

fied themselves of the accuracy of the statements.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has always been the practice for building and friendly societies to deposit their balance sheets with the registrar, together with such information as the Minister may direct, but this does not involve the Government in any responsibility. It is the practice of the registrar to call attention to anything which he considers to be irregular or wrong. This is designed as an extra protection to the public.

Hon. J. Cornell: The registrar is very strict, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. If a building society got away with the money of its members, there would be no obligation on the Government; but the registrar does his duty thoroughly, and if anything is wrong, he is very quick to direct the attention of the society to it.

Hon. A. Sanderson: I do not question that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 35 to 52—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—WESTRALIAN MEAT WORKS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 14th October, 1920.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION—OIL LEGISLATION.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When will the Oil Bill, promised to the deputation that waited upon him, be introduced? 2, Is he aware that suggestions have been made to the Commonwealth Government to declare petroleum a Commonwealth monopoly in the Empire's interest? 3, Will he safeguard the interests of the State by anticipating Commonwealth legislation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Conditions under which prospecting for oil will be regulated and under which areas will be provided are to be introduced in a Bill to amend the Mining Act, together with other necessary amendments, such as to provide better methods of tributing, and will be brought before the House at an early date. 2, I am not aware that it is proposed that the Commonwealth should claim it as a monopoly in the sense that only the Commonwealth Government would be entitled to work it. I think this would require an amendment of the Federal Constitution. It has long since been suggested that all oil should be reserved to the Crown in order to protect the interests of the Empire, and this is not being overlooked in the draft. This does not imply that leases will not be granted but the conditions of working same shall be such as serve the best interests of the Crown and the Empire, particularly the Navy and the British Mercantile Marine. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT.

Bulk Handling.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1, Will he inform the House when the necessary legislation will be introduced in regard to the installation of the bulk handling of wheat? 2, Is he aware that it is most imperative to enact the necessary legislation so that no time may be lost in getting the system working?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, I am informed by the Chairman of Directors of the Grain Growers Elevators, Limited, that the company does not wish the Bill introduced this session. 2, Answered by No. 1.

Marketing, Payments, Guarantees, etc.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that harvesting operations have already commenced in some districts, owing to the exceptionally early season? 2, If so, when is it intended to introduce the necessary legislation to control the marketing of wheat? 3, What financial arrangements have been made in regard to payment upon delivery of wheat at sidings for the present harvest? 4, What amount per bushel is it proposed to advance, and what date is being fixed to commence taking delivery? 5, What were the

receiving dates for delivery at sidings in connection with each of the previous wheat pools? 6, What were the original advances per bushel made on delivery at siding, and the dates and amounts of subsequent payments in connection with each individual wheat pool? 7, What were the guaranteed prices per bushel by either State or Federal Governments in connection with the previous wheat pools? 8, Has any guarantee been given for the present harvest? 9, As the Western Australian wheat pools are stated to be in credit, when is it proposed to make a further payment in connection therewith?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, No. Cutting for hay is in operation, but we have no knowledge of stripping. 2, At once. 3, It is anticipated financial arrangements will be finalised at the Australian Wheat Board Conference to be held on the 29th October, 1920. 4, Amount of advance will probably be determined at such conference. Date of delivery not yet fixed. 5, As early as possible for the first two pools, 1st January for 1917-18, 15th December for 1918-19, and 1st December for 1919-20. 6, The original advances made on delivery to the respective pools were:—1915-16, 3s. less freight; 1916-17, 2s. 6d. net; 1917-18, 3s. net; 1918-19, 4s. 4d. less freight; 1919-20, 5s. net. The dates and amounts of subsequent payments for each pool were:—1915-16: 2nd advance, 21st September, 1916, 6d. per bushel; 3rd advance, 19th April, 1917, 6d. per bushel; 4th advance, 2nd July, 1917, 3d. per bushel; 5th advance, 15th June, 1918, 1¼d. per bushel. 1916-17: 2nd advance, 1st August, 1917, 6d. per bushel; 3rd advance, 15th July, 1918, 3d. per bushel; 4th advance, 30th September, 1919, 9d. less freight. 1917-18: 2nd advance, 15th August, 1918, 3d. per bushel; 3rd advance, 30th September, 1919, 9d. less freight; 4th advance, 1st March, 1920, 6d. per bushel. 1918-19: 2nd advance, 1st March, 1920, 6d. per bushel. 1919-20, 2nd advance, 18th June, 1920, 2s. 6d. less freight. 7, The prices guaranteed were:—1917-18, 4s. net.; 1918-19, 4s. 4d. less freight; 1919-20, 5s. net. 8, The Commonwealth Government have announced a guarantee of 5s. per bushel for 1920-21 harvest. 9, It is anticipated that further payments on last four pools will be made in Western Australia on the 25th of the present month.

QUESTION—TIMBER, LOSSES IN CONVERSION.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it correct that two out of every three loads of hardwood put in to the saw-mills go into the furnaces and are thus a total loss to the State? 2, What amount, approximately, is thus destroyed each year at the mills. State and privately owned? 3, Cannot something be done to cut out this loss? 4, Are investigations still being made to save the valuable by-products of such

timber by distillation? 5, Cannot something be done to make available some of this timber for rough building purposes in outback districts, where the local timber is useless on account of its liability to ravages by the white ant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, At the State sawmills 20 to 33 per cent. is destroyed in the fire chute; about 20 per cent. goes out as sawdust and is also burnt. Have no information respecting privately owned mills. 3, Repeated endeavours have been made to cut out the loss. 4, Wood distillation plants in Australia before the war showed a loss, but matters have since altered and certain parties accustomed to the business are now inquiring as to the feasibility of erecting wood distillation plants at certain of the mills. 5, All timber of any service is now utilised, and what goes into the fire chute is heart, gum, or dry rot timber, which would be unsuitable to farmers.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL CANVASS.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Attorney General: Seeing that compulsory enrolment has now been made law, is it the intention of the Government to cause a house-to-house canvass to be made for the purpose of putting names on the rolls prior to the general elections?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: It will be necessary to have an efficient canvass made in populous centres or where there is a changing population, and the Government intend to have this done in order to purify the rolls before the general election.

