

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 13th August, 1896.

Guano: export of—Coolgardie Water Supply: private proposals respecting—Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: second reading: committee—Perth Water Works: proposed purchase of—Agricultural Lands Purchase Bill: committee—Adoption of Children Bill: committee—Coolgardie Goldfields Water Supply Loan Bill: second reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

GUANO—EXPORT OF.

THE HON. W. ALEXANDER asked the Minister for Mines,—(1.) Whether, owing to the continued and increasing demand for manures by fruit-growers and farmers, to enable them to supply to the fullest extent local grown products, the Government were prepared to introduce legislation prohibiting the export of guano from any part of the colony. (2.) If the Government would endeavour to prevent any further export of guano, particularly from the Abrolhos, and have the deposits examined.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied, as follows:—(1.) The Government had received offers from the lessees of the islands to sell their rights to the Government, but the price was considered much in excess of the nett value of the deposits. (2.) The withdrawal (in event of a sale) of the lessees' staff of labour, permanently stationed on the islands, would so considerably increase the cost of shipping the guano that the cost would much exceed the price that the lessees now supply it f.o.b. to purchasers. (3.) A thorough and detailed survey and examination of the deposits by a competent officer would be necessary before a correct estimate of the amount and value of deposits yet remaining on the island could be ascertained. (4.) The Government quite realise that these guano deposits are of considerable value to our producers as a fertiliser, but no practicable scheme of economically working them has yet been suggested better than the present method of purchasing cargoes

from the lessees, who supply cargoes at 30s. per ton f.o.b.

COOLGARDIE WATER SUPPLY—PRIVATE PROPOSALS RESPECTING.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: We have now before us a Bill to enable the Government to raise £2,500,000 for the purpose of a water supply at the goldfields. We are all agreed, I take it, that it is absolutely necessary that these fields should be supplied by some means or other, and the object I have in moving the resolution which stands in my name is that, before expending this large sum of money, the House shall be satisfied in regard to any reasonable proposals which would in all probability have the effect, if the concessions asked for were granted, of supplying this needful water to the fields. I have no doubt that the Government, as well as those gentlemen who are strongly in favour of the Bill which is now before the House, recognise that we should not commit the colony to this large expenditure without the fullest information, and I therefore move:—"That the Hon. the Minister for Mines be requested to furnish this House with a statement giving particulars of all proposals made to the Government during the past two years relative to the supply of fresh water to the Coolgardie Goldfields or any part thereof; the names of the companies or persons by whom such proposals were made; the concessions asked for; and showing how such proposals were dealt with by the Government." I do not ask that the whole of the papers shall be laid on the table. It will be sufficient for my purpose if the hon. gentleman will give us, shortly, an abstract showing the proposals which have been made; the concessions which have been asked for; the names of the persons or companies who have made the proposals, and showing in what way the Government have dealt with them. I now move the resolution.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I have only to state that I shall be very pleased to furnish the hon. member with the information he has asked for as far as I possibly can.

Question put and passed.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

This Bill was read a third time, and passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): By this Bill it is proposed to alter the present Act in two or three ways. The first is to provide for the licensing of weighbridges. Then it is proposed to deal with the preservation of public decency and public health, and to amend section 105 of the principal Act by adding these words: "For the erection in any public place of one or more machines or engines, with a suitable house or building thereto, for the weighing of vehicles conveying any goods or merchandise whatsoever." In regard to the weighbridges it is provided that the Council may either construct them or license them so that goods and merchandise may be weighed whenever desired. Clause 4 states that every vehicle used for carrying must be weighed and the weight of it painted upon it in legible characters. This will enable any person to purchase, say, a ton of wood and to have it weighed while it is upon the vehicle, because the weight of the vehicle will be known. The Bill is a useful one, and I move that it be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Clause 4—"Vehicles to have their weight, &c., painted on conspicuous part."

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I notice that nothing is said in this clause as to giving notice when weighbridges have been erected. There should be some notice given in the *Government Gazette*, otherwise when the Council construct weighbridges it will be hard to subject persons to a penalty for not complying with the regulations.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I agree with the hon. member that some notice should be given before these regulations are allowed to come into force.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Perhaps some legal gentleman may be able to tell us whether there is any section in the Municipal Act which would necessitate such a notice being given.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I move that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported.

PERTH WATER WORKS—PROPOSED PURCHASE OF.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:—

"Mr. President,

"The Legislative Assembly having this day passed the following Resolution, viz.:—'That this House approves of the purchase by the Government of the Perth Water Works for a sum of £220,000,' presents the same to the Legislative Council for its concurrence.

"JAS. G. LEE STEERE,

"Speaker.

"Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth, 12th August, 1896."

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): By leave of the House, as this is a matter of some urgency, I would ask hon. members to deal with this Message at once. The object of it is to enable the Government to purchase the Perth Water Works, and I may tell hon. members that if they give this authority a Bill will be introduced very shortly to provide for their management. It is desired that the Government shall have this authority as soon as possible, that they may make arrangements to obtain further pipes so as to provide an adequate supply of water for the city during the coming summer, and thus prevent anything like the water famine which was experienced last year. Hon. members know the details of the whole matter, and I need not go into them at the present moment. I will, therefore, simply ask them to concur in the resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

THE HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I have much pleasure in seconding this motion, not only because I represent the Metropolitan Province and occupy the position of Mayor of Perth, but because I

think it is in the interests of the whole colony that these works should be purchased. I must say that I think the thanks of the City Council are due to the Government for the action they have taken in this matter.

