

sulting them. But I am astonished that the Premier and the Attorney General should support a Bill containing a principle of that kind. As I said earlier, this measure passes a vote of no confidence in our magistrates and rubs their noses in the dirt.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	19
Majority against	3

**Ayes.**

Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. May

(Teller.)

**Noes.**

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

**Pairs.**

**Ayes.**

Mr. Kelly
Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. McCulloch

**Noes**

Mr. Wild
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Mann
Mr. Yates

Amendment thus negatived.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	16
Majority for	3

**Ayes.**

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

**Noes.**

Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. May

(Teller.)

**Pairs.**

**Ayes.**

Mr. Wild
Mr. Hearman
Mr. Butcher
Mr. Mann
Mr. Yates

**Noes.**

Mr. Kelly
Mr. Needham
Mr. Coverley
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. McCulloch

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 11 and 12, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 1.31 a.m. (Wednesday).

# Legislative Council

Wednesday, 7th November, 1951.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

## BILL—OPTOMETRISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### Third Reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT** (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [3.40] in moving the third reading said: I informed Dr. Hislop during the Committee stage that I would discuss with the Optometrists Registration Board his remarks with regard to reciprocity with the other States. The registrar of the board, Mr. W. Needham, has advised me that considerable action is being taken between all the States to bring about reciprocity. One meeting, at which all States were represented, has been held at Sydney, the Western Australian delegate being Mr. S. H. Frost, of the firm of Frost and Shipham, who was then chairman of the Western Australian board. Subsequent action has been taken by correspondence.

I am given to understand that there is still a good deal of work to be done before reciprocity is achieved, this being mainly due to the fact that at present there is considerable variance between the courses set by the different States. I am informed that after examining the courses of the other States, the Western Australian board is firmly of the opinion that the standard of this State's course is at least equal to that of any of the other States, and in some cases is superior. It is anticipated that it will be some time before reciprocity is finally achieved, and so the board does not desire that there be any delay in its being given statutory authority for the issue of diplomas. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.  
Bill read a third time and *passed*.

**BILL—COMPANIES ACT  
AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and *passed*.

**BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLE-  
MENT AGREEMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. A. L. LOTON** (South) [3.42]: It does appear as though this legislation is vitally necessary to enable the State and Commonwealth Governments to validate certain actions of those Governments in their endeavour to place servicemen on the land. There are, however, several points I would like the Minister to clear up. In his second reading speech he made the following remarks—

To overcome the legal position which had arisen, the Commonwealth view was that it would not be necessary for it to introduce further enabling legislation as it has power under the Re-establishment and Employment Act to enter into agreements with the State and for the appropriation of Commonwealth funds so that land settlement might be put into practice. The Prime Minister, relying upon this power, has suggested that the Commonwealth should enter into an agreement with the State by an exchange of letters between himself and the Premier. . . .

It is on this point of exchange of letters between the Prime Minister and the Premier that I want information. I can, of course, understand that letters are passing daily between the Prime Minister and the Premier but there is no writing into this Act what is contained in those letters.

In his speech last night the Minister further said, when referring to the exchange of letters—

. . . whereby the Commonwealth would abide by the principles of the existing agreement, with minor amendments . . .

The minor amendments referred to might of course, in the opinion of the Minister or the Cabinet, be unimportant, but to Parliament it might quite be that they would be regarded as of major importance. It seems therefore that this House and Parliament generally is to be denied the right of knowing just what the minor amendments are, and we are being asked to agree to this Bill passing through the House in an unspecified form.

Of course, the Minister may have the answer to it, but on reading the debates in another place I found there was no answer given to that point at all and indeed I doubt if it was raised. To me it is

of vital importance to know what is contemplated in the minor amendments referred to as matters of agreement between the Premier and the Prime Minister. Another point on which I would like information is in regard to the opposition of the Minister for Lands, who introduced this Bill in another place. Firstly, the Minister for Lands said, "We are not going to make it easy for these men to freehold." I do not know what he meant by that; no one wants him to make it easy for them, but if any soldier is prepared to make his property freehold, I fail to see why a barrier should be raised to stop him.

It has always been an Englishman's right—or his supposed right—to make freehold any piece of ground he owns, irrespective of his responsibilities to anybody else. I do hope members will amend this legislation so that returned servicemen will not have to wait a period of ten years before they can make their property freehold.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** What period do you suggest?

