Mr. ALLEN: It was important to know how the quantity of water would be measured. Surely some provision must be made for checking the quantity of water used. It might be better to expunge the words "four thousand gallons" and substitute "is necessary." People who were running stock must be allowed sufficient water.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An unlimited quantity of water could not be allowed. There must be some limit. If there was no limit, it might prevent the possibility of installing an irrigation scheme. In Western Australia it was not possible to carry such a large number of stock per mile of river frontage that any great harm would be done by the quantity of water consumed by the stock, but there might be a good reason for insisting on a limitation. He was prepared to look into the matter.

Mr. George: Will you give us an opportunity to discuss it further?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In order to do that, progress would be reported at this stage.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th August, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Honorary Minister (Hon. W. C. Angwin): Kalgoorlie Roads Board by-law.

By the Attorney General: Statutes of the University of Western Australia.

QUESTION—POWELLISING CONTRACT AND PAPERS.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Minister for Works (without notice): Will the Minister place on the Table of the House the sleeper contract with the powellising company, and also the papers in connection with the extension of the company's saw-milling permit over 15,000 acres of karri country, as promised by him when replying to the motion moved by the leader of the Opposition on Wednesday last.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: All the papers in regard to the 15,000 acres have been placed on the Table. The only other thing I could do would be to place on the Table the company's letter in which they agreed to the price being reduced to 9d. on condition that they got the order to supply a million sleepers and the extension of 15,000 acres. Beyond that nothing has been done at all. There has been no application made for the 15,000 acres and they have not been granted. The position we are in to-day is that, as outlined in the agreement, they had the right to supply the million sleepers, but they have not gone on with the matter; nothing has been done.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Did they have a contract?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I read for the information of the House the letter in which the company agreed to the price of 9d., provided that they got the order to supply the million sleepers at 2s. 2d., and that they got the extension of 15,000 acres. That is the only document there is outside the contract which has been laid on the Table of the House, and that letter is in *Hansard*.

Hon. J. Mitchell: May I explain, Mr. Speaker, that I wished for the agreement with reference to the supply of the million sleepers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is none, and I made that perfectly clear. It is in *Hansard* that the 15,000 acres had to be subject to all the conditions in connection with the Land Act and the Forestry Department. If the hon. member will read *Hansard* he will see the letter.

QUESTION — RAILWAY EXTENSION, BOLGART LINE.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY asked the Minister for Works: When is it the intention of the Government to proceed with the work of constructing the Bolgart Extension railway line, as authorised during the last session of Parliament?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: As soon as the works now under construction and others waiting construction are sufficiently advanced.

QUESTION — STATE STEAMSHIP SERVICE ROYAL COMMISSION.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (for Hon. Frank Wilson) asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact that the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the State Steamship Service has been revoked? 2, If so, why was the Commission not permitted to complete its work? 3, Will the Premier cause the papers in connection with the inquiry, together with the Commission's report, to be placed upon the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, It was deemed unnecessary, in view of the manager's resignation, to pursue the inquiry further, in view of the heavy expense involved. 3, If the hon. member will move for the production of the papers in the usual manner the matter will then receive attention, but there is no report.

QUESTION — MINES DEPARTMENT, CAMELS FOR PROSPECTING.

Mr. GREEN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is he aware that an old prospector, Mr. D. Craig Cooper, made application a short period ago for the loan of three camels to go prospecting 120 miles south-east of Kalgoorlie? 2, Is it true that the application was refused on the ground that no camels were available? 3, Is it true that the Mines Department have only 18 camels at their disposal throughout the State? 4, Did the Mines Department have 120 camels, or thereabouts, at their disposal some few years ago? 5, Is he aware that 50 camels or more are employed by the Water Supply Department at Kalgoorlie on dam sinking, a work in which horses might be engaged? 6, Will he make an effort in future to arrange for a loan of camels from the Water Supply Department to loan to deserving prospectors as has been done previously in this State? 7, If this cannot be arranged, will he use efforts to secure a further supply of camels for prospecting purposes?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, The application was refused as no camels were available at that particular time. 3, No. 4, No. 5, Yes; horses might be engaged on this work, but this would involve a heavier, and therefore a wasteful, expenditure. 6, It has not been the practice in the past to borrow camels for prospectors from the Water Supply Department. 7, Generally speaking, the supply is already equal to the demands of reliable prospectors.

BILL—NORTH FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 14th August, Mr. Holman in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 17—Conditions for the exercise of certain rights to take and use water:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When the Committee adjourned we were considering the question of the allowance of 4,000 gallons of water a day for domestic and ordinary use. The hon. member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) raised the point that the quantity was small; he wanted to know exactly why we fixed this quantity and how it was proposed to measure it. In the ordinary course it would be superfluous to put this provision in, but the difficulty was that, supposing the Government were to construct works under this Bill, they would give certain rights to those now on the stream, and after the conservation of the water would have to let down the stream a certain quantity of water to carry out their obligations to those to whom they gave certain riparian rights under the Bill. While it would be difficult to calculate the quantity of water consumed by each beast along the stream in accordance with the rights the owner of the beast had, it was at the same time necessary to have some quantity specified to let the people know that a sufficient quantity of water was being allowed to flow from the weir, in accordance with the acreage held. Unless some amount was specified it would not be known when there was sufficient to supply demands, and the position might lead to litigation in the event of those below the weir claiming that the Government had not let out sufficient water. Under the Bill ample was allowed in proportion to a mile of frontage; 4,000 gallons was a liberal allowance in view of the number of stock carried in Western Australia and the amount of water they consumed. Hon. members should realise that it was necessary to have some amount specified, otherwise the Government would have no protection at all.

Mr. GEORGE: In the cutting up of a number of selections in the South-West the settlers showed a considerable amount of forethought and divided the land so that there would be a certain frontage to each watercourse, to give those who took up country at the back an opportunity of getting to the known reliable watercourse for their stock. In many instances frontages were cut up to about 30 or 40 chains, and people took up these portions and then took up many thousands of acres behind them. These people could not have sufficient water if they were to get 4,000 gallons to each mile of frontage. Again, in some instances the same landowner had frontages to both sides of the river.

The Minister for Works: In that case he would get 8,000 gallons.

Mr. GEORGE: The 4,000 gallons proposed in the Bill was not sufficient, though he admitted it was more than would be required for domestic or ordinary use. Particularly at times when there might be a shortage of water, it would not be sufficient for watering stock.

Mr. Thomas: Would there not be some who would not use the full quantity?

Mr. GEORGE: No doubt, but each individual the Minister would have to deal with would want to feel that he was safeguarded.

Mr. Underwood: How many head of stock could you water with 4,000 gallons?

Mr. GEORGE: It would depend on whether they were sheep or asses.

Mr. McDonald: How many sheep will the country carry?

Mr. GEORGE: There were places in the South-West which would carry 30 or 40 sheep to the acre. The average, however, in those parts was one sheep to the acre.

The Minister for Works: Will you be satisfied if I agree to increase the quantity to 5,000 gallons?

Mr. GEORGE: The quantity ought to be 10,000 gallons, but 5,000 would be more satisfactory than 4,000 gallons.

The Minister for Works: Then to stop further argument, I will agree to 5,000 gallons.

Mr. GEORGE moved an amendment—

That in line 17 the word "four" be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu.

Mr. MITCHELL: There was no doubt that the amendment would meet the case, but he did not think the Government would deny the people the right to use water for their stock; the Minister would not call upon them to show exactly what they used.

Mr. FOLEY: On the argument submitted by the member for Murray-Wellington it was his intention to oppose the amendment, for the reason that that member used the argument that at various times of the year the streams to which he referred were partially dry. What the Minister wished to do was to give to people with a mile frontage ample water wherewith to water stock. The member for Murray-Wellington said that there was land in the South-West which would carry 30 to 40 sheep to the acre. If there was much of that kind of land in the State, there was not much irrigation wanted.

Mr. George: I am sorry to say there is not.

Mr. FOLEY: If there was a half mile frontage, and the paddock went back two miles, that would only give 640 acres. If that land would carry one bullock to six acres, that would allow 40 gallons of water per day for each bullock. Where was the bullock that could drink that quantity? A mile frontage would allow 40 gallons for each bullock and that, in his opinion, was too much. The Minister would, therefore, be justified in retaining the 4,000 gallons, because it would give the people lower down the stream the same opportunity enjoyed by the people higher up.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It was intended to let out from the weir 5,000 gallons a day for consumption by the people lower down. How would a check on this be kept, and was it to be allowed to run down a channel, or to be conveyed by pipes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As the hon. member was aware, in most creeks there were pools, and the idea was that when the creek was dammed there was a chance of the pools not being filled, with the result that the people who used those pools now would be prevented from getting water. The idea was to open up the weir and fill the pools.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: You might considerably exceed that quantity.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The water would be allowed to run until all the pools were filled.

Mr. Mitchell: So that the last man will get his share.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Exactly.

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

Clause 18—Artesian wells to be licensed:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: While he did not object to the clause, it was hoped that the Minister would not impose heavy license fees.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object of the license was simply to give the Government control. It was not proposed to raise revenue by means of the license fee. The fee would be purely nominal.

Mr. George: How will these fees be fixed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause was taken from the New South Wales Act. There was no desire to penalise or prevent anyone from putting down artesian bores, or do anything else in the nature of water conservation, unless they were interfering with other people or endangering other people's supplies. The fee would be nominal and there was no desire to raise revenue by its means. Hon. members could rest assured that it was

not proposed to raise revenue by means of the license fee, which indeed, would be merely nominal.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19 to 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—Penalty for alterations in licensed well or contravention of license:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause provided that during the currency of a license no alteration should be made in or in connection with the well. It was to be remembered that a contingency might arise calling for some alteration to be immediately effected in a well. Notwithstanding this, it seemed that it would be necessary to first obtain the authority of the Minister in Perth, which might represent a considerable delay in the case of an artesian well situated in, say, the Kimberley district. Was power provided for the Minister to delegate such authority to others in outback districts?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: After all, the only alteration likely to be required in a well would be the deepening of that well, or possibly, the putting down of a bigger casing. In either event the object would be the same, namely, the obtaining of an increased flow, which perhaps could only be obtained at the cost of neighbouring wells. In the first place it was not desirable that neighbouring wells should be thus penalised without the authority of the Minister, and in any case such alterations as he had referred to were not likely to be of any great urgency in point of time.

Mr. GEORGE: The clause appeared to him to be quite right. The proviso covered any danger of the sort mentioned by the member for Northam.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The only desire he had was to point out to the Minister that it would be advisable to take power to delegate authority to others in far distant parts of the State with a view to saving time in an emergency.