QUESTION—NORTHAMPTON FIELD, SURVEY.

Mr. MALEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has any proper geological survey been made of the Northampton mineral field? 2, If not, owing to the known deposits of lead, copper, graphite, and potash, the extensive salt deposit at Port Gregory, and the indications of oil and coal in the district, will he have this most important work undertaken?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. Geological Bulletin No. 9, 1903, and at the same time a two-sheet geological map, which is one of the most comprehensive in detail ever issued, was published and has been obtainable at the department. 2, An officer of the Geological Survey Department is leaving for Northampton next week and any additional data and information on this part of the field will be available.

QUESTION—NATIONALIST COMMISSION, REPORT.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Minister for Works, in the absence of the Premier: When will the report of the Royal Commission on the Nationalist Work-

ers be laid on the Table of the House? At the commencement of the session the Premier promised the House that he would lay the report on the Table, but since then three months have elapsed and we have not yet seen it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is a matter for the Premier to deal with, and I will bring it before his notice on his return. In the meantime inquiries will be made so that the Premier may have all the information at hand when he returns.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. O'Loughlen leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Holman (Murchison) on the ground of ill-health, and to Mr. Wilson (Collie) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD.

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILLS (3) RETURNED.

- 1, Parliament (Qualification of women).
 - 2, Carriers.
 - 3, Supply (No. 2), £350,000.
- Without amendment.

BILL—LUNACY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. F. T. Broun—Beverley) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: The principal objects of the Bill are to constitute an independent board of visitors for every institution for the detention of the insane, to improve the provisions regarding the release of patients, and particularly to vest in the board of visitors power to discharge patients whenever they think fit. Another object is to give attendants, who have been fined any amount exceeding £1 or who have been dismissed, a right of appeal to the board of visitors against the decision of the Inspector General, and the decision of the board is to be final. The board will consist of five members, two of whom will be medical practitioners, one a legal practitioner, one a lay woman and one a lay man. Members of the board are to hold office for three years and no longer. Any member may resign or may be removed from office by the Governor within that period if necessary. If it is found that any member of the board is not suitable or does not attend to his duties, he may be removed from the board by the Governor in Council. Members of the board will be eligible for re-appointment after the term of three years. Provision is made for one board to be appointed to control two or more institutions. This is necessary because we at present have

more than one institution, and it is considered that one board should be well able to attend to them. The members of the board shall receive such fees as may be prescribed by regulation out of moneys appropriated by Parliament. In other words, these fees will be fixed by regulation after the passing of the measure. The board will be empowered to make regulations prescribing the procedure and method to be followed and observed in the transaction and performance of the board's business. The board is to visit the institutions at least once a month. If necessary they will visit more often. Section 95 of the existing Act will be repealed, and it is proposed to insert the following in its stead—

(1.) The board of any institution or a majority (which shall include a medical practitioner) of such board shall, once at least in every month and also at such other times as the Minister may direct— (a) visit such institution with or without any previous notice and at such hours of the day or night and for such length of time as they may think fit; (b) inspect every part of such institution and every outhouse thereof whether communicating therewith or detached therefrom; (c) see every patient confined therein so as to give everyone, so far as possible, full opportunity of complaint; (d) inspect and consider, so far as may be deemed necessary, the orders, requests, and certificates relating to the patients; (e) make such inquiries, examinations, and inspections as are set forth in section eighty-seven of this Act; (f) enter in the Inspector General's book a minute of the then condition of the institution and such other remarks as they may deem proper.

Provision is made for the report following each visit to be transmitted to the Minister who is charged with the administration of the Act. While the amendment of Section 104 gives the board power to discharge patients, it provides that a majority of the board shall include a medical practitioner. This is necessary. The medical practitioners appointed to the board will be quite independent of the officials of the institution, and should there arise any occasion when the Inspector General or Superintendent disagrees with the decision of the board to release a patient, the final decision will rest with the board. There are other minor amendments which are consequential on these alterations. Clause 14, which amends Section 181, is intended to increase the severity of the punishment for offences against female patients in order to bring the law into harmony with that relating to offences against imbeciles and idiots as provided by Section 7 of the Criminal Code Amendment Act, 1918.

Hon. P. Collier: Will the board consist of honorary or paid members?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have already stated that the board will be paid.

and that their fees will be prescribed by regulation. Of course the medical men will have to be paid much more than the laymen. At present the members of the board of visitors are paid £50 a year, but the fees to the new board will have to be much higher because the members of the board will be required to visit the institution at least once a month. The new board will be faced with a considerable amount of work, especially in the early stages, and it will be necessary to pay the members of the board a fair salary. The measure is very plain, and the clauses are self-explanatory. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—WESTRALIAN MEAT WORKS.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Mr. Willcock in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment reads—

Clause 2, line 5, after the word "company" insert the words "or as soon as fifty thousand shares have been applied for."