**Hon. A. L. LOTON:** That is not for me to decide. If a man can meet his responsibilities and pay off his encumbrances, why should he not be permitted to secure his freehold? If the price of a property is based on a valuation that is assessed and a man chooses to go to some financial institution and borrow enough money from it to meet that obligation, then he should be entitled to make his property freehold. Some men who have had two very good seasons are well able to make their properties freehold, but because of this legislation they are denied the right to do so for ten years. I do not think any time should be laid down.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** You know this is in order to stop trafficking.

**Hon. A. L. LOTON:** It is not.

**Hon. N. E. Baxter:** Then why is it there?

**Hon. A. L. LOTON:** I do not know. Perhaps the hon. member can inform me. I would also like to know the basis on which valuations are to be arrived at. What will be the basis of purchase? Is it to be the cost of the land and improvements carried out by the Land Settlement Board as far as carrying capacity is concerned; is it to be the cost of the land plus the improvements as they were when the lessee; or is it to be on the value of the property at the expiration of ten years from the time the lessee took over?

A soldier can be on a property for ten years; he can build up the fertility of the soil and then he is entitled, as the Bill explains in Subclause (2) of Clause 6, to surrender the lease instrument and obtain a Crown grant of the fee simple in the land—

after the expiration of a period of ten years from the commencement of the term of the perpetual lease and on payment of such purchase price for the fee simple as is fixed by the Minister.

To my mind it is all in the air because the personal aspect could quite easily enter into the transaction. For instance, a man may be a personal friend of the Minister and could receive some pecuniary benefit by being his friend. Political considerations could also enter into this matter because a man, for political reasons—and because he is of a different political colour to the Minister—could have his price assessed on a much higher basis than if he were of the same political faith. There is no appeal; as far as I can see, the Minister decides the whole issue.

I am subject to correction by those who claim to know more about it than I do, but to my mind there is no provision in the Bill for an appeal against the valuation fixed by the Minister. I think the time to set out clearly what the soldier settler has to pay for his land is when the property is handed over to him originally and not after the expiration of the ten-year period. I hope members will agree to amend the measure so as to enable the serviceman to convert his property into freehold as soon as he desires to do so.

Hon. L. Craig: Such an amendment would hardly be acceptable to the Commonwealth.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT AND CONTINUANCE.**

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [3.51]: I intend to support the Bill because of its urgent necessity and because of the protection it will afford to many thousands of people throughout the State. Mr. Craig put the position very clearly to the House. I concur in what he said in the course of his striking contribution to the debate. No one likes controls.

It is a matter for great regret that as Mr. Watson said, a staff of 327 civil servants is necessary to implement the legislation that comes under the administration of the State Housing Commission. I was positively astounded at the bitter attack made by Mr. Watson on the Housing Commission when he opposed the Bill. In the course of his remarks he said that the cost of the Commission in 1951 was £181,000. All will agree that that is a lot of money, but I have no doubt that the Minister, when he replies to the debate, will fully justify the expenditure.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: We hope so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: When in due course there is an abundance of building materials available, no doubt the necessity for controls will lessen and there will be not so great a demand for a large staff and the consequent expenditure entailed. Mr. Watson advocated the setting up of another committee or commission to replace the State Housing Commission, which he suggested should confine itself to the building of houses. Later on in his speech he expressed the hope that the Minister for Housing, who is at present on a visit to Canberra, would not be successful in his effort to obtain money to enable the Commission to carry on the building of rental homes.

In this House, Mr. Watson is looked upon as a businessman and as the supporter and representative of business interests in Western Australia. The recommendation he made was a remarkable one, coming as it did from a man who represents business interests, because it must of necessity, if agreed to by the Government, mean much extra work involving considerable additional expense. The new committee would require a team of inspectors and a large staff in order to carry out effectively the work that would be imposed upon it. This would involve very costly overlapping which would be found far more expensive than the present organisation. I resent bitterly the attack made by Mr. Watson on the leading officials and staff generally of the State Housing Commission. Those officers are not members of the Government or of any political party.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That is my point. They are responsible to no one.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The officers are responsible to their ministerial head for the success of their organisation.

Hon. H. K. Watson: They are not.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: To whom are they responsible?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The attack made upon the Housing Commission was unjust and unfair and must be resented bitterly by the staff. The leading officials of the Commission are well known to every member of this Chamber. The chairman, Mr. R. W. Brownlie, the secretary, Mr. Bond, and the assistant secretary, Mr. Telfer, are all men of the utmost capacity and integrity. I do not think the Bank of England could buy off any one of them. I can speak from an intimate knowledge of those gentlemen, all of whom are of very high character.