THE HON. S. J. HAYNES: Whilst I sympathise with this motion I think the loan required to purchase these works should be a metropolitan one and not a general one. Probably it is the only way in which this matter may be grappled with, but I do think that loans for water supply should be local ones, and should not affect the whole colony.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: How does the Government propose to pay for the works?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): I may explain that this resolution is merely preliminary to a Bill.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: But if we agree to this resolution we vote the money.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): I might say that the Government have these works under offer to them only for a certain time, and if they do not take the chance which is given to them they may lose them altogether. It is generally considered that water works should be in the hands of either the Government or the Municipality. At the present time, it is beyond doubt, the Municipality is unable to acquire them, and the Government have stepped in so that they may help the citizens. A Bill will shortly be brought down which will provide for a board having powers to issue debentures for the purchase of the works. This board will manage them, and the price charged for water will be such as will cover all expenses. There will, therefore, be no loss to the State. This is not intended to be a gift to the people of Perth, but it is part of a scheme which the Government have in hand for helping all towns to obtain water where they are unable to help themselves. In an important matter like this I think hon. members should give the Government credit for doing what is right, and I can assure them when the Bill comes down they will be satisfied with the provisions which it contains. The Government have the right to purchase these works only for a

limited time; I believe the option expires to-morrow. If the matter were not one of urgency I should not ask hon. members to deal with it without further time for consideration.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I trust no objection will be taken to this resolution, because it is one of the most important matters we shall be called upon to deal with this session. Everyone who has lived in Perth is aware of the position in regard to the water supply. I, myself, have several times pointed out the position to the Premier. Last summer when the main was running day and night there was not sufficient water coming in to meet half the demand. This year the population of Perth has been doubled, and although we may pass this resolution, I feel sure we shall experience a most serious water famine. Still, if we agree to this, it will enable the Government to obtain further pipes, and thus minimise the evil as far as possible; but I can only say God help the people who have to live in Perth next summer.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: It seems to me an extraordinary thing that a measure of this sort should be run through the House in about a minute, and it also appears somewhat inconsistent to find hon. members, who are willing to support this, opposing another Bill which is before us. By adopting such a course they seem to be considering themselves, but do not seem to care for those who, in other places, are starving for water. Some hon. members are ever ready to vote away money when it concerns themselves, but they have no consideration when it concerns others. Some hon. members are saying why should the Government borrow £2,500,000 to supply the goldfields with water. We might just as well say why should they pay £220,000 for these works.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. SHENTON): The hon. member must not impute motives.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I withdraw any expression which may attribute motives, but I propose that the matter be considered at the next sitting of the House.

THE HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I am somewhat of the same opinion as the Hon. Mr. Burgess, and I can see very many reasons why the matter should not

be rushed through. These water works may not be large enough.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: There is plenty of water but no mains.

THE HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Even so, it would be as well to delay the matter somewhat so as to obtain further information. I shall support the Hon. Mr. Burges in his efforts to have the consideration of the resolution deferred until the next meeting of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): I should just like to say that this is a matter where the hands of the Government have been forced. The position is this: the water works are in the hands of a foreign company, and there are several people trying to purchase the rights. The Municipality of Perth has the privilege, within three years, of purchasing them at a sum something like £220,000. At the present time the works are not managed in such a way as to give universal satisfaction; in fact it is notorious that the want of water has led to many ill effects. The consequence has been that representations have been made to the Government to acquire the works, but it has been thought that, rather than purchase them for the Municipality, the Government should purchase them for themselves, and place them under the control of a board which will work them in the interests of the citizens. The City Council has surrendered its rights, and the Government has taken its place. The works will be altogether reproductive, so that there need be no fear of any loss. The working expenses, interest, and sinking fund will be paid out of the rate, and any surplus will go towards reducing the rate. The board will have power to issue debentures, and these will be cashed by the Government to enable the works to be purchased. If hon. members will take my assurance in the matter, I can tell them that when the Bill comes before them they will be perfectly satisfied, but, as a matter of urgency, I ask them to agree to this resolution now.

THE HON. D. K. CONGDON: I hope hon. members will agree to the resolution. Perth is very badly off for water; in fact, last summer there was almost a water famine. If we do not trust the Government now the option may expire, and the works may get into other hands

and cost more to obtain in the future than they will now.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I can quite see that the Hon. Mr. Burges' remarks were levelled at me, but they go off like water from a duck's back. I may tell hon. members, with regard to the scheme, that there is sufficient water in the reservoir to last two and a half years, but the pipes are not large enough to bring down what is required, and there is nothing to compel the present owners to put in more pipes. The City Council has to levy a ls. rate, and this pays sufficient for the working expenses, sinking fund, and interest. There need be no fear, therefore, of there being any loss to the State.

THE HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I should like to explain —

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I do not want any more explanation.

THE HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I should like to say that the Government cannot get another scheme, because the City Council is bound to levy a rate in the interest of this particular company.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: I beg to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.
Resolution agreed to.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PURCHASE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—"Sources of funds not more than £200,000 for purposes of this Act."

THE HON. F. M. STONE: I move that progress be reported. The Bill was only read a second time yesterday, and we have not yet had an opportunity of putting any amendments we may have upon the Notice Paper.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: Would the hon. member mind stating the effect of the amendments he wishes to propose?

THE HON. F. M. STONE: In Clause 4 I propose that the board shall continue to hold office for five years and shall not be at the will of the Government.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: Supposing one of them turns out to be a rogue?

THE HON. F. M. STONE: Then I propose that any offer which is made shall be a binding one. In Clause 7 I propose to strike out the words "If the Land Purchase Board shall report, etc.,"

and say, "If the Land Purchase Board shall recommend." Then, in Clause 12, I propose to insert a provision under which, if there are two applicants for any particular land, it shall be decided by ballot which of them shall have it.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: I trust that the motion will be carried. I have several other amendments which, if time is given, I shall be able to place upon Notice Paper.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I need only say that I am always willing to afford hon. members as much time as possible, but in this instance I am afraid that the desire to improve the Bill is not a sincere one. I take it that this motion is only made with the view to stopping the progress of the Bill because hon. members were defeated last night.

