

Mr. JOHNSON : There should be no reduction in the item, because there was considerable work in the Premier's Office, which work must be growing with the growing importance of the State. Members would recollect that for years there was a fight to abolish the Premier's Office. It was ultimately abolished and the cost was got down to a minimum, but now it was growing again. The Premier should see that it was not built up again, because it was hard to break down a department once it was built up. The present cost was sufficient.

Mr. SCADDAN : What the member for East Fremantle was desirous of pointing out was that there was no provision made for a gradual decrease in this officer's salary to the amount at which the position had been classified by the Public Service Commissioner.

The PREMIER : There was no recommendation by the Public Service Commissioner to classify the salary of the Secretary to the Premier. The office was exempt. The recommendation was that if a new Premier came in and desired a different secretary, Mr. Kessell would go back to his former classified position at £230.

Mr. ANGWIN : Evidently the Public Service Appeal Board knew the officer's work when it decided that £230 should be the salary. The Government, however, were making too many officers exempt from the Public Service Act. There were about a hundred at Fremantle who were exempt. The cost of this department had gone up from £268 in 1904-5 to £900 this year. Seeing that so many officers were exempt from the Public Service Act, the time had arrived when we should say whether we were going to comply with the Act or do away with the position of Commissioner altogether. The Commissioner had not been consulted with regard to many officers appointed. Seeing that this officer was exempt from the Act he asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

The PREMIER : The Public Service Commissioner in his classification of this official stated :—

"This official only temporarily occupies the position of secretary to the Premier, the position having been ex-

empt from the Public Service Act. Should the Premier for the time being decide to appoint someone else as his secretary, Mr. Kessell would have to fall back on his classified position. His present salary as secretary to the Premier is £400, including all overtime necessary. The salary he received as a permanent official was £300, which is £100 more than his present permanent position has been classified at."

In the event of a new Premier desiring to have a different secretary, the present official would fall back on his classified position.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Other items agreed to, and the vote passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.33 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 23rd October, 1907.

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

Prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Report showing number of depositors and amounts of deposits in the Government Savings Bank, moved for by Mr. Loton.

QUESTION—SEWAGE FILTER-BEDS, PERTH.

Hon. J. W. WRIGHT asked (without notice): When will the Colonial Secretary lay on the table the correspondence between Mr. Davis and the Government in reference to the filter-beds on Burswood Island? The papers were promised on 29th August and again on 17th September, but they have not been laid on the table yet.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: I will answer the question at the next sitting.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS OIL AND GREASE.

Hon. M. L. MOSS asked (without notice): Will the Colonial Secretary place on the table the papers connected with the purchase of oil and grease for the Railway Department, moved for last session. I wish to examine the papers, and it will necessitate half a day to do so. The papers were removed from the table at the end of last session.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Yes. It is usual to remove papers from the table at the end of a session.

BILL—POLICE FORCE (CONSOLIDATION).

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

BILL—MARINE INSURANCE.

On motion by *the Colonial Secretary*, Bill recommitted for a farther amendment.

In Committee.

First Schedule—Lloyd's S.G. Policy:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that in the second part of the schedule the words "in the above or other like form" be struck out. These words were not necessary now, the first portion of the schedule having been struck out.

Amendment passed.

Bill reported with a farther amendment.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN.