Hon. H. Hearn: Did anyone suggest that they could be bought?

Hon. G. Fraser: Mr. Watson spoke about graft and corruption.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The attack upon the officers was terrible. Had such an attack been made upon the lumpers at

Fremantle, no ships would be working in the harbour today. If I were a member of the staff of the State Housing Commission, I would—

Hon. H. Hearn: Go on strike!

Hon. E. H. GRAY:—enter a very strong protest to the Minister because of the virulent attack.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would get the staff to march up to Parliament House in a body.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not know about that, but members of the executive and staff of the State Housing Commission are entitled to protection and not abuse by members of Parliament. It is monstrous that they should have been attacked in the way Mr. Watson indulged in yesterday. However, I do not think we shall forget the attack. I hope Mr. Watson will not repeat the grave error he made yesterday. Civil servants, if they do their jobs properly, certainly play no part in politics in business hours. They are supposed to be loyal to their superior officers and to the Government of the day.

Hon. H. K. Watson: If they did their job properly, I would not have said what I did yesterday.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I can say that most of the civil servants with whom I have come in contact carry out conscientiously the work they are called upon to do.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: How do you know that?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Everyone knows the difficulties that arise through lack of building materials and therefore must appreciate the problems and difficulties confronting the officers of the State Housing Commission. It is quite impossible for them to satisfy everyone. In fact, they could not possibly do so. On the other hand, they have to stick to the straight and narrow course in carrying out their very difficult task.

I know very many members of the State Civil Service and my experience of the members of the State Housing Commission staff is that they are anxious to carry out their duties properly. In the Civil Service we have very many splendid men and women. They are anxious to carry out their jobs properly, irrespective of whether in doing so they incur the favour or wrath of members of Parliament. We should recognise that the task the staff of the State Housing Commission is called upon to tackle is most difficult.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Do you think that the inspectors do their jobs properly every time?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We must admit that it is very difficult to have a large staff without someone being slow on the job. On the other hand, my experience with the Housing Commission is that the officers are quick to adjust and remedy

any defects discovered in the organisation. The chief officers of the Commission have grown up in the Civil Service and are most approachable men. We may put up a just case to them, but we must appreciate that 80 members of Parliament are doing the same thing.

The heads of the Commission are called upon to administer justice impartially and, bearing in mind the difficulties attached to the task, obviously the word "No" has to be used on most occasions. In my experience, the officers have treated me very well and have dealt justly with any matter I have brought before their notice. I have never asked for favours and I like to see a civil servant stand up and say "No" when that course is necessary. I like to see them adopt the proper attitude, irrespective of the party with whom they are dealing.

*Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.20 p.m.*

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Before the suspension, I was protesting against unjust criticism by Mr. Watson. I think there was an interjection with regard to inspectors. In the years that the Housing Commission has been in existence, I have watched its operations closely, and only one case has come under my notice which looked a bit fishy. I think that the course I took on that occasion is one that should be followed by other members. If I see anything that appears to be wrong in the conduct of any civil servant, I take steps to put an end to it, if possible. On the occasion to which I have referred, I reported to the secretary of the Commission what happened to be a suspicious incident and let it go at that. Action was taken quickly and the man was dismissed.

It is impossible that in a big organisation like the Housing Commission there should not be some member of the staff who goes astray. In such instances, it is the duty of members of Parliament to bring the facts to the notice of the chairman or the secretary of the Commission, and I will guarantee that quick action will be taken. I was very sorry to see the extensive publicity given to Mr. Watson's criticism of the Commission. It will have caused unhappiness amongst applicants for houses and materials and created a feeling of distrust, which is unfair to members of the Commission. I hope the hon. member will be careful in future before launching such an unjust attack upon people who are not in a position to defend themselves in this House.

