

The PREMIER: Up till quite recently the only tests made of the hardwoods of this State were those by the Admiralty some years ago, and it was found they were not fair tests of our timbers. As a result the Government decided to go in for exhaustive tests of the Western Australian timbers and had applied the same test to the hardwoods of the Eastern States; and out of the various eucalypti of the Australian States, the timbers of Western Australia came out on top. Only the other day the Victorian workshops sent over an order for 300 loads of tuart for rolling-stock manufacture in Victoria. The tests which had been made were the most exhaustive ever carried out in the world and applications were being received from various universities and engineering schools for copies of the tests. He was satisfied the money so expended was justified. It would not be necessary in future to have tests made.

Other items agreed to; vote put and passed.

Vote—*Cossack - Roebourne Tramway*, £2,500—agreed to.

This concluded the votes for the Railway Department.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Plans of the Sewage Filter Beds, Perth.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 11 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 20th November, 1907.

	PAGE
Leave of Absence ... ..	885
Bills: Sand Drift Amendment, 3a. ... ..	885
State Children, Com. resumed, reported ... ..	885
Public Health, Com. resumed, reported ... ..	886
Motion: Goldfields Water Supply, to be self-supporting, debate resumed ... ..	886

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Hon. W. Kingsmill, leave of absence for three sittings was granted to the Hon. W. Maley, on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILL—SAND DRIFT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

#### BILL—STATE CHILDREN.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.

Postponed Clause 56—Apprenticed and placed-out children to be visited:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved an amendment, that all the words after "shall," in line 1, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

—cause all State children apprenticed or placed out to be visited once at least in every six months by an officer of the department, or person appointed for that purpose by the secretary, to ascertain whether the stipulations of the indentures of apprenticeship respecting such children have been fulfilled, and that the treatment, education, and care of such children are satisfactory. (2.) The governing authority of any institution or any person authorised by such governing authority may for the like purpose visit any State child apprenticed or boarded out by such governing authority. (3.) Every foster-parent shall, at the request of any such officer, governing authority, or person,

*personally produce the child apprenticed or placed out to or with him, or show cause to the satisfaction of the officer, governing authority, or person, for the non-production or absence of such child.*

The amendment provided for the inspection and visiting of apprenticed-out children. The first portion of the clause gave effect to the select committee's recommendation that these inspections should be only compulsory every six months, and should be made by an officer of the department. There was also a request from institutions that such institutions should have the right to inspect the apprenticed-out children, and follow them until they reached the age of 16 years. Subclauses 2 and 3 gave this right.

Amendment passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Postponed Clause 106—Register to be kept by foster-mother:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the first four lines of the clause be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

*(1.) Every licensed foster-mother shall keep a register in the prescribed form containing in respect of every State child received by her the prescribed particulars, and in respect of every other child received by her the following particulars so far as such particulars are capable of being ascertained by her, that is to say (etc.).*

A deputation recently waited on him from the Children's Protection Society, and stated it was not necessary in the case of a State child, nor was it advisable, that the names and descriptions of parents should be given to the foster-mother who received the child from the State, but in other instances the foster-mother should have this information.

Amendment passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### *Recommittal.*

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, Bill recommitted for farther considering Clause 120.

Clause 120—State children to travel free on Government lines:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yesterday the Committee amended the clause for the purpose of providing that children placed out to approved societies should have equal privileges with State children in regard to travelling free on the railways in certain circumstances, but the clause as amended was not at all clear. A new clause had been drafted to make it clearer. He moved an amendment that the clause be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

*Any State child or child committed to the care of any person or society under Part VI. and its attendant shall travel free on Government railways, on production of a certificate from the secretary that such child is travelling to and from an institution, place of residence, or foster parent; and any child apprenticed or placed out under this Act shall travel free on Government railways to and from a public or efficient school.*

Amendment passed, new clause inserted.

Bill reported with a farther amendment.

#### MOTION — GOLDFIELDS WATER SUPPLY.

##### *To be Self-Supporting.*

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the motion of the Hon. W. Patrick, that the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme be made self-supporting.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central): The mover is to be highly commended for bringing before the notice of this House in a forcible manner the need for a proper financial administration of the Goldfields Water Supply, and for the masterly manner in which he presented his case. The member had an unpleasant duty to perform. As a result of his action there has been widespread criticism from the public and the Press on the Eastern Goldfields; but when we consider that there is £84,000 lost each year on the scheme, and the general mass of taxpayers of Western Australia have to bear the burden, I think all will agree that