Infant Life Protection—Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly): In moving the second reading of this Bill, I may say that members will recognise the great importance of a measure dealing with infant life protection. This Bill is a consolidating and amending measure. It would have been introduced last session for it was partly drafted, but time did not permit of its being introduced. It was therefore delayed until this session. I do not know that the delay is to be regretted, because there has been farther time to consider the measure. This Bill repeals the four Industrial Schools and Reformatory Acts from 1874 to 1893, also portion of the Health Act of 1898 relating to infant life protection. Members will probably have noticed when the Health Bill was before the House that the portion relating to infant life protection which was contained in the original Act was omitted from the Bill, because it was thought—and rightly so—that the matter can be better dealt with in such a Bill as this before the House. There is an entirely new feature in the Bill now introduced, the boarding-out system, also children's courts, are sought to be enacted for the first time in this State. Assistance is sought from Government for maternity homes, and several other new features are in this Bill which are not to be found in the present Act, and which I will deal with later on. As far as the boarding-out system is concerned, there is no doubt if we can obtain the right homes, it is the right system. A good home is undoubtedly better than a good institution. At the same time, a good institution is preferable to a bad home. The inspector of reformatories and orphanages (Mr. Longmore) has repeatedly referred to the boarding-out system, and although it is the best and the ideal system, it was not quite practicable in this State, but it is carried out most effectively in the other States. Up to now it has not been carried out efficiently in this State, because we are so unsettled and there are not sufficient homes available for the number of children, consequently the institutions

—industrial and reformatory schools—have done good service in the past. A good deal has been said lately, especially when a recent trouble occurred—I refer to a case which came before the Supreme Court some time ago—of the great advantages of the boarding-out system, and I regret to say on one or two occasions the institutions have been spoken of rather disparagingly. I think the institutions in this State do not deserve that. [Interjection by *Hon. J. W. Hackett.*] When the discussion arose, the boarding-out system, particularly that in vogue in South Australia and Victoria, where they go in largely (South Australia almost wholly) for the boarding-out system, people spoke disparagingly of our institutions. Whilst that may apply to certain institutions, I do not think it is applicable at all, indeed I know it is not, to our institutions, for we have in this State very good institutions. I know some people compare our institutions, especially those who have not seen them, with the workhouse schools in England which existed in the time of Charles Dickens, or at that period, but the orphanages and industrial schools of Western Australia are not in the same category. Members have only to turn to the report of Mr. Longmore which is before them to see the remarks of the inspector of industrial and reformatory schools. I do not know what would have become of neglected children and orphans, but for these institutions. It may not be out of place if I briefly review the work of the ten orphanages and reformatories of this State which have provided almost entirely for the destitute and neglected children in this State in the past. There are ten subsidised institutions. I will explain later on what I mean by “subsidised institutions.” There is the Catholic Girls’ Orphanage controlled by the Sisters of Mercy at Subiaco which was established in 1868, and the Protestant Girls’ Orphanage in St. George’s Terrace established in the same year. Those are the two girls’ orphanages in this State. Then there is the Swan Refuge for Boys, established in 1871 or a few years later. Then there is the Clontarf Orphanage for Catholic boys,

first established in 1871 at Subiaco, and in 1901 shifted to the Canning. The girls were in Victoria Square and in 1901 were shifted to Subiaco, while the boys went to a new building on the Canning. The next is the St. Kevin’s Reformatory for Catholic boys, situated at Glendalough, near Monger’s Lake, Leederville, and established in 1896. We have also the Government Industrial and Reformatory School for boys and girls established at Subiaco in 1894; the Salvation Army Boys’ Reformatory School at Collie, established in 1901; the Salvation Army Reformatory School for Protestant girls established at Collie in 1901—the only girls’ reformatory in the State, though there are others which I shall mention later on that provide for females but are not subsidised by the State—the Redhill Industrial School for boys at Midland Junction, established in 1903; and the Salvation Army Industrial School for Protestant boys at Collie, established in 1904. Of these ten institutions—there are really eleven in all, the eleventh I shall mention later—nine are subsidised by the State, the tenth being a Government institution. In these ten institutions over 600 children are being cared for. I have not the exact figures, but out of this number there are 530 that are State children or are paid for by the State. For the information of hon. members who perhaps are not acquainted with all the details of the working of these institutions I may say that the State does not pay for every child, but merely for those committed by the courts to these institutions as destitute children, or those who are sent to them by the Charities Department. The balance are sent to the institutions by parents who can afford to pay for them and do so. However, the majority of the children are paid for by the State. Those which are kept in the junior institutions are paid for at the rate of 13½d. per day until they attain the age of 14 years. In reformatory schools where the boys are kept until they reach 16 years of age, or even more than that, they are paid for at the rate of 1s. 6d. per day. That has been the rule since 1884. Prior to 1884 there was an allow-