If we follow the hon. member's advice and defeat this Bill, there is no doubt there will be chaos in the building industry. Many unnecessary buildings will be erected and scarce materials will be swallowed up immediately. That would definitely injure the prospects of many people who are anxiously waiting for houses for their wives and children. I

think this is an appropriate time at which to refer to a letter, the reading of which will be in the interests of the Commission. It is from the Master Builders' Association of Western Australia, and I think every member received a copy some weeks ago. I will read it so that it can appear in "Hansard" because it gives the opinion of an organisation of which, I think, we must take some notice and whose remarks do credit to the Commission. This is a circular letter signed by L. F. Sandwell, the president of the association, and it reads as follows.—

The Master Builders' Association has been informed that a copy of the resolution carried at the annual general meeting of the Building Industry Congress, together with comments supporting the resolution, has been distributed to members of Parliament by that body, and for that reason, and only because of the action taken, the Master Builders' Association desires it to be known that whilst the Building Industry Congress comprises all organisations associated with the building industry no member of this association's executive was present at the meeting in question and consequently any resolution adopted was carried without having the considered opinion of this association. We therefore ask that all matters surrounding the adoption of the resolution be closely examined in order that facts concerning the control of materials in short supply are known before decision is reached as to the transfer of controls from a governmental department to the business community of the State.

One of the points Mr. Watson made yesterday was that we should allow the merchants rather than the State Housing Commission to control and distribute the materials. The letter continues—

It is generally agreed by those associated with building industry, including the Building Industry Congress, that under present circumstances there is necessity to continue the Act for a further period, and the only question raised by the Building Industry Congress in its resolution is as to which authority shall direct the distribution of materials in short supply—the State Housing Commission or the business community.

The State Housing Commission appears to be experiencing considerable difficulty, despite power to inflict penalties, in directing controlled materials into channels which conform to the State's urgent building requirements. The proposal in effect, however, is that building materials in short supply be no longer controlled

under the Act, and that the responsibility for its distribution be left entirely to the merchants throughout the State.

The Master Builders' Association claims that the control and distribution of building materials in short supply has been fair and equitable, and the association is definitely of the opinion that while the Act remains in force the control of such materials should remain with the controlling authority—particularly as it is known that the policy of the State Housing Commission is to progressively lift controls as the building materials supply position improves, as has already been the case, in regard to timber and tiles.

Hon. H. K. Watson: That shows how a vested interest can grow up under controls.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not know anything about that. The hon. member represents vested interests, and he suggested that they be given the control of scarce materials. Here we have a responsible body of men who are building houses and doing a good job, and who say it would be better if it were left to the State Housing Commission. We should take notice of the opinion expressed in the letter, because it is a convincing reply to the statements made by Mr. Watson.

Hon. H. K. Watson: What is the date of the letter?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is an undated circular letter.

Hon. G. Fraser: It came to light just after the Bill was introduced.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think it is only fair to the State Housing Commission that the letter should be published in "Hansard." I would like to see it appear in "The West Australian," but I doubt whether it will. It is a convincing answer to the wild statements made by Mr. Watson. I maintain that it is absolutely necessary, in the best interests of the State and of the large number of families waiting for homes, that the Bill be passed.

The welfare of the rising generation is more important than the cost entailed in controlling materials, and the expense of running the organisation necessary to see that, as far as possible, applicants for houses and materials receive a fair deal. I disagree entirely with Mr. Watson's reasons for opposing the increased penalties provided in the Bill for breaches of the Act. I think he made another grave mistake in quoting the case of a Mr. Doran who was fined £350 and sentenced to a month's imprisonment for defying the law. I have had a hurried look at the file, and I think it would have been a lot better for Mr. Doran if the file had never been put on the Table of

the House. Of course, we recognise it is confidential, though once it is laid on the Table of the House anyone can see and publish its contents

From his record and from the file it appears that Mr. Doran is a good builder and a fast worker, but he thought he could bluff his way through and defy everybody. The Housing Commission would have been placed in a very serious position if it had overlooked such a grave breach of the regulations. I think the Commission merits commendation rather than condemnation for having taken the action it did. Had it not followed that course, scores of other people would have been tempted to do what Doran did and that would have rendered control under this legislation almost impossible.

Once the unscrupulous and selfish people in the community realised that the administrative head of this department of government was weak and ineffective, they would take advantage of the position and the result would be chaos. I would point out, further, that it was the magistrate, and not the Commission, that heard Doran's case and passed judgment. If Mr. Doran was so convinced of his innocence, why did he drop his appeal to the Supreme Court? Had he been able to prove that the magistrate had made a mistake, as anyone might, an appeal to the Supreme Court would have been successful and the sentence would have been set aside; but instead of that Mr. Doran dropped his appeal.