Mr. McDONALD: The proviso contained in the clause amply covered any such danger as that referred to. Subclause 3 provided that the holder of a license might at any time during the currency thereof apply for an amended license. Under this subclause if a man desired to alter his well it was open to him to apply for an amended license.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23—Control of artesian wells:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause gave the Minister power to place under the temporary control of a board any artesian wells constructed or acquired by the Crown, whereupon the board would be required to raise and pay to the Colonial Treasurer interest on the cost of that well. How was it proposed that this money should be raised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board would make a charge for the water supplied, just as was now done in gold mining districts. If the Government, at considerable cost, put down an artesian well on a stock route and handed over that well to a board, it was only reasonable to expect that the board should pay interest on the cost of the well, and raise that interest by making a charge for the watering of the stock. This system was in operation on the goldfields to-day. It did not apply to stock routes at present, but there was a possibility that it might do so in the future.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was only right that the people who received a benefit from the well should pay for it. But the Minister would require some law which would give power to the board to make such a charge. Except that governing the travelling of stock there was no Act in force to-day which gave this necessary power.

The Minister for Works: This Bill will give us the power.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No.

The Minister for Works: Yes, it gives the boards power to charge for the water.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Perhaps the Minister would specially point out such clauses when the Committee reached them. In any event the Minister would require to see to it that he had power to charge for the water before he incurred the heavy expense of putting down such a bore as that contemplated.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause anticipated that an artesian bore might be put down for the convenience of those travelling stock. In order to get

the revenue necessary to pay interest on the capital cost such wells would be placed under the control of boards. Under later clauses these boards were given powers to charge for the water supplied. Each board would make its own local arrangements. Under the clause the board could reserve 40 acres, and this reserve, plus the water, would be placed under the control of the board. For travelling stock the board would charge, probably, so much per head, while if any adjoining landholder desired to use the water the board would be empowered to supply it at an agreed-upon rate.

Mr. MALE: The clause provided that when an artesian well was placed under the control of a board an area of at least 40 acres at the actual site of the well might be reserved. Did that mean that nothing less than 40 acres could be reserved?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. MALE: In that case the clause was not altogether a safe one. In the event of an artesian well being put down in a town for the purposes of a local water supply, the reservation of 40 acres in the centre of that town might prove a difficult proposition. In Broome there were two artesian wells right in the centre of the town. These wells had been put down by the Government and handed over to the local water board. It would be practically impossible to reserve two minimum areas of 40 acres each in the centre of Broome; nor was there any necessity for such reservation. On the other hand, in the case of a well put down for the purpose of watering stock, it might be necessary to reserve 5,000 acres. The minimum of 40 acres was dangerous.

The Minister for Works: It does not say we "shall" reserve 40 acres. It is a minimum fixed provided we create a reserve.

Mr. MALE: It might be found necessary to make a reserve of only a quarter of an acre.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In both Broome and Derby were artesian bores which constituted the sources of the local supplies. These wells were on Government blocks. The department could not sink an artesian bore except on Crown land. If a well had to be sunk in a town it would be necessary to purchase the block before starting operations. The clause contemplated the putting down of artesian bores for the purposes of stock water supplies. In such a case it was necessary that at least 40 acres should be reserved. This area had been fixed because from the very beginning it had been the practice in the agricultural areas in the State to reserve 40 acres around a well. All the wells throughout the agricultural districts were surrounded by reserves of 40 acres. That area was fixed as the minimum; if the Government wanted more they would take it. If they did not want to reserve it at all they need not take it, but if they did reserve land it must be an area of at least 40 acres.

Mr. MALE: In cases where a bore was put down on Crown land in a town, the moment the bore was sunk the Government reserved that land for the purposes of the bore, but the clause said they would not be able to reserve less than 40 acres.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause stated that the Government might reserve 40 acres, but it did not say that they should do so. If they put a well on Crown land they need not reserve an area.

Mr. Male: Yes, you reserve it for a well.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no need to reserve Crown lands. The clause anticipated cases where a bore was sunk on private property, in which case the Government had a right to resume in order to create a reserve of at least 40 acres. In the cases mentioned by the hon. member there was no need to create reserves because bores were put down on Crown lands, and in other cases the Government would not think of putting down a bore in a town before they had acquired by purchase or otherwise land for the purpose.

Mr. MALE moved an amendment—

That in line 13 the words "of at least 40 acres" be struck out.

Those words were superfluous. If the amendment was carried the Government would have power to reserve any area

from a square yard to a thousand acres, if necessary.

The Minister for Works: I do not see any objection to the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: No reason had been advanced why the amendment should be carried. The clause said that the Government might reserve an area of at least 40 acres.

Mr. Male: My objection is to the words "at least 40 acres."

Mr. McDONALD: Forty acres would represent a square of about 20 chains each way, and water coming from the bore at a temperature of 160 degrees would be scarcely cool before it passed out of the reserve. The bores at Derby and Broome were sunk on Crown blocks, but in the event of a board having control of any well acquired or constructed by the department 40 acres was quite little enough. If the land was not available, there was no need to resume 40 acres.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In squatting country the reserve about a well would run to thousands of acres, but in the case of land in the South-West it would be unnecessary to reserve anything like 40 acres.

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

Clause 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Governor may make regulations:

Mr. GEORGE: It would be well if the Minister would give the Committee some idea as to the scale on which the fees mentioned in the clause would be charged.

The Minister for Works: This refers to regulations governing the right of the lessee to charge.

Mr. GEORGE: So far as the person who had to pay was concerned, it did not matter whether the fees were charged by the lessee or by the board; he still had to pay them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The previous clause provided that the Governor might lease an artesian well constructed by the Crown, and that the lessee should have all the powers of a board except in regard to the levying of rates. The clause now before the Committee stated that the lessee might charge fees which the Governor would fix by regulation. In other words, it gave the Governor power to make regulations to protect the public against unreasonable charges by the individual who leased the well.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 26—Constitution of irrigation districts:

Mr. GEORGE: In the Bill before Parliament last session Clause 26 stated "nothing in this part of the Act shall have application except in irrigation districts constituted under Part IV. of this Act." That seemed to be rather an essential provision, but it was entirely omitted from the Bill now before the Committee.

The Minister for Works: I cannot see the necessity for it.

Mr. GEORGE: The provision was evidently thought essential by those who framed the measure last session. It did not appear in the Bill placed before either House of Parliament, but it was in the Bill placed before the managers at the conference, and it must have been put into the Bill because it was considered of importance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was difficult to understand why the provision mentioned was placed in the Bill of last year, because he could not see where it had any connection with this portion of the measure. It would be limiting the whole of Part III., which dealt with rights in natural waters as well as in artesian bores.

The CHAIRMAN: Some latitude had been allowed in connection with this question. If the hon. member considered that a new clause was necessary, it could be moved after the other clauses had been dealt with.

Mr. GEORGE: The Chairman's ruling would not be disputed by him.

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion could not be allowed to continue.

Mr. GEORGE: Attention had been directed by him to this matter before Part III. had been finished as he considered that that was the proper place to mention it.

The CHAIRMAN: There was no clause in the Bill bearing on the question and he had to deal with the Bill as it appeared before the Committee. The hon. member could move a new clause later on.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister should consider the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Amendments to various clauses were desired by other hon. members, and as he proposed to meet some of their wishes, the Bill would have to be recommitted. That would give the member for Murray-Wellington an opportunity to again refer to the point he had raised.

Mr. GEORGE: Clause 26 of the Bill stated that the Governor might on the recommendation of the Minister "acting with the advice of the Commissioners" by Order in Council constitute irrigation districts, whereas last year the corresponding clause contained the words, "if the Commissioners so advise." That was a very different matter and the Minister should explain the reason for the alteration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was thought by some people that the Minister might act without having expert advice and, in order to prove that the Government desired to work on the advice of expert officers, the words, "acting with the advice of the Commissioners" had been included in the present Bill. Under the clause, the Minister could not advise the Governor unless he acted with the advice of the Commissioners.

Mr. GEORGE: The present clause was stronger than the one in the previous Bill. Under the measure of last year it was almost obligatory on the Government to carry out what the Commissioners advised, but, under the present clause, although the Commissioners might advise a certain course, the Minister had power to prevent its adoption.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was a matter of opinion whether the words should be included; personally he thought there was no need for them. Some people seemed to think it necessary to have a body of civil servants to keep Ministers in check. In order to allay any fears and get the Bill passed, the words in question had been inserted as they would make it clear that the Minister would act with the advice of the Commissioners. The Minister and the Commissioners would confer and, after coming to a decision, the Minister would advise the Governor of the decision.

Mr. GEORGE: It was inconceivable that the Minister would act without the advice of the experts. He was anxious to know why the alteration had been made.

The Minister for Works: To meet objections raised last year in this House and particularly in another place.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Advice should be taken from experts capable of giving it, but it should be written advice, because such experts should be responsible for the advice they would give.

The Minister for Works: They would not be likely to give advice verbally.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But there was nothing to prevent the Minister from acting on verbal advice. He moved an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "written" be inserted before "advice."

Mr. DWYER: The clause implied, firstly, that the Commissioners would advise, secondly, that the Minister would consider that advice, and thirdly that if the advice commended itself to the Minister the constitution of irrigation districts would follow. If the recommendation of the Minister was not necessary, the Commissioners would be placed above the Minister and would become the highest authorities on the question of boundaries. That was not desirable; the Minister should always have power to say whether advice tendered him was such as should be carried out. The Commissioners would probably be civil servants in the Minister's own department and to provide that they could advise and that the Minister should not have the power to consider the advice, would be stripping him of the very powers he ought to possess. To include the amendment of the hon. member for Northam would reduce the clause to an absurdity

and retard the progress of the measure when it became law.

Mr. GEORGE: There were three copies of the Bill, one which was placed before this House and another place last session, another before the conference of managers from which nothing resulted, and the present Bill.

Mr. Dwyer: If you agree with the clause, why stop the progress of the Bill?

Mr. GEORGE: It was his desire to assist the passing of the measure, and if possible prevent any tomfoolery.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. GEORGE: There was a strong feeling in the South-West that the people should have an opportunity to express their opinion as to whether they wanted an irrigation district proclaimed or not.

The CHAIRMAN: There was an amendment before the Chair.

Mr. GEORGE: Had it not been withdrawn?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr. GEORGE: In his opinion, the amendment was unnecessary.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): If it had been suggested that the words, "acting with the advice of the Commissioners" should be struck out, that would have been nearer the point. He could not understand why the Minister had included those words. There were some people who regarded every measure brought down by the Government with a certain amount of suspicion, and no doubt the member for Northam, in moving the amendment, realised that his side of the House were relegated to Opposition, possibly for all time, and would have no opportunity of administering the measure; so the hon. member wanted to tie up Acts of Parliament in a way which showed a want of confidence not only in the members of the present Government, but in those who would follow them. Did the hon. member for Northam ever carry out a provision of that nature without seeking the advice of his responsible officers? No Minister would undertake irrigation in any part of the State without first seeking the advice of his responsible officers, who would inspect the district and see whether the work was necessary.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: All that he would ask for now was that it should be written advice, so that the matter would be made quite clear.