ance of 8d. per day for all children, but after an inquiry into these institutions by a committee of the Legislative Council—I believe Mr. Randell, Mr. Marmion and Mr. Lefroy were members of the committee—the allowance was raised to 1s. per day for maintenance, while £2 10s. per year was paid for each child by the Education Department. That system has since been altered to a payment of 13½d. per day, that is 1s. per day for maintenance and 1½d. per day for education; because it is provided that these children shall be educated to the standard of the State schools, and for the extra 1½d. per day the State is not called upon to provide teachers or accommodation for educating these children. The whole of the buildings and the furnishings of these institutions were provided without any assistance from the State. State assistance may have been given, but I cannot find any trace of it in the very early days. The institutions relied solely on contributions. It cannot be pretended that 1s. a day will keep up the whole institution; it may provide food and clothing, but the institutions must rely on the members of their churches and others to provide for the teachers and the general upkeep of buildings. However, all this information can be obtained much more fully if members desire it, by perusing Mr. Longmore's report on his inspection of these schools. I have mentioned ten institutions. There is another, the Waifs' Home at Parkerville, which receives both boys and girls. This institution carried on for a number of years without State assistance; but within the last year or two it has received a subsidy of pound for pound from the State, at first up to £500, but last year up to £800, and this year a subsidy up to £800. These are the eleven institutions which provide for the welfare of the neglected children of this State at the present time. We have also other homes such as the Home of the Good Shepherd at Leederville, and a similar institution controlled by the Salvation Army at Highgate Hill, but these are maintained without State assistance, and they are not solely institutions for children, because they admit females from the age of 14 years to old women.

I have shown how the children are at present provided for, but the principal deficiency in the existing legislation is that it does not make proper provision for infants under two years of age. I do not wish members to misunderstand me when I say that; but generally speaking, with the exception of the Waifs' Home at Parkerville, the institutions do not care to take any children under the age of two or three years. [*Hon. W. Patrick*: But they have been taking them.] They have been admitting a few under that age, but they have not the nursing staffs for infants. If members will look at the Bill they will see that ample provision is made for State infants from the time they are born, and even in some cases before they are born. As I have already mentioned, infants are not altogether neglected now. For instance there is the Government Maternity Home in Pier Street, and last year in that institution there were 46 admissions and 40 births, 16 legitimate and 24 illegitimate, while there is attached to the Govern Industrial School at Subiaco a nursery where children are kept until they are old enough to be distributed to the different institutions. There are at present about 13 children and babies there, apart from those in the Maternity Home in Pier Street. This nursery at the Subiaco Industrial School is used more as a distributing centre, though it is generally kept up to a certain strength because a certain staff has to be maintained. A child is kept there until it is decided that it is absolutely necessary to treat it as a State child. If it is, then the child is sent on to one of the institutions, but children are kept at the nursery until it is seen whether the parents may get into better circumstances and so be able to maintain their children. If they cannot do so, then the children are sent to one or other of the institutions I have named. Besides the Subiaco nursery and the Maternity Home, the Charities Department assists widows in some cases towards supporting their own children by monetary grants and allowances, rations and clothing. All cases are dealt with on their merits, and members can see the number of cases dealt with during the past year