THE HON. F. M. STONE: Is the hon. member in order in imputing motives?

THE CHAIRMAN (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): I think it would be drawing the line rather fine to construe the hon. member's words into an imputation of motives.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I willingly withdraw them, but I may point out that if the hon. members wished to make these amendments they had ample opportunity of giving notice of them yesterday. However, I shall place myself in the hands of hon. members, although I shall oppose the adjournment.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: It seems to me the hon. member might just as well consent to report progress. It will be a saving of time if we have the amendments on the Notice Paper, but it should be understood that hon. members place them upon the Paper.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN BILL.

IN COMMITTEE:

Clauses 1 to 2 agreed to.

Clause 3—"By whom female child may be adopted."

THE HON. S. J. HAYNES: In subsection 4 of this clause I notice that before a married man can adopt a female child he must be forty years older than the child. I think this is too much, and

I move that "forty" be struck out, and "thirty" be inserted in lieu thereof.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): This is a private member's Bill, and I am unable to say what the object was in fixing the age at forty years.

THE HON. A. B. KIDSON: I think we should consider the question from the point of view of whether forty is a reasonable age or not. I do not think it is.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I think the object in fixing forty is that the person who adopts the child should not be too young to take care of it.

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause—put.

The committee divided with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	8

Majority for ... 1

AYES.	NOES.
The Hon. H. Briggs	The Hon. W. Alexander
The Hon. R. G. Burges	The Hon. F. T. Crowder
The Hon. D. K. Congdon	The Hon. J. W. Hackett
The Hon. C. E. Dempster	The Hon. A. B. Kidson
The Hon. W. Spencer	The Hon. E. McLarty
The Hon. E. H. Wittenoom	The Hon. J. E. Richardson
The Hon. C. A. Piessé	The Hon. F. M. Stone
(Teller).	The Hon. S. J. Haynes
	(Teller).

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—"By whom male child may be adopted."

THE HON. A. B. KIDSON: I move that the word "forty" in this clause be struck out, and "thirty" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

The remaining clauses were agreed to, the Bill reported, and the report adopted.

At 5:30 o'clock, p.m., the PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) left the chair until 7:30 o'clock, p.m.

On resuming,

COOLGARDIE GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY LOAN BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): Sir, in introducing this, the most important Bill of the

session, I would crave the indulgence of hon. members for a short time while I endeavour to place before them, as plainly as I can, the details of the proposal of the Government, and the reasons which have led to the introduction of a measure of such great magnitude and immense possibilities. I need hardly say more regarding the Bill than to read the title, which is "An Act to authorise the raising of a sum of £2,500,000 by Loan for the purpose of providing a Permanent Water Supply for the Coolgardie Goldfields." In that there is the whole gist of the Bill, and, if I were to explain every clause, I could not put hon. members in possession of more information concerning it. I may, perhaps, mention that Clause 4 provides that the sinking fund in this particular instance shall be £3 per cent. The other clauses merely deal with the method in which the money is to be raised. Ever since the first discovery of gold in the colony the want of water has been the greatest drawback to the prompt development of the industry. In the first place there has been no surface water where the reefs have existed, and, in the next place, very little has been found by sinking, and even then what little there has been has proved to be salt and unfit for consumption. In some instances it has been possible to condense the salt water, and thus enable those engaged upon the industry to further prosecute their researches, but the absence of fresh water has militated against the prompt development of our gold resources. At the outset the Government naturally expected that as the work on the fields proceeded and shafts were sunk to depths the probabilities were, taking into consideration the experience of other parts, that water would be struck. While waiting for developments the Government were by no means idle. They endeavoured to provide water by the construction of dams, by boring in a small way, by the erection of condensers, and in other ways as well. With regard to the dams, no doubt the work was, to some extent, successful, as it afforded a means of keeping open the road to the fields at a time when it would otherwise have been impossible for any team to travel. Had it not been for these dams which were constructed at great expense, and at a time when labour was scarce

and wages high, I do not know what we should have done. At the same time they were only partially successful, owing to the smallness of the rainfall. The boring was not prosecuted as fast as it might have been or as fast as many demanded, but the reason was that the efforts which the Government made were so discouraged by geologists that they felt it would only be wasting public money to embark on works of that kind, and especially so when they were told over and over again by qualified experts that they would be unsuccessful. Nevertheless, as so many people expressed their disbelief in expert advice, the Government decided to bore; but unforeseen obstacles occurred from time to time, and, in fact, everything tended in the direction of the advice which was given and went to show that the operations would be unsuccessful. Even now I can only hope that, even against the expert advice, it will be found that the subterranean water does exist, for if it does it will be of material assistance to the scheme which the Government, by this Bill, propose to embark upon. In spite of the sinking of the shafts, in spite of the boring, the universal drawback to the development of the fields has been the want of water. The cry—water—came from everywhere, and I think when I bring to the notice of hon. members the very urgent telegrams which were received by the Government last summer they will see that the matter was very serious. In fact events really culminated at that period, and, to show what the position was, I will read one or two of the telegrams that were received, because there is no reason why what happened yesterday should not be repeated to-day. Hon. members will remember that last year the traffic on the road to Coolgardie was almost stopped, and the Government were compelled, not only to carry the water they required for their engines, but also large quantities for those engaged in the carrying business. The expense involved was very large, but even that was not the worst part of it, for, instead of the trains going away laden with machinery and food for those who were prosecuting the industry, they had to be sent away laden with water. I do not think, however, that I need labour this question, but I will just read a few of the telegrams that were received at the time.

