioner such drastic powers as are likely to interfere with the rights and liberties of those who have commodities to sell, one is justified in making comparisons with other countries, when we see what has been reported in the Press. I only wished to show the disastrous effect that similar action is having in other countries.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must deal with the clause which refers to the duties of the commissioner. The second reading of the Bill has been carried and I will not allow him to wander all over the place.

Mr. THOMSON: I submit I am dealing with the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will have to resume his seat if he is not prepared to obey the Chair.

Mr. THOMSON: I maintain I am dealing with the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member not to dictate to the Chair, otherwise I shall have to take action.

Mr. THOMSON: The clause sets out that it shall be the duty of the commissioner to investigate matters that are set out in the paragraphs 1 to 8. I maintain that it is not in the best interests of the State to give any person such extensive power. I contend, therefore, that I am justified in drawing attention to the position in other countries where a similar procedure has been adopted, and where the result has been a restriction of output, and making a comparison between those countries and ours. In view of the findings of the Commission which reported in 1926, the power it is now proposed to vest in the commissioner will certainly not be in the interests of the primary producers and consumers. It will certainly not be in the interests of the smaller traders.

The Minister for Justice: The smaller trader will not do much in the way of speculation.

Mr. THOMSON: It will be possible to fix the price at which he shall sell his commodity. I intend to vote against the clause.

Mr. DAVY: I propose to endeavour to strike out everything in the clause except power for the commissioner to investigate any act or attempt by any person to engage in speculative dealings in or to raise or maintain the price of any commodity. Those words are contained in paragraph 5. Instead of being content to give power to get to the root of things, the Minister has produced the widest possible measure that one could imagine. He has tried every possible way to get the result that can be obtained in one way only, and that is by keeping trade free. If he had done that, I should have supported him, and the result desired would have been achieved. To ask Parliament to give the commissioner the powers proposed is too much, particularly when the clause is read in conjunction with Clause 16, which says that these investigations may be carried out by the

commissioner in any way he thinks fit, and then goes on to say:—

No decision, declaration, demand or other act or proceeding of the commissioner shall in any manner whatsoever be questioned or reviewed, or be restrained or removed by prohibition, injunction, certiorari, or otherwise howsoever.

The Minister is asking for the most extensive powers that could possibly be framed by the ingenuity of any draftsman to be vested in a Commissioner who shall act absolutely in his own discretion and without control by anyone.

The Minister for Justice: Subject to the control of the Minister.

Mr. Lindsay: He will be a super man all right.

Mr. DAVY: The control of the Minister will not govern the exercise by the commissioner of these powers. Under Clause 16, the Commissioner will be able to exercise the powers exactly as he chooses and no one will have a right to criticise or interfere in any way. The cream of the whole business is to be found in the concluding paragraph of Clause 8 that extends the scope of the Commissioner's duty to investigation of "any other matter referred to him by the Minister." The Commissioner will be practically the most powerful man in the world.

Mr. Latham: A second Mussolini.

Mr. Thomson: Mussolini will not be in it with him.

Mr. Latham: Oh yes. Mussolini does that sort of thing.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister has not put up any case whatever to justify the granting of such extensive powers. He said he hoped the Government would never have to enforce the measure and there was no need for the Bill at the moment.

The Minister for Justice: You are deliberately misquoting me.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister said he hoped the measure would never be needed.

The Minister for Justice: I hope the Criminal Code and other restrictive legislation will never be needed.

Mr. DAVY: If anyone says, "I hope this will never be needed," the irresistible inference is that it is not needed at the moment.

The Minister for Justice: Nothing of the kind. That is a ridiculous and illogical statement.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment—

That in line 3, the words "all or any of" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I assume the hon. member intends later to move for the deletion of the first four paragraphs.

Mr. Davy: Yes; I want to restrict the powers of the Commissioner to investigation of any attempt by any person to engage in speculative dealings in or to raise or maintain the price of any commodity.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We have already had a discussion on the paragraph dealing with the state of the prices of any commodity in any part of the State and at any time. The Leader of the Opposition said the Minister would be bothered, annoyed and worried in the administration of the Act by the constant demands of people from all parts of the State for inquiry into various commodities. The first paragraph should be retained in order to eliminate some of the worry.

Mr. Davy: My amendment will save the worry.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If a prima facie case has been made out for inquiry regarding any commodity, the Government will refer the matter to the commissioner. That is not an extraordinary power to request. Without such inquiry, no decision could be made as to the necessity for price fixing.

Mr. Davy: Paragraph (v) will give power to inquire into any attempt to engage in speculative dealings or to raise and maintain the price of any commodity. That will enable you to deal with trusts or any immoral combination to keep prices up.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There is nothing drastic about paragraph (i).

Mr. Davy: But it must be read in conjunction with Clause 16.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is necessary to have information also as to the quantity, situation, demand and supply of any commodity. There is nothing drastic about that paragraph. It would be necessary to know the probable requirements of the people in regard to any commodity.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is always a disadvantage to have to pay any price at all.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I thought I made it clear that there was no desire to restrict business unduly.

Mr. Thomson: We are concerned, not about your intention, but about the power you are taking.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot see anything drastic in any of the paragraphs complained of.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Can you see any paragraphs that are necessary?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, all of them are necessary.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The amendments indicated by the member for West Perth will clothe the Government and the commissioner with ample power. The term "commodity" as defined in the Bill covers an exceedingly wide range. Let the Minister be reasonable. Let us send the Bill to another place in such a form that there will be a chance of its being accepted. The Minister is reaching out for too much power.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope the Minister will not continue his opposition to the amendment.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister should be willing to accept the amendment, under which he would still have all necessary powers.

Mr. DAVY: I wish the Minister would accept the amendment. He would have most of the members on this side with him if he would restrict the scope of this legislation to prevent persons from conspiring to fix prices, and especially to compel others to join their price-fixing association. I would certainly vote for legislation comprising Clauses 13, 14 and 15 of the Bill. I cannot, however, agree to the appointment of a commissioner with such extraordinary powers of investigation, particularly as his procedure would be altogether untrammelled. The public would always have protection if free competition were permitted within the States of the Commonwealth. In this respect I want freedom of trade. I do not know of any association which has attempted to fix prices and which has not encountered its rebel. Apparently there is no person engaged in trade here who is making an enormous income. If the bakers' ring were really effective, bakers would be seen roaming around in Rolls

Royce or Packard cars, and wearing overcoats with astrakhan collars. Most of the bakers are struggling; the least efficient are on the border-line of bankruptcy. If we are able to prevent combinations of persons to raise or maintain prices, we shall be doing all that is necessary and shall not run the risk of interfering with legitimate enterprise. I do not know what sort of man the Minister would select for commissioner; he will have to be a superman, in view of his amazing powers and terrific responsibilities. I am afraid the commissioner will make a mess of things and will only be a nuisance to the community. When there is a scarcity of a commodity, its price ought to go up, for the benefit of the community. For instance, if wheat went up to £2 per bushel, we all ought to give up eating wheat and resort to substitutes, of which there are numbers. It would be a crime to eat wheat which would bring such a financial return to the State.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	17

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Latham	Mr. North
Mr. Lindsay	
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munzie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holmes	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	(Teller.)

PARTS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Barnard	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Kenneally

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph 5, line 1, after "by any" the words "combination of" be inserted; that the letter "s" be added to the word "person"; and that in lines 1 and 2 the words "to engage in speculative dealings in or" be struck out.

If the paragraph be agreed to as it stands, it will mean that a person, who anticipates the price of a commodity rising in the immediate future, will not be permitted to purchase a few extra tins or pounds of the commodity, because he will be engaged in a speculative deal. If he should purchase wheat, hoping that he will not make a loss when he comes to dispose of it, he may find himself dealt with by the commissioner. Unless we insert the word "combination," it will be possible for the commissioner to inquire into any act or attempt by a person to increase the price of any commodity. For instance, a doctor might intimate his intention to refuse to give medical advice to his clients for less than 10s. 6d. per consultation, as against a charge of 7s. 6d. that he may have made formerly. Medical advice is a commodity in that it represents a service rendered, and therefore the doctor might be brought within the scope of this legislation.

The Minister for Justice: But the giving of medical advice would not be a commodity in the hands of one man and controlled by him alone.

Mr. DAVY: But as the Bill stands the doctor could be dealt with by the commissioner, acting under instructions from the Minister.

Mr. Thomson: The inclusion of combinations would enable the Government to deal with monopolies rather than individuals.

Mr. DAVY: That is so. An association might control some particular commodity and might decide that they would not sell except at a considerably increased price. I favour legislation to deal with a combination of that description, but not under legislation such as the Minister proposes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We should retain the right to deal with any person, particularly as the interpretation clause sets out that a "person" includes a body of persons, whether corporate or unincorporate, and a firm of partners. For instance, companies in this State might combine to control the supplies of crude oil and without any warning they might suddenly increase the price of crude oil from 1s. 4d. to 2s. per gallon, and might foist that increase on the farmers at harvest time, when oil fuel was necessary for tractors.