from Mr. Longmore's report. Briefly, what I have outlined is the method we now have of dealing with the neglected and destitute children of the State. As I have said, the Bill was drafted last year, but it was thought well that Mr. Longmore should go to the Eastern States, particularly to South Australia and Victoria, and go through the different institutions there to see how the Acts in the different States worked. Mr. Longmore went away in June last and spent some time in the East visiting all the institutions and the different boarding-out homes, that is to say homes where the children are placed with foster parents. He gained a good deal of information, which has been drafted into the Bill, and I shall be much disappointed if we do not have a Bill here that will be, if not better than any other Act in Australia, certainly as good as any other. I may mention the systems in force in the Eastern States. The general principles for the treatment of neglected and destitute children throughout Australia are very similar. In Victoria there are subsidised institutions similar to those we have in this State, but they are more reformatories and industrial schools than orphanages, and are for children who have committed offences and are sent to them as punishment. But there are also private institutions and societies which receive boys under the Act, and maintain them without assistance from the State. The Bill before the House deals with these societies, but I will come to that part presently. At the present time in Victoria there are 2,400 destitute and neglected children being kept by these societies without any cost to the State. The children are handed over to these societies who get legal control over them and deal with them entirely. The boarding-out system is a leading feature in Victoria; there are 2,000 children boarded out with foster parents, and over 4,000 are boarded out with their own mothers. In Victoria there are a large number of boarding-out committees which supervise and visit the children who live with foster parents, and do a great deal of good for the children. There is provision made in the Bill before the House for appointing these boarding-

out committees. Children's courts are established in Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand. They are also provided for in this Bill. In South Australia the State children are principally boarded out, over 1,000 children being dealt with in this way, but there are seven institutions which deal with a number of children. It is sometimes said that there are no institutions in South Australia. That is wrong—there are seven; but the great majority of the destitute children are boarded out. There are in South Australia also 80 lying-in homes and licensed foster-mothers supervised by the department. There is also a State Children's Council which entirely controls the system. This has been in force for a number of years, but before getting entire control the council worked for 10 or 15 years, during which time it gained a great deal of experience and no doubt is now quite qualified to carry out the whole thing. This Bill does not go so far as South Australia in that respect. In New South Wales the system is very similar to the Victorian system and children's courts have been established there for some time. The establishment of nautical school reformatories for a class of boys provides in that State a means of dealing with these children which exists nowhere else. A new feature in the New South Wales Act, which is also referred to in this Bill, is that which deals with the licensing of children who trade in the streets.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Up to what age can children be termed neglected?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Up to 18 years, but in special cases by order of the Governor-in-Council and in the case of girls the age can be extended to 21 years. The Bill as a whole is largely based on the South Australian and the Victorian Acts.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: I see that again in this Bill there are no marginal references.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I regret that this is so, but it is some mistake of the draftsman.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Can you withdraw the Bill and get another copy brought down containing marginal references?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can tell the House where the differences between this Bill and the Acts in the other States exist.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: You are following the example of the late Government.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is not so. The late Government had marginal references to their Bills.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Part II. deals with the State children's department and is taken from the South Australian and Victorian Acts. Part III. refers to institutions and is practically the present law. Provision as to children's courts is taken from the New South Wales, Victorian, and South Australian Acts. That portion dealing with the committal of neglected children comes from the South Australian and Victorian Acts, and that referring to the maintenance of children by their relatives from the South Australian, Victorian, and New South Wales measures. The clauses as to the control by private persons or societies are taken from the Victorian Act. Part VII. is taken from the New South Wales Act, and Part VIII. referring to lying-in homes and foster-mothers comes from the South Australian Act. Part IX. refers to procedure, penalties, and general provisions and is taken from the South Australian Act. The Bill preserves the existing law for dealing with institutions and adds certain clauses for the better working of those institutions. It provides that State children can be dealt with in several ways. They can be placed in charge of foster parents or sent to industrial homes. Provision is made for the constitution of children's courts as existing in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. The object is that children can be tried in a separate building. Power is given to the Government to contribute towards the support of women in lying-in homes for a period of not exceeding 12 months. Provision is also made for the licensing of children trading in the streets. I mention these clauses specifically as they will provide members with the information which they desire should be placed in the margin of the Bill. The particulars I have just given will enable them to understand