Mr. Patrick was amply warranted in the course he has taken. I was present during Mr. McKenzie's defence of the position, but I failed to discover that he successfully parried the criticism of my esteemed colleague. I say that without any intention to reflect on the hon. member. It was evident that the hon. member attempted an obviously impossible task. He said that Mr. Patrick asked the Government to do something impracticable, and that it was impossible for the people of the goldfields to pay such an enormous sinking fund as three per cent. When we come to consider that the water is supplied on an average at 4s. 10d. per thousand gallons and that the cost of administration, sinking fund and interest amounts to 7s. 3d. per thousand gallons, I think we will all agree, if we give the matter careful consideration, that there is abundant room for increasing the price in order to make the income balance with the expenditure. It must be remembered in this connection that the Railway Department is paying more than it should, something like 3s. a thousand gallons more than any other consumer on a similar scale would be required to pay. From Mr. McKenzie's remarks there is only one conclusion to be drawn, namely, that the Eastern Goldfields are in a poverty-stricken condition, that the mining industry will be soon in the Bankruptcy Court, and that the greater portion of the people on the Eastern Goldfields will be on the way to insolvency if the price of 4s. 10d. per thousand gallons be increased by about 33½ per cent. I do not know whether that was the impression the hon. member intended to convey, but it is not the impression a visitor to the goldfields would form. One has only to go to the goldfields at any time to see the fields must be in a highly prosperous condition. A vast amount of money is spent in sport, a staggering sum; and there is every evidence that the people on the fields are at any rate in such a position as to pay a fair price for their water, and that they should not ask the State to bear something like 33½ per cent. of the cost. If the Eastern Goldfields would be on their last legs if the price were increased

even 50 per cent. it only goes to show that there must be wonderful vitality in the mining industry on the Murchison Goldfields, because the people of Cue and Day Dawn pay 10s. a thousand gallons for water conveyed less than 20 miles, and the people of Meekatharra pay 10s. a thousand gallons for water conveyed less than 12 miles, while a large number of the people of Geraldton pay something like £2 a thousand gallons for water conveyed to them. In all these circumstances can any common-sense and unbiased person say there has not been abundant room for justifiably increasing the price to those using the water on the Eastern Goldfields? Mr. McKenzie said that the Kalgoorlie mines had benefited by the scheme to the extent of £350,000. It follows that the scheme must be of immense advantage to the Kalgoorlie goldfields; they cannot very well do without it; and if the scheme has served them so well as to put so much profit into their pockets, I think it is only fair to ask them to contribute a sufficient sum to prevent the scheme adding to the deficit of the State.

*Hon. R. D. McKenzie:* They have already contributed more than that in dividends.

*Hon. J. M. DREW:* The hon. member also said that it is as much a national work as is the rabbit-proof fence. Undoubtedly it is a national work; but the fact that it is a national work is no argument why the people of the whole State should pay a large proportion of the cost of supplying the consumers on the goldfields with water. I fail to see that because it is a national work it should be expected to be carried on at a loss in the interests of one particular section of the community, no matter how much that particular section of the community may be contributing indirectly to the wealth of the country. I do not think Mr. McKenzie cited a parallel case at all when he spoke of the rabbit-proof fence. Was the rabbit-proof fence constructed primarily in the interests of the pastoralists of the State? Certainly not. If so it would be unjustifiable. It was constructed purely for the purpose of preserving an important asset to the State

yielding annually thousands of pounds worth of wealth to the State, and which will continue to yield that wealth for all time. If the fence had not been constructed that asset would be gone. The whole of the northern areas of Western Australia would be grassless and sheepless and the Crown lands made worthless. We must remember they are all Crown lands, those pastoral leases; they belong to the Crown and can be disposed of under certain conditions. If the fence had not been constructed a big asset of Western Australia would be gone. That was justification for the construction of the rabbit-proof fence. Any argument used in attempting to justify the providing the Eastern Goldfields with water at a price less than cost cannot be upheld on the same grounds. We might just as well say that if an extremely democratic or socialistic Government decided to start a meat supply on the Eastern Goldfields or at Cue, on the ground that an important industry was being developed in those parts, the Government should provide pork chops at 5d. a lb. when the cost to the Government was fully 10d.

*Hon. R. D. McKenzie:* It does not justify us paying three per cent. sinking fund.

*Hon. J. M. DREW:* We all know that the report of the Goldfields Water Supply shows that before very long the scheme will have to be renewed. The report says the pipes are deteriorating, and £11,000 had to be set aside last year as a reserve fund in order to meet the cost of repairs. The engineer says that as years progress this will have to be substantially increased.

*Hon. R. D. McKenzie:* The scheme is paying for that.