Mr. Davy: If that were done, the farmers would have to pay the price demanded, or do without the oil.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We say that if a commodity is dealt with in that way and an unreasonable price is charged, we should be permitted to step in in the interests of the community.

Mr. Thomson: But you could not prevent those people from sending their crude oil to the Eastern States and getting their price there.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think firms would run the risk of sending their supplies to the Eastern States, where they would have to encounter the opposition of other firms.

Mr. Thomson: If I thought you would have power to reduce the price I would be inclined to assist you, but you have no hope.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If a person has a monopoly of a certain commodity, he can exercise just as much control as if it were in the hands of a combination.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you think the buyers of crude oil would submit to such prices for long? They might be caught once, but not again.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But the owners of crude oil might take action at a time that would do incalculable harm to the growers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not so much as the Government do through their freights. I have been going through them, and for the Commissioner of Railways to raise any point about crude oil is ridiculous.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think we should retain the first part of the clause as we have it. I am prepared to consider the later amendment that the Leader of the Opposition has referred to.

The CHAIRMAN: I will put the amendment in two parts. The first portion of the amendment moved by the member for West Perth is now before the Chair.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sorry that the Minister has put his back up against the amendment. If he insists upon eliminating all enterprise, he will do incalculable harm. What good can the Minister possibly hope to achieve? Should any person, or persons, take the action the Minister suggests in connection with crude oil, and the Minister decide to hold an inquiry, the harvesting would be completed before anything could be done.

The Minister for Justice: We would see to it that the commissioner got to work quickly.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Government do not require the Bill, they should stick to it in its present form. If we wanted the Bill to be defeated in its entirety, we would leave it alone.

The Minister for Justice: Well, do so!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But we have passed the second reading, and we desire to send the Bill to the Legislative Council in a commonsense form. As it is, it will stop enterprise and speculation.

The Minister for Justice: In certain instances "enterprise" is another word for "robbery."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are not robbers because we increased our own salaries!

The Minister for Justice: Some people say so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If some man with a little foresight ordered goods for his store, some special line, and the other fellows with less foresight and enterprise ran out of that line of goods, the commissioner could say to the man with six months' supply in his store, "You must disgorge and give up some of the stuff you have." What possible justification would there be for that? Competition is the life of trade. I know a prominent Labour man who was a Minister in the Fisher Government and who once said that business combination was common sense. I did not agree with it, but he said it, and evidently he thought so.

The Premier: There have been instances of combinations reducing prices. A combination is not necessarily an evil in itself.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was through a combination that oil in America was reduced from 32 cents to a little over 6 cents. Again, it is mass production that makes possible the prices of motor cars. Under the system by which motor cars are sold throughout the world, they are becoming cheaper all the time, even when everything else is becoming dearer. That is the work of combinations.

Mr. Davy: And of competition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and of competition. Motor cars are becoming cheaper while everything else is becoming dearer.

The Premier: In some trades, if prices were put up unduly high, there would not be a market.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. In our case, we know, it is as the result

of the high tariff that prices are unduly high. Even the present Government have had to increase the building costs of workers' homes from £650 to £850, although we know that a man will not get any better home for the higher price than he could have got for the lower price a few years ago. We might just as well look for the cause of the trouble, and not try to meet the case with legislation of this sort. I hope the Minister will agree to let people who have money use it.

The Minister for Justice: Let us talk about combinations first.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is, the insertion in the paragraph of the words "combination of."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought the amendment had to do also with speculative dealings.

The CHAIRMAN: Later on the mover of the amendment proposes to strike out the words "to engage in speculative dealings or."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A little while ago the Minister mentioned bread. I understand it is being sold in Perth down to 4½d. per loaf.

The Minister for Justice: And up to 6d. It shows the need for control.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some bakers are selling at 4½d.

The Premier: When they put up their price they have to change their customers. If my bread is raised to 6d., I have to look about for another baker.

Mr. Davy: You could then get your bread from the man that is selling at 4½d.

The Minister for Health: To get that you would have to go away out to William-street, over the bridge.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: So we are to have this legislation because we cannot get cheap bread without going away out over the bridge. If the Minister wants the Bill, he should allow us to infuse some common sense into it.

Mr. DAVY: I never will agree that, if one person is possessed of goods honestly come by, there is anything wrong in his insisting on getting his own price for them. If the Minister had the only diamond ring in Western Australia, and there was a general desire for it. I would not regard it as improper in him to insist upon getting the highest price that anybody would pay for it.

The Minister for Justice: You are very unfortunate in your illustration, for I have no such thing.

Mr. DAVY: I am asking the Committee to suppose the Minister had a large diamond ring, the only one in Western Australia. I say that in such circumstances it would be perfectly proper in him to sell it to the highest bidder.

The Premier: What about food? Would a man be entitled to hold up food because he happened to be the only one to have it?

Mr. DAVY: No, that would be a most immoral thing. But the Bill does not confine itself to food. We endeavoured to confine it to food, but the Minister rejected that attempt and would have nothing to do with it. He insists on the Bill covering all commodities and services. To make it a subject of investigation and punishment when a person owning certain goods or commodities proposes to charge a certain price for them, seems to me to be absolute rubbish. I thought the Minister would have accepted our amendment. After all, it is combinations of persons that effect the harm referred to.

The Minister for Justice: The Premier suggests we should recommit Clause 2 and exempt diamond rings.

Mr. DAVY: I shall have to take the Minister's word for that. Seriously, if the Minister will restrict the scope of the Bill to foodstuffs, I shall be prepared to withdraw this amendment.

The Minister for Health: What about clothing? Do not the people want anything but foodstuffs?

Mr. DAVY: If I found myself possessed of all the blue serge cloth in Western Australia, I would expect to get my own price for it. In similar circumstances so would any of the Ministers. But that is a different thing from supposing that I had succeeded in cornering all the blue serge cloth and then raised the price.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is the insertion of the words "combinations of."

Mr. DAVY: The paragraph deals with attempts to raise or maintain the price of any commodity. I suggest it should be attempts on the part of any combinations of persons, etc. I ask the Committee to accept that amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	19
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	7
				—

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. North
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Millington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munse
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Sleeman
Miss Holman	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. McCallum	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Kenneally
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Lambert
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Clydesdale

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph 5 the words "to engage in speculative dealings in or" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I must admit that the efforts which have been made by the Leader of the Opposition have impressed me. The inclusion of these words may unduly hamper people who are doing legitimate business. I agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON: How is it proposed to arrive at the maximum selling price of any commodity, as outlined in paragraph 6?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is proposed that the commissioner shall ascertain all the circumstances, and set a standard price beyond which no one can sell. If anyone desires to sell at below that price, he can do so. The object of the Bill is to ensure that no unduly high prices shall be extracted from the community.

Mr. Thomson: How will that be arrived at?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: After inquiry a price will be determined that will give a reasonable remuneration to the merchants. That will be the price fixed for the commodity. Some people may desire, in order to get rid of some stock, to sell it below that price. The commissioner will fully inform himself as to all the circumstances surrounding the selling arrangements and fix the price accordingly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: People with an inferior article might then put up their price to the level of that of the superior article.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There are all kinds of sugar, for instance. Each kind would have its own price fixed. If we did not fix the maximum price, there could be no control over any commodity.

Mr. THOMSON: The Bill does not say what a reasonable selling price for any commodity shall be. Some method should be laid down whereby the commissioner may arrive at his decision. Once he gives a decision, there is no appeal, and the commodity must be sold at that price. In 1926 the Prices Regulation Commission reported—

There is no evidence of general excessive profits on the part of merchants and retailers engaged in the distribution of ordinary household commodities, or of such a character as to warrant the introduction of price fixing by the State.

The Premier: That has been read three times.

Mr. THOMSON: I have not read this. The recommendation of the Royal Commission was—

Your Commissioners do not recommend that the Price Fixing Commissioner should have power to fix prices, feeling as they do that the publicity afforded to questions which would suggest the need of price fixing, will be a sufficient deterrent.

There is no need to give this commissioner power to fix prices. I move an amendment—

That paragraph vi. be struck out.

Mr. LINDSAY: The commissioner will have almost supreme power to do what he likes in the matter of fixing a maximum price. Grocery firms such as Carter's and Broadhurst's sell at lower prices than those who are in a small way, because they have such a large turnover. We do not know whether the commissioner would choose the prices fixed by the large grocery establishments or those fixed by the smaller establishments. A big storekeeper in my dis-

trict informed me that he could not buy from the wholesale houses in Perth as cheaply as these large retail grocery establishments can sell their goods over the counter.

The Minister for Justice: In some particular lines.