Mr. Dwyer: Would you have it written in ink or pencil?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The reason it should be written was that it would be fair to both Minister and Commissioners. It would not make the slightest difference to the clause and it did not reflect on the Minister in any way.

The Minister for Works: You are practically calling the Minister a rogue.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Not at all. A recommendation of that kind should be always written. For the protection of those immediately concerned, it was necessary that the recommendation should be in writing.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister should realise that there was considerable trepidation throughout the South-West on the question of an irrigation district being declared without the people having an opportunity to say whether they were prepared for it or not. Some people might like irrigation to be done, but at the same time would not be prepared for it, or be in a position in which they could bear the expense. An opportunity should be given to the people in any proposed irrigation district to signify their desire for it or otherwise.

Mr. Thomas: What percentage would you suggest,

Mr. GEORGE: It was not his intention to support the idea that merely the ownership of a large acreage of land should be capable of stopping a project, but it was desirable that a poll of all the landholders should be taken.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The suggestion was one with which he could not agree. If we were going to have irrigation it was because, in the opinion of Parliament, it was in the best interests of the country. Why should we pass a Bill for the establishment of irrigation schemes, and then say "We cannot do it unless a certain section of the people

want it." If irrigation was in the interests of the State, it ought to be undertaken, and Parliament in passing the Bill would do so because it was necessary. There were thousands of places where the water in streams would become the property of the Crown, but where there would be no irrigation scheme. Irrigation would be undertaken in big schemes, and those schemes would be in the interests of the people, and therefore the Government should not have to say to one section of the people, "Can we do this in the interests of the whole of the people?" If the Government were going to do an injustice and go in for an irrigation scheme which would ruin people, it would be a different thing altogether. On the contrary, they were going to establish something that would enable the people to utilise their land to the fullest extent. It would be argued that a man had 200 acres and it would be absolutely impossible for him to irrigate that area, and yet he would have to pay so much an acre on the 200 acres. The Government, however, were not going to put in schemes to irrigate 200 acres, as that area was too large for a man for the purposes of intense culture. It had been argued that it would be better to allow the tax to be imposed gradually and enable a man to get a little return from a small part, so that he would be able to go on with the rest, but that would be only penalising his neighbour. The Government could not allow anyone to take a dog-in-the-manger attitude.

Mr. GEORGE: With a lot of what the Minister said he entirely agreed, but a popular democratic cry was, "The referendum for the people." If the referendum was good for the whole of the people, why should it not be good for the people affected in one particular interest? Where a number of people were grouped together in such places as Harvey, Brunswick, or Waroona, he did not think there would be any opposition at all to an irrigation project, but the people should be given an opportunity of saying whether they were whole-hearted in the matter. If the Minister got a vote in the affirmative it would strengthen his hand, and if the vote was in the negative it would clearly demonstrate what the attitude of the people was.

Mr. THOMAS: Although at first blush there seemed to be something in the suggestion, it was not likely to work well. If a number of people in a district reasonably objected to an irrigation scheme, there would be nothing to prevent them from forwarding a petition to the Government. If they were preponderating in numbers, the Minister would, no doubt, seriously weigh their objection. The point to consider was that we would be taking the vote of those who owned the land, and that we certainly would be consulting them as to their interests, but there were others living in the district who were vitally interested in the question of irrigation, and they, too, had a perfect right to be considered. No man should be allowed to own land and act the dog-in-the-manger to the detriment of others. In addition, consideration should be extended to those who had the right to expect that they would be able to acquire land in these irrigation districts. He would be sorry to see any provision entered into which might ultimately result in actually defeating the purposes of the Bill.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It was almost impossible to believe that people would object to irrigation districts being proclaimed in their areas excepting for certain reasons. They might have an idea that the scheme might be impracticable in a certain district, or that it might be too costly to put in. The member for Murray-Wellington would realise that the ordinary settler was not best fitted to say whether irrigation schemes would be practicable or not. The only persons who could express that view would be the experts.

Mr. George: That is admitted.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Why then did the hon. member desire those people to be given a vote as to whether irrigation districts should be proclaimed. The Bill amply protected all the people who might be brought into an irrigation district.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In Victoria, with its small areas and fairly large population, the Government had not been able to collect interest and sinking fund, and if that trouble existed there how much

more likely was there to be trouble here. It was patent to everyone that we, with our population of 300,000, could irrigate very little of the land which was suitable.

The Minister for Works: That is the beauty of a number of small schemes; we can make a success of one, go on with the next, and so on.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Our duty was to provide that the people should not have irrigation schemes forced upon them —schemes that they could not profitably use.

The Minister for Works: You do not argue that the people in the irrigation districts are the only people concerned? You and I and everybody are concerned in getting the land to produce that which it is capable of producing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It might be possible to force a scheme which would not pay upon the people. At Harvey, where oranges were planted, a scheme there would pay right away, because the people were ready for it, but there were many other places which were suitable for irrigation which would not pay, firstly, because of the limited market, and, secondly, because of the difficulty in getting people in large numbers to irrigate. The Minister for Works and the member for Subiaco argued that the whole of the people were concerned, but it was the people who owned the land who were vitally concerned. No doubt the Minister had consulted Mr. Oldham, who was present at the meetings held by the select committee, and who conducted the case for the Minister very well.

The Minister for Works: He did not conduct the case for me. If he had done so a better case would have been made out. Mr. Oldham was only there on sufferance.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Mr. Oldham did remarkably well. He put questions to all the witnesses, and, in fact, played an important part at every meeting the select committee held. However, the position now was that the member for Murray-Wellington declared that the people who owned the land should have some measure of protection. There was no doubt that the Minister would see to it that these people would receive consideration, but it was certain that the scheme would be more far reaching than we imagined it to-day. The Minister had consulted with the Mayor of Northam in regard to the damming of the Avon. If the water could be held up there it could be made to supply the Yorkrakine district, which was 50 miles away, and where there was land suitable for irrigation. The Bill would well apply to a scheme of that sort. The Minister ought to consider carefully whether the clause in question was sufficient to protect the interests of the people who were to receive water, and we certainly ought to be careful not to force even limited schemes upon the people of the South-West. When the people learned to irrigate they would be on profitable ground, but irrigation had come very slowly in Victoria, so slowly that the Government had been obliged to send outside the State for people. There ought to be some board appointed to recommend to the Minister where schemes could be established. This should not be left to any Minister. It was admittedly a difficult situation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The argument of the member for Northam was one that was influenced solely by his imagination that the Government would put in a scheme really before the people in the district were prepared to pay for it, and before they could finance it. That would be a suicidal policy for any Government to adopt. If the people could not pay for a scheme the burden would be placed on the people of the State, and no Government would do anything which was so silly. The matter had been investigated closely. If the people were not ready for a scheme it would not be undertaken. There was no fear of a scheme being undertaken which would not show a reasonable prospect of becoming a paying proposition. To show that the Government anticipated that there might be some difficulty it was declared that the Government would purchase the land, and the Minister would have the power of putting on a rate so as to immediately apply water to it and put people on it, with an

absolute guarantee that they could start work straight away.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 27—Governor-in-Council may by order alter boundaries of districts:

Mr. GEORGE: Would it not be better if a subclause were added providing that the clause was subject to the same conditions as was Subclause 3 of Clause 26? This might not be absolutely necessary, yet he would suggest it for the consideration of the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause simply defined the power of the Governor to alter boundaries.

Mr. George: And unite two or more districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In such a case those united districts would have the double quantity of water to which they were entitled.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 28—agreed to.

Clausse 29—Mode of constitution of boards:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was provided that any person might be appointed a member of a board, notwithstanding that such person was not a ratepayer of the district. Previously the Minister had pointed out that this clause was required in order that an expert officer might be appointed to a position on the board. On occasion that might be necessary, but it seemed a wrong thing to appoint any person a member of the board if that person were not a ratepayer, particularly as the ratepayers would be responsible for the cost of the work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was simply a provision giving power to go outside the ratepayers in order that the best possible board might be secured to assist in the satisfactory running of an irrigation district. It would be quite possible that somebody from outside might be obtained who would be a positive acquisition to the board. For instance, it might be desired to appoint an engineer a member of the board to assist the board in their administration. Generally speaking, it was not wise to confine the selection to ratepayers, because an irrigation district might be a very restricted district, and so it would be difficult to get sufficient members of a board to administer irrigation affairs in the best interests of the district itself, and at the same time to conserve the State funds. It was to be remembered that, generally speaking, the State would finance these schemes, and the board would have to be relied upon to return interest on the money invested.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The ratepayers are in much the same position as those in a roads board or a municipality.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was not so, because the members of a roads board had very little capital invested other than that they were responsible for. They got Government grants, it was true, but those grants were given, not under the direction of an Act of Parliament, but as a kind of subsidy; and following these grants roads board auditors were sent round to see how the money was expended. In this case, however, the Government might invest thousands of pounds in an irrigation scheme, and would have to see that the scheme was properly administered in order to provide a return. In these circumstances it would not be wise to limit the scope of the appointment of members of a board.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Minister could step in and take charge of the revenues.

The Minister for Works: That would only be in the last resource.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It might be necessary to appoint some officer to the board, but it would be wrong to appoint a board altogether away from the taxpayers who had to foot the Bill. The Government had to find the capital, but the land was responsible for the contributions. Would the Minister accept a proviso in connection with Subclause 2, providing that such person appointed from outside was to be an officer of the civil service.

The Minister for Works: No, I cannot agree to that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister ought not to be prepared to appoint a

person from outside the ratepayers, and outside the civil service.

The Minister for Works: It may be desirable.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: These people were to contribute specially to cover the cost of the scheme, notwithstanding which the Minister held that it was just to appoint one who was not in any way responsible. It was to be hoped the public would notice that the Minister was in this case departing from the usual custom of giving the contributors to a scheme the right to manage their own affairs.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister could limit the selection to officers of the civil service.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The choice could not be limited to officers of the civil service, because those officers were not employed for the purpose of becoming members of irrigation boards. They had their ordinary duties to perform, and if they could be spared to attend meetings of irrigation boards their services could be dispensed with altogether.