Hon. L. Craig: His sentence might have been increased, on appeal.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not like to see anybody go to gaol, and I am sorry that Mr. Watson brought this matter forward.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are prepared to see people go to gaol, if you support the penalties contained in this Bill.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think anyone who breaks the law should go to gaol. Such people deserve it.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Would you be prepared to have the same penalties included in the Electoral Act?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, though under that Act any number of people could quite innocently make mistakes.

Hon. R. J. Boylen: That is the same type of inference as he made against the Housing Commission yesterday.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the State Housing Commission is to be effective, it must do its duty, irrespective of whose applications come before it. I appeal to members to support this legislation and I believe the provision for increased penalties is justified in order to make it clear to potential offenders that they must not openly defy the law.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: It will make criminals out of the people.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If this legislation is rendered ineffective by this House, we will be doing an injustice to thousands of young children.

Hon. H. Hearn: But you have said it has been effective without these penalties.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The action of Mr. Doran in defying the Commission justifies the increasing of the penalties as a warning to the unscrupulous.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Others should have gone to gaol before Doran.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Possibly, but no one can justify Doran's action. The Commission has a difficult task to perform because the day is past when private enterprise would build rental houses.

Hon. G. Fraser: It has not done it for 20 years.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: And will not do it for the next 20 years. It is therefore necessary, in the interests of the children of the community, that some government instrumentality should do the job, and the State Housing Commission has been chosen for that purpose. It has to carry out the policy of the Government of the day with regard to both State and Commonwealth housing. The more houses built, the better it will be for the State and our people generally. I ask members to take no notice of Mr. Watson's opinions, because he speaks for only a small minority of the electors in this State. Rather should members take notice of a big businessman such as Mr. Craig, and pass the legislation as it stands. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

## BILL—LIBRARY BOARD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.35]: While agreeing that the principle of this Bill is good, I confess that I am rather alarmed as to what it might lead to. The scope of the measure is such that it could be responsible for building up, in the future, a vast organisation. Although the measure has reference to a free library, there is nothing free in this world, and it seems to me that one section of the community is to be asked to pay heavily for something that will be of benefit to the other section. If a local authority decides to join in this library movement, the ratepayers in the area of that local governing body will have to pay, and I would point out that the ratepayers in any district are generally in a minority—

Hon. E. M. Davies: What do you mean by that?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There may be 20 ratepayers and 50 or 60 other people in the area, so the hon. member can work it out for himself.

Hon. L. Craig: But those others have no say in the election of members of the local authority.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: No, but the ratepayers have to pay the rates and under this Bill all the others in that area will get the benefit of the free library.

Hon. L. Craig: But that applies equally to roads, and so on.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Anything we can do to improve the cultural standards of our people should receive support, but I see no reason why such movements should be free. A much better idea would have been to appoint a State librarian who would take steps to combine all the libraries in the State so that they could be properly organised. Mr. Davies said that Fremantle was the only local authority that issued books free—the only free library—but I am not sure that that statement is correct, because to my knowledge many road boards in the area I represent are subsidised by the Government and run free libraries.

If a State librarian were appointed he could build up an organisation on the system we have today, modified to some extent, and there could be an interchange of books as between libraries. In that way we could progress gradually towards the ideal contained in the Bill. However, if local authorities enter whole-heartedly into the scheme foreshadowed by the Bill, I can visualise its developing into a colossal organisation.

Hon. E. M. Davies: The boards that you mentioned just now are subsidised by the Government. Who is paying for them?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Government and the taxpayers.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Well, what is your objection to the Bill?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I want to get away from that principle to a certain extent, because, as I said before, the taxpayers are paying for it. There is nothing free in this world. Some will get the benefits of this service while others pay for it. I agree that we must build up our cultural standards but the Bill presents a grave problem. Mr. Baxter has mentioned that the scheme will cost a considerable sum of money, and eventually, with all the other costs piling up, the time will arrive when a depression or recession will set in, and the more we have burdened our people with such costs, the harder it will be to get out of it.

I shall support the second reading, with mixed feelings. A lot of what Dr. Hislop said yesterday was quite sound. To listen to him, one can realise that he has made a solid study of library work, and I think we can rely on him as an authority on this subject. Text books prove costly to

the individual and it is only through free libraries that people are afforded an opportunity of studying such books. I would like the Government to realise that some of the cost must be borne by the people who use these libraries, and that it should not all fall on the taxpayer.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.43]: I have previously mentioned that I think a library scheme should not be free for the reasons already expressed by other members, and also because I believe that anything free is not appreciated to the fullest extent.