*Hon. J. M. DREW:* Yes, but we must realise that the cost in future years will immensely increase, when the scheme cannot possibly pay for it. The scheme is not paying its way now. It is not paying sinking fund and it is not paying interest in full. It failed to pay interest last year by £3,000; consequently the scheme is not paying. The hon. member went on to say that "all economies dated from the water scheme." If

so and the people are now benefiting by these economies, it is about time the Government stepped in and did their duty to Western Australia. Again he said: "With an increase in price of water consumption would fall off." There is no reason why this should be so; the price was reduced last year and there was a decrease in consumption of two million gallons. If we go on that experience there is no warranty for the assumption that if the price is increased the consumption will decrease. I do not for a moment think the member would contend that, if the price were increased to 10s. as it is at Cue and Meekatharra, the people would go back to the days of the condenser when they had to pay £2 or £3 a thousand gallons. Last year the total consumption for household purposes was 53 million gallons. This was with a reduction in price, but in the previous year at the higher price the consumption was 55 million gallons. The hon. member also referred to the saving to the Railway Department of £70,000 per annum. In that connection the report by Mr. W. J. George is of interest. In his last report he says:—

"For water purchased from the Goldfields Water Supply Administration, 6s. 3d. per thousand gallons has been paid, while comparatively small consumers along the railway have only paid 3s. per thousand gallons and in some instances less. This overpayment of 3s. 3d. per thousand gallons has, during the past five years, added £46,447 to the cost of working the railways."

Some people say there should be an increase in the price of the water to the railways and argue that the railways had to pay a considerable amount more before the scheme was undertaken than they were asked to now. That argument will not hold water for a moment for you might just as well contend that if the Railway Department require sleepers up the line now they should debit themselves with the same amount it would cost to convey those sleepers by bullock or horse teams in the olden days. In order to carry out a proper system of book-keeping and to know exactly what the water

supply costs the country the Railway Department should not be debited in one penny more for the water they purchased than any other persons getting a similar quantity. We want to know what it costs to the country. Under the present system any price can be charged to the Commissioner and Cabinet compels him to buy at that price; while that state of affairs exists we will never be able to know the true position of the finances of the scheme.

*Hon. J. A. Thomson:* The Railway Department have dams of their own but they are not allowed to use them.

*Hon. J. M. DREW:* I should not allow them to use the water from those dams. The Department should be made to use the water from the scheme, but not pay for the supply more than anyone else taking a similar quantity. The hon. Mr. McKenzie said that Western Australia could well afford to spend £80,000 a year in order to keep up her primary industry. If the expenditure of that sum would prevent the mining industry from strangulation, I would be the first to lend my assistance but I can not see it is possible. I do not think that if the price of water is increased to 10s. a thousand gallons for household purposes and 7s. 6d. for mining purposes or even to 7s. 6d. and 5s. respectively, we would see an end of the mining industry on the Eastern goldfields. We are told that some of the agricultural railways are run at a loss. If when these lines were contemplated by the Legislature it was thought they would be run at a loss for a long period, Parliament was not justified in sanctioning their construction, but the object of the lines was to develop a very important industry and to tap lands which would not be likely to be settled unless railway facilities were provided. Besides that, when railways are provided for agricultural purposes we know for a certainty that, if they are kept in proper repair, they will serve the country permanently. The goldfields will pass away, maybe in 50 or 70 years, but the agricultural industry will live and, while there is a market in London, there is a certainty that the time must come when the lines will pay handsomely. Another advantage

gained by the construction of agricultural railways is that they settle a population which will be there for all time. It must be remembered that there are mining railways also which are not paying and which are not expected to pay for some time to come. If we were to wait until we were certain of mining and agricultural railways paying from the jump, such works would never be undertaken. No railway is justified unless the prospects within sight are sufficient to allow an ordinary person of common sense to decide that before long they will pay sinking fund and interest, if not return a small profit to the State. It has been stated that this is purely a coastal wail brought about owing to jealousy of the goldfields. So far as my province is concerned there is a stronger protest against this deficiency in the Murchison goldfields centres than on the coast. A few weeks ago I saw in both the *Cue* papers strong articles supporting the stand the Hon. Mr. Patrick has taken. In these articles attention was drawn to the fact that the people there had to pay 10s. a thousand for the water which only came from a comparatively short distance away and, while they thought this charge was a fair one, they could not see why the Eastern fields should be allowed to burden the State with so huge a sum as £34,000 owing to the fact that the people up there were receiving the water which they consumed at very much less than its worth. The time has arrived when the Government should take some action in connection with this matter. No hardship would be involved to the people on the fields if the price were increased somewhat. The people up there should pay an increased price and any Government which had sufficient backbone would compel them to do so.

*Hon. R. D. McKenzie:* You cannot force them to take the water.