Hon. J. Mitchell: But the Engineer-in-Chief is chairman of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That officer was also conducting very big works at Fremantle, and it was part of his duty to pay frequent visits to Fremantle, and so no extra expense was incurred. But to expect officers of the public service to attend to the affairs of irrigation boards scattered over different parts of the State would be to disorganise the public service altogether. The hon. member had said it was not right to take the power to appoint as members of the board persons outside of the ratepayers. But the hon. member had been a member of a Government who appointed certain water boards. That Government had taken power to appoint someone to represent the Government on those boards. Experience had shown that it was a pity that more of these special representatives had not been appointed; because the ratepayers as board members had been selling the water at a lower price than would return interest and sinking fund on the capital outlay. Government funds had been invested in these schemes, and the interest and sinking fund had not been paid, with the result that the general taxpayer had been required to make up the deficiency.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Why not stop it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So many of them had there been to stop that he had been kept busy all his time trying to stop them. Because of that he did not want any such difficulty in connection with the irrigation boards. The drainage boards had furnished a similar experience. Thousands of pounds of public funds had been invested in drainage works, but on taking control of the department he had found that only one of the drainage schemes was paying, the other boards having taken up the attitude that, seeing that public funds were invested in the works they were not going to bother about paying interest and sinking fund. As Minister he had found it necessary to go to the extent of taking control of drainage areas in order to compel the people served to pay their rates so as to recoup the Consolidated Revenue for the capital invested. With experiences like these before him he did not desire to see the scope limited of the appointment of members of the irrigation boards. It would be unwise to confine the selection to the civil service, because this would result in disorganising the service, and moreover it would be robbing the department of officers whose services could be utilised to better effect in other directions.

Mr. FOLEY: Of course, if the Government were going to invest money to the benefit of any one district it would be well to allow the people who were to make use of the scheme some say as to how the scheme would be run; but those people should not be given all the say, because when this was allowed to happen it sometimes worked to the detriment, not only of the money invested, but of the scheme itself. The member for Wagin had by interjection asked why the Minister had not stopped certain practices

of the water boards. He (Mr. Foley) knew that ever since the Minister had been in office much of the time of the departmental officers had been taken up in adjusting the affairs of the water boards, to correct something which would surely happen again if the proposed amendment were agreed to. In many instances there would be found qualified to sit on these irrigation boards men who could take an impartial view of the administration of the Government funds. In connection with one water board which had spent many thousands of pounds of Government money, one of the biggest customers had a seat on the board, and either through the other members not having enough backbone or through them studying their own business interests, that particular customer was allowed to control the affairs. The result was that the board was insolvent, and if the Government were to take the scheme over to-day they would find it in a worse condition than when it was handed over to the control of the board. If it was possible to put on an irrigation board persons other than ratepayers, men might be obtainable whose services would be of great advantage to the scheme. It had been proved unwise to limit the scope of the Minister in getting the best men available on these boards.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 30—Board to have the powers and authorities of a water board:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was under this clause that the board referred to in the previous clause would have power to levy rates and make arrangements in connection with artesian wells. He had promised to point those powers out to the member for Murray-Wellington.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 31—Construction and maintenance of works:

Mr. GEORGE: In the Bill of last session it had been stated that all work should be carried out with moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. That provision was missing from this Bill.

The Minister for Works: Part VIII. deals with finance and Clause 44 refers to money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose.

Mr. GEORGE: Clause 44 said that the Minister should prepare a statement of works constructed out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose, but nothing was said about moneys drawn by the Minister from other funds. In the previous Bill it was distinctly stated that Parliament should have control over all moneys applied to this purpose.

The Minister for Works: Clause 47 deals with that point.

Mr. GEORGE: Could the Minister carry out these works without submitting the matter to Parliament in order to get an appropriation of funds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Minister could not possibly construct works except out of funds provided by Parliament. The addition to this Bill was that it provided that boards were not limited to borrowing from the Colonial Treasurer. A board might get funds from another source, but certain forms would require to be gone through. If any district considered that an irrigation scheme should be undertaken, the Government might say, "We do not think it should be undertaken, but if the people think it worthy of consideration and are prepared to foot the bill, we will give them power to raise the money." Where the Minister carried out the works, however, he could operate only with funds voted by Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Cannot he do it as a board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Whilst the Minister had the powers of a board, he was limited to doing works out of money provided by Parliament. The Minister could not constitute himself a board and then go outside of Parliament and the Government to borrow money for the purpose of irrigation works.

Mr. GEORGE: The Minister's interpretation did not seem to be correct. Under the Bill the Minister was given all the powers conferred on the board

and they must include the borrowing of money by debentures.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In every loan Bill was to be found an item for agriculture, which would probably cover money for irrigation purposes. Would the Minister give an assurance that he would not undertake irrigation works of any magnitude without consulting Parliament? Nor was it desirable that a board should have power to raise and spend money without the authority of Parliament. The people of the country were responsible for the expenditure, and Parliament should have a say as to whether it should be incurred or not. This Bill gave a board power to raise money without consulting Parliament, although it must consult the Government.

The Minister for Works: A board can only borrow money with the approval of the Governor.

Mr. GEORGE: Clause 50 said that the board might, with the approval of the Governor, borrow money and "all debentures and the interest thereon shall be a charge upon the works constructed by or vested in the board under this Act, and upon the revenues of the board." Where money was borrowed, whether by the Minister or a board, practically on the security of the country, it was desirable that a statement of the expenditure should be laid on the Table. Seeing that the Minister took unto himself the power to borrow money, that money should be appropriated by Parliament so that the Legislature might keep track of the expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In connection with water supplies for towns Parliament voted a lump sum, and the Minister was given the responsibility of spending that money in the interests of the State. At Wagin, for instance, the Government had installed a water supply, but they did not go to Parliament with the details. They had the authority of Parliament for the expenditure of a lump sum and they used the vote for the construction of this work; afterwards they declared the cost and said to the people of Wagin, "You constitute a board to take over the works at actual cost and pay us interest and sinking fund on the expenditure." The same principle would apply under this Bill. The Minister would not go outside of the appropriation of Parliament to do his works, but he would not come to Parliament with every detail of irrigation works which he proposed to establish. In connection with the vote for town water supplies, the Minister did not give to Parliament the details of his proposals, but the Estimates usually stated where it was proposed work should be undertaken.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You always outline the estimated cost.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the Estimates simply stated where the work was to be done. The Minister was subject to Parliamentary control, and he expended the lump vote in those districts where the expenditure was more urgently required. Then he was not limited to the construction of new works, but could utilise the vote for additions and improvements. The same thing would be done under this Bill. There would be a lump sum voted, and out of that the Minister might carry out works, but he would not be limited to details. However, he was not very keen about giving the board power to borrow except from the Colonial Treasurer. That provision had been inserted because it was considered that it might be desirable in a case where a board wanted to incur expenditure which the Government would not be prepared to father, and they would simply say to the board that if their bona fides were proved they could have power to borrow money from some outside source. He was not keen on the clause at all. He was quite prepared to limit it to the vote of Parliament because all the irrigation work, he believed, would be done by the Minister who had charge of this measure.

Mr. GEORGE: If the clause was struck out his objection would be removed. In regard to the lump sum voted, the Minister was not obliged to give all the details, but the Auditor General reported on the expenditure to Par-

liament. That could be done with regard to money which was to be appropriated by Parliament, but where the Minister took the power indicated by this clause, and when Clause 50 was read with it, the Auditor General would not report to Parliament on that expenditure. The Minister appeared to be with him in the contention that it was desirable that expenditure for which the State was responsible——

The Minister for Works: The State would not be responsible under Clause 50.

Mr. GEORGE: The State would have to stand the burden of the debt.

The Minister for Works: Not under Clause 50.

Mr. GEORGE: It must be added to the aggregate indebtedness of the whole State.

The Minister for Works: It would not be added to the State debt.

Mr. GEORGE: It would be a portion of the State indebtedness. If the Minister would agree to strike out the clause——

The Minister for Works: I am not keen about it but it was thought it would provide a little extra assistance.

Mr. GEORGE: Then would the Minister agree to insert the words, "out of money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose"? No Minister should have powers which he could exercise given to him to borrow money without Parliament having some say. Any money borrowed should be borrowed by the Treasurer, and when the Treasurer borrowed money it became the function of the Auditor General to report to Parliament on the expenditure and members then had an opportunity to discuss such expenditure.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not necessary to insert the words suggested because finance was dealt with under Part VIII.

Mr. George: You are taking all the powers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we passed this clause, the point could be argued when Clause 50 was reached.

Mr. McDONALD: Was it intended under this clause that the Minister should override a board in existence? It was easy to understand the need for the clause as it affected the position before a board was constituted, but when a board might be dissolved, the Minister would have power to override the decision of the board after its constitution. Was that the intention?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not proposed to override a board but to give the Minister power to construct or maintain works with the concurrence of a board after the board were appointed. The board would first have to agree to take over the liability. The clause would give the Minister power to construct works even after a board was established. The Bill was based on the assumption that the works would be carried out by the Minister. Even after a board was established, any additions required to an irrigation scheme could be carried out by the Minister. A board would not maintain the necessary staff to do the work as economically as the Government could do it.

Mr. McDonald: The board assume the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They must because they were liable for the interest and sinking fund. If they did not agree to the work being done, they would not be likely to agree to pay the interest and sinking fund, and consequently the Minister could not carry out the work. Therefore, the work would not be done without the board's concurrence.

Mr. McDONALD: Assuming that the board did not agree to the work being done by the Minister, the board might be dissolved.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. McDONALD: But that power was given under the clause and the work could then be carried out after the dissolution of the board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Supposing the board wanted work done, and this provision was not made in the Bill, how could the Minister step in and do it for them? The clause was necessary so that the Minister could do the work if the board so desired.

Mr. McDonald: The board have power to borrow money for certain things.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but they might not want to do it themselves.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 32 to 35—agreed to.

Clause 36—Principles in awarding compensation:

Mr. GEORGE: Subclause (d) practically meant the introduction of the betterment principle. How far did the Minister intend to allow that to operate? In the Harvey district the irrigation scheme would probably be completed before long and if there came a question of compensation for injury, it might be argued that some benefit was received from the established of a railway, a benefit which existed prior to the Irrigation Bill becoming law.

The Minister for Works: These works are limited to those done under this Bill.

Mr. GEORGE: That limitation had escaped his notice.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 37—agreed to.

Clause 38—Irrigation rates:

Mr. GEORGE: Since last year the words "interest on and contributions to the sinking fund for the redemption of loans" had been added. He agreed with their inclusion and this showed that the delay had been an advantage to the measure rather than otherwise.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 39 to 42—agreed to.

