RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1956

House of Assembly, 25 October 1956, page 1243

Second reading.

**The Hon. C. S. HINCKS (Minister of Irrigation)—**I move:—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It makes two amendments to the Renmark Irrigation Trust Act which have been asked for by the trust.

The first amendment deals with the fees payable to members of the trust, other than the chairman. Originally, these fees were one pound a meeting, with a limit of £25 a member in any year. In 1945 this was altered and provision was made for an annual payment to each member of such amount as the trust fixed, but not exceeding £50 in any year. The trust has informed the Government that at the last annual meeting of ratepayers approval was given for an increase to £75. The trust desires to pay this amount, but has asked that a limit of £100 a member should be provided in the Bill so as to allow for the possibility of a further increase without the necessity of amending legislation. In support of the increase, the trust pointed out that since 1945, when the present fees were fixed, the business of the trust has increased very greatly and members are called upon to give much more time to their official duties. This often makes it necessary for members to employ additional labour. It will be apparent that if £50 was justified in 1945, the increases now contemplated by the trust are equally justified.

The other provision of the Bill deals with the publication of the trust’s balance sheet. At present the trust is obliged to publish its balance sheet in a newspaper and in the Government Gazette. In this matter the trust has greater obligations than a district or municipal council. The Local Government Act requires a council’s balance sheet to be published in the Gazette, but leaves it optional for the council to advertise it in a newspaper. The trust has, however, been complying with its Act and, in addition, has adopted a practice of sending a copy of the balance sheet by post to every ratepayer. The trust regards the advertisement of the balance sheet as an unnecessary duplication and has asked that the obligation to advertise it should be removed.

The Government agreed to propose this to Parliament. Clause 4 accordingly makes it obligatory on the trust to send balance sheets every ratepayer, but removes the duty to advertise them in the Gazette or a newspaper. The clause will, of course, apply only to the balance sheets of the trust relating to its irrigation activities, and not to its balance sheets as a local governing authority. These latter balance sheets will continue to be regulated by the Local Government Act.

Mr. HUTCHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.