Hon. G. Fraser: Your cobber said it was not free!

Hon. A. R. JONES: I did not hear that interjection. It is evident that whenever we have access to anything that is free, we do not appreciate it and, in fact, sometimes abuse it. If this organisation were established and people were given access to a free library, I think the same would apply. The reason expressed by Mr. Logan and one or two others that the ratepayers will be meeting all the expense is something to which we must give consideration, because some ratepayers could be hit rather badly if the proposal embodied in the Bill were carried out. Yesterday Dr. Hislop suggested that he would like to make the rate proposed the minimum sum. To my mind, that would result in some people contributing to the extent of £5 a year towards a library and they might not read one book in the whole of that period. The scheme is something we must encourage for the reasons given by Dr. Hislop, but when the Bill enters the Committee stage, I reserve the right to do as other members probably will, namely, to alter the object of the Bill in providing for a free library so that library services may be instituted where those benefiting from them will pay a certain fee for their reading matter. With that reservation, I support the second reading.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [4.45]: I support the Bill. In the district I represent there are several local governing bodies, and the one of which I am a member subscribes to a library scheme now to the extent of £250 a year. That library is at the Kalgoorlie Mechanics Institute. About five years ago we considered establishing a municipal library.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: Was that a free library?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I do not know whether they tried to get assistance from the Government to establish it, although it think they did.

Hon. H. Hearn: Did they get it?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Perhaps the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council may not now consider establishing a free library, because there are already two large libraries in the district, but in some of the smaller

centres it might be the wish of the road boards to take advantage of the assistance offered by the Government so that their ratepayers could benefit accordingly. We must have amenities in outback centres and if the authorities get suitable reading material in those places, it is something to be recommended, and people will take advantage of it. I do not agree with Dr. Hislop that we should allow the rates to be increased because, as Mr. Jones said, we do not know where such steps will lead. The increase in rating might hit some people pretty hard. I would agree to those in the metropolitan area being charged a little more.

Hon. H. Hearn: Big business!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The fee in the country, we were told, would work out at about 2s. a head, whereas in the metropolitan area it would be about 6d. If that is so, the metropolitan area should give a little assistance to those in the country.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Do not forget that postage will have to be paid on books.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes, I am taking postage into consideration and also freight, etc.

Hon. H. Hearn: The metropolitan boys will pay for it!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes, I think they should. They enjoy a lot of other amenities which are not available to people in country districts. Water is another burning question.

Hon. H. Hearn: A burning question!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I want to see it possible for the people in the back country to obtain books at a reasonable price.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: And that the people in the city contribute their adequate share.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Too right, and so assist the people in the remote areas. If we in the country have to pay 2s. a head and the people in the metropolitan area only 6d. they should split the difference and make it 1s. all round. I support Mr. Davies in his remarks because there is a very successful free library at Fremantle, and, with the guidance of the knowledge gleaned by those running that scheme, I think it is a worthy idea to have a member of the Fremantle Municipal Council on the board. I can visualise that body becoming rather expensive to keep up and I do not think the money set aside by the Government will be sufficient.

Hon. N. E. Baxter: It will only be a fraction.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: It might be all right for a start, but eventually the scheme must grow into a large organisation. Nevertheless, the Bill is a step in the right direction.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

## BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st November.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.50]: This is a simple Bill. The story told by the Minister when he introduced it represented a very good thumbnail sketch of the irrigation scheme as it has developed from the commencement in this State. Before dealing with the Bill itself, I would like to point out that government money could not be spent in a better way than in conserving supplies from our fresh water streams for use during the summer months. It is possibly the best form of government expenditure that could be conceived.

I do not know if members are aware of the fact, but all the rivers that rise on the western side of the Darling Range are fresh while, roughly speaking, all those that rise along the eastern slopes of the Darling Range are salty. Thus in Western Australia we have a very limited number of streams of fresh water. Even the Murray River is too salty for use for irrigation purposes. We have a most unusual climate and a rainfall that is almost unique, inasmuch as we experience very heavy winter rains and almost complete droughts in summer months. By that I mean that we get more rain than is needed in winter—

Hon. N. E. Baxter: In some places.

HON. L. CRAIG: —at coastal centres and practically no rain in summer. If we can hold some of our surplus supply of water in our streams and make use of it, we then have, because of our unique hot summer period, every prospect of building up a large and prosperous closely-settled farming community.