Clause 43—Supply of water not compulsory:

Mr. GEORGE: An absence or shortage of water must necessarily be of considerable moment to the persons affected and provision ought to be made whereby the collection of rates would be deferred during any such shortage. The landholder should not escape the rates, but provision should be made for deferring the payment. During dry seasons rents in the agricultural areas had been deferred and a similar consideration should be shown in irrigation districts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be very dangerous to include such a provision in the measure; it would be an invitation to people, directly they were confronted with any difficulties, to ask that their rates should be deferred. The Government were under no legal obligation to defer rents in the agricultural areas, but the necessities had demanded that some consideration should be given to people who were in difficulties, and the Government would have the power to do the same under this measure. Rates could not be deferred without imposing the burden on somebody else. Only the actual cost of the work could be imposed, and if the Government could not get their rates in a year of drought, it would be only fair to say that in good years they they should contribute something towards a sort of guarantee fund against bad years. If the burden was taken off the people in irrigation areas it would be transferred to other people who would not have an opportunity to get a profit during good years.

Mr. GEORGE: The State had to bear the burden, and it was questionable whether this was a fair way of doing business. In one case the land belonged to the Government and remained the Government's until the money was paid; but in this instance it belonged to the occupiers, who were simply paying for the water and for the works that were being constructed. Once the debt was lifted from them it was put on to the shoulders of someone else. If there was a succession of bad years, and there was not sufficient water for the people to irrigate, any Government would extend special consideration; but the clause was absolutely necessary so that claimants would not come upon the State for compensation when Providence was not so kind as we would like it to be.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 44—Minister may determine value of works transferred to Board:

Mr. GEORGE: This clause, taken in conjunction with Clauses 31 and 50, appeared to give the Minister power to borrow money on debentures, but any expenditure in that way should be subject to the Auditor General and laid on the Table of the House. The Minister would have power to borrow, whereas in the ordinary course such power rested with the Colonial Treasurer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Clause 44 said distinctly that the Minister "shall" do certain things out of money appropriated by Parliament for the purpose. Immediately the Minister carried out work with moneys appropriated by Parliament the matter came automatically under the purview of the Auditor General, who must report on the expenditure of the money.

Mr. George: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause went on to state that the liability should be transferred to the board, and the board should be liable to the Colonial Treasurer for the interest and sinking fund. It was not his desire to construct works without the approval of Parliament. The matter could be further dealt with in connection with Clause 50.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 45 to 49—agreed to.

Clause 50—Power to borrow money:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The object of this clause was simply not to limit the possibility of establishing irrigation schemes to the funds that were voted by Parliament. It aimed at giving a board the power with the approval of the Governor in Council, which meant that the Minister and his officers would investigate each proposition, and if they found any proposition where the board desired to raise money and go further than the funds voted by Parliament would permit, there would be power to enable the board to go outside and raise funds, which did not, however, become part of the State debt, but were confined absolutely to the irrigation district and the ratepayers in that district.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Who issues the bonds?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board issued the bonds, and the bond holders had the right to come in and take control of the work.

Mr. George: Would not the Government have the first mortgage?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The district in question would be one where we would not be prepared to put in Government money, and the people within a given area were desirous of establishing irrigation schemes. The Government might think that the vote of Parliament was not sufficient, or there might be other reasons, and would say to the people, "You constitute a board and prove your bona-fides; we will investigate the matter, and by Order-in-Council give you permission to raise funds, but the works are the security for the funds, and if you fail in your obligation to those who lend the money then the bond holders can step in and take the works." Personally, he did not think it was likely that the clause would come into operation within any reasonable time, as he was convinced in regard to a State like Western Australia, with so many small schemes, that generally speaking the vote of Parliament would enable the Minister to deal with a sufficient number to satisfy the people; but there was just a possibility that there might be the need to use the clause, and he did not see any danger in leaving it there.

Mr. George: It is in conjunction with Clauses 31 and 44. The Colonial Treasurer should be the only one to borrow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was not his desire to give the Minister the power to go beyond the Colonial Treasurer in the raising of funds. It would be wrong if the clause gave the Minister the power to go outside the authorisation of Parliament in the expenditure of money. If the Minister became the board he should not have the power to do so. If the board failed it was the bond holder who stepped in; the Government had no liability and no responsibility. On recommittal he would go into the question, and see whether the clause gave the Minister the power which the hon. member for Murray-Wellington thought it did. If it did give that power it was wrong, and would have to be amended.

Mr. GEORGE: In conjunction with it, the Minister's attention should be given to Clause 51, which stated clearly that all the liability of the board should become the liability of the Minister.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In his opinion there was no power for the board to issue debentures. Apart from that, while there might be some districts which would have control absolutely by a board, in others

the people would prefer to put in their own works, and would have the power to raise money and expend it as they pleased. In Subclause 2, which dealt with borrowing, there was no provision for a vote to be taken.

The Minister for Works: The people have to get the approval of the Governor in Council.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The people who paid the piper should be allowed to call the tune, and the clause should be altered to read as one with the Municipal Act. He moved an amendment—

That after "district" at the end of Subclause 2 the words "and a vote taken as provided in Sections 446, 447, 448, and 449 of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1906" be added.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It was surprising to find the hon. member moving such an amendment. A municipality could carry out various works and undertakings, and it had been found necessary in the past to take an expression of the opinion of ratepayers to see whether the municipal council should embark on certain works. Under the Bill before the Committee the irrigation board was formed for the purpose of providing irrigation works. Without irrigation works the board was not necessary and, therefore, the amendment as proposed would be of no value. The board would be formed at the request of the persons living in the district. Those who were outside would not prefer any request for a board to be formed. The amendment was not necessary and should not be agreed to.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The original works might involve the expenditure of, say, £5,000 and it might be necessary to extend those works to the extent of £30,000. Did the Minister mean to say that power could be given to any board to raise such a sum of money without the people being consulted? If the provision that the ratepayers should be consulted was good in a municipality it should also be good in the case of an irrigation board. The board need not be elected by the people; it could be appointed by the Minister.

The Minister for Works: We would not appoint anyone specially to look after our money.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What he was talking about was the power which the Bill gave to the Minister. Provision should be made to enable those most concerned to vote on the question before the money was raised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As the Honorary Minister had pointed out, there was no analogy between the provisions of the Municipalities Act and the measure before the Committee. The member for Northam would know that the Northam municipal authorities dammed the Avon for the purpose of making a lake in the centre of the town to improve the appearance of the town. That was of no direct advantage other than to beautify the town, and the ratepayers had to be consulted as to the desirability of the work because it was not going to be of direct benefit to the people. With regard to road making another instance might be given in the cases of East Northam and West Northam. The council might desire to raise a loan for the purpose of carrying on work in East Northam, towards which the people in West Northam would have to contribute, and they had a right, therefore, to be consulted as to whether half of the money should not be spent in West Northam. Such a thing did not apply in the case of irrigation districts. Everyone in an irrigation district would get some return from the expenditure. They had to convince the Governor-in-Council that it was desirable in the first place to establish a scheme, and then to permit them to go outside to get the money to finance the scheme. There was absolutely no comparison between those inside an irrigation district and those in a municipal district.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 51 to 54—agreed to.

Clause 55—Accounts to be audited:

Mr. GEORGE: The desire should be to make the work of these boards as little irksome as possible. A system of accounts should be prepared by the department and approved by the Auditor Gen-

eral so that the boards might afterwards get the fullest assistance from the Auditor General.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was done at the present time. Wherever boards were established the department outlined the method of book-keeping, and particularly was this the case in regard to water boards. The department generally sent one of the accountants of the Water Supply Department to give the water board a start. That would be done in connection with the irrigation boards.

Clause passed.

Clauses 56 to 59—agreed to.

Clause 60—Land may be acquired and leased for cultivation:

Mr. GEORGE: Attention might be drawn to the proviso in this clause which read, "Provided that land actually under irrigation shall not be acquired by compulsory process, except so far as the land may be required for the construction of works." He was not quite sure whether in the case of taking land used for irrigation, compensation would have to be given to the owner. If it was proved to be necessary to carry a scheme through some person's land, compensation should be paid. It would be a fair thing if a channel had to be cut through a man's orchard to pay him compensation and make that a charge on the general works.

The Minister for Works: That is provided for.

Mr. GEORGE: Further along in the same clause there was a provision in regard to land acquired that the Minister could register the certified copy of the notification in the register, but that the production of the certificate of title should not be required. It seemed to him that the introduction of the certificate should be required; it was an essential matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This part of the clause dealt with the power of a Minister to acquire or compulsorily resume land. There were cases where there were parcels of land that it was not possible to get a certificate of title for because the owners could not be located. People had taken up land and gone to other parts of the world and it was only in such instances where it was not desirous to hang up works or prevent works being continued, simply because it was not possible to get hold of the people that this clause would be given effect to. The Parliamentary draughtsman had stated that it was necessary to have such a provision otherwise works would be prevented from being carried on.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The compulsory process of acquiring land was altogether objectionable. Under the clause the Minister might take land by compulsory process just when he pleased, for, unlike the provisions of the several railway Acts, the clause did not require the Minister to make his resumptions within a certain time after the establishment of the works. Did the Minister think it fair to continually hold a sword over the landowners, a sword of unspoken threat that he would acquire their land whenever he pleased? Did the Minister not realise that the people who owned the land would have to pay for the scheme?

The Minister for Works: No.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Did the Minister mean to make a wholesale resumption of land in an irrigation district?

The Minister for Works: If necessary, yes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was an extraordinary policy.

The Minister for Works: You hold that we should build works for the improvement of a person's land, and allow that person to have all the advantage arising from those works.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should not have the power to take the whole of a man's land when the owner was willing to irrigate. The Minister's idea is to take the land in moderately large parcels and subdivide it into small lots. It was not right to give the Minister power to take land just where he pleased. The Minister would be empowered to take land when and where it to him seemed fit.

Mr. Dwyer: On the advice of the Commissioners and with the approval of the Governor.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Apparently the Minister desired to take all the land in an irrigable district.

The Minister for Works: Where it is in large parcels.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause was entirely the Minister's own, and was not to be found in any other Act. The Minister had made it clear that the land was to pay for the scheme, notwithstanding which the Minister was taking power to compulsorily purchase the land. The time in which compulsory purchases could be made should be limited to a specified period, as in the various railway Acts.