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Council considered that a free hand should not be given to any company, because it might be quoted as a precedent for making certain provision in articles of association and then seeking to go behind them. The first 60,000 shares have been applied for, and it was thought that no hardship would be caused if the company were authorised to go to allotment when 50,000 shares had been applied for. The company have no objection to the provision, seeing that it has already been complied with. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1920-21.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 12th October, Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister):

Vote—Mines, £67,667:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [4.57]: In introducing these Estimates, there is very little, after the discussion on the Address-in-reply and other matters which have been before the Chamber this session, that one can add with regard to mining operations in Western Australia. We have discussed the matters affecting the industry almost from A to Z, but quite naturally members, together with the general public who are interested in mining, expect that something should be said by the Minister when introducing his Estimates, because he controls largely the development of our great mineral industry. In the compilation of the Estimates there is little or no change from previous years. I do not know whether I can take credit for that or otherwise. I suppose these are times when changes are anticipated and might be made with advantage. Whether this is the case or not in this instance, I think there is very little that can be done by way of change which can be effective, except the giving of greater encouragement to prospect new fields and greater assistance to discover new finds. At the present juncture we are suffering from what has been almost a disease in late years, a decline in the gold yield, and for the moment I cannot see how we can prevent that decline for some little time to come. There are quite a number of contributing causes to the decline during the last 12 months, among other things the disturbed industrial conditions. There was a strike on the wool lines which lasted from the 1st July till the 17th August of last year, and which necessitated the closing down of the big producing mines for that period. Then there was a disagreement between the unions in Kalgoorlie, which had the effect of further closing down the mines from the 6th November till the 7th January. That, of course, had a very serious effect on the gold yield, as the bulk of our gold is obtained from the mines at Kalgoorlie. Also we have to take into account the fact that the old mines at Kalgoorlie in particular are working down at greater depths. They have to operate at increased costs and naturally must do more in the nature of picking their ore than was the case previously, with the result that the quantity of gold really recovered is now not so great as it was before. Then we have suffered, and still suffer, from the lack of efficient labour. It cannot be denied that if a greater number of skilled miners were available, any amount of employment could be found for them in our various mines. In addition there is the fact that quite a number of new finds have been made during the last year or two, with the result—of which we cannot complain—of withdrawing a fair percentage of skilled labour from the gold-producing mines for development work on the new finds, which, moreover, have been largely in the district surrounding Kalgoorlie, where the greatest number

of miners are employed. Hampton Plains St. Ives, and Mount Monger have all withdrawn miners from the Golden Mile, where the gold producers are. Although these miners are engaged in the profitable occupation of opening up new mines, the benefit of that is not reaped at once; in fact, initially the tendency is in the opposite direction. While people are naturally elated at the new finds, they must expect, side by side with those discoveries, a fall in the gold production as the result of the withdrawal of labour from gold producing mines. Notwithstanding this, however, we still hold pride of place in gold production as regards Australasia; we are producing over 50 per cent. of the total gold that is produced in Australasia, including New Zealand. For the nine months of the current year we have produced about 455,000 ounces of fine gold, of an approximate value of two millions sterling. That is not quite as good as the corresponding production for the previous year; but, taking into account the conditions which I have mentioned, we can at least say that our decline is not a real one. Probably the production will recover to some extent during the next few years. Of course, when gold is taken from the ground, it cannot be replaced. Mining is not like farming conditions, in which one obtains crops year after year, and where one obtains continuously larger crops by the application of agricultural science. An ounce of gold once taken out of the ground cannot be put back again, and sooner or later the big gold producers must peter out, though I do not for a moment suggest that they are anywhere near that point yet. When in Kalgoolie some months ago, I was advised that the present developments on the Golden Mile show something like 50 million pounds worth of gold to be taken out from known developments. Further, I was informed that from some of the dumps on the Golden Mile about three million pounds worth of gold will be recovered. So there is no occasion yet for alarm. We have, moreover, to bear in mind that probably other fields which are now nearly in the developmental stage will replace some of the big mines when these peter out. During the period of the war the price of gold did not increase, but the industry had to carry the burden of additional costs. Moreover, there is the fact that the war withdrew many skilled miners from the industry, with a consequent detrimental effect on our gold production. This takes some time to recover, and it has not yet been fully recovered. During the year 1919 the cost of production in the gold-mining industry increased probably even more than during the war period; and had it not been for the fact that a bonus was paid on gold during that period, there is considerable question whether a number of our mines could have continued to operate. The bonus, undoubtedly, saved a number of them from closing down. The

number of men engaged in mining has decreased to an alarming extent since 1914. In that year mining employed over 12,000 men, whereas in 1919 it employed only something over 7,000 men, showing a decline of about 42 per cent. since the commencement of the war. So far, I regret to say, there is no evidence of that decline being made good. As I have stated, the skilled miners are not available. Quite a number of mining districts are to-day languishing for skilled miners and cannot obtain them. It is true that a not inconsiderable percentage of the miners who have abandoned the industry were compelled to do so because the conditions attaching to it made such inroads on their health that they had to seek fresh fields—in many cases, unfortunately, they took that step too late to recover from the ill effects which they had suffered. One knows that the disease attaching to the occupation of a miner may not be felt by him at all until it is too late to make anything in the nature of a good recovery. Miners go on working year after year feeling quite well, and being quite convinced that their health is good; and then suddenly they break down and find themselves gone to such an extent as to be no longer fitted even for light employment. One problem we have to solve is how we can save a great number of miners even from themselves. I suppose all gold-fields members have had the experience of meeting in the street a man who has been engaged in mining for a number of years and remarking to him that he is not looking quite fit, whereupon the miner will reply that he never felt better in his life. Then, after the lapse of a few weeks perhaps, one meets the same man and learns that he is done for work. It is an economic waste to permit such a man to continue in the mining industry until the time when he is unable to do any class of work whatever. The suggestion has been made to me that the State Government should do in the case of miners what the Federal Government are doing in the case of returned soldiers; that the State Government should introduce a system of repatriation, so to speak, for miners no longer able to continue in that industry.

Mr. Foley: Vocational training.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and also steps to remove the men from the mines before they get into a condition which renders them useless for ever after. I know there is a great deal of difference of opinion among the miners themselves as to whether compulsion should be employed in this matter.