From Woolgangie, dated 2nd January, 1896.

From Mr. H. Climic, for delegates, re transport at Woolgangie, to Hon. Sir J. Forrest.

Many loaded teams cannot get away want of water; horses starving; carriers indignant; look out starvation. If you cannot make better arrangements, carrying must cease, and the goldfields must starve. Wire what you intend doing, otherwise all teamsters go down.

From Woolgangie, dated 1st January, 1896.

From Mr. H. H. Roche, Chairman of Meeting at Woolgangie.

Unanimous decision here that unless 20,000 gallons of water is sent daily, carrying business must cease, and teams leave for Northam.

From Southern Cross, dated 30th December, 1895.

From Mr. J. J. Reilly, Editor "Southern Cross Herald," to Sir John Forrest, Premier.

Water gone at Woolgangie; absolutely necessary stop traffic till water difficulty overcome. Only urgency would produce this wire.

Later telegram from same to same, dated 1st, January 1896.

Twenty thousand gallons necessary; must have it; put on all trains; water must be supplied.

From Woolgangie, dated 30th December, 1895.

From delegates of Committee re transport from Woolgangie, to Sir John Forrest, Premier.

One thousand horses here; only twelve hours available supply in dam. Wholesale stampede Tuesday morning; 20,000 gallons least daily supply meet emergency.

From Woolgangie, dated 29th December, 1895.

From Mr. W. Thompson, President Chamber of Mines, to Sir John Forrest, Premier.

Cannot too strongly urge upon Government absolute and imperative necessity of sending water to Woolgangie immediately and without one moment's delay. There are over 1,000 horses camped here, which must be supplied; at least 20,000 gallons daily needed; if something not done at once there will be general stampede from here, and no stores can possibly be supplied to the fields; please do make inquiries and act.

Hon. members will not require me to read out a dozen or twenty more of these, for I am sure those I have already read are sufficiently convincing to show the state of affairs at that time. At Kalgoorlie water was so very scarce and so much so that in one department, which I have the honour to control, I do not know what the officers would have done if the Government had not had a condenser there and had been in a position to supply at a reasonable rate. At Menzies at one

time the food supplies were very scarce on account of the want of water along the road. Again, capitalists were beginning to despair. Capitalists who had embarked thousands of pounds found their money lying idle and unable to do anything, and what was more exasperating was the fact that the gold, in many instances, was staring them in the face, and they were unable to secure it owing to there being no water to separate it from the earth. I do not think at that time there were six mines on the fields that were in a position to say they could run ten heads of stampers for twenty-four hours continuously. If more evidence were wanted to prove the scarcity of water I could produce numerous applications for exemptions which were based on the ground that the applicants were having to cart water twelve and even twenty miles for domestic consumption, and I may say that these applications were endorsed by the wardens. I have shown, I think, that a great necessity existed for us to do something to provide water, and, having this in view, the Government cast about for some way to overcome the difficulty. They recognised that the state of affairs which prevailed last summer might prevail again; they recognised how unprofitably the railways were being worked; they recognised how the trade of the colony was stopped (for I believe that the Fremantle block was largely due to the scarcity of water at the goldfields)—

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER: Why did the Government cut the freights down then?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom): I say the Government, recognising all these things, cast about to see if they could not get a scheme to obviate the difficulties—a scheme which would give a plentiful supply of fresh water at a moderate price and which could be carried out in a reasonable time. The matter was well considered by the Government. All sorts of evidence was taken. Advantage was taken of the experience and advice of experts, and finally it was decided to propose this present scheme which will cost £2,500,000. The Government say that it is a good scheme—one that will pay, not only working expenses, but interest and sinking fund besides. More-

over, they claim that it will not inflict the slightest charge on the colony; nor do they consider that a scheme of this magnitude, which is in the interests of one particular district and one particular industry, should do so. Such would not be fair and just to other parts; but, as this scheme will pay its way, and provide a sinking fund, it is considered that there can be no just cause for complaint that it will prove a burden on the whole colony. I think I have mentioned it before, and, if I have, I may repeat it now, that the Government have not brought forward this scheme as a great stroke of policy, but, on the other hand, have brought it forward with reluctance and diffidence, knowing as they do how objectionable it is to propose that large loans should be entered into. I do not propose to weary hon. members by telling them that the pipes shall be of this size or that, or to flood them with details as to the construction, for they will be found in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, which has been laid upon the table. To-night I have had circulated another paper, showing how the details have been arrived at. I may just mention that the scheme is a simple one, and that it involves the construction of a large reservoir in the Darling Ranges. From there the water will be pumped from place to place, until the top of Mt. Burges is arrived at. The actual height to the top of the Mount is 1,350 feet; and there will be from eight to ten pumping stations. Mt. Burges is 416 feet above Coolgardie, and 420 feet above Menzies, so that hon. members will see that, when once the water is pumped to its last stage, there will be sufficient fall for it to gravitate round the adjacent country. The supply that will be forwarded will be 5,000,000 gallons per day; and it is proposed to sell this at a price not exceeding 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. This price, it is estimated, will pay working expenses, interest, and a sinking fund of 3 per cent., thus enabling the original cost to be paid off in something like twenty-two years. The supply that will be forwarded will be used, in the first place, for the railways. Hon. members will see what a great advantage it will be to have an adequate supply of water all along the line, instead of having to rely upon tanks and dams, or being compelled to carry it by train.