from which measures the various clauses of the Bill are taken.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: It would be much easier if we were to have the marginal references.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Part I. of the Bill deals with definitions which are rather numerous but necessary. Part II. deals with the State children's department and provides that the Minister shall appoint fit and proper persons to form boarding-out committees. This is set out in Clause 9. It is farther provided that the children shall be placed in a receiving depot and subsequently transferred to an institution or be boarded-out or apprenticed. Institutions or societies will have the power to apprentice boys after they attain the age of 14 years. That is the same as the law is at present. Most of the boys who leave orphanages are now apprenticed to farmers for three years, a certain sum being received for their labour which is paid to the manager of the institution. It would not be possible to apprentice these boys to artisans as they would not earn enough to pay for their board. Anyhow these lads could not receive better training than an agricultural one. Part III. deals with institutions which are already in existence. I have fully explained the system and it is unnecessary to go into it farther. Part IV. refers to the establishment of children's courts, and to State children generally. So far as this portion of the Bill is concerned it is an entirely new departure, and one which I am sure will be approved by everybody. It is provided that these courts shall be presided over by special magistrates. They shall be held in a separate building from the usual courthouse, and if it is not possible to obtain a separate building, such as will be the case in the country districts, the children must be tried in the magistrate's room. The special justices who are appointed to sit will have all the powers conferred under the Justices Act, 1892. The benefit that will be derived from having these special courts rather than bringing the children in any way into contact with criminals will be apparent to members. It is farther provided that neglected children shall not be confined in a lockup,

but in the policeman's house or be sent to some respectable person to be taken care of until they have to appear before the court, and thence be boarded out or sent to an institution. In some cases it might be impossible to find accommodation for the children without taking them to the lockup, and if this latter course has to be adopted then care must be exercised that they shall not be brought into contact with the ordinary criminals.

Hon. R. W. Pennefather: Is there provision against the publication in the Press of proceedings before the children's court?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, there is. The justice can direct that all persons be excluded from the court. The idea is to prevent publicity and to treat the children not as criminals but as poor unfortunates who are either without parents or who have drunken fathers and mothers, and who are placed in their position through no fault of their own. The court will have full power to commit any neglected or destitute child brought before it by the Children's Department to any society or institution until it attains the age of 18 years, and the institution or the person to whom the child is committed will have the legal control of it until it reaches that age. No one can interfere with that child until then. [*Hon.*

J. W. Hackett: Is there no discretion to reduce the age?] It does not follow that these institutions or persons will keep the child for that time. Children who are sent to orphanages will only be paid for by the State up to the age of 14 years. Children who have committed an offence and are sentenced for stealing or something of that sort will, according to Sections 26, 27, and 28, be sent to an industrial school and paid for until they reach the age they are committed for. Power is given to the institutions, persons or societies taking those children to apprentice them out after they attain a certain age, which will be set forth in the regulations. The age will probably be as now, 14 years. The definition of State children says, "A 'State child' means a destitute child or neglected child received into a Government institution or a subsidised institution or apprenticed or placed out under the authority of this

Act." State children under the age of three years will be sent to foster-mothers and those over the age of three years will be committed to an institution or to foster parents. All foster mothers will have to be registered, and once a woman receives registration as a fit and proper person the court or society will be entitled to send children to her; but no person for any gain or reward shall receive a child under the age of three years without having first been registered. The one exception to this is in the case of a person who is a near relative of the child. The same remarks apply to foster parents who will also have to be registered. The court will have full power to commit a child to foster parents until it reaches the age of 18 years. Part IV. of the Bill deals with this question. Clause 58 sets out, "The Minister may pay to the foster parents or foster mother of any State child for the care and maintenance of such child, until he shall attain the age of fourteen years, such sum as may be prescribed." The right to commit will be found in that portion dealing with the courts. The clause is to my mind essential, and it provides that the Government will contribute to the support of the child. That is to say, if a child is made a State child, or a woman is registered as a foster parent or a foster-mother and a child is committed or boarded out to that woman, she is not to look to the parent to pay the contribution, but the regulations lay down what sum she shall receive, and if it is a State child the State will be responsible for paying that foster mother or foster parent. Machinery is provided later on in the Bill by which the State may if possible collect the amount from the mother of the child. There can be no question about the benefit of this new departure in the boarding-out system, if we can find suitable homes. No doubt a number of suitable homes can be found; but I doubt whether a sufficient number can be found for the whole seven hundred children now cared for in the institutions. As time goes on no doubt such homes will be found, and we shall gradually realise the conditions as in South Australia and Victoria, where the great majority