[*Mr. Angelo took the Chair.*]

Mr. LINDSAY: These large retailers have their goods sent to them direct, and can get along with a 2½ per cent profit, whereas the wholesale merchants require at least 10 per cent. profit. It is not possible for one man to carry out this important work of price fixing without doing an injustice to a large section of the community. In the long run the procedure must make for dearer goods. A farmer should be allowed to get the best market price available for his wheat, and, if that is a good price, it will help him to make up for the losses he incurs in other seasons.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the Minister does as he apparently wishes to do, and causes inquiries to be made into the price of every article, he will want 50 commissioners to undertake the work. On the other hand, if he were to confine himself to the food supplies of the people, it would be quite different. We have to remember that if we fix a maximum price it will give an opportunity to those who supply a cheaper article to increase their prices up to the amount of the maximum price. If that were the result, it would not mean that prices would be kept down for the man who, for instance, buys the cheaper sort of suits. We are attempting the impossible under the Bill because the Minister will have to submit to pressure from all sides to conduct inquiries into all sorts of commodities. The price-fixing commissioner might say to the farmers that because they had been able to produce wheat at 3s. 9d. a bushel one season, they should be able to do it in a succeeding season, although the cost of production might have been considerably more. The lambing this season has been disastrous. In one instance, I know that a farmer lost 1,000 lambs out of 1,200. The price-fixing commissioner might tell that farmer that he must accept for the 200 lambs that are left, a price that would be far less than the cost of production.

The Minister for Mines: Who said that?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That was the effect of what the Minister said.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing of the kind!

Mr. Lindsay: At any rate, this superman of a commissioner might say so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister referred to the price of meat. We all know that the real cause of the high price of meat is the existence of the State Shipping Service.

The Minister for Mines: If it were not for the State operations, there would be another £2 a head on to the price of the stock.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The State vessels would not go to Wyndham to lift chilled meat, and so the people have had to pay more for their meat in the metropolitan area. We shall always have to pay higher prices after a bad season, and we should be prepared to do so, because the people who have to take all the risks in the production of our food supplies are those who are confronted with the loss. I think the Minister should abandon the Bill because it is such a bad one. If he desires to have the Bill, he should stick to essential commodities, the things that the people require.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. North
Mr. Sampson	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Rowe
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willson
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Richardson	Mr. Kenneally
Mr. Teesdale	Mr. Troy
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Clydesdale

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment:—

That paragraph viii. be struck out.

I hope that the Committee will not agree to the paragraph. Not only will the commissioner be expected to be a superman, but he will be expected to deal with all matters that the Minister may refer to him.

Mr. DAVY: The amendment is a reasonable one. Under the clause as it stands the ubiquitous commissioner who is to be appointed, will be asked to carry out duties that are outlined in seven paragraphs and the eighth, under which he will be asked to investigate any other matter that may be referred to him by the Minister, could well be struck out.

The Minister for Justice: Of course, any other matter that is referred to in the paragraph must be consistent with the principle of the measure.

Mr. DAVY: I suppose those matters will require to have some vague connection with the Bill, but it is difficult to imagine what this can mean.

Mr. Thomson: It is a good drag-net paragraph.

Mr. DAVY: It reminds me of the regulation-making power that creeps into all our Bills. It always suggests that the imagination of the Parliamentary Draftsman has become completely exhausted, and after having called in to his aid the assistant draftsman and the office boy, they resort to the regulation-making clause.

The Premier: It was 5 o'clock and they did not want to have to start all over again next day.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, they say "In case we may have forgotten something, we will just put this in, and then anything that possibly can be required of the Minister will be provided for." The concluding words of the clause cover everything that might possibly have been forgotten. I suggest to the Minister, not as giving away any of the principles he holds so strongly in respect of the Bill, but just as a concession to the principle of sound legislation, that he allows this subclause to be deleted.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This, of course, has nothing to do with the principle of price-fixing, and in looking down the list of clauses I really think we already have most of the things covered by this subclause.

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

Clause 9—Declaration of maximum prices, etc.:

Mr. DAVY: I take it the first portion of the clause means that the commissioner having made a report, the Government will decide what is wanted, and will publish it in a proclamation, and that is the law. They will thus fix the various prices, and that will be the end of it.

The Minister for Justice: Well, that is the law, or will be.

Mr. DAVY: No, the Minister has not necessarily to adopt the recommendations of the commissioner. We have not yet been told how the commissioner is to set about fixing these maximum prices. There may be a great difference between the prices of certain commodities, prices which will enable a small man to live, and prices which will enable a big distributing firm to live. Is the commissioner to adopt a price that will enable the most efficient trader to live, or a price that will enable the least efficient trader to live, or is he to strike a happy medium between the two?

The Minister for Justice: He will strike the happy medium.

Mr. DAVY: Well, what will be the happy medium?

The Minister for Justice: That will be for the commissioner to say.

Mr. DAVY: But on what principle is he to work? Is he to be given a free hand, or is he to be told to fix prices at which Boars can afford to sell a tin of salmon, even though it will kill the little man in the same line? Which is it to be? When we start to work the thing out, we are faced with insuperable difficulties.

The Minister for Justice: Nonsense!

Mr. DAVY: Is it nonsense to say the commissioner, who is going to determine first of all whose price he is to take, the price of the big man or the price of the little man, will find his task exceedingly difficult?

The Minister for Justice: He has only to fix a reasonable price for the commodity.

Mr. DAVY: Reasonable to whom? It would be unreasonable to fix the same price of a particular article for a firm doing a turnover of thousands of pounds per week and for a small man with a tiny turnover.

Mr. Latham: The big man can buy so much better than the small man.

Mr. DAVY: Of course. Henry Ford can afford to take a profit of about £1 on every car he turns out. I learn that W. R. Morris is prepared to capture the light car market of the world even if he has to take a profit of 10s. on every car. But on the turnover the same Morris had 15 or 20 years ago, a profit of 10s. per car would have landed him in bankruptcy. What principle is the commissioner to go upon? Is he to take the W. R. Morris of now, or the person who corresponds to the W. R. Morris of 20 years ago? The more we look at it, the more difficult we discover the task to be; particularly when the same commissioner is going to spend this week investigating the price of beer, first of all from the brewery to the licensed victualler, and then from the licensed victualler to the public; and next week will turn to tailors and will have to decide whether a fashionable tailor is entitled to charge a guinea extra because people like his cut. The task is an impossible one, particularly when we reflect that the market is fluctuating all the time. However it does not seem to me that any amendment to this clause would make the Bill less objectionable than it is, and so I suppose the clause will have to go through.

Mr. LATHAM: Before it goes through, I should like some information from the Minister as to Subclause 2, providing for the fixing of maximum prices for carriage or transport services. Will the Minister explain that subclause?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Take the transport services on the Perth-Fremantle-road. The subclause has not been drawn with any particular regard to those services, but nevertheless they will serve as an illustration. Certain fares have been deemed to be reasonable for that route. Previously it was the practice that in the interests of public safety only a certain number of vehicles should be allowed on that route, and so the licenses were limited in number.

Mr. Davy: But the Government have since decided otherwise.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are not now discussing the policy of the Government respecting those services. The bus and taxi people on that route had the monopoly of the traffic at that time, and if they had liked to put their heads together they might have charged an unreasonable

price for the transport of passengers on that road.

Mr. Davy: But they have had serious competition, as for instance the railways and the Alpine taxis.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Alpine taxis are a combination.

Mr. Davy: Anybody can run a taxi on that route.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It was not always so, and may not be so in the future. The subclause is not confined to the transport of passengers. There may be certain country routes on which motor lorries are carrying goods. If the owners of those lorries were to charge unreasonable prices, there is in the Bill power to fix a reasonable price for the service.

Mr. LINDSAY: Before we pass the clause we should have some idea as to how the maximum prices are going to be determined. If we are to give the commissioner power to fix prices, we should lay down the lines on which he is to proceed. Suppose the commissioner investigates the prices of the firm that buys in a big way and sells cheaply for cash, and also of the small man and arrives at a maximum price. Immediately there will be created a fine advertisement for the big firm, who will be able to announce that they are selling below the maximum. Also the fixing of prices will tend to prevent the people from buying in the suburbs and will drive them to the big cheap stores in the city.

Mr. Thomson: The big shops deliver goods in the suburbs free.

Mr. LINDSAY: They may or they may not. It is not possible for any man to carry out the provisions of this measure justly. It is not possible to create a maximum for the small man and for the big man. Something between the two must be fixed, and that must have the effect of driving business into the hands of the big men and closing up the small shops whose owners are trying to make a living.

Mr. THOMSON: How will the maximum price or a fair and reasonable price be arrived at? There are small shops in Hay-street that have to pay high rentals, while small shops in the suburbs may pay only one-tenth of the amount by way of rent. It is proposed to give an opportunity to sell on the sliding scale? Subclause 2 gives power in the case of carriage or

transport services to fix and declare different maximum prices according to the nature of the carriage or service and give priority of transport to any special commodity. That will place in the hands of the Commissioner, working in conjunction with the Commissioner of Railways, very great power. The Price Fixing Commissioner may refuse to permit the carriage of a commodity that is profitable and insist on the carriage of one that is unprofitable. The Minister will say that is not the intention, but power is certainly being given to the Commissioner to wipe out motor transport competition with the railways. I move an amendment—

That paragraph ii. be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is not impossible to fix a fair price—

Mr. Davy: A child could fix it in two minutes.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:—a price that will give reasonable protection to the public and not unduly hamper trade. That policy was carried out for three or four years with beneficial results.