In the next place, it will be used for domestic consumption, a blessing none can estimate who have never been without water. In the next place, it will be used for battery purposes, and, altogether, there is not the slightest doubt but that the whole of the water will be used. At the present time I am in possession of three offers from private individuals guaranteeing to take the whole of the water and put down a certain sum of money as a guarantee. We all know that the majority of the mines are composed of low grade ore. With a good supply of water it will pay to work them, and what a fillip it will give the industry if even these mines can crush night and day. I have only to refer hon. members to many of the companies in Ballarat, where 6dwt. and 7dwt. to the ton are made to pay; but, of course, it can only be done on account of the quantity of water and fuel which are available. Then there are hundreds of acres of alluvial ground which, with the aid of water, could be turned over, and there is also what is known as the cement country, which could be washed for about 20 feet deep. It has been stated that, if water were plentiful, a quantity of ground could be washed which would give about 5oz. to the ton. I do not believe that; but if it only went half an ounce to the ton, it would be a big thing. The time it is estimated the works will take to construct is the most objectionable part of the scheme; but the Government have looked round and can see no way of doing it quicker. I might point out this, however, that if we cannot do it any quicker the best thing for us to do is to commence at once. Of course there are objections to the scheme, and of those which appear to be most plausible two present themselves. It is said that the scheme is not practicable, and that the work cannot be carried out in the time mentioned, or for the money named. I think, however, if anyone has given the matter serious consideration, he will have no doubt as to its practicability. The Government have taken the advice of their skilled expert—the gentleman who is employed to advise the Government—and he assures us that the scheme is thoroughly practicable. When we say we have taken the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief, hon. members must bear in

mind that he has now a large staff. It has been necessary to acquire talent in the Works Department, and it happens that among this talent we have obtained the services of men who have had experience in this particular class of work, so that when we say we have the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief it carries with it that we have the advice of those associated with him who have had experience on works of a similar character. There is no difficulty about the pumps or the pumping. I will read to hon. members a letter to Sir John Forrest on this subject from Mr. Montague Browne. He says:—

After reading Mr. O'Connor's very modest 35th section re pumping power, I conclude that I have some matter that will interest you. The Tasmanian Gold Mining Company have good reason to expect, within a month or two, offers of plant to pump 6,000,000 and 8,000,000 gallons of water respectively in twenty-four hours to 1,500 feet. Their present plant is pumping over 3,500,000 gallons per day through 718 feet in three lifts, using 560 horse power. The engines are on the surface, but if we had room below, 1,000 feet in one lift could be done at much less cost. One of the factors of modern pumping is a quicker valve motion, and the cost is reduced by the use of quadruple expansion engines and water tube boilers (vertical tubes); and I expect our engines to pump 6,000,000 gallons at not much more than the present cost of pumping 3,500,000 gallons. Under the circumstances the mechanical difficulties in your water scheme appear to me to be a very small factor.

Here is another from Mr. H. C. Muis, M.I.C.E.:—"I have been entrusted with the sale of two triple expansion duplex pumping engines, of the Worthington type, each engine being capable of raising 2,000,000 gallons of water and delivering the same at an elevation of 320 feet above the engine-house floor every twenty-four hours." That does not look as if the scheme is impracticable. The question will no doubt arise, may not Mr. O'Connor's judgment be wrong; and, to controvert that idea, I will refer hon. members to a scheme which has received the consideration of many people—a scheme which is altogether independent of the Government scheme—and I think that, reasoning by analogy, I shall be able to show that our scheme is perfectly practicable. The scheme I refer to has been put forward by Mr. Wilson. It is the scheme of private enterprise, and I shall refer to it to prove that the Govern-

ment scheme is practicable even from the point of view of those who are bringing forward an opposing scheme. The Government scheme proposes to pump water from station to station. Mr. Wilson's scheme proposes to pump water to a height of 170 feet and a distance of 65 miles. Thus so far they are parallel schemes. Mr. Wilson says:—"At the storage reservoir a pumping plant would be erected which would pump the water into a service reservoir to be constructed on a hill situate about 25 miles South of the storage reservoir. This hill is 170 feet above Menzies township. Should this not be sufficient height we can attain any head required by a slight deviation West." If, therefore, it is practicable to pump 170 feet, it is surely possible to pump the same height in series. Hon. members have no doubt heard of Mr. Jobson. He was engineer for the Government at one time, and I believe he possesses the confidence of every hon. member. Referring to Mr. Wilson's proposal, he says:—"Regarding your scheme for supplying these fields with water I have to say that, after inspecting the site for the reservoir and the watershed, I have no doubt whatever about its entire feasibility." I ask hon. members to apply these words to the Government scheme. In order to meet the objections of those hon. gentlemen who say that they want more evidence as to the feasibility of the scheme than that which is supplied by the Engineer-in-Chief, I will quote further from Mr. Jobson. He says:—"There is no engineering difficulty whatever as regards the carrying out of the scheme." Messrs. Allen, Beart & Co., and Mr. T. Speight, C.E., say:—"There is a hill 25 miles from site of reservoir on the proposed pipe line which, by carefully checked aneroid readings, is 170 feet above Menzies. Menzies again is about 450 feet above Coolgardie. If a pumping plant were installed at the reservoir, and the water forced into a service reservoir on this hill, it would gravitate to Coolgardie. . . . In conclusion, we may add that the scheme is eminently practicable, and would, we feel sure, be an extremely profitable investment." This is the evidence of engineers of a private water scheme, and it applies with equal force to the Government scheme, because

both schemes are based upon the same principles. Although I may be trespassing somewhat on the patience of hon. members, I desire to convince them of the practicability of the scheme, and I will read further from the reports of gentlemen who are eminently capable of giving an opinion. Mr. Percival Fowler, M.I.C.E., in writing to a newspaper, says:—

Since the Government scheme for supplying the Coolgardie goldfields with fresh water from the Greenmount Ranges was placed before the country, I have carefully gone into all the details that have been submitted to the public, both as affecting the purely engineering aspect of the scheme and its estimated cost. I have had some considerable experience during twenty years of pumping under various difficulties and varying circumstances, and have also had the designing of water works which presented far greater engineering difficulties. I can confidently say, after a full examination, that there is not a single engineering difficulty in this scheme which has been presented to Parliament by the Government; in fact the scheme, as an engineering one, is about as simple as it is possible to conceive any engineering scheme to be.