Hon. P. Collier: That is practically what obtains at Broken Hill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. We have to accept the position that if we take the responsibility of making a man leave an occupation in which he has been engaged all his life—and a miner very seldom can see another outlook once he has started in his particular business—we must accept the further responsibility, somewhat

in the same way as the Federal Government accept it in the case of returned soldiers, of finding some occupation by means of which the man can live in reasonable comfort. The method of solving the problem, in my opinion, is a proper appreciation of the fact that these men are valuable to us. If the mining industry cannot carry the whole burden, then I think the State is sufficiently interested to carry a portion of it.

Mr. Underwood: Why should the State carry any portion of it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Because if the industry is burdened to such an extent that it cannot carry on but must close down, then the State would lose more than by accepting portion of the responsibility. Indeed, I do not know that the State would lose much by enabling a man to continue to produce wealth instead of allowing him to continue as a miner until he arrives at a stage when he cannot do any work at all but probably must become an inmate of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. In many cases a man if taken out of the mining industry a year or two earlier, can earn a living at some other employment, possibly with some assistance from the State. By the adoption of such a system the State would gain a great deal. It is one of the problems that we must face in the very near future.

Mr. Lutey: Why not have an annual inspection of the miners?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That probably may be one way out, but I am not quite sure that the miners themselves are yet prepared to accept that proposal without objection. I have heard it suggested for many years, but I have just as often heard it strenuously opposed by miners themselves.

Mr. Munsie: They object to it unless some other provision is made for them, and quite right too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Certainly. It is useless to compel the men to come out of the mines unless the State is prepared to find them some satisfactory employment, and therefore we must sooner or later establish a kind of repatriation department to enable these miners to adopt some other occupation. When that has been arranged, we may be able to adopt the suggestion of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) of an annual inspection with a view to withdrawing affected men from the mines before it is too late. Apart from gold production, we have to remember that this State has other minerals which are undoubtedly of great value to it. Taking the entire mineral production of Western Australia as compared with the entire mineral production of the Eastern States and New Zealand, we are still practically second on the list. Last year New South Wales produced nearly 10 million pounds' worth of minerals, but included in that amount was coal to the value of nearly 5½ millions. Western Australia produced last year minerals of a total value of over

3½ millions sterling. The next producer is Queensland with 2½ millions, and Tasmania is fourth with one million. Victoria's production was about the same as that of Tasmania. South Australia was last on the Australian list with a total of less than one million. New Zealand's production was just a little more than that of Western Australia, but included in New Zealand's total of four millions was nearly three million pounds' worth of coal. This is evidence that the total mineral production of this State is an enormous benefit to Western Australia as a whole. Sometimes we are inclined to suggest that the State is not doing its part in encouraging the mining industry. Members may be interested to learn the result of some inquiries I made in this connection recently. I find that we have over 30 State batteries operating, making a total of 205 head of stamps; and that plant is operated for only 15½ per cent. of its time. The capital expenditure on State batteries to the end of 1919 amounts to £1,210,000. The gross loss on working to the end of 1919 was £639,000. That is a fact which is not very often cited. The value of the output of the State batteries from their inception to the end of 1919 has been £5,244,000 worth of gold. Under the Mining Development Act the State has made advances, and the amount of those advances outstanding at the end of 1919 on account of leaseholders was £21,766, and on account of assistance in working batteries and treatment plants apart from State batteries £22,750, and on account of assistance for boring £644. Thus the total of outstanding advances is £45,162. The Government's contributions towards the advancement of the mining industry, including a debit on our revenue account of £765,000, a loss on the operation of State batteries of £639,000, and outstanding advances of £45,162, represent a total, in actual cash, of £1,450,000. Practically a million and a half of money has been granted by the Government in the way of direct assistance to mining. That is since the inception of the policy of assistance to mining. I want it to be clearly understood that this million and a half does not mean the amount of assistance rendered by the State to mining, but the amount of actual cash outstanding on this account. It is as well to point out that during the time this assistance was rendered, gold was produced to the value of 148 millions sterling, and dividends were paid amounting to over 27½ millions sterling, while, in addition, other expenditure in wages, stores, and so on paid over in Western Australia amounted to 114 millions sterling. So it will be seen that the gold production in Western Australia, notwithstanding the 1½ millions sterling I have mentioned, is of tremendous value to the State. I do not want to repeat what everyone knows and reiterate that it was the discovery of gold and its big production in the early days that had the effect of drawing attention to Western

Australia and was the forerunner of that agricultural industry of which we are all so proud. But I want to mention these facts to show that it cannot be claimed that the Government have not given fair consideration to the mining industry. Giving assistance to the mining industry is an entirely different proposition from that of giving assistance to any other industry. For instance, we may give assistance to a mine on account of the valuable products being derived from the workings over a given period. If the mine suddenly peters out, the State does not recover directly the assistance rendered to it. But the best assistance rendered is that given in the early stages, not merely from the point of view of providing prospectors with sustenance, camping outfits, pick and shovel and so on, but from the point of view of the new field, providing a water supply, putting in tracks, and lending every assistance necessary to enable them to cope with their initial development. It is important that our mines shall be able to get over that stage, and if we cannot render that assistance, we fail as a State. In the first instance, the mining industry is much the same as the agricultural industry. A man goes on the land first and he gets provision for water supply, fencing and clearing operations, for all of which purposes he gets credit. It was to deal with this that the Agricultural Bank was established. It should be much the same with mining. When we get a new find, it is essential that we should open up tracks, put in water supplies, and do other things necessary, so as to enable the producing stage to be reached. Then the assistance given could be withdrawn without much hardship being done.