Mr. Davy: That is questionable.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It was an annual measure re-enacted on three or four occasions.

Mr. Thomson: That was during the war period.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It was two or three years after the war. If it had not been necessary to re-enact the law annually, it would probably have been in existence to-day.

Mr. Thomson: You were dealing with extraordinary conditions.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If fair prices could be fixed under extraordinary conditions, it is reasonable to assume that fair prices could more easily be fixed under ordinary conditions.

Mr. Davy: You quarantined a large section of country when we had the rinderpest here, but you did not propose the same thing for all time.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That was only done to meet extraordinary circumstances. The measure will be administered in a practical way without harm to anyone.

Mr. Thomson: I am afraid it will mean increased costs.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, it will not.

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

Clause 10—Sale at higher than declared price unlawful:

Mr. LATHAM: Paragraph (b) provides that it shall be unlawful to refuse to sell at the declared price any commodity if a man has under his control in excess of the quantity a trader is permitted to withhold from sale. In the country districts it is necessary at times to carry over fodder for stock; yet there is no exemption for that. One of the greatest safeguards we have is the carrying over of feed by farmers.

The Minister for Justice: That is done in the reasonable course of business.

Mr. LATHAM: But the Commissioner might have no knowledge of it. If he is going to have knowledge of all things required under the measure, he will have to be more than a superman. If I wished to do the Government injury, I would assist to pass this Bill, because it is one of the worst measures ever submitted to Parliament and will cause endless confusion.

The Minister for Justice: We will take the risk.

Mr. LATHAM: I accept the declaration of the Minister that the provision will not affect farmers carrying over fodder supplies.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 15—agreed to.

Progress reported.

Message.

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

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [9.13]: This is another of several small Bills brought down by Ministers this year. This one has been introduced by the

Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies and is another tax. In past years we have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds in pioneering water supplies to enable the goldfields to be opened up, the agricultural country to be opened up, the pastoral country to be opened up and the stock routes to be opened up. There must be some part of this development work that is national work.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: And it will remain a national work in future.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not with the present Minister.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Yes, it will.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said if water was provided it had to be paid for, and he was rather pleased to be able to announce that the rate would be 3d. per acre on agricultural land adjacent to a supply, no matter how limited it might be. The rate works out at £12 10s. per thousand acres.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: That will be the maximum rate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The chances are it will be the rate. The Minister said if people are to have the right to cart water from a well or dam put down by the Government many years ago, or a dam now being put down by the Government, a rate would be struck to pay for interest and sinking fund on the expenditure, plus the amount necessary for the protection of the work and the upkeep of the supply. That is going too far. The farmer is singled out for special taxation at all times, and on every possible occasion gets it in the neck. Already we have a tax of 1s. per acre where water supplies are being put in by way of the bigger rock catchments. That, too, is the maximum, but I hope it will not have to be applied. All these charges are a burden on production. The producer is already severely taxed, and the public of the country can well afford to spend some money to encourage production. If a man is compelled to cart water five or six miles, the tax is very severe and heavy. If in the past these small works have been carried out as national undertakings, they can be continued as such in the future. It goes without saying that after a few years the farmers are able to provide their own water supplies. It is only in the early

stages that water is so urgently needed. The Minister will realise that in the development of new country the tractor will in the future be used. That means that in the first five or six years the quantity of water needed by the settler will be limited, although his tax will go on. The farmer will not then have any stock, and will not need water even for horses. He will, however, have to pay the tax, which will cover the water for household purposes and for his engine. I do not think that is fair. The tax will be applied in the main to recently settled land. We ought to be the more ready, therefore, to contribute something towards the cost of this pioneering work. If it has been possible over the years that have passed for the cost of these water supplies to be met out of public funds, surely now that the pioneering work is nearly over, and when all but the fringe of the wheat-belt is settled, we need not change our methods. The advantage these people have had in the past should be continued to them. I am surprised that the Minister has determined to bring down this additional tax. He will not only apply this legislation from now on, but will apply it to all supplies which have been furnished in the past.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Nothing of the kind. I did not say so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister intends to do it. I dare say he will not apply it in the case of a dam of 1,000 yards or so, but he did say he would effect repairs to a well that had been put down years ago, and which was now being used by one or two people. When he puts a new cover over a well and erects a windlass and supplies a bucket, he will charge the people who can use the well £12 10s. per thousand acres. Probably the work cost about £50 in the first place, but the Minister will have the right to charge about £500, and get this money from those who can be considered to be within reasonable distance of that particular water supply.

Mr. Griffiths: The Act can be made retrospective.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. It covers all existing water supplies that have been put down by the State. I believe it covers wells which have been put down by the prospectors themselves.

Hon. G. Taylor: And which the Government have commandeered.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of these wells are 50 miles out in the never-never country. The Minister seeks the right to impose a charge for these supplies. We have dealt with many small measures this session, some of which should never have been introduced. We are now asked to deal with this Bill that imposes another tax. I hope the House will give the proposal short shrift. It is altogether wrong that these charges should be piled up one on the other against those who are really bearing the load in this country. If it were not for the primary industries, very little would be going on in Western Australia. Owing to the reduced price of wool and the unfortunate reduction in the total wheat yield, the farmers will be in a worse position to meet taxation than they were last year. The Minister should not go on with the measure. It is a trifling thing that the Government should want to tax the small water supplies. It will mean the holding up of water against the shortage that may exist on the farms. The water will probably not be required for more than one or two months in the year. During the remainder of the year the farmers will naturally have to supply their own requirements. The supplies will be sufficient to carry them on for most of the year, after which they will be within a reasonable radius of the Government well or dam. After supplying his own wants for most of the year, the settler will have to pay this tax for a guaranteed supply for the remainder of the year. If the Minister has the right to impose a tax at the rate suggested, there is grave danger of the tax being imposed at that rate. I will not vote for any increase in taxation in any circumstances upon the man on the land. During last session or the session before we were asked to impose a second vermin tax upon the agriculturists. It was an entirely wrong proposal.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You got what your party asked for.

Mr. Thomson: We did not ask for it.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You know you asked for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister did not believe in the tax, but someone asked for it and he imposed it upon everyone else. That is a mighty poor reason for a tax. We have had that given more than once this session. It is a poor

reason for the Government to offer for the imposition of a tax.

The Premier: You never bring down a Bill unless there is a request for it from a considerable section of the people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have refused to bring down Bills when there have been requests for them, because I knew it would have been wrong to do so.

The Premier: There was strong pressure from the farming and pastoral interests for the vermin Bill.

Mr. Thomson: Only from a section.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Bills should be brought down because Ministers have gone into the matter and consider it advisable to bring them down. The Government should bring down Bills because they think it is necessary to do so, not because they are asked to bring them down.

The Premier: Really!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said that a section of the people had asked for the vermin tax.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: We considered it a reasonable request. We did not bring it down because people asked for it, but because we thought the request was reasonable.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is sufficient for the Government to say, "We believe that this is the way it should be done, and we have done it in this way."

Mr. Lindsay: We are told we asked for the Act, but we were not allowed to explain in the House what we were asking for.

Mr. Withers: It was supported by the Leader of the Country Party.

Mr. Thomson: It was not.

Mr. Withers: Look in "Hansard."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was a poor excuse to put forward.

The Premier: We are bringing down this Bill, and no one has asked for it!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government have an opportunity to get advice upon these matters, such as is not afforded to the ordinary member. They can come here better informed on all these questions than ordinary members. It is not enough to say that someone has asked for a Bill. The Premier said he wanted to put a tax of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on land in order that we might reduce railway freights. He said a section of the people had asked for that to be done. I shall ask at the proper time that this tax be taken off. The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies has

now brought down this Bill, and seems to think that the agriculturists will not object to the payment of the tax. Is it worth while?

The Premier: Nothing of the kind. He is not foolish enough to think that people will not object to the payment of a tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He has grown wiser than he was yesterday. I am glad the Government now realise that people do object to paying taxes.