Irrigation in this State really started on a big scale during the depression when large works were put in hand to relieve unemployment. I live in an irrigation area and I remember the difficulties we experienced in getting the settlers to agree to be rated and to have water brought to their farms. All sorts of reasons were given in support of opposition to the move and only after a lot of propaganda—the Under Secretary for Works visited the district and I drove round with him from farm to farm, telling the people what the scheme meant—was the stiff opposition overcome. Eventually the scheme was agreed to and the work proceeded with.

The present method of watering land is by means of gravity. Water runs downstream and is then blocked, the supply being built up in big dams. From each the flow is regulated downstream and is diverted into big channels, which are eight or ten feet wide and anything from five to fifteen feet deep. The water is conveyed around the hills in channels



graded in such a way that it flows at the rate of between two and three miles an hour. The water thus comes from the hills to the flat country where it is diverted into smaller channels that are still very large.

Then it is diverted into still smaller channels which deliver the water to the various farms. That water is taken to the highest point on each farm so that from there the farmer is able to direct the flow to where he requires it. The irrigation methods today, although effective, are wasteful. Members will appreciate the large quantity of water involved when I tell them that on my small farm, every three weeks I use just on 12,000,000 gallons.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What is the area of your farm?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I have 130 acres under irrigation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: How many inches do you get?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Each watering is equal to about four inches.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is too much.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Sir Charles ought to know that there are experts who have travelled all over the world, and they say that a watering of four inches is necessary.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I still say it is too much.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not all of that water soaks into the ground.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I know that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We reach the point where a watering of four inches will not be necessary.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: How much would that 12,000,000 gallons of water cost?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Every three weeks it costs me about £20, plus the rates. I will talk about that phase in a minute. As I mentioned, the water is delivered to the highest point on the farm and from there the farmer has to construct his own channels. As a rule it is necessary to do a great deal of grading. On my farm we have spent hundreds of pounds on grading. The land must be made even because wherever there is a bump the water will be held up behind it. If there is a small rise of two or three inches, there will be a pool. In that event the farmer experiences scalding and there is a growth of rushes but no good grass. So it is necessary to grade the land from the bottom to the top in order to get a smooth surface. On the farm we run furrows from the head of the paddock to the bottom every twenty feet. The water is run down the furrows. That system was all right, but

it involved a lot of work because when the ground is wet and soft the cattle tread on the edge of the furrows which are filled in, and so the water will not run.

Now we grade the land until it is quite smooth and make borders or mounds every 20 feet, four or five inches high and about three feet wide. The water runs down between them. The borders are run parallel and, of course, the water runs between them. The borders prevent the water from sliding to one side or the other and keep it within the 20 feet between borders. The grass itself ensures that the water spreads. The effect that grass itself has on the flow of water is amazing. I have two or three miles of channelling on my farm and these have to be chipped by hand once a year, which makes it an expensive and long job. If the grass in the channel is, say, two inches high, the water will not run at all. It just will not flow, hence the necessity to keep the channels chipped at considerable expense.

Hon. H. C. Strickland: Is it a hand job?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, it has to be done by hand with a shovel. If any members of this House would like a little exercise in late spring, I will guarantee to keep them for many weeks on that job and will pay them at the rate they are worth, which will not be very much.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: With a 40-hour week?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Any incentive pay?

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is a most interesting form of farming. Any well-to-do member who desires a most interesting hobby should take my advice and buy a 50-acre farm which would provide him with about 20 acres or so of irrigable land. That will give him an interest for the rest of his life. It is full of interest—and work.

The Minister for Agriculture: What would it be worth per acre?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Good irrigated land would be worth £100 an acre. The thing to do is to buy undeveloped land and develop it. Under the old method, when irrigation was first begun, paspalum and subterranean clover were used. Subterranean clover is an annual and paspalum is a grass that grows only with the heat. It did provide a summer fodder but it was not so good. We have learnt much more about irrigation since then.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Was it paspalum dilitatum or paspalum distichum?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Paspalum dilitatum. That is the common paspalum. Distichum is not a pasture grass at all. It grows in swamps. With proper grading and keeping away of pools and scalding, we have developed an English-type pasture. It is a most interesting occupation and, if properly done, most profitable. There are three

main grasses—a winter grass, a spring grass, and a summer grass. All are blade grasses, which absorb and require a good deal of nitrogen. The necessary nitrogen is provided in the natural way, through a legume; and white clover is very hardy and a nitrogenous legume. That grows thick amongst the blade grasses and keeps them supplied with nitrogen.