*Hon. J. M. DREW:* The people have to use water. If it were a matter of luxury then it might be argued that the people would refuse to pay extra price for it; but when it is a question of water there is no such difficulty. Supplies have to be obtained by the residents of the Eastern fields whatever price

is charged for them. The State, so far as the finances are concerned, is in rather an alarming condition. There was £40,000 deficit last month, and that sort of thing, though perhaps on a lesser scale, is likely to continue. Owing to the deficit the Government are bringing in a land and income tax which will affect settlers on the land, clerks in offices, civil servants and every struggling person in the community. What are these people to contribute for? Merely to wipe out the deficit, a large portion of which has been created owing to the improper administration of the Goldfields Water Scheme. It is about time Parliament insisted that this vast leakage should be stopped, and the best way to stop it should be determined at once by the Government. It may be advisable perhaps to take water from the Mundaring Weir to Perth, but if some such scheme is not feasible then the only course to adopt is to do what any business man would do in similar circumstances, increase the price until the income balances the expenditure. Retrenchment is going on in every direction, and even in my own district they have decided to abolish the Old Men's Home in order to save 3¼d. per week per man. This is a case of straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel. I hope that the resolution will be carried by a very large majority so that it will be a direction to the Government to do the proper thing and make the people on the goldfields pay for the water they consume.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): While it is desirable to make the water scheme pay, if that end can only be obtained by unduly increasing the cost of water to the consumers, I am entirely opposed to the motion. If the same principle were set up in connection with the agricultural railways it is quite clear that this State would never have an agricultural railway. From an accurate knowledge of what is going on I realise that the Government are taking the only sensible course of dealing with this scheme. It is no fault of the Government that the fields no longer require five million gallons of water a day. [*Hon. R. F. Sholl:*

They never did.] It is clear that the climatic conditions have changed up there since the scheme was initiated. The present position is that we have a scheme able to provide five million gallons of water a day and, speaking from memory, we find there are customers for only three million gallons. What are the Government to do? Are they to increase the price of the water to consumers and make it so prohibitive that instead of increasing the consumption it is to be decreased? If they do that it will destroy the objects for which the scheme was brought into existence. What were those objects? They were not only to supply the people with water for domestic purposes but also to supply our great mines. To a great extent those objects have been attained. At present the Government find themselves able to supply a large quantity of water for which there are no customers. What do they do? They seek new customers and, instead of at a hugely enhanced value, at a low price. Water, like air, should if possible be free to consumers. The Government are now linking up Newcastle, York and Beverley with the goldfields scheme. Groups of farmers along the Eastern Railway are being linked with this scheme, and they would not be customers but for the reduced cost of water. On part of the Eastern Railway we have a limited rainfall, and it is almost impossible to keep stock. I said at the very outset to my friend Sir John Forrest that he might call it the Coolgardie Water Scheme if he liked, but that I should live to see the day when the water would be used for agricultural purposes; and I am glad that day has arrived. Much as we may value our goldfields, we know that to establish men successfully on such dry land is to enable them to contribute to the wealth of the State by keeping stock, and that we can thus do quite as much good for the country through the water scheme as if the water were all consumed on the goldfields. And more, because men who settle on the land, or their descendants, will be there for all time, while as regards the goldfields history will repeat itself, inasmuch as another half-century will see some of our

boasted gold mines requiring no water at all. If we adopted the principle laid down by some members, where would be our Ravensthorpe Railway; where would be any of our agricultural railways to-day? We should be entirely without them. If it has not already been said, I desire emphatically to point out that the water scheme has never had fair consideration, especially from the Railway Department. The mover (Hon. W. Patrick) has doubtless read that able letter from Sir John Forrest published the other day in the Press, and evidently approved by the editors of the papers in which it appeared—that letter in which he showed that the scheme was not in such a bad way as its opponents tried to make out; that on the contrary, had the scheme been credited with the cost of water required by the railways, then instead of a loss the accounts would have shown a positive gain. However that may be, I say emphatically that the Government are taking practical steps to make it pay. We find that in all districts tapped by the scheme prizes are given for the best kept gardens. We find the same system followed on the goldfields, which, since the advent of the water, have so changed that they contain gardens which will vie with those of the city and the towns. We find that the goldfields racecourses are places of beauty, and that all these changes have been rendered possible by the great water scheme. And if we remember that in constructing railways and other public works we consider entirely the indirect gain to the country, we shall perceive that we need not blame ourselves for initiating this great enterprise. I say, if I were in the place of the Government, I should take just the same means as they are taking to make the scheme a success. We shall find next year a very different state of things obtaining in respect of the scheme. The agricultural towns will be grouped together by the water service, farmers round Beverley and York will be asking the Government to lay smaller pipes to their holdings, the number of stock will be increased and the revenue of the scheme will be largely enhanced, and not by the absurd and foolish method of in-