The Premier: Of course they do. Everyone does.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There was a time when the people were persuaded that if we could only tax enterprise heavily enough it would be a wonderful thing for the workers. The workers know now that high taxation means loss of employment, and they are not so keen on it. This Bill is an additional tax on top of the other taxes.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You do not realise the needs of the agriculturists or the agricultural towns.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course I know nothing about them.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You have no grasp of them at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I had spent most of my life in a mining centre somewhere in the back country I should have known all about everything. I would be in no doubt about anything. I should have been well-informed upon many subjects about which I now know nothing. Particularly should I have known all about the town I live in if I had spent all my time, say, in Menzies. I know enough, however, to know how little I do know. If the Minister knew enough to know how little he knows about these subjects, he would deal with them in a different manner. I am not going to agree that water supplies put down 20 or 30 years ago, and which have been used by the people ever since without charge, shall now carry the charge sought by the Minister.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: It is not proposed to do that at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is what the Bill says, and what the Minister said would happen when he introduced it. When we pass a Bill, we pass the written word. We do not consider the words of the Minister will become law, but the words

we find in the Bill. We have no right to insert in a Bill a single word that is unnecessary. It is unnecessary to impose taxation upon people who have had the advantage of these pioneering supplies for many years. I am not going to agree to the imposition of this tax. It is becoming a habit to pile taxation upon the agriculturist. It cannot be put on the gold-miner because he holds only a small lease. For the twentieth time during the last few years, the agriculturist has been singled out for some special impost of this kind. I do not propose to agree to it, and I hope the House will reject the Bill. The Minister is now engaged in putting down water supplies which will mean reticulation, and will thus provide an adequate yearly supply for farmers, who will be spared the cost of establishing supplies on their own lands. I suppose hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on goldfields water supplies without the imposition of any charge. Even to-day we are writing off £45,000 from the cost of water on the Eastern Goldfields because we knew the price charged was too high. But then we turn to people in the outback country, people engaged in the work of development, and say to them, "You shall pay for water which you cart from wells." This is not water supplied through a standpipe. Such a position is absolutely wrong. I object not only to the charges to be made, but to the attitude of the Government towards people engaged in developmental work. Those people are already overburdened by taxation, not only as regards amount but as regards the multiplicity of its forms. I hope I can appeal with some degree of confidence to hon. members opposite, whose constituents are kept afloat by the work of the man on the land, and who themselves are helping on the work of production. I hope I can look for their support in the rejection of this measure.

Mr. Sleeman: Are you referring to the Minister?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. His heart is hardened, and it is no use appealing to him. I hope I can appeal to the member for Menzies (Mr. Panton).

Mr. Panton: Oh, easily! What is it all about?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I shall divide the House on the question, and we shall see where hon. members stand whose

districts live by the work of the very people whom the measure attacks. I hope the Minister will agree to withdraw the Bill. The hon. gentleman comes here and asks the House to impose taxation upon these people for small supplies that will not justify the installation of pipes for reticulation. By such taxation the Minister may collect a relatively tremendous amount of revenue, having regard to the small cost of the work. I shall vote against the second reading, as I shall vote against every bill introduced during this session imposing any form of taxation upon the man on the land.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [9.34]: I cannot support the Minister as regards this measure, especially in view of its retrospective features. Speaking on the Address-in-reply, I congratulated the hon. gentleman on the work he had done in certain portions of my electorate, and presumably throughout the State. I referred more especially to small schemes of water supply, such as wells and dams. The position under the Bill, however, particularly having regard to its retrospective clauses, is alarming.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Take my advice and resist all those taxes.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that there seems to be a general atmosphere of taxation about the present Government. After all said and done, the burden of taxation falls chiefly upon the man on the land. If the Minister succeeds in getting this Bill through—I sincerely hope he will not—the result will be to lower him in the estimation of the public generally, and especially of the people whom the Bill closely affects. Under existing legislation relating to water boards the Government already have sufficient power. It is as regards the more essential services that I think the Minister is wrong. I acknowledge that in moving the second reading the hon. gentleman stated that only in certain cases would the measure be made retrospective. But there is need in many cases for the provision of tanks, dams and windmills, and these things do not last for ever. It is a continual source of worry to agricultural members to have these matters kept in order. There is an arrangement under which local governing bodies take over some of the smaller water

schemes, and in some cases, I believe, those bodies carry out their duties as expected. In other cases, however, neglect occurs during good seasons, when additional supplies of water are not needed. Then comes a season like the last, and the additional supply becomes essential. In every future case the Minister will have power to impose a rate up to 3d., as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. In introducing the measure the Minister said he intended to use with discretion his power to impose rates. But Ministers come and go.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The sooner some of them go, the better.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: To me that phase of the Bill is highly disturbing. Another direction in which the Bill seeks additional powers is the application of rates to new settlers. I refer especially to the 3,000 farms scheme. The Minister has said that the measure will apply even to the supplies by way of dam and well that he is putting in hand now. If the schemes in view were large, and if the people concerned were first consulted by way of referendum, this would be well and good, but as regards smaller schemes, consisting of wells and dams, I wonder how this measure will be viewed by the Migration Commission.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: They have nothing to do with that.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The Minister is making provision for schemes which will be financed out of the cheap money provided under the migration agreement. On the one hand the Government say to people, "We will settle you on the land under advantageous conditions," and on the other hand the Bill proposes to impose on those people a rate of 3d. per acre for all time. That is what it amounts to in plain English. It is not a good advertisement for this or any other Government to introduce a measure of this kind at the present juncture, even if it were wanted. In many areas, and more particularly the pioneering areas which are to be dealt with under the 3,000 farms scheme, the difficulties are sufficient without additional taxation in the form of rates to be imposed under the Bill. I repeat, it is not a good advertisement for either the Government or the State that such a measure should be introduced at the present juncture. I am with the Leader of the Opposition in opposing the imposition of further

taxation in any shape upon the man on the land, more especially in view of the distressing time ahead of many pioneering settlers, whom the Bill hits severely. We have heard it claimed by the present Government times out of number that they are out to assist the man on the land. I give them credit for what they have done; but this measure is nothing to be proud of, particularly as troublous times are ahead. Prospects are not bright for the pioneering settler at present, and I hope the Minister will see the wisdom of withdrawing the Bill. It is one of the most drastic measures he could possibly introduce in the present stage of this country's development. On the one hand the Government offer free conditions of settlement, and on the other hand they introduce taxation of this kind.

MR. LATHAM (York) [9.42]: I should oppose the charging of a water rate to settlers who are to be served by the new scheme, but still I sympathise with the Minister in his intention to establish water supplies. In the past such supplies have been paid for out of the State revenue, and I see no reason for deviating from the old system. One of the most burdensome things a farmer has to do, especially in the early stages, is to cart water; and to have to pay for the water after carting it possibly a long distance seems a great hardship. I have often heard it said that in making a valuation of a farm one has to take into account the invisible improvements. An invisible improvement made in the early stages is represented by water-carting. I am sorry that the Minister has introduced a Bill which will make things harder for the people doing pioneering work in this country. To ask people to come out and put up with all the inevitable hardships of new settlement and then to say to them, "We are not going to give you any concessions at all, but will make you pay rates and taxes and rent and interest and a hundred and one other things," is to put up an impossible proposition. On top of it all, the Minister proposes to tax pioneers at so much per acre, although they may have to cart water for five-sixths of the year with two or three horses. The tax may be as high as £12 10s. per thousand acres. I do not wish the Minister to feel disappointed at the opposition to the Bill from this side of the House, and

to conclude that we do not want these water supplies.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: I have seen similar opposition to the amending Bill brought before Parliament in 1925, which made it possible to inaugurate the rock catchment schemes.

Mr. LATHAM: I hope the Minister will not misunderstand me. A vast difference exists between that large scheme and these small ones. That is a fact the hon. gentleman must not lose sight of. I do not wish him to infer, from our opposition to the Bill, that we do not want the man on the land to be given water supplies. We want the pioneer settler to be assisted, and especially in the early stages, in the matter of water supplies. The larger schemes have all been installed in established districts.

Hon. Mr James Mitchell: They are put in out of the one per cent. money.

Mr. LATHAM: I back the Minister in that respect, and will back him again.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Then support the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: I cannot honestly support a Bill imposing taxation upon settlers who are on the edge of settlement. In the past such settlers have been furnished by the Government with wells and dams, and despite that fact some of them have had to cart water as far as 12 miles. We should not harass and penalise the majority of people because a minority will not look after equipment when they have got it. While on this Bill I would mention that road boards have been permitted to do certain work in connection with water supplies in the interests of their districts. In that connection I wish to tell the Minister what is being done in one case. A boring plant was sent to a road board district to bore for water. I guarantee that the men employed found water more cheaply than it would have been found by men from the Public Works Department. However, they damaged the boring rods; one rod was broken. Thereupon the Public Works Department charged the road board £12 10s. for loss of equipment and damage. In the ordinary course of events, should the Government send out a gang, no charge would be made against those men in the event of any of the gear being damaged. Because the local governing bodies desired to assist the Government, the department turned round and charged the local author-

ity I have in mind with the cost of a damaged rope and a broken boring rod. That sort of thing does not tend to improve the feeling that should exist between the local governing authorities and the department. Work of this description has always been done more cheaply by the local authorities than by the Government. The cost of supervision has been less and, generally speaking, the work has always been more cheaply carried out by the local people. I wish to encourage the Minister to provide water supplies, and Parliament has never refused to agree to the Estimates he has submitted for the provision of supplies in the early stages of land settlement. When the Minister has reason to find fault with the action of Parliament in that respect, then he will be justified in levying the charge he seeks under the Bill. I want to see wells and dams supplied for the assistance of early settlers in districts that are being pioneered; I do not want to see farmers harassed at a time when it is impossible for them to meet the demands such as will be made if the Bill is agreed to. I hope the Minister will go on with the work and drop the Bill. I have no great objection to the proposal to levy a charge against settlers who have secured a water supply in country townships. There are many small towns along the various agricultural railway lines where the residents would be only too happy to secure a permanent water supply during the summer months. Provided the local people are consulted, I do not think there will be any strong opposition to the proposal to levy a charge against the people who have secured water supplies in the country townships. I will not oppose that portion of the Bill but I shall strenuously oppose the Bill insofar as it seeks to provide a charge against the early settlers.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.47]: When travelling round my electorate, I discussed the question of water supplies with the Minister. As a result of what he told me, I was in favour of his proposals, but I am quite sure that the Bill will not give effect to what I understood the Minister was aiming at. The Bill deals with a tax proposed to be levied in respect of wells that have been, or may be, constructed. I do not believe for one moment that the Minister intended to charge a rate in respect of work already done in connection with

pioneering water supply schemes. I think it is that phase of the Bill that has so gravely concerned hon. members. I hope the Minister will make that point clear, and that he will agree to amend the measure insofar as it applies to work already done. I do not think the Minister intended the Bill to be applied in that way.

