**WATER CONSERVATION ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 1915**

**House of Assembly, 2 September 1915, pages 682-3**

Second reading

**The MINISTER of INDUSTRY (Hon. R. P. Blundell)—**The amendments proposed by this Bill are of a purely machinery character. They are intended either to make good various defects in the Water Conservation Act, 1886, which have been disclosed by experience of the working of the Act for a period of nearly 30 years, or to provide facile and summary methods for carrying out the objects of the Act, and especially to secure the prompt and certain payment of water rates and other payments due to the Commissioner of Waterworks. The Water Conservation Act, 1886, contemplated that the Act should be carried into effect through the medium of Water Conservancy Boards, but no such boards are in existence, and the Act is therefore administered entirely by the Commissioner of Waterworks in pursuance of a provision contained in the Act. For consistency with the principal Act, however, it has been necessary to refer in the various amendments to the responsible authority under the name of “ the Board ” instead of the “Commissioner.” Section 4 of the Act provides for the constitution of water districts, and the alteration of their boundaries by proclamation of the Governor. There is no provision, however, enabling the Governor to abolish a water district. This deficiency is rectified by clause 3 of the Bill. Clause 4 provides for a re-enactment of section 123 of the Act, which gives power to distrain for water rates in arrears. This is desirable in order to bring the provisions of the Water Conservation Act in line with the similar provisions of the Waterworks Act and of the Adelaide Sewers Act . As the three Acts are all administered by the same authority such uniformity would be highly convenient. Clause 5 provides for a re-enactment of section 185 of the Act, which deals with payment for excess water, to make the language of this section uniform with that of the similar provision in the Waterworks Act, and in the Adelaide Sewers Act. The remainder of the Bill consists of various provisions which experience in the work-ins of the Act has shown to be necessary. Clause 6 provides a penalty for interfering with water meters, and gives power to recover the cost of damage to fittings. This is already provided for by regulation, but it is desirable that it should be covered by direct legislation. *A* similar section is contained in the Waterworks Act. Clause 7 gives power to require the removal of injurious matter from a watershed, and enables the responsible authority, on default, to remove the injurious matter and recover the cost from the owner or occupier of the land. The Commissioner of Waterworks has similar power under the Waterworks Act. Clause 8 provides a facile and summary method for recovering rates and other amounts due under the Act. Clause 9 provides that all such amounts shall, until paid, be a charge upon the land with respect to which they are payable, and shall be recoverable from the owner or occupier for the time being of such land. Clause 10 prohibits trespassing on waterworks land. Clause 11 enables a fee to be charged for the use of meters where desirable. Clause 12 is a useful evidentiary provision. It will make it unnecessary, in cases where the Waterworks Department institutes legal proceedings to recover amounts due for excess water, to prove affirmatively that the water in question has been supplied to the defendant in pursuance of a specific agreement entered into between him and the Commissioner. Cluse 13 enables the Commissioner, in cases where he has provided a special water supply by extension of the main, for any applicant, in pursuance of an agreement to pay interest on the amount of the special expenditure necessary, to compel other persons who are equally benefited by the extension to contribute, and also enables him, if necessary, to impose a rate for the purpose on the lands benefited. The provisions of the section are made retrospective, in order to apply to persons who have obtained the benefit of a water supply provided in consequence of an agreement under which the persons benefited have incurred no corresponding liabilities. This piece of legislation will fetch the other Acts into conformity with the modern conditions existing to-day. It does not make any drastic alteration to the present legislation except that it provides that where the water mains have been extended over some particular area those persons through whose property the mains are passing, and who are not using the water, may be made to bear a share of the cost in common with the person who in the first place applied for, and is making use of, the water. The Bill makes various amendments in regard to the better administration of the Act, and the recovery of rates ; also in regard to difficulties that have cropped up owing to the different conditions existing to-day. I move the second reading.

Mr. RITCHIE secured the adjournment of the debate until September 7.