creasing the price of the water to 10s. or 5s. a thousand gallons. I have said elsewhere and I say here that the Government have under great difficulties conducted this enterprise in a sensible fashion; and I desire members to take a broad view of the subject, such as they have taken of other great national works, and to remember that the water scheme is not for one part of the community but for the State as a whole. If we enable goldfields such as Southern Cross to open up low-grade ores, not only will increased population be attracted to those fields, but we shall increase our general prosperity. If the motion means benefiting the Coolgardie Water Scheme by increasing the price of water, I am against the motion; and I ask every member present to recollect, as I hope the Leader of the House will be able to demonstrate, that in the past the scheme has not received fair treatment at the hands of the railway authorities.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): I should like to say a few words on this subject, because the more it is discussed the greater number of phases it presents for our consideration. If I remember rightly, when this scheme was first promulgated it was accepted on the distinct understanding that it would be, as it was then termed, self-supporting. It has never been self-supporting.

*The Colonial Secretary:* We were also promised water at 3s. 6d.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: The price of water, I think, was estimated by Sir John Forrest at 5s. a thousand gallons. I think that was the minimum.

*Members:* Three shillings and sixpence.

*Hon. C. Sommers:* Provided that a certain quantity was used.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER: Exactly. My recollection is, though I may be wrong, it was calculated that upon the revenue produced by charging 5s. per thousand gallons, the scheme would pay not only interest but sinking fund on the capital involved. For various reasons the charge was reduced, and has since been gradually reduced still farther, until now the scheme lands us in an annual deficit.

as we have been told by other members, of no less than practically £80,000 per annum. That matter needs much consideration. Every other portion of the country that applies for assistance from the Government, and has a perfectly equal right to be treated as liberally as the Eastern Goldfields, has been practically told by the Government of the day that unless it is prepared to accept a scheme that will be virtually self-supporting, very little assistance will be given by the Government. In fact, the Government have laid it down as the basis of assistance to all municipalities under the Waterworks Act, that the water schemes, when handed over to the municipalities, must be self-supporting. I do not know that any member who allows his common-sense to rule his judgment can be opposed to that principle. Because if it were otherwise, I can say that at a very early date, in order to confer the advantage of practically free water upon the whole community, the State would be in the Bankruptcy Court. The Eastern Goldfields have been treated with a generosity which I do not say has been misplaced, but with a generosity which in these Australian Colonies has been without parallel. The Eastern Goldfields have been treated most generously, because it was undoubtedly felt that they formed, when the scheme was initiated, the main source of the wealth of this State. But when we are considering the whole of the State; when we consider, too, that the scheme was launched by the enthusiastic advocacy of Sir John Forrest and those associated with him; we must perceive that the enthusiasm has cooled down, must perceive that we cannot support a scheme that is landing us in an annual deficit of £80,000, without considering to what reasonable extent the Government ought to go in order to minimise that annual deficit. I venture to say the whole of that deficit, caused by the present low price of water, would in my opinion be wiped out by laying pipes from Perth to the Mundaring Weir; and that to my mind is the solution of the whole difficulty.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* In spite of all the engineering reports to the contrary.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER:* We shall not allow our common sense to be outraged by any absurd doctrines of that character. Without our adding one stone to the weir, and thus in the opinion of supercilious critics interfering with its stability, we have now enough water in the dam to supply both Perth and the goldfields. Of course this is a very sore subject to some gentlemen who have, in season and out of season, advocated a totally different scheme up the Canning River—a scheme which would involve this State in an expenditure of three-quarters of a million. [*Hon. C. Sommers:* More than that.] That sum at the very least; while we have, pent up in the Mundaring Dam, sufficient water at the end of the summer season to supply not only the goldfields but the whole of the Perth district.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* The engineers say no.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER:* At the end of the summer season last year, I am told—and the statement is not questioned—that although there was a draw of not more than two million gallons per day, there was still left the whole of the water which the dam is capable of holding, minus four feet.

*The Colonial Secretary:* But that water was the accumulation of four or five years.

*Hon. C. Sommers:* How much ran away to waste?

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER:* Exactly. Consider the beautiful cataracts which annually run over the weir for four or five months at a stretch.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* Why not appoint Mr. Sommers chief engineer?