Mr. Latham: But why differentiate?

Mr. LINDSAY: There will be no differentiation if the Minister gives effect to what he informed me was his desire. In the future, I understand, the pioneering water schemes will be provided as in the past. The provision of small schemes to assist settlers during the pioneering stages will still be made available without any charges being levied. On the other hand, the Minister is aiming at bigger schemes for country towns. I had two in my electorate and the Minister has indicated that no power is contained in the 1904 or the 1925 Acts to enable him to provide water schemes unless he lays down a main and imposes water rates. The purpose of the Bill has been clearly indicated by the Minister. It will enable the Government to erect windmills or pumping plant that will allow the water to be made available in townships where the farmers can secure their water supplies from a stand-pipe. The Minister has taken power under the Bill to strike a rate on the capital cost, interest, sinking fund and working expenses. I assume that the work to be carried out will be handed over to the local governing authorities, so that they may attend to it. This will not be the first time that that sort of thing has been done. When I was chairman of the Dowerin Road Board 10 or 12 years ago, I signed an agreement with the Government for the extension of the Dowerin water supply by means of duplicating the dam and erecting a windmill and stand pipe in the main street. On behalf of the board I agreed to pay interest and sinking fund amounting to £27 per annum, and that scheme has been a god-send to the district. It was not an expensive proposition for the people, and it has assured an adequate water supply from which the settlers have been able to draw off their requirements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But they did not pay any taxation.

Mr. LINDSAY: No, the road board paid the tax, not the individual settlers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was a pretty cheap scheme for them.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, and I want an extension of that scheme. The people there have been building upon securing an extension of the Goldfields Water Scheme. I appreciate the fact that that is an absolutely impossible proposition from an economic standpoint. On the other hand, these country towns are the backbone of the State and it is only right that water supplies shall be made available so that the people may live in comfort. There are difficulties to be encountered, and it is impossible to sink dams in the vicinity of back yards. The people at Wyalkatchem are confronted with a difficulty, for the dam there is not very successful. It is a mile and a half from the town. Means must be provided to enable the water to be conveyed to the town. The Minister stated recently that it was not fair that the Government should be asked to find the capital cost on all the money, and that the people should pay their proportion, not 1s. per acre, or 3s. on the annual value, as was proposed in the past, but on a basis of something like 9d. on the annual value and 3d. per acre. I could instance the Wilgoyne water scheme, without which the settlers in that area would not be there to-day. In that instance a rock catchment was made use of, the first of its kind in Western Australia. The country there is in the dry areas and is flat, so that it is almost impossible to catch water. However, the Minister found the money and carried out the scheme. It is not a matter of reticulation. A main was constructed alongside the road and some 1,000-gallon tanks were erected at different points. The settlers were able to draw off their supplies from the tanks and they have been quite satisfied with that scheme, for which they pay from £8 to £12 per 1,000 acres. I do not like the clause that has a retrospective application, and I do not think the Minister intended it to apply in that way.

Mr. Thomson: That was indicated in the Minister's speech, at any rate.

Mr. LINDSAY: I think the Minister really made a mistake. In the course of his speech the Minister said—

I have already referred to the enormous sums of money that have been spent to provide water supplies throughout the agricul-

tural areas, and there are many that are to-day, and never have been, revenue-producing. That state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue.

We can only infer from that that the dams and wells will be taxed in the future. I do not think that is what the Minister intended. The Minister pointed out that £520,519 had been expended up to 30th June last on the provision of tanks and wells in agricultural areas. A great proportion of that expenditure has not been revenue-producing. In fact, a great deal of the money has been wasted.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Quite a number of bores have been put down.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, and a great many dams, too. I have sunk some of them and know what I am talking about. Some have been put down in places that never have held water and never will do so. I have sunk a number of dams under contract to the Government, and those dams were constructed south of Trayning. Plans were forwarded to me showing where the dams were to be constructed. When I examined a number of the sites I found that some of the trial pits were bottomed in gravel, and I was expected to put dams down in that class of country. Not one of the sites that I inspected according to the plan, could be utilised. An inspector visited the district with me and we fixed on other sites. I understand that four of the dams that were constructed held water but one has not done so. Years ago the Government used to look after the water supplies and were accustomed to sending men 60 or 80 miles to repair a pump. When I was a road board chairman, I rather foolishly butted in and suggested that instead of the Government looking after the dams and so forth, they should subsidise the road boards to the extent of half the amount it had cost the Government to carry out that work. The Government adopted that scheme for a year, but in the succeeding year they made the road boards take over the work without any assistance from the Government at all. Quite a number of the dams are not for the convenience of the public; they are really private water supplies in the interests of individuals whose farms are adjacent to the dams. When other settlers go to the dam for water, they find it empty because the farmer living alongside the dam has used the water himself. Local governing authori-

ties have refused to keep wells in repair because they have not been required for the use of people generally but rather for individuals. In many instances the farmer residing alongside a dam has sent to the road board office 20 miles away to secure the repair of a pump, although the farmer himself has been the only man to use it.

Mr. Thomson: You would not suggest that such a man should not use it?

Mr. LINDSAY: No, but such a man will not use the pump unless the local governing authorities repair it for him. According to the Minister's statement, £1,604,325 has been expended on wells and water supplies on the goldfields, exclusive of the Goldfields Water Supply scheme, and of that amount only £113,680 produces revenue. As against that, £522,509 has been spent on the provision of tanks and wells in the agricultural areas.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is over a period of years.

Mr. Thomson: And is returning revenue.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, indirectly, because men cannot be settled in the country areas without water supplies. The position is becoming more important in the wheat belt because we are settling people further out where the rainfall is lower.

Mr. Latham: And where the distance for carting wheat is greater.

Mr. LINDSAY: Railways will be constructed and they will overcome that difficulty. In many of these districts there is sufficient rain to enable settlers to grow crops, but not sufficient to provide water supplies. In my own district the Minister administering our water supplies has put down quite a number of schemes. He has been harnessing these small rock catchments. So, to-day wherever there is a rock catchment, it has been reserved for the future use of the people in the district. In many cases the Minister has harnessed those water supplies and put down concrete tanks. I do not think it is the intention to tax that particular form of supply, but I believe that what is intended is that some time later on, as the district progresses, another and bigger scheme will be put down that can be used for the whole of the district, a pipe line running eight or ten miles, and a stand pipe.

Mr. Latham: Not a stand pipe.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister's words were "Where old schemes have been re-

conditioned and additional expense incurred, it will be necessary to rate. In connection with new schemes where motor power is necessary, or a stand pipe service, a rate will be struck." I assume that when the Minister mentioned stand pipe services, he did not mean a stand pipe into a tank or a dam, but a stand pipe that will have to travel some miles along the road. The people in my district, of course, like to get something for nothing, but I am satisfied we are not going to get this service unless we are prepared to pay for it. Also, I am satisfied that the majority of the people in my district who require this service, are prepared to pay for it. All I want the Minister to do is to make it clear in the Bill that this charge is not going to be retrospective.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It applies to new schemes and old schemes in precisely the same way.

Mr. LINDSAY: No. There is only one old scheme in the whole of my electorate, which is a big one. Not one scheme has been put down, except it is a dam or a well with a pump on it, that we have not paid for ourselves. In one or two instances the local authorities have applied to the Government for assistance in putting up a windmill, but we have always had to find our share of the cost. And they are the only instances in which anything has been done except to put down a well and erect a windlass. Only once have we not had to pay anything, and that was in Dowerin, as I have mentioned. In Dowerin we have come to the conclusion we must have that local water supply. Everybody has concluded that if that town is to progress, it must have a better water supply. That better water supply can be provided by the Minister, but we cannot afford it. We cannot get enough water to lay it on to every house, and even if we could, we would have to provide a stand pipe. I am not going to compliment the Minister on the way he introduced the Bill, for he said something that made the matter suspicious. Nor do I like in the Bill that word making it retrospective. I have discussed the thing with the Minister on various occasions, and I do not believe he intends to make taxation retrospective. I hope the Minister in his reply will clear up the position. I will support the second reading.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [10.5]: As a representative of an agricultural electorate, naturally I have been suspicious since reading what the Minister said when moving the second reading of the Bill. I take it the Bill really is one that has been framed with the idea of providing some means of taxing the small towns. I gather from the Minister's speech, and also from what the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has said, that that is really behind things. At the same time, as has been said here repeatedly, we have to go upon, not just what the Minister says, but what the Bill says. There is no getting away from the fact that the Bill is intended to be retrospective.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: No one is denying it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The member for York (Mr. Latham) said just now that the water supply at Narembeen and Emu Hill would come under the Bill.