if not all of such children are boarded out.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: How many of the 700 are under the age of three?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Less than 100, I suppose. Most of the children under two or three years of age are, as I have said, receiving aid from the Charities Department, the mothers being thus enabled to keep the children till they attain the age of two or three, when they are sent to an institution.

Hon. W. Patrick: There is a considerable number in the Subiaco institution?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; in the Government institute. It is also provided that the homes kept by the foster mother or the foster parent shall be open for inspection at any time by the different societies, boarding-out committees, and officers of the department, so that if the children are not properly treated they can at once be removed and the license of the foster mother cancelled.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Do the Government prefer the boarding-out system to the institute?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; the Government are quite satisfied with the institutions; according to reports, and, as I know, both treatment and education are satisfactory; and I doubt whether children can get better treatment in any foster homes. But this method will give people a choice. If they wish to board out children, there is the necessary provision; if they wish to send them to institutions, that can be done. Some children may be better in an institution, some may be better boarded out. We hope to get the right people to act as foster parents—people who will take a child not so much for the money they are paid as for the sake of having a child about them; and that system is undoubtedly the best. [*Member*: More especially for infants.] Decidedly. If we can get the right class of home, the boarding-out system is the best for infants; but at present only a limited number of such homes is available.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: The treatment of the children is sometimes very cruel.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Simply because there is no proper super-

vision. The Health Act provides merely that the foster mothers shall be registered, and does not limit the number of children they may receive. The Bill provides also that the foster mother shall be debarred from taking a lump sum from any parent. No woman can receive a child for gain or reward, whether a State child or not, unless it is registered, except in the case of a woman who is a near relative of the child. If it is more convenient for the parent to pay a lump sum for the support of the child, the parent must pay that sum to the department, which will pay instalments week by week or month by month to the foster mother. That is an excellent provision, the necessity for which members will realise. The death of that child will not benefit the foster mother, as it would if she received a lump sum for its maintenance. Part V. deals with the maintenance of children by their relatives. It is quite as much the duty of the State to see that parents and other relatives contribute to the support of their children as it is to see that the children are properly clothed and fed. Unfortunately, it is undeniable that some parents, guardians, and relatives are too anxious to get rid of their responsibilities. The Bill provides as far as possible that the children shall not be neglected. Part VI. is highly important, and I specially draw members' attention to its provisions for the committal of children to the care of private persons and societies. This is a system I spoke of at the beginning as in vogue in Victoria. Part VI. of the Act was taken without alteration from the Victorian measure, which has worked very well in that State. It provides that where benevolent societies are so disposed they can receive and can obtain legal control over children until these attain the age of eighteen. When the Government are satisfied of the *bona fides* of such societies, these will receive registration, and the court will then have power to commit children to their care. The societies can then deal as they think best with the children, who will probably be boarded out to suitable persons. I should like to draw attention to an excellent system which I should be glad to see inaugurated in this State.