Mr. Foley: They could get their water supply more quickly at one time than they can now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think that is fair. There are different opinions on that point. For a considerable period the water supply to the mines was directly under the Mines Department and was not looked upon as a revenue earning department. That was changed, I think, during the Labour Government's regime, and we put the water supply matters under one control. The principle underlying that change was the correct one, in my opinion. Instead of having engineers from different departments going out to make investigations and submitting reports, we now have them all under one head and some system is brought into play, from which standpoint alone considerable savings have been made. It has been no infrequent sight in the past to have a dam established to provide for the requirements of one department and quite close at hand another dam established to serve the purposes of another department. Our purpose was to so arrange matters that such incidents as these should not occur. It is not the intention even now to look upon the mines water supply as a revenue earning de-

partment but as a means for making provision for prospectors, and assisting them in their work.

Hon. T. Walker: Unfortunately that is not always considered.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It must not be forgotten that the position to all intents and purposes, only arose during the last 12 months or so. We were not doing much in the way of new discoveries prior to the war, or during the war, but since then returned soldiers and other prospectors have been sent out and have been making new discoveries. I admit that there has been some delay in making the necessary provision for water supplies and so on, for the reason that the Minister for Works, who is in charge of the Water Supply Department, was entitled to consider proper reports and consider the advisability of providing money from a revenue standpoint. He was entitled to take that matter into consideration. But quite recently we changed that policy and now the Mines Water Supply Department is to continue its old policy of making available these necessary provisions, the Treasurer is to be responsible for finding the funds for the Mines Department, and the Minister for Water Supply is not to carry the responsibility of the expenditure from its revenue earning aspect. This change has already proved beneficial. Only during the last week or two I have had a report from the superintendent of batteries, who was at St. Ives. He intimated that Mr. Ives, who was the founder of the St. Ives field, desired to inform me that he knew of no ease, although he had been engaged in mining for many years, where the Government had rendered more expeditiously or better the necessary assistance, than had been the case at St. Ives. He said that we could not have done more in the circumstances. At Mount Monger much the same position arose. There was no provision there for water supplies when gold was first discovered, and an agitation soon arose for the Government to make arrangements for the use of water from Creedon's dam. That dam had been erected by Mr. Creedon for pastoral purposes but was utilised in the early days of the fields. A certain quantity of water has been used but we have found that not so much as had been suggested would be used, has been taken from the dam. Mr. Creedon has done very well out of it, however.

Mr. Munsie: Well, the country did well out of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not suggesting that is not so.

Hon. P. Collier: It was a good deal on both sides.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps so, but the fact remains that up to the present the development on the field has not been as great as was anticipated. There has not been that progress made up there that was expected. In matters like this, however, the State must take risks and assist those who are prepared to take their share of risk

in opening up fields to-day. We must realise the tremendous advantage to the State which our gold production has been. We are entitled in the circumstances to say to these prospectors, and others engaged in the development of these mines, "If you have sufficient confidence to go ahead with your work, we will render you assistance by providing a water supply."

Mr. Troy: The State takes no risk in providing a water supply.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, very little, because even in the most remote areas, water supplies made available in the early days are to-day standing us in good stead and providing not only for those searching for gold, but for other things necessary for our well being.

Mr. Troy: Including the sandalwood getters.

Hon. P. Collier: And prospectors all the time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. The Mines Department has accepted the responsibility of saying where these supplies shall be provided and Mr. Ives, probably one of the best and most experienced prospectors we have to-day, admits, quite without the slightest suggestion on the part of the Government or the department, that the Government came to their assistance most expeditiously.

Mr. Foley: What about the engineer for water supply?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The engineer, Mr. O'Brien, has not been doing so much work on mines water supply as before, but it is not fair to blame Mr. O'Brien. The policy has, to some extent, been changed, and I have no hesitation in saying that if Mr. O'Brien is provided with funds, and is told that he is responsible for making early provision for water supply, Mr. O'Brien will provide it all right, just as was the case in the early days.

Mr. Hudson: Do you say that the Mines Department have taken over the responsibility of water supply?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, that is the position. Members will find two new items appearing in this year's Estimates; they are Nos. 127 and 128. No. 127 is "Subsidising researches for advancement of mineral industry, £1,000;" and No. 128 is: "Cutting tracks and other necessary works on goldfields, not provided elsewhere, £500." These two items will mean a great deal to the industry so far as new fields are concerned. I am under the impression that some of this money has already been expended.

Mr. Munsie: Has any of it been expended at Hampton Plains?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, I do not think any of that expenditure has come out of this vote. In fact, I should say that I do not really know whether this has been actually drawn upon yet. One particular work by the Works Department, it has been suggested, was a fair charge against this vote. Unquestionably, the object we had was

to cut a track to bring the mine within the shortest distance of the source of supplies. There are certain things which we consider should be under the direction of the Mines Department, whatever department may do the work, and the responsibility of saying where it shall be done should be with the Mines Department and no other. In the circumstances I believe that the introduction of such methods will prove more beneficial to the industry than the conditions formerly obtaining.

Mr. Troy: What about mining development?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That comes under the Loan Vote and we should not mix up mines development, which comes from loan, with the cost of the Mines Department, which comes from revenue. The former position will be elaborated later on when the Loan Estimates are being considered. So far as it is possible to provide practical assistance, it is the policy of the department to provide it, although sometimes we may not be certain that such assistance rendered will be recouped to the State. For instance, take the mines development vote. We changed the policy in connection with that aspect of the general question but for years we carried on what was known as "plastering" on a mining lease. Under this system, advances were obtained and after a certain amount of work was done, before anyone else could work it, they had to agree to recoup this amount so advanced from their takings, notwithstanding that they had secured no advantage from the previous expenditure. We lifted this as time went on and we now encourage prospectors to go on the lease by lifting the embargo. Then take the position at Phillips River, which presents some of the greatest difficulties we have to contend with. The policy appears to have been to render assistance to small parties carrying on mining operations.