Mr. Latham: It is provided for in the existing law.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Yes, it is provided for in the existing law. But as the member for Toodyay pointed out, I take it this is for towns like Dowerin and Wyalcatchem. Those towns are seeking, and naturally must have, better water supplies. Recently I totalled up the claims with some farmers from Dowerin and Goomalling. The subject was discussed very earnestly with me by many men there, and it was said that the extension of the goldfields water scheme should be carried through to supply the country along that railway.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: It cannot be carried through.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am aware of that. I wrote to the department and they kindly furnished me with a draft of the scheme for providing water for Quelagetting in that area. When the matter of extending it further was gone into, it was found that the cost would be altogether prohibitive. In fact, it is the pumping plant that has put the thing altogether out of court. Reference was made at the time to a proposal drawn up prior to the inauguration of the rock catchments scheme. A scheme was being outlined by the Engineer-in-Chief to provide that area along the railway. This was put out of court by the establishment of the rock catchment schemes, and it was found it would be impossible to provide water for those people at reasonable cost. The Minister will be well advised to agree to an amendment of this clause that makes

the whole thing retrospective. I do not like the idea of taxing schemes already in operation. For instance, I think it is at Bungullopine where they have a dam. And there are other places from which settlers have had to cart their water. If any improvement were made, it is quite possible under this measure for the people using the water to be immediately taxed. I do not know whether the Minister intends that this shall be done, but it is possible according to the wording of the Bill. I do not propose to support the clause that makes a charge for retrospective work. I agree that something must be done for the small towns, but as the member for Beverley pointed out, and as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, it seems that every measure being brought down is designed to impose fresh taxation on the man on the land. The member for Toodyay is interested in seeing that his towns are provided with water supplies and I am quite with him that provision should be made for them, but to the taxing of small schemes, particularly old-established ones, I am entirely opposed.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.11]: I think we all admit that the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies has done the best he can, and he certainly has been very sympathetic, but I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill because I do not approve of its retrospective character. The member for Toodyay said that from conversation he had had with the Minister, he was convinced it was not intended that the Bill should have retrospective effect. When the member for Avon was speaking, however, the Minister, in reply to an interjection, said it was intended to be retrospective. The Country Party hold that it is essential to provide water supplies to enable the people to develop the land. The present and previous Labour Governments certainly have done their part in providing water supplies. The expenditure of that money has enabled many districts to be settled, but it is not in the interests of a district that after its wants have been supplied, the Government should be permitted to come along and levy a charge of 3d. per acre in order to increase the supply that it may meet the requirements of possibly only a few settlers. Men on the land have already gone to the expense of providing their own water supplies, and yet they are

to be mulcted to the tune of £12 10s. a year for a water supply. While the Bill may suit some members, it will not suit the people I represent. Take the position of a man who has to cart water: we are asked to impose a levy of 3d. per acre on his holding. He has to cart water six, eight, ten, or perhaps 12 miles to enable him to carry on his farming work. Surely that is quite sufficient tax on him! If it is necessary, I am agreeable to the Government doing in future as they are able to do at present and as many road boards are able to do at present, namely, charge so much per hundred gallons for water at the standpipe.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You will have enough of that this year and you will find it far more expensive than the schemes put into operation under this measure.

MR. THOMSON: I do not know that that will be so. Take the small towns where the townspeople have been unable to secure a supply and a dam has been sunk. It may be some distance away and it is proposed to levy a rate up to 3d. per acre on agricultural land and up to 9d. in the pound on town land when a standpipe is taken into a town. There may be quite a large number of people in the town who have made adequate provision for a water supply, but because some people are probably careless and have not made sufficient provision, the others are to be mulcted to the tune of 9d. in the pound on the valuation of their land. I am not prepared to give the Government power to place increased taxation on the people in country districts. The Government have already power similar to that enjoyed by the local authorities that when a standpipe is erected in a small town they may levy a charge for the water carted. That is fair and just. I regret that I cannot agree with the Minister in his proposal to impose this levy on settlers. While he was making his second reading speech, I asked by way of interjection if it was proposed to impose the levy even if a man had provided a water supply of his own. The Minister's reply was, "Why should people in agricultural areas, irrespective of whether they have a well or windmill on their blocks, be exempt from paying water rates?" If I have gone to the expense of sinking a well and providing an adequate supply, surely an additional tax should not be imposed upon me for all time simply

because other settlers in the district have not seen fit to provide for their own needs! Provision should be made for such cases. From my reading of the Act already on the statute-book the Government have full power to deal with the supply for country towns, and as regards the small towns, there is nothing to prevent the Government from doing what has been done in the past. A road board has power to sink a dam and provide water. The Government can do as they have done in the larger towns—supply the funds to the road board, which then imposes a levy on the people in the district—instead of levying a special charge under a measure of this kind. Let the local authority provide the water supply and charge a sufficient sum at the standpipe. People who are compelled to cart water to carry on their farming operations are sufficiently taxed without having levied upon them an additional charge because they are within a prescribed water supply area. The extension of the goldfields water scheme imposed a grave hardship on a large number of settlers who to-day are levied for a supply simply because the main passes their farms or because they are within the prescribed area. They have never drawn a drop of water from the scheme, and yet they are mulct in pounds every year. Where people have their own water supplies they should not be compelled to pay these rates. I commend the Minister for his sympathetic consideration towards these people, but I am afraid there is no gainsaying the fact that it is the intention of the department to levy a tax upon water supplies, some of which have been in existence for the last 10 or 20 years. I do not approve of that action, and intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill. There should be no increase in taxation, in view of the burdens already placed upon the farming community. This tax will certainly place an additional burden upon the newly settled areas. It is the duty of the Government to supply key dams. That is the policy we stand for and it is one I must support. I cannot support any charge that is made upon new areas. Possibly the Minister may not intend to inflict a burden on the settlers, but as the Bill gives him power to do so I must oppose it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. J. Cunningham — Kalgoorlie — in reply) [10.22]: The Leader of the Opposition stated that in his opinion it was not right to tax the farmers or settlers upon works that had been completed some years ago. It is not intended to levy a tax upon the settlers for the purpose of bringing in revenue to meet the sinking fund and interest charges on completed works.

Mr. Thomson: That is what you say in Clause 2.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I will explain that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You cannot explain it.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I may not be capable of explaining it to the Leader of the Opposition, but I think I can make myself sufficiently intelligible to the other members of the House, and be understood by them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope so; you have not succeeded so far.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The Bill will be retrospective in certain directions. Recently the Water Supply Department have been called upon to provide water stations in new country in advance of settlement. In carrying out these works the department has had an eye to the future. It is realised that a substantial sum of money will be spent in the near future in the enlargement of portions of schemes already completed. Parts of schemes already completed will be worked into greater schemes for the purpose of rendering the necessary service in the matter of water supplies in the districts concerned. Service tanks have been constructed in the new areas. These will serve as storage tanks for the time being. Later on, from the service tanks the water will be gravitated to the surrounding country and will supply the farmers' needs. A pipe line will be run out as a preliminary to the more extensive work that will be put in hand later. When this has been done at the request of the settlers, we shall call upon them to pay a rate in accordance with the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Thomson: Have you not power to do that under the present Bill?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No. I have power under the Act of 1925 only to levy a maxi-

imum rate of 1s. per acre, plus a holding fee of £5. That is for a reticulation scheme and not for a standpipe scheme.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all you want. You are putting in these tin pot standpipes.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I have introduced this Bill to meet the needs of the settlers who have asked for additional water supplies in their districts.

Mr. Thomson: Is it the first I have heard of the request.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The hon. member does not hear everything. As Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies, I probably hear a great deal more about those matters than he does. The provisions of the Bill will be made retrospective for the purposes I have mentioned. Works which have recently been put in hand and are nearing completion will be brought into a greater district water supply scheme later on. The supply may, however, be used in the immediate future from a standpipe system, which may extend for five or seven miles into the agricultural districts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could do all that without this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No. I have had enough of the guarantee system adopted by the previous Administration. I often find that settlers who have entered into an agreement have left their holdings or sold them, and that the agreements become null and void and are of no use to the department as a guarantee. When a settler sells his holding that is the end of the agreement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It ought to have applied to the land.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: It is an agreement between the individual and the department, hence the need for this legislation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That has nothing to do with the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: It has everything to do with it. The policy of the department has altered considerably since the Leader of the Opposition left office. We have kept away from the mudhole policy that was then in vogue. We propose that the department shall give more valuable service and be more efficient than it has been in the past. That is another reason for the introduction of

this legislation. I did refer to a certain sum of £520,000 which had been spent on pioneer agricultural water supplies, and which is not revenue producing. I said this expenditure should not go on. I was under the impression that I had connected my remarks with requests that had been made for the reconditioning of some of the older tanks. By that I mean the enlargement of existing supplies by means of silt pits and the roofing of tanks to prevent evaporation. I am assured by those who understand the position that to-day we are losing upwards of 7 feet 6 inches or 8 feet of water per annum through evaporation in the wheat areas.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not in Western Australia.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: It is realised that the storage tank cannot properly fulfil its purpose if it is not roofed. It is no use storing a quantity of water in a hole in the ground if we are to permit evaporation to this extent to go on each year.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the evaporation without the roofing?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The roof is designed to prevent evaporation. When the settlers put in a requisition through their representatives, or by way of deputation, for certain old tanks to be reconditioned and for a district water station to be provided they will then understand that the work can only be done in accordance with the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Thomson: Could not the road boards do the work?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No. A road board is not a water board. It could be made a water board, but even then it would have no powers additional to those now enjoyed by the Minister under the Water Boards Act. The Minister himself has not power to do it otherwise than by special agreement, and special agreements are most unpopular with the Water Supply Department. This legislation is necessary.