So we have cocksfoot, a winter-growing grass, which provides fodder in the winter; rye grass, which does not like cold or intense heat, and provides good fodder in the spring and autumn, when it is not hot and not too cold; and then paspalum, another blade grass, which revels in the heat; and all the time there is growing through it white clover which keeps it supplied with nitrogen and provides the stock with nitrogenous food. In that way there is a balanced pasture far superior to what was available in the olden days. We have a winter fodder through cocksfoot and clover; in the spring and autumn, rye grass and clover; and in the summer, paspalum and clover.

Consequently, there is scarcely a week in the year when it is not possible to graze on a well-organised irrigated pasture. I take the stock off mine for about six weeks in the middle of winter, when it is soggy; and we do run the stock on the irrigated pasture for, more or less, ten months of the year, or perhaps a little longer. In the early summer it is almost impossible to keep the pasture down, and we can run a beast to the acre, and perhaps two during November and December.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Especially on the potato land that you have.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I realise I am getting away from the Bill; but members will see the possibilities of closer settlement with properly organised farming and irrigation. A 60, 70, or 80-acre farm is quite enough for a man, and he need have no fear of the future. If I were a man of 20 or 30 years of age, I would not mind starting on an 80 acre farm; and if I worked and was reasonably thrifty, I need never fear the future, because the product of an irrigation farm is always saleable since it is available during the out-of-season period of the year. Anybody who can produce milk in December and January has no fear of not being able to sell it.

We are learning more about crops under irrigation. We are now growing potatoes without any rain at all. We plant them in January and dig them towards the end of May. I put in 10 or 12 acres every year. If it is properly done, one can make as much as £100 per acre clear, after paying expenses, if there is a good crop. A great deal of work and expense is involved, but it is most interesting and very remunerative. The point I am coming to is that we can settle large numbers of people in small areas and

they can live under good conditions because of closer settlement. They can lead good lives and have the best of food. Green feed will be available to their stock all the summer and they can grow vegetables throughout that season.

It is worth while watching the Italians, who are probably the best small farmers in the world. When they put in a crop of potatoes, they use every bit of land. Along the edges of a channel they plant beans and peas and other vegetables. When peas are 1s. 6d. per lb in Perth, they are hanging in clusters along the edges of those channels. I can commend the conservation of our water in the winter-time and its distribution in the summer.

The Bill proposes that the old method of watering shall go by the board. The man who grades his land the best and farms the best will pay less. The man who has badly graded land and requires a lot of water will pay for it. Under the old system, we are allowed three hours to water one acre. If a man has an eight-acre paddock, he is allowed 24 hours in which to water it. He pours on the water and hopes to finish in that time. If the land is properly graded in the future, when water wheels are installed, and a man can water his paddock properly, he will pay only for the amount of water that he uses, and he may have a good deal of water left over for which he will not be charged and which he can use on some other paddock.

Not only will that save the good farmer money, but it will make for better farming; because the less water a man puts on a pasture, while adequately watering it, the better. Over-watering is very bad for any plant, because the roots are left in water. The idea is to saturate the ground completely without having any surplus water lying about. I commend the Bill to the House and urge upon the Government the wisdom of spending loan moneys on the conservation of water in this country.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

#### **BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

#### **BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

- 1, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.
  - 2, Agriculture Protection Board Act Amendment.
- Without amendment.

**BILL—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST  
ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [5.13]: I have had a look at the Bill, which deals with two very minor matters, namely, the payment of fees to the chairman and members of the trust and the method of signing cheques. I am satisfied that both amendments will make for improvement, and I have no objection to the increased fees. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

**BILL—GAS UNDERTAKINGS ACT  
AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; Hon. G. Fraser in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 1 had been agreed to. Clauses 2 and 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 5.17 p.m.*

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 7th November, 1951.

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

**QUESTIONS.**

**DREDGE "SIR JAMES MITCHELL."**

*As to Cost and Suitability.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) On whose advice was the dredge "Sir James Mitchell" purchased?

(2) What was the cost of this dredge?

(3) Did it prove suitable for the work at Albany it was sent to do?

(4) Is it being removed from Albany to Fremantle?

(5) Will it be suitable for the dredging of the present Fremantle Harbour?

(6) If not, what dredge is to be used for this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Engineer for Harbours and Rivers.

(2) £310,000.