*The PRESIDENT:* Order! Members can afterwards reply in their turn.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER:* It is rather pleasing—I may say without undue egotism, flattering—to hear these interjections; because I know when I hear them that I am touching a sore place which members have been endeavouring to guard for the last eighteen months or two years. It affords me much pleasure to be able on this occasion, for the first time, to express an opinion entirely adverse to the enthusiastic advocacy we have

read so frequently in the leading newspaper of the State, in respect of the Canning scheme.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : You are romancing.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER* : To come back to the subject, I think every member will agree that if we can in any way minimise the annual deficit on the Coolgardie Water Scheme, it is only right that we should attempt to do so. But I must say that some gentlemen whose interests lie immediately in advocating and conserving the interests of the goldfields have occasioned a hostile feeling by practically affirming the principle that the water in the Mundaring dam is sacred to the goldfields alone. Of course that principle has been broken down to the extent that the Government of the day are extending the pipes into the farming districts from York to Beverley, and also (I am reminded) to Guildford. Now the pipes are coming in the direction of Perth, the nearer they approach to the city the stronger the feeling will become until the Government will not be able to resist the demand to carry the water to Perth. If the water is being taken to Guildford, the added distance to Perth is so small that there can be no doubt it will ultimately be brought to Perth. [*Member* : There is now a small pipe to Perth.] Yes ; but we want large pipes. The expense of laying pipes from the weir to Perth would be more than counterbalanced, even if after five years it were found impossible to supply Perth farther from that source. Doubtless when the scheme was initiated it was intended for the benefit of the goldfields ; but it was on the assumption that there would be a much larger consumption than has proved to be the case. The disappointment has been that the estimate in that respect is proved to be completely wrong. The estimated daily consumption of water at the time the scheme was promulgated was five million gallons ; but it has been found that, even allowing for distribution in the farming districts and in additional mining districts to which the scheme has since been extended, the actual daily consumption does not exceed two million gallons per day.

We are thus faced with this position, that as none of us wishes this deficit to continue, I feel it will be admitted even by members representing the Eastern Goldfields to be stretching loyalty to a point bordering on the unimaginable that the rest of the community should be burdened annually with the deficit of £80,000. If Perth and suburbs were supplied with this water, I am certain from information I have gathered, that therein lies the solution of the whole difficulty. There is no doubt whatever that were this done the scheme would be self-supporting and the deficit disappear. If that be so, of course the question of wiping out the deficit is settled ; but there are those who think otherwise, who have set their hearts on the other scheme, and believe the only water that can relieve the thirst of Perth must come from the sacred area of the Canning district.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : It is a question of the quantity of water available.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER* : True, it is a question of the quantity of water ; and in this regard we are told there is sufficient water in the Mundaring Weir to supply the city and suburbs and also Fremantle, as well as the Goldfields, for the next ten years.

*The Colonial Secretary* : Who made that statement ?

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER* : It has been stated time after time.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : Give one name.

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER* : The question may be considered in another aspect. I do not wish to be unduly critical as to the generosity shown to the consumers on the goldfields ; but when we consider that the price charged for water to those not within the favoured goldfields districts is so much greater, one wonders whether past Governments were not mistaken in reducing the price of water on the goldfields to so low a figure. The observations tendered by Mr. Throssell, supporting the action of the present and previous Governments in reducing the price of water on account of the benefit a supply of pure water confers must, I submit, be received with some qualifications ; because if that be the only object to be aimed at in the

future, why charge the consumer for the water at all? Why not supply him free? But it is unlikely that any community would stand that; rather would they consider the Government has made a mistake in reducing the price to the present low figure, and that some adjustment must be made in order to minimise the deficit. If the present price of water were raised to those for whom this scheme was initiated, and if at the same time Perth and suburbs were supplied from Mundaring, there can be no doubt that the scheme would be more than self-supporting. Of course, one cannot argue and illustrate to a mathematical nicety that such would be the result; but I venture to think that if the Government saw their way to obtaining the expert advice of eminent hydraulic engineers from the Eastern States, it would probably be found they would advise the Government to extend the water collecting area at Mundaring Weir. The experts might even advise that it is possible and feasible to raise the weir wall without in any way interfering with its stability. If that suggestion can be supported by the advice of reputable engineers, farther advocacy of the quixotic idea of plunging this State into an expenditure of three-quarters of a million for the Canning scheme would, I venture to say, be supported by nobody outside the walls of a lunatic asylum.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* Is the hon. member serious?

*Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER:* I shall listen with pleasure to the hon. member's expression of his views on this subject, and I am sure they will prove interesting, since he will be able to pose as a benefactor of the goldfields, having been so strong a supporter and advocate of the other scheme. I should like to know—and I think the House has not yet been informed on this point—upon what basis this goldfields water scheme has been extended to the farming districts; because I think the pipes ought not to be extended indefinitely into those districts unless the extensions are made self-supporting. If we lay lines of pipes 50 and 60 miles into districts in which the demand is inadequate, it will become