Mr. Lindsay: A road board may be formed into a water board under the Act now.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, and if this Bill passes that is the intention. The Water Supply Department do not desire to

handle small schemes, or to recondition old tanks, or to instal windmills and storage tanks, or to connect a district by a small line of pipe if it is found that a local authority is prepared to handle the business in accordance with the provisions of the Act. It is the Government's desire to make possible the fullest local autonomy, and to get road boards to handle their own affairs in the matter of water supply as far as possible. The Leader of the Opposition said that in legislation of this kind the farmers are getting it in the neck.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Let me assure the Leader of the Opposition that as the result of inadequate water supplies in agricultural areas the farmer is going to get it only in the neck but also in the pocket during the coming season. The water is not stored; provision for storage was not made in the past. Now it will remain to haul water over long distances, and who will be called upon to pay the freight involved? What is a half-penny, or a penny, or even threepence per acre, as compared with the cost of water hauled during three months of the year or even longer? The Leader of the Opposition has taken rather a short-sighted view of the provisions of the Bill. The hon. gentleman pointed out that where settlers are called upon to cart water for eight or 10 miles they should receive the fullest possible consideration from the Water Supply Department. That is quite right and absolutely true. But what is the position of the farmer who carts from an excavation made years ago, an excavation partly silted, where there is no roofing, where he has to lose hours hauling the water out of the reservoir to fill his tank? Is it not more economical to pay even £12 10s. per thousand acres—which is the maximum—and have an adequate water supply? Of course it is. The Leader of the Opposition possibly has not looked into the matter as closely as he might have done.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I know what the farmer is going to pay in taxation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: When the Bill to amend the Water Boards Act was being discussed in 1925, the Leader of the Opposition used exactly similar arguments in opposition. I cannot understand his at-

titude. I cannot believe that he has not the interests of the farmers at heart in the matter of water supply. Yet why does he on every occasion assume an attitude of opposition to the beneficial measures submitted for the purpose of assisting the settler?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have to show that this is beneficial.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I have shown that it is.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is not.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: In addition, there are the works now under construction, which speak for themselves. It will be the same with the works put in hand if the Bill passes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who paid for the McPherson's Rock water scheme?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: That is a most useful scheme. It is a joint railway and agricultural water supply. There would be considerable difficulty to-day in running the railway system between Esperance and Coolgardie were it not for that scheme. Thus it is serving a highly useful purpose in that respect alone. As regards country towns, let me inform the Leader of the Opposition that Three Springs, Dalwallinu, Dumbleyung, Ardagh, Morawa, and Perenjori have already asked for old tanks to be reconditioned and enlarged and roofed, and to be provided with windmills, and for 5,000, or 10,000-gallon tanks to be erected and furnished with pumps and standpipes for the use of the people. Those towns are prepared to pay for that service.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They ought to provide it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Under the Water Boards Act I have no power to furnish those facilities.

Mr. Thomson: Have not the local authorities power to provide themselves with those things under the Roads Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: No.

Mr. Thomson: Yes, they have.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: If they have the power, they will not exercise it because they have not the money.

Mr. Thomson: They certainly have the power under the Roads Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: It is much better to introduce the necessary legislation whereby these works can be carried out in a proper manner.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The taxation applies in any case now.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I know of the few cases where it does apply. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) mentioned one.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There is Bridgetown.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: That case is under the old Act, and up to the present has been administered by the Water Supply Department, because it has always shown a deficit. As soon as it ceases to show a deficit, the local people will no doubt ask for a water board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you have the power.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, where there is a reticulation system, but not where it is a standpipe system. Work may be put in hand for the purpose of providing additional water supplies in old-settled districts where the settlers so far have not been successful in obtaining their own supplies. If it is possible for the settlers to furnish their own supplies, naturally the department will not rush in and spend public money. Only in those districts where a reticulation system cannot be provided will advantage be taken of the water supply system as here authorised, should the Bill become law. To-day I am being asked in various parts of the State to enlarge tanks and recondition outfits. Instead of a man having to waste an hour or two in pulling water with a bucket, it will be much better to have the water in the storage tank, so that he can run in his lorry, fill his tank, and get away and utilise his time to better advantage in connection with farming operations. I wish to emphasise that as regards old tanks and wells constructed in years gone by the department do not intend, should the Bill become law, to pass the tax on to the settlers in the various districts unless the settlers themselves ask for those wells to be reconditioned, and to be equipped with windmills

and storage tanks. If the Bill becomes law and such a request is submitted, the people will know what they are asking for, and will realise the obligation under which they are placing themselves to the department, and also the financial responsibility they are undertaking. I was rather surprised at the Country Party's opposition to the Bill. One would naturally expect that the representatives of the farmers would make some effort to acquaint themselves with what the Bill actually proposes.

Mr. Thomson: But there is authority under the Roads Act to do the very same things.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: That is not so.

Mr. Thomson: I say it is so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: I have not the necessary authority under the Roads Act, nor had the past Minister, nor will the incoming Minister, whoever he may be, have it unless this Bill passes. The Roads Act makes certain provisions with regard to water supplies, but it is invariably found that a road board has not sufficient money to recondition a well, or to effect repairs where the windlass has tumbled down the well, or to replace a rope or a bucket that has been lost. Invariably a request for assistance comes to the Water Supply Department. Applications are received for the replacement of buckets and windlasses. And then they come along and say that the Government should provide water supplies, as they have not the money to do it.

Mr. Thomson interjected.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: Your Government did not do much.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We did a lot, and with less revenue than you have.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: You sank a lot of mud holes and you are advocating the same sort of thing now!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister must address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLIES: The system of mud holes that were put down some years ago for the purpose of providing an adequate water supply for the settlers, was all very well in those days, but we have got beyond that stage. Those mud holes served a useful purpose, but now the people desire to run stock.

They cannot provide water supplies on their own holdings, and they ask that the Government shall make additional provision. That is why the Bill has been presented to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 18th October, 1928.

	PAGE
Bills: Lunacy Act Amendment, 1R.	1289
Railways Discontinuance, 3R.	1289
Fertilisers, report	1289
Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 1R.	1295
Dog Act Amendment, Com.	1296
City of Perth Superannuation Fund 2R., to refer to Select Committee	1297
Motion: Collie Power Scheme	1289

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

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary and read a first time.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—FERTILISERS.

Further report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—COLLIE POWER SCHEME.

Debate resumed from 16th October on the following motion by the Hon. J. Ewing:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should forthwith proceed to establish in the Collie Coalfields Area a generating plant capable of supplying electrical current for lighting and motive power throughout the whole or the greater portion of the State.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: Mr. Ewing's proposal is one which is calculated to win many supporters among those who are not in a position to consider the question from every point of view. There is something enchanting in a scheme which transforms coal into electricity at the colliery itself, and which by the turning of a handle at Collie, can be made to distribute power and light to all the thickly populated parts of Western Australia, at what is alleged to be nominal cost. But things are not always what they seem, and Mr. Ewing's project is not the sound economic proposition it appears to be on his presentation of the case. Boiled down, Mr. Ewing's proposal is not to extend East Perth power station, but to erect a power station at Collie and to electrify the whole State. Let me take the first point. The idea of closing down, or of making the East Perth power house partially non-effective even under Mr. Ewing's scheme could not be wisely entertained. With a power station at Collie, East Perth power station would also have to be kept in full service in order to avoid trouble. It requires only a minute's thought to perceive that it would be very risky to have a 120-mile transmission line as the only source of supply. A heavy storm or a stray rifle bullet, or any of a score of other occurrences might create an interruption and cause a total shut down over the whole metropolitan area. Not only would the people be without light in such a contingency, but every factory and every workshop in the metropolis, and in the other districts to be served would be idle until the defect was discovered and remedied.

Hon. J. Ewing: Could not they duplicate the line?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member did not put up that proposition. Had he done so, I would have been in an even better position to prove that his proposal is not, and could not be, an economical one.

Hon. A. Lovekin: How do they manage in other places?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We shall come to that presently. While Melbourne is drawing power from Yallourn it must be remembered that it does not rely solely on Yallourn. It has taken fine care to make provision for continuity of supplies in case at any time Yallourn fails. In Melbourne