Mr. Maley: Difficulty exists elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have an extensive field there known to be rich in gold and copper, but the question of treatment is one thing and mining quite another. Unfortunately we have deliberately encouraged the development of the mines there, in order to get as much as possible from them as quickly as possible, without asking the people to engage in proper mining with proper plant. During the last 12 months or so we have advanced something like £5,000 to small parties, to assist in the development of that field. I am still of opinion that even that assistance will not have the desired effect, that unless there is an aggregation of capital between a number of the mines the smaller parties will never be able to work their shows profitably. The essential difficulty confronting the management of the smelting works at Ravensthorpe is the securing of sufficient ore to keep running for reasonably long periods. Necessarily the time of running is very much broken, which means

largely increased costs of working. Nevertheless I am convinced that, properly worked, the Phillips River field will some day prove a very valuable asset to the State. One of our great difficulties is the fact that we are continually making discoveries of various minerals in remote parts of the State, where they cannot be worked as economically as if they were in more favoured localities. Take the recent discovery by Mr. Lambie of silver lead out from Bangemall. Mr. Lambie assures me that he has a very large deposit of valuable lead and silver ore, the analysis returning 44 per cent. of lead, and about 15 ozs. of silver. But if we take into account the remote position of that discovery and remember that there are no means of transportation, it becomes evident that it will be very difficult to make it pay. Still, if the material is there in sufficient quantities, and of sufficiently high grade to pay with proper transport, then we must consider the supplying of the means of transport. I hope it will be found on further development that there is there sufficient high-grade ore to warrant us opening up the field. I do not think it is any more remote from the seaboard than is Broken Hill. Of course it may not be a Broken Hill, but the fact remains that to allow the field to be properly worked, transport facilities must be provided. One of the methods suggested for developing these remote properties is the provision of up-to-date treatment plants, and refining works in some central locality, to which the ore from the remote districts may be brought for treatment. Under such a scheme it would be necessary to provide concentrating plants in the several districts concerned. We know that in the case of copper it is a simple operation to decrease the quantity and increase the percentage, thus enabling it to be economically transported great distances to treatment works. If we can do that with our silver lead until we determine whether there is available a sufficient quantity to warrant the provision of railway communication, we shall be doing a great deal for the remote mineral areas of the State. Extending from Meekatharra to Port Hedland is a huge mineral belt which obviously must contain a tremendous amount of wealth. Under existing conditions it is not possible to profitably work that area. It is largely a question of finding one or two sufficiently rich and extensive deposits to warrant the provision of railway facilities. Many of what are to-day struggling shows could be profitably worked if they had proper means of communication. Hon. members know that I have had this matter of central treatment works in hand. Personally, I should prefer to see the co-operative system introduced, so as to enable those concerned in the production of base metals to take the first interest in the treatment works itself. I am not so certain that Government control of treatment works is entirely satisfactory. However, we do not find much difficulty in lending financial assistance to a freezing works company to produce wealth, and con-

sequently I do not think we ought to find it impossible to provide financial assistance to enable co-operative treatment works to be established for the handling of our base metals. We shall never be able by purely Government control to operate works of that class to the satisfaction of the producers.

Mr. Hudson: Did not the Commonwealth Government make some proposal?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, the Federal Government did make a proposal of assistance, but they made it clear that what they had in mind was the lending, in conjunction with the State, of assistance to co-operative treatment works. They consider that the men directly interested should take some of the responsibility for the operation of such works. I believe that many of our companies, when sufficiently well established, would cheerfully accept their share of that responsibility. One of the great difficulties will be the selecting of a central site, our base metals being distributed over so large an area. I take the view that, when settled, this question ought to be settled on the basis of establishing the works where they will be of greatest advantage to the men producing the commodity. If we can get those men sufficiently interested, they will probably overcome their parochial ideas and be guided by the sole consideration of which will be the best site for all in the industry. I am hopeful that at a conference of those interested I shall get from them some idea of what in their opinion should constitute the best site for the works. In regard to the sub-departments, there is little or nothing to be said, except that the Geological Survey Department has almost reached vanishing point. At present some three members of the staff are doing all the field work. Whether or not that is desirable is a matter for grave consideration. I know there are many people who believe that geologists are of no value, simply because in some instances they fail. But no scientists are infallible, and I think our geologists have done a tremendous lot of work which has frequently been of considerable advantage to those engaged in the mining industry. While on the one hand a newspaper circulating in the Yilgarn district declares that geologists are of no value, when I was on the Murchison recently representations were made to me by the Prospectors' Association, urging that more work should be done by the Geological Survey Department, because the work of that department was of tremendous assistance to the prospector. If the department was organised on the basis of being more than a source of scientific fact, if it would bring down the science to the level of the practical and thus enable the prospector to make use of the facts disclosed by the geological survey, I think the geological survey staff could be increased with considerable advantage to the State. What I hope to be able to do by bringing the prospector and the geologist into closer touch is thus to get the prospector to appreciate and report any discovery he might make likely to be of value to the department. The trouble is that so

many of our prospectors go out into new country without any geological knowledge of that country. Such a man unconsciously might be walking over ground giving strong indications of containing rich minerals.