Works of this character are being constantly carried out. It is simply a multiplication of pumping stations, all on the same system, to give a large aggregate result. As regards the estimates, I consider they would be accepted by any first-rate contractor in the old country. There is no doubt in my mind that this scheme has been worked out with great care and with the fullest regard to economy of construction and working expenditure. It is obvious that the Government will be very glad to have figures, facts, and opinions from any qualified engineer to oppose the scheme or the estimates which have been prepared in respect of it. There is not the slightest doubt that, as in every engineering scheme of magnitude, there are many details which can be modified, and that a great deal of care will be required in the organisation of the works unless they are let by contract. One of the chief objections which has been raised to Mr. O'Connor's scheme is that the work cannot be carried out within the stipulated time, for the reason that the pipes required could not be manufactured within that period. Those, however, who make this statement do so in ignorance of facts. I have no hesitation in saying that, if necessary, and if the orders were divided between the firms which manufacture such articles in England, the Continent, and the United States, they could be delivered within 12 months. But there is no reason to adopt this course, as the pipes will only require to be delivered gradually, and if delivered within two years, will certainly meet the exigencies of the case. I can imagine no proposal which can possibly compete with this one, which I

consider an absolute necessity for the development of the goldfields of this colony. Although water will, as I believe, be found on the fields at a depth, it will not supply the necessities of the inhabitants, who are increasing daily on the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie fields, nor will it supply batteries for many rich mines in the neighbourhood, which are in course of development and sinking for water.

A drought may occur in any year, in which case not only would the inhabitants of the fields—as, I say, daily increasing—be in a very unfortunate position, but possibly many batteries be obliged to shut down, unless this scheme is taken in hand at once. I venture, therefore, to predict that before many years are passed this scheme to supply water to the fields will have proved to be one of the grandest and boldest and most successful measures ever undertaken by any Government, and more especially creditable to the Government of a young country like Western Australia. Taken all round, I believe this scheme not only to be a sound one, and in the circumstances the only possible one, but that the figures of the Engineer-in-Chief will be found to bear the strictest scrutiny.

This gentleman is the son of Sir John Fowler, one of the most eminent engineers in the world, and hon. members will understand, therefore, that every word he says must carry weight with it. I will now read another opinion, that of Mr. W. G. Cox, C.E. Writing to a newspaper, he says:—

On the 5th May last you were good enough to publish a letter of mine, written from Queensland after a visit to Western Australia, upon a water supply to the goldfields of Western Australia. There was also a leader by you in the same issue upon my letter and the subject of it. In my letter, which was the outcome of a very long experience—some 20 years—as an engineer of underground water supply, the last 14 years of highly successful work in Queensland, I naturally advocated an extensive and thorough system of deep boring for a supply. At the same time I fully endorsed the Chief Engineer. Mr. O'Connor's Government scheme is a perfectly sound and feasible one in an engineering sense. Since my arrival, a week ago, I have further fully examined Mr. O'Connor's report, the Parliamentary statements of the Premier (Sir John Forrest), the debate in Parliament, and the Press comments, and I am of opinion, taking a broad view of the subject, that this Government scheme is, so far as time and a certain supply of water are concerned, the best available under the circumstances. At the same time I can see no reason to alter my opinion as to the advisability of pursuing a steady and thorough test of the country by thorough deep drilling for supplementary local supplies. The larger scheme may in its success cast a cloud upon, and tend to check enterprise on the part of the Government and others in boring for water; but until

this is done, and done efficiently and thoroughly, until it is clearly and definitely known whether or not there is available water in the ground, this great water supply question of Western Australia will, I am of opinion, never be satisfactorily settled.

I will now give hon. members a letter from a gentleman who is well known on the goldfields—Mr. N. W. Harper. I am given to understand that this gentleman has had considerable experience in connection with many of the mines, that he has spent a great deal of time in the various districts, and has lived there; and, therefore, his testimony must be of some value. He says, in a letter to the Premier:

I am very pleased indeed that you have taken so great an interest in this great project, and I sincerely trust that you will have the unanimous support of all the members of the House. I feel certain the scheme will be an unqualified success. For the last two years I have strongly advocated this scheme, as being the only certain, permanent, and adequate supply. I have been in the colony over four years, during which period I have always been in search of permanent water. During my supervision of Fraser's Gold Mine, several new sources of dense water were intersected, and which appeared permanent when first met with, but unfortunately with a regular draw soon became exhausted, consequently another supply had to be explored for, and so, on a repetition of this, had to be continued in order to keep the mill going.

We hear of a great many shafts, bores, etc., having met with a great influx of water sufficient for all requirements; how long does this supply last with anything like the requirements of a 20-head battery? I venture to say that there is only one battery, out of the numerous plants at work on the Yilgarn and Coolgardie goldfields, that can fairly claim to have even sufficient to run continuously, that being South Fraser's; and then only by a careful method of returning and using over and over again. This mine has its main shaft in the bed of a lake, and no drainage in that direction.

I cannot understand men who are identified with our goldfields advocating a lake conservation scheme; they must know, if they have lived in these parts and watched the disappearance of the salt lakes, that they are unreliable, only temporary, and only equal to requirements when rain falls in the winter season.