I refer to the system which obtains in Canada, where the work of caring for children is carried out on lines which differ almost entirely from those in Australia. Last year 58 children's aid societies were spread over the province of Ontario, and represented over 600 volunteer workers. These societies have in many cases made provision for the shelter and protection of destitute children. The main object the societies keep in view is to help the children as far as possible in their own homes, endeavouring to exercise a good influence, with the co-operation of the churches, over the parents of the children. Another important matter attended to by these societies is finding suitable homes with foster mothers for children who are neglected and destitute. The work of placing out children is done, and the expense is borne, almost invariably, without Government assistance. The societies endeavour to find benevolent people who will voluntarily take such children from the Government. It is an excellent system, which I would like to see established here; but probably we cannot hope for such great things in this new country. The system of committing the children to a society is carried out to a great extent in Victoria, where various societies are maintaining to-day over 2,400 children free of cost to the State.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: Are these religious societies?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; they are mostly undenominational. Some of them are religious. The Rev. Mr. Cole, who visited Perth the other day, controls one of them. Most of these societies are without institutions for the reception of children. Some have small homes or farms, but most of them adopt the boarding-out system. The Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society, at the end of last year, was looking after 839 children, male and female, without any cost to the State. The Burwood Boys' Home with which I believe the Rev. Mr. Cole is connected, controlled at the end of last year 53 children. The Presbyterian Scots' Church Neglected Children's Aid Society, which I presume is connected with the Presbyterian Church, provides for 344 children whom it receives and

boards out without any assistance from the Government. The society is supported by voluntary subscriptions. And a door is open in this portion of the Bill for any society that cares to do likewise. The Victorian Neglected Children's Aid Society is non-sectarian. The Church of England Society, which cares for 97 children, is, I presume, denominational; and there is a Rescue Home at East Ballarat, with 28 children. Altogether 2,486 children are provided for by the ten or twelve societies in Victoria, free of cost to the State. The court, as I have said, will have full power under the Bill to commit a child to such societies when they are registered; and the society will have legal control over the child until it attains the age of 18. The Children's Protection Society has been newly formed here, and I think it is the first of its kind, apart from societies with institutions or homes. The Bill makes ample provision for giving such a society legal recognition. It can apply to the court for registration, which will certainly be granted. Then the Children's court to be established may commit a child to that society, which will have legal control over the child until it is 18 years of age. The society can board out the child with a suitable foster mother if it be under the age of three, or with a suitable foster parent if it be over that age; and when the child has attained the age of 14 and has left school, the society can apprentice him to a farmer or mechanic, and if he turns out well may afterwards look on him with pride as one of the wards of the Children's Protection Society.

Hon. J. W. Langsford: Does the society receive no Government assistance?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; and it will not receive any under this clause. Any child in need of it will get help. If that society or any other society bring the case before the Children's court, then the court will hear the case, and if the child is destitute will make an order for its being boarded out; and if it is made a State child, the State pays, and the State will in that case retain the control. The society will retain the control over those children for whose maintenance it is willing to pay. Part

VIII. deals with the licensing of children under the age of ten trading in the street. I think it is necessary that such children should not be allowed to trade indiscriminately. Every child under that age must be licensed. The license will not cost him anything, and it is farther provided that any person employing a child without a license for trading shall be liable to a certain penalty.

Hon. J. W. Hackett: There are numbers of newspaper boys under the age of ten.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think there ought to be. A boy is very small at ten years of age. At seven he is only starting to go to school. However, that is how the clause is drafted, and it is for the House to say in their wisdom whether it shall be altered. I should certainly oppose any alteration in that particular. Part VIII. provides for lying-in homes and foster mothers. This is a new departure. Possibly I spoke too soon about the foster mothers, that subject being dealt with in this part of the Bill. A new departure is made in regard to lying-in homes, the Government being empowered to contribute towards the support of any woman in such homes who is a State case, for a period not exceeding twelve months. Members will recognise the necessity of caring for the mother for that period in order to save the child. Many mothers now are compelled to seek employment, leaving their children to be reared by artificial feeding, which is responsible for a large percentage of the deaths of children under the age of one year. Dr. Norris, chairman of the Victorian Board of Public Health, who has extensive experience of the subject, recently called public attention to this aspect of the case. He finds that while the mortality among infants naturally reared is under 100 per 1,000, it is little less than 300 per thousand among children artificially fed. "There is," Dr. Norris declares, "no solution of the problem unless mother and child are regarded as inseparable." This Bill provides, not in every case but where the child is delicate, that the Government may contribute to the support of the mother for a period not exceeding twelve months.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Is it proposed to subsidise the homes, or to pay for the mother's keep during the time she is in the home?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Both. As members know, the view that the future health of the child largely depends on maternal assistance and care was expressed at the recent meeting in the Perth Town Hall, held after the disclosures in connection with the Mrs. Mitchell case. A resolution was there carried affirming that Government assistance should be given to institutions which provide for the maintenance altogether of mothers and their illegitimate children for nine months after the birth. We have provided for that in this Bill, and perhaps gone a little farther. Apart from the Government lying-in home, there is no other in this State, with the single exception of the House of Mercy at Highgate Hill, which is controlled by a committee of ladies.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Salvation Army has two homes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The House of Mercy has been in existence many years and done good work, and has received no assistance at all from the State.