Mr. Underwood: That is not likely with a prospector who knows his work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The fact remains that a large number of our prospectors have done it. We have endeavoured to supply them with information as to the geological possibilities of a district before they go into that district, notwithstanding which the Geological Department has been criticised for neglecting to disseminate information. Day after day I receive demands that further information should be made available from the Geological Department before big work is undertaken by mining companies. Again, when certain field work has been done and geological data obtained, we have great difficulty in getting the reports published and circulated. The member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) knows that we have bulletins supplying wide information in close detail. We have one of the best geological maps ever issued dealing with the Northampton field, notwithstanding which the people of Northampton apparently know nothing about it. When I was on the Murchison recently the Prospectors' Association waited on me and complained of want of data relating to the Meekatharra district. On returning to Perth I had inquiries made, when I found that the very information asked for was available, not only in Perth, but at the mining registrar's office at Mt. Magnet. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) when Minister for Mines had a pamphlet printed showing all the publications issued from the Mines Department. I have now instructed the under secretary to send a copy of that pamphlet, with other up-to-date information, to every hon. member, to the mining registrars, and to the Prospectors' Association, so that all available information may be readily turned up.

Mr. Chesson: It ought to be placed in the mining registrar's office.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That has been done already. It is in the mining registrar's office at Mt. Magnet.

Mr. Chesson: Then it ought to be displayed in a prominent position.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If a prospector, when passing the door of the office, cannot ask whether the information he requires is available, he has not much interest in his work.

Mr. Foley: If he were an enthusiastic prospector he would naturally go in and prospect.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are having that pamphlet widely distributed. I merely mention these points to emphasise the fact that our Geological Survey Department is called upon from time to time to make a field survey, and supply data which will enable mining companies or prospectors to better understand the field in which they are working. On the other hand we very frequently hear it stated that the geological

survey is of little or no value. Some considerable time ago the department prepared a handbook of mining giving a great amount of valuable information in as much detail as possible, and that handbook has been in the printer's hands, to my knowledge, for six or eight months. Apparently it is a most difficult task to get the work out. The Government Printing Office is working overtime continually; one can see the light burning there at midnight. Everything has to take its turn in the printing office; the printers cannot be taken off more urgent work for the sake of the handbook. Similarly, the geological reports have to wait until an opportunity presents itself to the Government Printer of getting them out. Let me point out, however, that these reports are always made available to the Press as soon as they are ready, and that the Press publishes them at considerable length. The individual who is concerned with these reports does not take the opportunity of perusing them at the time when they are published through the newspapers. But later on he suddenly becomes interested, and then he wants the report immediately. It is not fair always to blame the officials for something that is due to a lack of alertness on the part of the private person interested. I contend that our Geological Survey Branch have unquestionably done a great deal of good work, and that they will continue to do good work if given the opportunity. I will admit, however, that one essential is prompt publication of the reports made by the geologists. Outside the two or three matters to which I have referred in detail, I know of nothing of moment that calls for mention at the present time in connection with our mining industry. Let me repeat that we have to make provision for the men who are unfortunately operating in an industry that is very detrimental to health. If we compulsorily withdraw men from that industry, we are bound to find ways and means of enabling them to take up other occupations. I believe that course will prove the cheaper even if the State has to some extent to assist disabled miners, because they will then be placed in a position to continue the production of wealth, whereas under present conditions they become utterly helpless.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.47]: It is true, as stated by the Minister for Mines, that there is very little fresh that can be said regarding the industry. Unfortunately, it is likewise true that the decline in the value of our gold output continues year by year. The drop in the number of men employed, as mentioned by the Minister, from 12,000 in 1914, to 7,000 last year, is very significant; and it becomes even more significant when we remember that at the high water mark of our mining industry, in 1902, the number of men employed was 16,000. To-day we are down to 7,000, and naturally there has been what may be termed a corresponding reduction in output. It is very

difficult indeed to know what to do. Without being unduly pessimistic, I suppose we must look forward to the inevitable decline of the gold mining industry. The Minister's statement that Western Australia still produces more than 50 per cent. of the gold yield of Australia shows that in recent years the Eastern States have suffered a reduction of gold output correspondingly in proportion to the reduction here, because for many years this State's gold production has been just over 50 per cent. of that of the whole of Australasia. I suppose the gold mining industry has suffered, by reason of the war, more than any other industry that was able to keep going at all. The prices of all mining requisites increased enormously, and of course the increased cost of living has had its effect on the goldfields. Until about a year ago these increases could not be passed on by the gold mining industry in the same way as is done by other industries, for the reason that the price of gold remained stationary. In fact, the gold mining industry suffered very much until the embargo on the export of gold was removed and the price rose. But for that fact some of our larger producing mines would have had to cease operations. The outlook is somewhat dark, because the increased price of gold can hardly continue. Certainly it will not continue permanently. If we should get back again to the old standard, then the industry, in view of the costs piled upon it, will be in for a very bad time indeed. The Minister spoke of the difficulty experienced in securing efficient labour for the mines. It is a fact that out of the large number of men who went from our goldfields to the Front comparatively few have returned to the gold mining industry. Their experience in the war and what they saw of other countries created in their minds—and I do not wonder at it—a dislike for the conditions inseparable from a miner's existence. Hundreds of our miners upon their return from the war went to seek fresh fields in the Eastern States. It is true, of course, that the discoveries adjacent to Kalgoorlie and Boulder have drawn many men from the older and deeper mines on the Golden Mile. The men were only too glad of an opportunity to get out of the dust-laden deep mines into the open air or into the comparatively shallow mines of the new fields. I venture to assert that no section of the Australian community has borne proportionately a larger share of the war burdens than the men employed on the goldfields. I say that more particularly in view of the fact that while the rises in the cost of living have been followed by increases in wages in all other industries, this does not hold good of our gold mining industry. The only section of wage-earners in Australia, so far as I know, whose wages have remained stationary during the past few years, are the miners employed on our goldfields. The conditions with which they have to put up, particularly since the close of