a serious matter for the Government of the day whether such extensions will be tolerated. It has been pointed out by Mr. Drew, and this has to be borne in mind, that from the day these pipes are laid down the cost of maintenance is on the increase—so much so that last year a sum of £11,000 was set aside for the renewal of pipes. It becomes not only a matter of renewing the pipes, but also of renewing the expensive machinery for pumping. [Interjection.] This is a matter that will trouble the people by affecting their pockets. Machinery has only a stated period of life; after a certain number of years it must be renewed. That proposition may be safely laid down, and if it is not followed out there is certain to be trouble. Even now the pipes have to be constantly relaid, and it may be that in a future year the eyes of the Government will be opened to the fact that instead of having to provide £11,000 for the maintenance of the pipe-track, twice or treble that sum will be needed; and that has to be added to the amount of the deficit. The hon. member who brought this motion forward deserves the thanks of the House and of the country. I concur with the remarks uttered by Mr. Drew on this subject, and would assure members representing the goldfields—doubtless other members will give the same assurance—that this motion is not introduced out of selfishness or from any desire to see the goldfields treated less generously. The matter is one of pounds, shillings, and pence; for we must be just to the whole State before we can be generous to one section; and in the present straitened condition of our finances, we must utilise every opportunity of economising when that can be done without inflicting injury on any part of the community.

*Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan):* In common with other members who have spoken, I feel that the thanks of the House are due to the mover for bringing this matter before us. At the same time, I have serious doubts as to whether the difficulty can be got over merely by raising the price of the water to consumers on the goldfields. Members who visit the goldfields frequently will know that the

climatic conditions of the fields have changed considerably since the initiation of this water supply scheme. They will know also that of late years deep sinking has resulted in a great amount of water being obtained locally for mining purposes; but as it is less costly to use fresh water at the reduced price now charged, a large proportion of the water obtained as a result of deep sinking is allowed to go to waste. Therefore, since it is doubtful whether we could improve matters by raising the price of water, it behoves us to seek opportunities for utilising the surplus water at Mundaring. With the previous speaker, I feel we are losing an excellent opportunity in not providing a supply for Perth and suburbs from Mundaring. Practically no risk would be taken by tapping that scheme, as we are assured there is a supply more than sufficient to meet the probable demands for many years to come. Assuming that we drew two million gallons a day—[*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: We should require four times that quantity]—we should not at present require a larger quantity than I have quoted, for we have not the population to consume more. The outlets for this water provided outside the goldfields, other than Perth and suburbs—say, Newcastle, Northam, and York—are only small items. I doubt whether some of those services will pay interest on the cost of the pipes, with construction and maintenance, because the demand is so limited, the supply is drawn upon only during a portion of the summer. Assuming that we could draw farther on the scheme to the extent of two million gallons a day, we could, at the rate charged for water in Perth, at 2s. a thousand gallons, obtain a return of £73,000 per annum; and while that would not mean a net profit, it would at any rate go a considerable way towards reducing the amount of deficit now incurred annually. We have to face the position that Perth and suburbs, and also Fremantle, must in the near future be given a better water supply than they have at present. The present supply is not only insufficient, but the quality is poor and the price is high. This is a

state of affairs we should try to remedy. I have read with much interest the report of the engineers on the proposed Upper Canning reservoir scheme; but my recollection of the figures quoted in that report gives the cost of the scheme at nearer one and a half millions than the three-quarters of a million stated by Mr. Pennefather. The present population of Perth and suburbs and Fremantle does not, I think, exceed 100,000 persons. Can a community of that size require an expenditure of one and a half millions in the provision of a water supply? It cannot; for if we wait until we are able to pay that amount, we shall wait a long time. We are told that we cannot spare this water; that it should be earmarked for the Eastern districts. We have already broken down that understanding by tapping the main for Guildford and Midland Junction, and the water comes right down as far as Maylands. I know one brewery on the northern side of Perth is using this water, so that it practically is brought to Perth. Instead of bringing the water down by a small pipe it is a pity a little more money was not expended in laying a larger pipe. If we are to draw regularly from that source we can hold our other supplies in reserve and we can always shut down when there is a doubt as to the quantity of water available. [*Hon. J. W. Hackett*: What would be the cost of the big pipe?] I do not know. If we have put down a pipe that will carry one million gallons a day and have not felt the cost of it, we can surely put down a pipe to carry two million gallons a day. It is going to cost one million and a half of money to give us the supply from the hills, and we cannot afford that. Dr. Hackett in referring to engineers should not forget there are engineers and engineers. When the Coolgardie Water Scheme was first proposed there were some engineers who said that it would not be possible to pump water to Coolgardie. When we think that during the winter months hundreds of millions of gallons of water go over the weir, we should see if we cannot utilise some of that water. I think the only certain means there are

of meeting the deficit is by tapping the water for the use of Perth and the suburbs. I am confident we can make good use of the water and so reduce the great deficiency. To my mind, it is no use waiting for this scheme in the hills; it is not in the hills but in the clouds. The population cannot afford to provide the immense amount of money for such a scheme. I am grateful for Mr. Patrick having introduced this motion, and I hope the Government will consider whether the water scheme cannot be made to serve Perth, Fremantle, and suburbs.