The average evaporation annually is 7 feet, and in a dry season this will be increased, so that at the time water is most required, viz., in the months of December, January, and February, these lakes are all dry, and I have no hesitation in saying, notwithstanding our exceptionally good season, that they are all dry by the end of the approaching summer. Is our large population going to leave these

districts and desert their mines in the future as they have done in the past for want of water?

Look at the exodus of people from our fields, and the general dissatisfaction of the unemployed during exemption period last year—all for the want of water. This same trouble will occur every summer until a permanent supply is obtained.

Artesian Boring.—A great many support this method. Now we will refer (for comparison sake) to the other goldfields or mining centres of Australia, where deep shafts have been sunk to depths varying from 2,000 to 3,000 feet, viz., Charters Towers, Gympie, Croydon, Bendigo, Ballarat, and Moonta. If artesian water exists in mining districts, as some would have us believe, why do they not get artesian supplies in those mines where they have reached great depths? Surely a main shaft will intersect an underground water current as readily as a 6-inch bore.

True, they have drainage water in some of those mines, but only in a small minority of them. The shafts in the Bendigo mines went through the water at 300 feet, and there is every indication that the same will occur here.

Cost of water at 4s. per 1,000 gallons is remarkably cheap. Providing the mines had the water, the cost of pumping, wear and tear of plant would cost the amount, and even more to land it on the surface.

The great success of your scheme I am certain about; the failure of any other than a coastal scheme I am also certain of.

I have no hesitation in staking my reputation on what I have stated in this letter. I have no axe to grind; have only the welfare of the colony at heart.

My object in writing to you on this matter is—you may probably gather something in what I have said—in support of your scheme.

There is no engineering difficulty about the whole scheme. The distance is only a matter of pipes. The vertical height to pump the water is an every-day occurrence in deep mines, which is overcome by a series of pumping stations at, say, from 200 to 300 feet elevation stages. Supposing the height to be 1,000 feet, five stages would be ample, or just a repetition of what has, and is now being done in the well watered deep mines of the world.

I had a little experience of lake water when I owned a quarter of Hope's Hill Mine. In good winter seasons we had large sheets of water, and before the end of November this water had all gone. I believe I am not exaggerating when I say the evaporation on a dry hot day from the surface of the shallow, dense lakes is not less than 1 inch per day, at any rate I have witnessed 6 inches evaporate in a week; so that, taking all these matters into consideration, I say the lake scheme is a sure failure in a dry season when most required.

The evaporation reaches down many feet below the surface, so that it is not always

necessary to have a sheet of water to cause evaporation. Owing to the flat country the rain which falls is absorbed by the dry hot surface, and is mostly retained for evaporation.

In conclusion, any other scheme than a coastal one is only putting off the evil day, and I for one would be very sorry if the colony does not accept the opportunities they have now, to have this great problem solved.

The advantages are so numerous, which render them almost indescribable.

Wishing you every success with your project.

The Government claim for their scheme that on each day they will be able to pump 5,000,000 gallons of good fresh water, which will be available to those who require it at a cost of 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, and that this price will include, not only the working expenses, but the interest and the sinking fund as well. We have heard a great deal about alternative schemes, but I may say that the Government have carefully considered everything which has been brought under their notice, and, up to the present, there has been nothing which has commended itself to them. The schemes which will, no doubt, be submitted by those who oppose the Government scheme will, probably, have deep boring for their basis. I may say at once that the Government consider it unwise to spend more money upon boring, in the face of what they are told by the experts who advise them. Geologists say that the formation of the country does not hold out the slightest hope of finding subterranean water. Perhaps a little of such water might be found lodged at a depth, but there is no hope of finding artesian water. Then, if we resort to boring, it will take a long time before the question can be settled, and, even should it be found that the experts are wrong, the supply which can be obtained must be a very small one, and then there is the almost certainty of its being salt. Having, perhaps, spent years in putting down a bore, a further long period would have to elapse in order to sink a shaft so that the water could be pumped up in anything like quantities. While all this is going on with uncertainty, the Government scheme, which will give a certain supply of good water, can be carried out. With regard to private enterprise, I may say that the Government are somewhat loth to have anything to do with it on account of their past

experience. We have, at the present time, two railways—the Great Southern and the Midland—which have both been constructed by private enterprise, and in both cases the owners want to sell to the Government. The people who live along the routes of these railways are perfectly dissatisfied with the railways being in private hands, and they are urging upon the Government to buy out the companies. Possibly the day may come when this will have to be done. Again, I might refer hon. members to a matter which occurred this very afternoon. The Perth water works were constructed by private enterprise, and so great has been the dissatisfaction among the citizens that we have had to vote £220,000 to buy the works, which are probably not worth it.

THE HON. R. G. BURGESS: Why did you not tell us that before?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM): With all this staring us in the face, is it to be wondered at that the Government are a little afraid of having anything to do with private enterprise? Even if private enterprise were allowed to undertake the work, only two methods would be open for procuring the water—the one by boring, and the other by catching the rains which fall from the heavens. Last session Parliament decided that private companies should not be allowed to take water from the coastal rivers. A Bill was introduced for the purpose of allowing companies to take such water, but the clause was eliminated in the Legislative Assembly, and as the Bill came to this House it only gave the right to private companies to take electricity to the fields. I might again bring Mr. Wilson's prospectus to our aid, for he proposes to do exactly what the Government intend to carry out. He is going to build a large reservoir; so are we. He proposes to construct his in a country where, it is stated, that the formation of the ground is of doubtful holding capacity. The Government, on the contrary, are going to make their reservoir in an admittedly good country, where the capacity of the holding ground is well known, and where the reservoir of the Perth Water Works is located. Under Mr. Wilson's scheme it is stated that his reservoir can be filled by $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of rain. How much more advantageous will