Hon. G. Randell: The House of Mercy has received assistance.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not in receipt of assistance at the present time, though it may have been in former years.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But the Salvation Army has the Cornelie Home at Highgate Hill and the Open Door at North Fremantle.

The MINISTER: I had overlooked the fact that the Salvation Army has established maternity homes. In the Bill, penalties are provided for the keeping of unlicensed lying-in homes, this being a very necessary provision for the protection of infant life. Provision is also made that any person taking in lying-in cases must be licensed, so that there may be an assurance that the mother is taken into proper premises and by fit and proper persons. Penalties are also provided for foster mothers taking in more children than allowed by the license. Those

lying-in homes in which State children are placed will be open for inspection in the same way as the institutions kept by foster parents. These provisions, it is hoped, will largely tend to stamp out baby farming, which has unfortunately existed in the past in this State, though not perhaps to the same extent as in other States. Part IX. deals with procedure, penalties, and general provisions. These are the main features of the Bill, which makes ample provision for the neglected child from the time of its birth until it is able to do for itself. No child need be without a home, whether it be sent to a foster mother or to an institutional home. It is not to my mind so much a question of whether the Government should adopt the boarding-out system or send the children to an institutional home, or go in for both systems. The more important question is as to what degree the State should accept the whole responsibility for these children. Personally I cannot agree with much that has been said recently, that the State should accept without question every founding brought to it. I think it is right on the part of the Government to provide a home for every destitute or neglected child; but it appears to me just as much the duty of the Government to see that parents do not escape their responsibilities, both financial and social, for it is the duty of the parents to see that the child has a proper home. Ample provision, as I have said, is made for every child to receive a home; but on the other hand it is also provided that the parent or guardian shall not escape responsibility. I think I have touched on the principal provisions of the Bill, and if farther explanation be necessary I will readily afford it when the Bill is in Committee. I commend the Bill to the House and have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL, in moving the adjournment of the debate, requested that copies of the Bill now before members be replaced by others containing marginal references.

The Minister promised to bring the request under the notice of the Crown Law Department.

Motion passed, the debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT,

The House adjourned at 5.39 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 23rd October, 1907.

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

Prayers.

QUESTIONS — STORAGE OF WHEAT, ABATTOIRS AT NORTH FREMANTLE.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What arrangements are being made for the export of wheat this year? 2, Is it the intention of the Government to advance on the wheat to the farmers and store such wheat until shipped? 3, If so, where will the wheat be stored? 4, Is it the intention of the Government to proceed with the abattoirs, freezing chambers, and grading sheds at North Fremantle? 5, If so, is the matter now receiving consideration? 6, Has the site been definitely fixed?

The HONORARY MINISTER (Mr. Mitchell) replied: 1, Shed accommodation has been arranged for at Fremantle and Albany, and the necessary accommodation will be arranged for at Bunbury and Geraldton. 2, Yes. 3, Fremantle, Albany, Geraldton, and Bunbury. 4, The matter is now receiving attention. 5, Yes. 6, No.