On motion by the Hon. J. T. Glowrey debate adjourned.

## BILL—PUBLIC HEALTH.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 7th November.

Clauses 212, 13, 14—agreed to.

Clause 215—Special powers when authorised by the Minister:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that Subclause 10 be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

*It may cause vessels and ships to be fumigated and may require or undertake the destruction of rats in vessels and ships, and may recover from the owner or agent for such vessel or ship all reasonable expenses incurred in the exercise of such powers.*

This simply made clear the meaning of Subclause 10.

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 216 to 225—agreed to.

Clause 226—Removal of persons suffering from infectious diseases to hospital:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In the report of the Select Committee on the definition of "infectious diseases," the number of diseases was recommended to be considerably reduced, because it was thought that having power under Clause 226 it was dangerous to have too many infectious diseases defined. Afterwards the Committee reinstated certain diseases, or it would not have been necessary for doctors to report such diseases. So that the full

powers of Clause 226 would not be exercised in regard to the whole of the diseases in the definition clause. He moved that the following be added to paragraph 5:—

*For the purpose of this section the term "infectious disease" shall include diphtheria, membranous croup, cerebro-spinal meningitis, tuberculosis, and also any other disease which the Governor from time to time, by notification in the Government Gazette, brings under the provisions of this section.*

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 227 to 230—agreed to.

Clause 231—Ceasing to occupy houses without previous disinfection, or giving notice to owner making false answers:

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Persons suffering from typhoid fever were often carried in trains to a town where there was a hospital. Was any provision made for disinfecting the compartments of the railway carriages?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Railway Department disinfected any carriages or sleeping cars used for the conveying of persons with infectious diseases. The point had been raised earlier as to whether the provisions of this Bill should apply to the Government departments generally, but that opened up a very wide question, which was now under consideration. It seemed simple enough in the instance quoted to make the Act apply, but it would be wrong to make it apply to the State generally. The Crown Law authorities were considering the question, and an amendment would probably be inserted when the Bill was before another place.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 232 to 245—agreed to.

Clause 246—Medical practitioner to notify cases of tuberculosis; regulations as to tuberculosis:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Subclause 3 dealing with regulations as to tuberculosis was a repetition of Clause 237. He moved an amendment—

*That the subclause be struck out.*

Amendment passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 247—Aborigines :

Hon. C. A. PIESSE moved an amendment—

*That the words "and the cost of transport shall be borne by such employer," at the end of the clause, be struck out.*

This imposed on the employer of a diseased aboriginal the cost of transporting the native to the nearest hospital. It was a monstrous clause. The native might be suffering unknown to the employer when engaged. An employer should not be taxed in this way. The native might have to be transported hundreds of miles.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The clause was reasonable. It was known there was a good deal of infectious and contagious diseases among the aborigines employed on the pastoral leases, but no employer would object to the cost of transporting these natives to the nearest hospital, and the cost would not be great as hospitals or places for treating these diseases in the North-West were not a hundred miles apart. The Government had nearly formulated a scheme for treating these natives in the North-West, and there would not be a great cost necessary for the transport of these natives ; also the transporting could be done much cheaper by the squatter.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE : We should not have one law for the white man and another for the black. If a white man suffered from a disease of this kind the employer would not be called upon to pay the expense of transporting him to the hospital.

*The Colonial Secretary :* The employer had now to bear the cost of treating the natives :

*Hon. J. W. Hackett :* It would be cheaper to send the natives to hospitals than to treat them on the stations.

Amendment negatived ; the clause passed.

Clauses 248 to end—agreed to.

Schedules (2), Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### Recommittal.

Clause 1—Short title :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : This clause had been amended so that

the Bill should come into force on the 31st day of March ; but it was since ascertained that it would be impossible to have the Acts printed by that date. He moved an amendment—

*That the words "thirty first day of March" be struck out, and "first day of May" inserted in lieu.*

Amendment passed ; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 174—By-laws :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Subclause 7 prohibited expectoration on any footpath or in any street or public place, etcetera. This was too sweeping. He moved an amendment—

*That "or" between "footpath" and "in" be struck out, also that "or public place" after "street" be struck out.*

Amendment passed ; the clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with farther amendments.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the adjournment of the House, said : To-morrow he could let members know what business would come down next week. Possibly, if the Land and Income Tax Assessment Bill did not come down from the Legislative Assembly, the House might adjourn over the week.

The House adjourned at 6.22 o'clock, until the next day.