The Minister for Works: You can construct your railway before you start acquiring the land, but it is altogether different in this case.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The powers sought to be taken by the Minister were altogether too wide. Hon. members should vote against the clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Being a representative of large landholders, the hon. member had very little sympathy with the small men. The hon. member was opposed to the taking over of large estates, and consequently his support was not to be expected for the clause. We had along a number of our rivers large tracts of cultivable country, more particularly in the South-West. These rivers had been taken up years ago within large areas of country. The hon. member would like to put those people who happened to own large areas in a position to say, "The Government are going to instal a big irrigation scheme. We will subdivide our lands and sell them out in small parcels, and so will secure to ourselves the benefit of the expenditure of public money." He (the Minister for Works) was not prepared to put public funds into a proposition which would transfer the benefit from that expenditure to an individual or individuals. If public funds were to be spent the public must get the benefit of that expenditure. The State would have to get the land and subdivide it and settle it, and so secure the unearned increment from the irrigation works, while at the same time getting closer settlement. It was to be remembered that whilst the clause gave the Minister power to compulsorily acquire land, yet he had to acquire it under the provisions of the Public Works Act; that was to say, he had to pay the value of the land. No land holder would be permitted to say, "I will not sell; I will block the scheme." In such case the land would be acquired, willy nilly. If we were going in for irrigation we must get closer settlement, without which it would not be worth while spending the money. To get closer settlement we must first acquire the land. The clause gave the Minister power to acquire land and get it ready for cultivation, so that as soon as the reservoir was completed the people could be settled on the land. The object was to overcome difficulties experienced in other countries where irrigation schemes had been installed, but without getting the land settled, in consequence of which irrigation districts had been for a long time burdens on the State. By acquiring land and subdividing and settling it properly, we could get an immediate result from the expenditure of State funds on irrigation. The clause would impose no injustice on the owners of large tracts of country. No landed proprietor should adopt the attitude that because he happened to have land along a river bank he should have the whole of the advantage from the State irrigation scheme. However, the land owner was justified in saying, "If you are going to take my land you must pay for it." The Bill provided that the land should be paid for. Unless power was given to acquire land, subdivide it, settle it and cultivate it, there would be no irrigation scheme so far as he was concerned.

Mr. George: How would you apply it on the Harvey?

The Minister for Works: It is not required there, because they already have closer settlement in that district.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister had said that if the Government expended money on these schemes, the Government should have the power to do certain things. As a matter of fact the people would be paying for these schemes, notwithstanding which the Minister would have the power to compulsorily purchase the people's land.

The Minister for Works: Where the board spend the money, I have no say in it, and this clause does not apply. The clause does not give the board power to acquire the land. Such power lies with the Minister only.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That was not so. Wherever irrigation was established the Minister had absolute control over the land.

The Minister for Works: You heard me give an undertaking that if it is so we will alter it; because it should not be so.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If, in addition to that undertaking the Minister would have this question of compulsory purchase also looked into one would be satisfied. When talking so lightly about the compulsory taking of land, the Minister ought to remember that in many cases a sentimental value was attached to the land.

The Minister for Works: We will not pay sentimental prices.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Did the Minister argue that he should have the right to come in at any time and acquire a man's property bit by bit; that he should collect water rates for five or six years and then acquire the property without, however, returning the rates collected? The Minister was not bound to take the land within any fixed time.

The Minister for Works: He is only bound by common sense. He is not likely to take a piece of the land to-day and another piece in twelve months' time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Still the power was there. Were these land owners to have no fixity of tenure? Were they to understand that their land could be taken from them whenever the Minister chose?

The Premier: We can resume any land at any time.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Would the Premier like it to go out that no land owner was safe at any time? It was a very dangerous principle for Parliament to affirm. If the land was to be acquired, let it be acquired within a reasonable time. But if the Minister was to have power to acquire whenever he pleased, some added value should be given on account of the rates which the owner had paid in the meantime.

Mr. GEORGE: The member for Northam seemed to fear that a man might have his land taken from him by the Minister after he had been paying rates for some time, and not have his rates refunded. But the clause said that if the land was actually under irrigation the Minister could acquire it only if the owner was agreeable, unless, of course, it was required for the construction of works.

Mr. Thomas: If he had paid rates for a number of years without having used the scheme, and then had his land resumed without receiving any compensation for the rates he had paid, he would be very hardly treated.

Mr. GEORGE: The clause said that if the land under irrigation could not be acquired by agreement, it could not be acquired at all. He could quite understand the Minister's view that if the State was to incur big expenditure on irrigation works, it must have some reasonable prospect of the greatest good resulting from the work provided. Therefore, there must be a certain amount of power given to the Minister to come to an agreement with the owner, or some process provided by which the Minister might deal with the land. In regard to Subclause 7, which dealt with claims for compensation, he thought it desirable that there should be a time limit fixed in which the Government should deal with claims put before them. There had been considerable delay in connection with a Geraldton claim for compensation under the Public Works Act, whilst in Perth some claims had been sent in 12 months ago, and yet to-day not even an acknowledgment of the receipt of the claims had been sent to the claimants or their agents. There should be some limit to the time in which the department might keep matters of this sort hanging on. It was not fair to take a man's land and keep him waiting for many months before he could get a settlement of his claim.

Mr. LANDER: It was to be hoped that the Minister would stand firm on this clause. At Pinjarra, in the district rep-

resented by the preceding speaker, land had been held up for years, and if the Government were able to take that land and utilise it for closer settlement it would be better for the town and better for the railways. If there was to be an irrigation scheme, the Government should have power to acquire land that was unutilised; otherwise it would be held up just as it was at Pinjarra to-day.

Mr. GEORGE: There was a big project for the employment of English capital to bring about irrigation and closer settlement on one of the large estates at Pinjarra. The introduction of that English capital was viewed with some favour by the Public Works Department, and engineers had been down there to inspect the land. The fact of an irrigation scheme being started in Pinjarra with English capital might lead to the better utilisation of other estates in that historic district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There had been many delays in connection with the settlement of claims for land resumed under the Public Works Act, but it would be dangerous indeed to fix a time limit. In a number of cases the claimants had failed to supply the requisite information to the department.

Mr. George: But there has not been even an acknowledgement of the claim having been received.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The claim should have been acknowledged, and he would be pleased to receive the names of those whose claims were unacknowledged. At the same time he was not prepared to go to the extent of putting a time limit in this Bill, because of difficulties of that description. Admittedly, there had been too much delay in connection with the settlement of claims; they had been accumulating for years, but in some cases the delay was due to the claimants themselves, and in other cases to carelessness on the part of Governments in not making the resumptions, particularly in connection with railway construction. The City resumptions were congested and those claims could not be settled by a scratch of the pen. There was a tremendous lot of routine to go through, negotiations had to be conducted, both sides attempted to avoid the court, and then when they decided to go to that tribunal the court was not prepared to hear them. There were a number of cases waiting for submission to the court, but the court was not ready to deal with them. He hoped there would not be any attempt to put a time limit in this Bill, because such a limit would make the administration of the measure impossible.

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved an amendment—

That Subclause 11 be struck out.

Last session the leasehold principle in connection with Crown lands had been rejected, but in this subclause it was provided that land owned by the Crown might be dedicated to the purposes of this measure and leased by the controlling Minister. Then there would be two Lands Ministers, one in the Works Department who would lease his land, and the other in the Lands Department who would sell land, because the law of the country required him to do so. If any class of people would require the freehold, it would be those people seeking to make a living on small blocks. The freehold system was the system of the country, and he objected to this method of introducing leasehold.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The basis of the Bill was irrigation to encourage intense culture by closer settlement. There was only one way of guaranteeing closer settlement and that was under the leasehold principle. The Government would take a parcel of land, subdivide it, and sell to individuals the quantity which each could successfully cultivate and make a good living from. The expert officers would decide the size of the blocks, but each man would have sufficient for his requirements and an area with which he could successfully cope. If the land, after being acquired for closer settlement, was sold, some settlers would buy others out, and gradually the holdings would get back into large areas again, and after a few years it would be found that the very object in view, namely, closer settlement, had been defeated; consequently it would be necessary to again go through the process of purchasing and dividing.

The Premier: That has been done already.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Large blocks had been repurchased for closer settlement, not for irrigation schemes, but for agricultural farms. In Victoria there were numerous instances where large estates had been purchased, subdivided, sold and settled, and a few individuals had bought it up again, and the State had to repurchase it once more.

Mr. Harper: The individual holding it might let it out again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the individual did not do so, the State would have to purchase it again and so the State would go on perpetually buying land and alienating land, and yet monopoly would establish itself again under the freehold system.

Mr. Allen: You can always tax it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Closer settlement was essentially a leasehold proposition. It was different from land settlement as applied to the agricultural districts. There was an established system in regard to agricultural lands. Many people held that it was wrong to have both the leasehold and freehold systems, but if all the land could be brought under leasehold they would not object.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The man who has the freehold does not object to retaining it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If a State could be started under the leasehold system everyone would be satisfied and happy, but the difficulty was that the freehold system was established and the financial institutions would not recognise the value of the leasehold title, and the man who took up leasehold was consequently penalised. The Northern Territory was being settled under leasehold conditions——

Mr. Harper: They are not making much success of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The latest reports from a Liberal Government stated that they were making a success of it and this proved his contention that the leasehold system could be established on a large scale in a comparatively isolated area. Then take the North-West——

Mr. S. Stubbs: Go to New Zealand.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In New Zealand both systems were operating in a comparatively small area. The North-West was under leasehold, and there was no agitation on the part of pastoralists for freehold. Leasehold had become the recognised system. There was no other title in the North-West and leasehold was giving general satisfaction. The same would apply to irrigation districts. A new system was being established and established on the only basis which would ensure to the State that these areas would be perpetually under closer settlement and would lead to that intense culture which was necessary to make them a success. If we adopted irrigation under leasehold and freehold, there might be some dissatisfaction, but if we started off right we would finish right. If the question was considered from the State point of view, members must agree that to absolutely guarantee the success of irrigation the system must be under leasehold.

Mr. Allen: Do you propose to take all the land?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In many systems the Government would take all the land, because very little of it was subdivided. In the Harvey scheme, which would be the first to be pushed forward —it had already been started—that land was alienated and cut into small blocks and closer settlement prevailed. No Government could improve what was existing at Harvey, and that scheme would not be interfered with. That would be a scheme in itself and would deal with that particular area.

Mr. Allen: That is the freehold system.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then there would be another scheme at Harvey on Crown lands, and that would be on the leasehold principle, but in all other schemes where there were large tracts of land to be subdivided by the State, leasehold would prevail. Apart from the Harvey scheme, each scheme would be a

new one, and generally speaking would apply to districts where land was held in large blocks.

Mr. MALE: In spite of the Minister's explanation, the amendment would have his support. The Minister had demonstrated that no harm had resulted from the freehold system at Harvey, and that there was not the slightest necessity to to pastoral land.

The Minister for Works: At the present time, but there is nothing to prevent a man from buying the lot; as a matter of fact it is going on gradually.

Mr. MALE: The Minister said there was no need to buy that land.

The Minister for Works: At the present time.

Mr. MALE: It was no use talking of a future time.

Mr. Heitmann: What is the experience of the world?

Mr. MALE: The experience of the world was that freehold was very satisfactory. The Minister tried to show that the leasehold system was proving successful in the Northern Territory. The conditions there were very different from those in the South-West. The statement that there was no demand for freehold in the North-West was incorrect. Freehold did exist.

The Minister for Works: Not freehold pastoral land.