it be for the Government scheme when it is known that there is an average rainfall of 23 inches at the site of the proposed reservoir? Mr. Wilson says that he can pump 65 miles with the greatest ease. If he can do so why cannot the Government? In these circumstances I say that those hon. gentlemen who would support this private scheme cannot avoid supporting the Government scheme, because the two are practically identical, but with the Government scheme there is the advantage that the water can be supplied at 3s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons, while under Mr. Wilson's scheme the charge will be 10s. per 1,000 gallons. Then, under Mr. Wilson's scheme, only 2 per cent. is set apart to cover the cost of maintenance, &c., whereas under the Government scheme about 6 per cent. is set apart. In criticising Mr. Wilson's scheme I do not say it is not a good scheme, nor do I say that the Government wish to check private enterprise. On the contrary we are prepared to help the promoters, and we have already given an undertaking that, if any fairly reasonable private Bill is introduced, the Government will offer no opposition to it. I do not think we can do anything which is more fair than that. My own opinion is that not only will all the water of the Government scheme be required, but that the water of many private schemes can be utilised as well. It is a matter of great gratification to the Government to see how their scheme has been received. On the whole it has been well received. At first it was considered as a gigantic undertaking which was too large for the colony to embark in, but as the people got to know more about it, they began to look upon it in the same light as the Government did. There is not the slightest doubt that when it is completed it will give an impetus to the gold mining industry, and will be of great benefit to the inhabitants of Western Australia—I was almost going to say to the whole world. Again, we may take it as some evidence of the practicability of the scheme that the Legislative Assembly has passed it without a division. I do not mean to say that we should be guided altogether by that, but it is some evidence in the direction I have referred to. I do not consider it belongs to the functions of this House to enter into the

details of a scheme of this kind; these are rather a matter for consideration by another place. The principle, however, involves a scheme of such magnitude and tremendous issues that I ask hon. members to give it their calm consideration. It involves one of those issues which this House should look into in its judicial capacity. We may take it that the Legislative Assembly has decided that the scheme is practicable, and it is now for us to say whether we are in accord with them that so large an amount should be spent. Can the colony afford to do the work? Are we justified in undertaking it, and is it to the interests of the colony as a whole that we should embark upon it? The anticipated results that will accrue from it are of the highest character. We have only to look round and imagine what a scheme of this kind will do. What a great thing will it be for Western Australia if we can see a large population at our goldfields amply supplied with water for ordinary purposes, and see hundreds of batteries working night and day. As regards the financial aspect, our position in the money market is better than ever it was. It has been said that the scheme will increase our indebtedness per head to too great an extent, but, in reply to this, I can only say that I trust our population is going to increase largely before this money is expended. If people come here at the rate they have been coming during the past few years, the indebtedness per head will not be in any way increased by the adoption of this scheme. In the past, notwithstanding the great water difficulties that have existed, people have come here, and is it not reasonable to suppose that there will be a still greater influx when these difficulties are swept away? The Government have not introduced this scheme without feeling the grave sense of responsibility which attaches to them. It involves a large loan, and they have brought it forward with reluctance on this account. They were, however, thoroughly convinced that something must be done, otherwise our gold mining industry must almost cease. Grave as is the responsibility of the Government in bringing this forward, much greater responsibilities now rest with the members of this House. It has been agreed to by the more direct repre-

sentatives of the people, and it is now for us to take the responsibility of saying whether it shall be carried out or not. I can only trust that hon. members will see their way to assent to this Bill, and thus give relief to thousands of people upon our goldfields, who are in need of it. Sir, I move that this Bill be now read a second time.

THE HON. S. H. PARKER: I have been requested to move that the debate be adjourned until this day week. Hon. members are aware that a great responsibility attaches to them, not only on account of the goldfields, but in regard to the colony at large; and they feel it would be almost indecent for them to pass such a measure as this at one sitting, even if they were inclined to do so. They feel that they should have time to read, mark, and digest the admirable speech which has been addressed to them this evening by the Hon. Minister for Mines. In these circumstances I move that the debate be adjourned until this day week.

Motion put and passed.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House at 8:45 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, 19th August, 1896, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 13th August, 1896.

Question: Condition of North Fremantle Road Bridge—Motion: Joint Committee on Bridges over Railway in Perth—Married Women's Property Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Transfer of Land Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Constitution Act Amendment (Re-distribution of Seats) Bill: re-committed—Streets and Roads (Greenmount and Marble Bar) Closure Bill: second reading—Federal Council Reference Bill: second reading; in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—CONDITION OF NORTH FREMANTLE ROAD BRIDGE.

MR. MOSS, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works,—(1.) Whether the Government were aware of the condition of the traffic bridge over the Swan River at North Fremantle; (2.) Whether the Government had recently had a report from any of their engineers as to the safety for traffic of the said bridge; (3.) Whether the Government intended laying such report (if any) on the Table of the House; (4.) If a report had not been recently obtained, whether the Government would instruct an engineer employed by the department to make a survey of the bridge, so that the public safety might not be endangered.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piesse) replied:—(1.) The Government have no information whatever leading it to doubt the stability of the North Fremantle Road Bridge. (2.) The last report is dated 17th April, 1895. (3.) It was not intended to lay the report on the table of the House, but for the hon. member's information. I will, with permission, lay copies of reports received on the subject since 11th February, 1893. (4.) A further survey and inspection of the bridge will be made forthwith.

MOTION—JOINT COMMITTEE ON BRIDGES OVER RAILWAY IN PERTH.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse), in accordance with notice, moved "That, in the opinion of this House, the time has arrived when one or more dray-bridges over