Mr. MALE: There was no reference to pastoral lands.

The Minister for Works: I said on the part of pastoralists.

Mr. MALE: Wherever agricultural land had been laid out in the North, it had been laid out with the idea of being sold as freehold. Where suburban land had been laid out as garden blocks, it had been under freehold and there had been a demand for freehold, and always would be in spite of what the Minister might say. If closer settlement was to be encouraged and people outside the State were to be attracted to settle on our land, freehold must be offered them or they would not come here. It would be useless to go in for expensive works and expect people to take up leasehold. Was not the man with 20 or 30 acres who employed labour doing as much as the man who held five acres. Proportionately the same number of people was employed, and with freehold capital was brought into the State and more people would be employed on irrigation areas.

Mr. LANDER: The previous speaker had quoted the Harvey district. Why was that such a success? It was because of the system which the Minister was seeking to have adopted.

Mr. Allen: That is freehold.

Mr. LANDER: A few years ago that estate was cut up and sold in small blocks. In the South-West there were large blocks which were not being used, and which would not be cut up by their present owners. The Harvey estate was cut up many years ago and sold in small blocks, and that was the explanation of its success. If the Minister insisted on retaining the clause as printed, there would be plenty of little men now in the mills who would be prepared to take up land in the South-West, but at the present time they were unable to get it. The owners of large estates hung on to the land and took advantage of the railways and other facilities provided by the State while some people were unable to get land to settle on.

Mr. THOMAS: If there was to be closer settlement and hon. members desired it to continue for any length of time, only one system would answer, and that was leasehold tenure. Harvey had been referred to as an illustration of the benefits under alienation, but while that might be effective for the time being, the day might come when the present small holdings would accumulate into the large holdings of the future. It was argued that, even if the land did accumulate into large holdings, the proprietors would still be prepared to lease it. That was true, but they would lease it at the most extortionate rate they could obtain from the people. Instead of the State being able to deal fairly and equitably with the tenants, it would be a private individual would be endeavouring to extort the last penny from them. An hon. member had said that in England there was no leasehold, whereas in England about 88 per

cent. of the people were under leasehold tenure — unfortunately not from the State, but from private individuals. Under this irrigation scheme with non-alienation we would secure for all time a sure means of closer settlement for the people, and there would be no possibility of the land accumulating in the hands of one or two individuals. Whatever might be said about non-alienation under ordinary conditions, against the proposal in connection with the irrigation schemes no valid argument could be introduced.

Mr. George: Would you take all that land at Waterloo and on the Collie River?

Mr. THOMAS: Where it was once necessary to resume the land and the State invested its capital in behalf of the small settler, the State had the right to demand that the land should remain the property of the small settler for all time. We would defeat the best objects of the Bill if we allowed the power once more for the large landholder to get a grip and deprive the people of their rights. Unquestionably there would always be a demand for freehold, while human greed existed, for personal benefits. What was the real basis of the desire for private ownership in land? To profit at the expense of the rest of the people of the State. All the expenditure of money by the State went to the increasing of land values. Would hon. members spend all the people's money for the benefit of privileged individuals who had been able to get the land into their own hands? There was only one excuse for owning land, and that was for it to be used in the bests interests of the individual and the State. If the Minister was successful in carrying this clause, he (Mr. Thomas) could foresee happy and prosperous settlements wherever irrigation was carried out. But if the clause was defeated he could foresee a time when the private landholder would own the land and the majority of the smaller people would be paying tribute to him.

Mr. ALLEN: It was regrettable that so much heat had been introduced in connection with the clause. All hon. members were anxious for an irrigation Bill to go through, but unless care were exercised this would be the clause on which the measure would be wrecked.

Mr. Lander: It is not the clause on which it was wrecked last time.

Mr. ALLEN: No doubt the hon. member for East Perth owned the freehold of his own property.

Mr. Heitmann: What has that to do with it?

Mr. ALLEN: People ought to be consistent.

Mr. Heitmann: You believed in municipalising the trams, but you ride on the Government trams.

Mr. ALLEN: For the same reason as the hon. member did. A good deal of what the Minister had said about leasehold being a success might apply to the starting of new settlements, but the matter of leasehold or freehold should be optional. At Renmark in South Australia the people irrigated on freehold and did well, and he had not heard anything about them being absorbed by big landholders. If the Government would not agree to freehold, let the matter of leasehold or freehold be optional.

Mr. HARPER: It was to be regretted that the Minister for Works could not see his way to accept the amendment. The hon. member for Bunbury had waxed eloquent as a great prophet of the future, but the freehold system for closer settlement, and the small selector, were certainly essential. Large areas of this land would not pay an individual owner. If a man had what he and his family could cultivate he would do better out of it than by having a large area and having to employ labour. A splendid argument in favour of freehold, as against leasehold, had come from New Zealand, where the Government by 42 votes to 14 had passed a land Bill giving effect to the freehold principle for settling their land. It was absolutely contrary to all reasoning and argument to say that leasehold was the best system to promote settlement on the irrigated lands of the State. Proof of that fact was to be found in the dairying districts of Victoria.

Mr. McDOWALL: From the manner in which hon. members on the Opposition

benches cried out about the leasehold system, one would think that that system was almost unknown. Everyone would admit that Great Britain was a great country, but there only 12 per cent. of the agricultural holdings were owned by their holders, and the remaining 88 per cent. were leasehold.

Mr. Mitchell: That is no argument.

Mr. McDOWALL: If leasehold was a curse, as alleged by members of the Opposition, then those members must say that England was a doubly cursed country, because it had the worst class of leasehold, the land having been alienated to large holders who farmed it out. The object of the Bill, on the other hand, was for the Crown to let the land out in a reasonable way. If the provision for leasehold or freehold was made optional, some of the freeholders would be bought out, and the object in view would be defeated. In Great Britain the number of holdings of one to five acres that were rented was 92,662 compared with 15,432 that were owned; the number of holdings of five to fifty acres that were rented was 203,346, compared with 28,473 that were owned; the number of holdings of fifty to three hundred acres that were rented was 136,411 compared with 14,491 that were owned. Of the holdings over 300 acres only 2,792 were owned, and 14,922 were rented. Out of the 508,629 agricultural holdings in Great Britain of over one acre in area 447,341 or 87.95 were rented. Therefore, it was seen that the people in Great Britain occupied their land on the leasehold system for the greater part, although he quite admitted that it would be difficult for them to get it under any other system. He was quoting from the *Daily Mail Year-Book* of 1910. It was a remarkable thing that Mr. E. J. Cheney and Mr. M. T. Baines, the two small holdings commissioners reported thus: "A striking feature of the applications made under the Act has been the small extent to which the applicants desire to purchase their holdings." It was remarkable that the member for West Perth and other members rushed into the fray and told us that all wanted freeholds. Messrs. Cheney anad Baines further reported, "Out of the 23,295 applications received during the year, only 629, or 2.7 per cent., expressed a desire to purchase. Of these 629 applications, 281 came from Wales, of which 191 are from the County of Brecon, but in England the percentage of applicants desiring to purchase is only 1.6." This was under the small holdings, and it would be realised that that Act was one which was specially adapted or specially introduced in order to give people easy terms to purchase, and yet we found the remarkable fact that the people rushed for leaseholds. Why? Because the terms of payment were easier, and the same thing would apply to the irrigation measure if brought into operation. The clause under discussion was really in the best interests of the majority of persons who were likely to avail themselves of irrigation in the State. It was all a bogey and nonsense to talk about people always wanting freehold, if they could get leasehold under decent conditions.

Mr. GEORGE: If the hon. member who had just spoken were to meet some of the small farmers he would considerably alter his ideas.

Mr. McDowall: They have never had a chance.

Mr. GEORGE: It was his intention to vote against this particular subclause because it would mean the introduction into our legislation of a principle which, in his opinion, was entirely wrong.

Mr. Lander: There is plenty of room for a lot of principles to be brought in.

Mr. GEORGE: Just as there was plenty of room for the introduction of other principles to the hon. member. There would be difficulties in the way, he admitted, of the Government acquiring this land under freehold conditions, but the principle laid down here was absolutely opposed to the training he had received and to his belief, and therefore he considered that it was opposed to the best interests of the people of the State. Of course he was free to confess that if there never had been freehold and the Government from the start had had the control of the whole land, and could have let it out on leasehold terms, probably there

might be more prosperity throughout the whole State than under present conditions. But the whole aim and end of the Government in Western Australia, from its first establishment when Lieutenant Stirling brought the first lot of people to the country, had been to offer every possible inducement for people to come and acquire land under freehold conditions. In the early days, for every pound they brought into the colony, these people were entitled to demand and get so many acres of freehold land. Take the great Peel estate of 250,000 acres in the South-West, a great portion of which belonged to Murray and Fowler; how was that acquired? Peel who came here, was an astute man and he managed to get the immigrants to assign to him their rights.

Mr. Lander: The same old game.

Mr. GEORGE: There was no doubt it was the same old game, and there were also then the same old fools whose descendants were here to-day. We had now to deal with the conditions as they existed to-day. Peel, whether right or wrong, had sufficient skill, and sufficient roguery, if hon. members liked, to acquire from the people who came on the same vessel with him, their rights for the taking up of land, and that estate of 250,000 acres was obtained in that way. In those days the giving of land was the bait with which the Government tempted the people to come to this land of promise. That principle having been established since 1834, were we now going to break it in a day because of the temporary success of one phase of political power? It did not matter what the member for Coolgardie said, but if he went amongst the small farmers or the people who were desirous of becoming small farmers, he would soon find out that there was nothing more precious to them than to be owners of that land which they were occupying. Some members had spoken about having too large a piece of land, but was there one amongst us who had the idea of marrying and being blest by Providence with children who did not desire to make provision for those children who would succeed them. The feeling that it was possible to come to Australia and acquire a little bit of land under freehold conditions was responsible for a big proportion of the immigration which had come about. The Honorary Minister knew well that in that part of England whence he had come the feeling with regard to freehold was very strong, and that hon. gentleman, too, experienced that feeling just as everyone else did. The little bit we could call our own was what had been responsible for colonisation in different parts of the world by British people.

Mr. Thomas: Leasehold in perpetuity is the same thing.

Mr. GEORGE: No.

Mr. Heitmann: It is better.

Mr. GEORGE: That was a matter of opinion. Personally he was satisfied with freehold, and he meant to stick to that as long as he could. There was no desire on his part to be impertinent, but he would put it to the member for Bunbury in this way: For the purpose of argument, it might be assumed that the hon. member leased the premises he occupied at Bunbury. In the course of his business, would that gentleman be inclined to spend his hard earned money—and it was hard earned in the chemistry business, as the Honorary Minister had led them to understand—in effecting improvements which would fatten the landlord, or if it was his bit of freehold, would not his natural pride, which was noticeable in him every day, make him improve those premises so as to make them the best in the town?

Mr. Heitmann: You are putting up a good case against freehold.

Mr. GEORGE: Apart from the political aspect, would the member for Bunbury, who was a shrewd man of business, spend his money on the property of someone else. He (Mr. George) on this subject was speaking on behalf of a large community of small farmers and land owners who had to work their way in the south-western districts, and he was not mistaken in their views when he declared as strongly and emphatically as he could that freehold was what they wanted, and that leasehold was what they were not willing to take.

[*Mr. McDowall took the Chair.*]

Mr. THOMAS: There seemed to be some confusion in the mind of the hon. member who had just spoken on this question. The hon. member had made out a case with regard to himself (Mr. Thomas) as to whether he would rather make improvements on his own property or on property which he held upon leasehold. There could be no two opinions on this point; he would rather improve his own property for the reason that the leasehold was only a limited one and any improvements he might make would ultimately become the property of another individual. That, however, did not apply in the case of leasehold from the Crown, because the clause under discussion provided for a lease in perpetuity.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You cannot raise money on such a lease.

Mr. THOMAS: It sometimes happened that it was necessary to protect a man against himself. It might be that if a man owned the land, the first little difficulty that came along would represent the opportunity of the capitalist, and he who had hitherto been the owner of the land would become the tenant of a private individual whose sole object was to extort the last penny in the shape of rent, whereas the object of the Crown as landlord was to foster the prosperity of its people. It was the business of Parliament to step in and prevent an individual from doing anything which was detrimental to the State. Of course it was the desire of every man to accumulate land. But that desire was closely allied with personal ends. It was in the interests of the State that that particular desire should be opposed, so long as the opposition was carried out on just and equitable lines. The member for Murray-Wellington seemed to think that people had flocked to Western Australia solely with the idea of accumulating land on a freehold tenure. He (Mr. Thomas) was convinced that people would come here just as freely if they were satisfied that they could get land on an equitable leasehold tenure. However, what an individual might desire was of no importance. The question was whether it was just and equitable to the people as a whole. The best intellects of Australia had decided that in the Federal capital city all land should be held on leasehold tenure. And, at latest, we had the example of Mr. Joseph Cook who, since his return as Prime Minister, had declared that he was not going to interfere with the principle introduced by the Labour party, but instead was going to maintain the principle of leasehold tenure in the Northern Territory.

Mr. George: They have an absolutely clean sheet up there.

Mr. THOMAS: No, some of the best of the land up there was already alienated. However, hon. members should consider this question as applied to the Bill. They should for the moment leave out the larger view, and ask whether they could not settle people on restricted areas of land in the sure and certain hope that they and their descendants would remain on that land for all time, immune from the nightmare of landlordism.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: If the desire of every human being to possess a piece of land and a home of his own could be given effect to, then undoubtedly the sentiments expressed by the member for Murray-Wellington would appeal to all. But it was the experience of every country in the world, where private ownership of land obtained, that the great majority of the people could not satisfy their laudable desire to own land. Invariably the land got into the hands of an infinitesimal number of people, while the bulk of the community had to pay toll to the few landowners. In England 98 per cent. of the people did not own one inch of land, but had to pay rent to the two per cent. into whose hands the whole of the land had passed.

The CHAIRMAN: I think it is 88 per cent.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: No, it was 98 per cent. Recently Mr. Lloyd-George, in making his famous Limehouse speech, had quoted the case of a business man in London whose premises were leased from a certain noble Duke. On the tenant going to the landlord for a renewal of the lease, the noble Duke had said that he could have the renewal, but that his rent, which was then something under £200, would

be increased to £5,000 per annum, that he would be expected to erect a new building in accordance with plans to be approved by the Duke, and, in addition, would be required to pay a lump sum of £50,000. While members of the Opposition did not believe in the leasehold of Crown lands, they probably believed in the Duke's system of leasehold, where the benefit went into the pocket of the private individual. If the leasehold system were applied to irrigable lands the poorest person in the community would be able to take up an area from the Government at the very small rental which would be charged. On the other hand, to part with the freehold would be to reserve it all for those who were comparatively wealthy. There could be no question among thinking men that to do justice to the whole of the people of any country the land of the country should be owned by the Crown, and leased to those who desired to use it. Rather than see the provision for leasehold struck out of the measure he would prefer to see the Bill itself sacrificed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The member for Murray-Wellington had declared that the clause was establishing the leasehold principle in an Act of Parliament. As a matter of fact the principle was already established in the Land Act, for we had thousands of leaseholders who had taken up land under the Land Act.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: It was never intended.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Whatever might have been the intention of the framers of that Act, the fact remained that under it land had been leased to thousands. Representing, as he did, one of the principal districts to which the Bill would apply, the member for Murray-Wellington ought to fully realise the advantage of the cause. Yet that hon. member had said that he would vote against it. Apparently, the hon. member was not considering whether or not the clause was advantageous to the State, because he desired to take in a greater principle to apply to all lands. There were special privileges and provisions for persons who took up land under this Bill, and he was very pleased to know that Parliament had already endorsed the principle. Parliament had realised that it was advantageous, so far as this Bill was concerned, that the Government should have the right to give leases in perpetuity for the express purpose of establishing in these irrigation areas properly cultivated farms. The member for Murray-Wellington had admitted that it was a necessity so far as these districts were concerned.

Mr. George: I said there was a difficulty.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The hon. member was opposed only to the principle, and if the hon. member thought the leasehold necessary in connection with the irrigation schemes, he should, whether or not he agreed with the principle, vote for the clause being retained in the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The country had been told by the Minister exactly what he proposed to do, and such frankness was to be appreciated. It had been made clear that all land to be irrigated would, as far as possible, be resumed. The Minister did not want any two systems in connection with this irrigation scheme. The committee had been informed by the Minister that he was going to resume all land in irrigation districts.

The Minister for Works: I said nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister had said that he wanted only the leasehold system, that land under cultivation at Harvey being held in small areas he was satisfied with it, but other land in the district would be resumed.

The Minister for Works: Where it is necessary in the public interest to resume land, that land will not be alienated again. That is what I said. If we put water on an area owned in large holdings, that land will be resumed. If it is in small areas we will not resume.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What did the Minister mean by small areas? It was right that the people should be told that the Government considered the leasehold system the only one that should be applied. In connection with workers' homes,

it was provided that no man could have more than one home or sell his worker's home to anyone who owned another house. There could be the same limitation in connection with freehold in these irrigation areas. He believed that freehold was the proper system, and that under it men did better work. It was to be hoped that members on the Government side would realise what they were doing in voting for the leasehold system under this Bill, because he believed that when the Minister got the water laid on, he would have a difficulty in getting irrigationists to take the land. In Victoria great difficulty had been experienced in getting men to take up the land in irrigation areas under the leasehold system.

Mr. FOLEY: Leasehold was a more just system than freehold, and the member for Murray-Wellington had said that it would have been well if the leasehold system had been adopted when the land question was first being considered in this State. The hon. member stated that he would have been perfectly satisfied then, and would be now, to have his land on leasehold if a start had been made on that basis.

Mr. George: I did not say that.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member had said that this country would have been better if the leasehold principle had been adopted when the land system was first considered in Western Australia.

Mr. George: I did not; the hon. member is on the wrong track.

Mr. FOLEY: Undoubtedly the hon. member's argument had been that had the leasehold system obtained in the first instance this country would have been better. This was the commencement of irrigation in this State, and if the hon. member thought that leasehold would have been a good thing in the first instance he must support this subclause, which would give each and every one equal opportunity of working the land. This clause had been sent forward to another place last session in the same form, and had been agreed to, and as both Houses of Parliament had agreed that this was the best system opposition to the subclause was futile. This provision had passed through the Legislative Council without discussion, and was not one of the questions dealt with at the conference of managers. If the hon. member was going to raise bogeys and so discredit the Bill, he must take the responsibility.

Mr. GEORGE: What he had said was that if this State had started from scratch on different lines, started with the leasehold principle and carried it right through without giving any freehold at all, the people would have been accustomed to it; but having once started with the freehold principle, it was now so firmly implanted in the people's hearts and minds that they were not prepared to give it up.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	11
Noes	.. .. ..	20
Majority against	..	9

AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. George	Mr. A. N. Piesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Layman
Mr. Male	(*Teller*).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Foley	Mr. Swan
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lander	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Heitmann
Mr. McDonald	(*Teller*).
Mr. Mullany	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 61—agreed to.

Clause 62—Water supply to railways:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

That the following words be added to the clause:—"constructed under the authority of a special Act, and subject only to riparian rights under this Act, water may be lawfully taken for such purposes."

The object was to make it clear that the Government had no desire to interfere with railways authorised under special

Act acquiring water for the purpose of such railways. Railways required a certain supply, and there were certain rights existing to-day, and to interfere with those rights would be an absolute injustice. He referred chiefly to the Midland Railway Company whose representative claimed that the clause did not protect them to the extent they should be protected. The matter had been inquired into closely by the representative of the company, the Parliamentary draftsman and himself, and a compromise had been arrived at in the form of the amendment.

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

Clauses 63 to 76—agreed to.

Clause 77—Proof of ownership or occupany:

Mr. GEORGE: In the Bill submitted to the conference last year there was a schedule, but as it did not appear in this Bill he presumed it had been abandoned.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Clause put and passed.

New clause—Exceptions:

Hon. J. MITCHELL moved —

That the following be added to stand as Clause 26:—"Notwithstanding anything in this part of this Act contained to the contrary:—(a.) The bed of any lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh situated on land heretofore or hereafter alienated by the Crown, and declared by this Act to be deemed to have remained or to remain the property of the Crown, shall not exceed in width the width of the watercourse at its inlet to or outlet from such lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh; and (b.) This part of this Act shall not apply to the bed of any lake, lagoon, swamp, or marsh situated on land heretofore or hereafter alienated by the Crown, and cultivated either wholly or in part at any time during the year, or capable of being drained and cultivated."

The Minister, he understood, had an explanation to make in regard to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No objection would be offered to the proposed new clause, although he contended that provision was already made to prevent the Government or the Minister from taking anything except the channel. He did not want any misconception, and while the Parliamentary draftsman considered that the amendment was not altogether necessary, it made the clause clearer. However, he moved an amendment to the proposed new clause—

That at the beginning of paragraph (b) the words, "Except to such extent" be inserted.

Amendment passed; the new clause as amended agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 20th August, 1913.

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

QUESTION — MARGARET RIVER-FLINDERS BAY RAILWAY, PRICE.

Hon. J. MITCHELL asked the Premier: 1, What price is to be paid for the Margaret River-Flinders Bay Railway purchased from Millars' Timber and Trading Co.? 2, Have the company's