the war, are nothing short of cruelty. Most people even in this State are not aware, and will find it difficult to believe, that in some instances the rates of wages now being paid on our goldfields are lower than those obtaining in 1914 at the outbreak of the war. In very few cases indeed has there been any increase. The Arbitration Court is now sitting in Kalgoorlie to hear an application for increased wages made on behalf of men who are working at a depth of over half a mile, of fully 3,000 feet, under conditions which hon. members can imagine. And for such work the rate at present paid is 1s. per day less than that now paid for any class of labouring work in and around the metropolitan area. It must be borne in mind, too, that the cost of living is necessarily higher on the goldfields than in the metropolitan area. Therefore I say that our miners have borne a greater share of the war burden than any other section of the Australasian community. Further, notwithstanding their comparatively low wages and the high cost of living, no class of the community have shown themselves more generous than the miners in subscribing to funds raised for war purposes. It is a very difficult problem, as the Minister said, to know what to do with miners who are becoming affected with occupational disease. A large proportion of the men in the deep mines, if they have worked in the industry continuously for 15 or 20 years, are practically settled at the age of 40. It seems to me that the State owes a duty to those men. The State should devise some scheme which will enable them to adopt some other occupation. The State should make some provision to that end. The decision of the tribunal appointed in New South Wales a month or two ago deals with that aspect of mining. It provides that men who are affected shall be compelled to leave the mining industry, and that an allowance shall be made to them, amounting, where required, to as much as £3 per week. Of course the money will have to be found, and I believe the proposal is that it shall be found partly by the mining companies and partly by the New South Wales Government. The Broken Hill mining companies are very wealthy concerns, and therefore are fortunately in a position to contribute to a fund for miners suffering from occupational disease. I do not know that at this stage there are in Western Australia many wealthy mining companies, although undoubtedly some of them have in the past distributed very large sums indeed by way of dividends to their shareholders. However, there can be no question that something will have to be done, and that the State will have to recognise its responsibility to those miners. I am very sorry that there has not been established for their benefit some scheme of land settlement similar to that established for our returned soldiers. It is a fact that many of the settlers in our newer wheat districts originally came from the gold-

fields. One from Kalgoorlie or Boulder cannot travel through the eastern areas without meeting scores of men who in their earlier experience in Western Australia followed mining as an occupation. I see no reason whatever why the number of men on the goldfields who still desire to get away from mining should not be afforded assistance by the Government. Undoubtedly conditions on the goldfields are unsettled. The labour is inefficient partly because the men's physical condition does not enable them to render the same service as in former years. There is also a feeling of dissatisfaction, of unrest, created by the knowledge within the man that he is not being paid a wage sufficient to enable him to live in reasonable comfort. I am not complaining of the fact that the mining companies are resisting the demand for higher wages. The companies, too, are now finding themselves in a difficult position. The mines are old, and nearing their end; and the companies are not to-day in as good a position to pay higher wages as they were in former years. I suppose the mine managements at the present time are merely discharging their obligations to their shareholders in fighting the citation for increased wages. Unfortunately, the position is a cruel one for the miners and their wives and children.

Mr. Davies: An increase in wages is inevitable, though.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly, and quite regardless of the effect which it may have upon the mining industry. The argument will not stand that we cannot provide a ruling wage because to do so might result in the extinction of an industry. If we went to the other extreme, by keeping on reducing wages we would enable any industry to continue in operation. If an industry cannot pay a wage sufficient to enable those who are engaged in it to live decently, honourably and honestly, that industry, or the portion of it concerned, must cease to exist. There is nothing else for it to do.

Mr. Foley: The President of the Arbitration Court said that if a mine was not paying, the men engaged on it ought to work at a cheaper rate.

Mr. Munsie: Not the present president.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even in much despised Germany they made attempts to deal with those matters to which the Minister for Mines has referred, as far back as 20 years ago. They had a universal scheme of national insurance, providing for sickness, unemployment and other matters affecting the workers. This scheme covered every man, woman, and girl who had been contributing to the fund. When these people were in work they contributed a small amount to the national insurance fund, the employers contributed a similar amount, and I think the nation gave something as well. Contribution was made compulsory. When money was needed because of sickness, unemployment or some other

cause, the workers were enabled to draw weekly payments from this source. In respect to our regard for the welfare of those who through illness, unemployment, occupational diseases, or other cause over which they have no control, we in Australia are far behind many other countries in the world. This is really a national affair, for in this country the workers move from one State to the other. It is a question which the Commonwealth Parliament might have taken up years ago in establishing some form of national insurance. It is not less cruel for a man to see his wife and children suffer because of his unemployment, than it is for him to see them suffer because of his illness. The great cloud which overhangs every wage earner, even when he is in employment and getting a wage sufficient to enable him and his family to live in decency and comfort, is the future unemployment that may lie before him. The wage earner is not able to spend even small sums of money in certain directions because of the insecurity of his employment. Especially is this uncertainty felt by the man who has the responsibilities of a family. The only way to overcome this difficulty—and the Australian Parliament might well have dealt with it years ago—is to establish some form of national insurance whereby there will be secured to the worker, no matter what industry he may be engaged in, some means by which he can keep going and prevent those dependent upon him from suffering in the event of his being overtaken by illness or unemployment. It is not too late now for us to do something in this respect on the Eastern goldfields. In many ways the conditions there are worse to-day than ever before. This is not a party question. I believe that proposals to meet that position would be supported by every section of the community and every member of the House. I hope the Minister will see whether it is possible to devise a suitable scheme to be dealt with by Parliament next year, so that something may be done towards establishing an insurance fund, not only for men engaged in the mining industry, but in other industries as well. I wish to deal briefly with the new finds on the goldfields. I hope the Minister will treat generously those men who are doing their best to open up these new fields. I am not alleging any want of sympathy for them in the past. It is certain that the new fields require nursing. They need all the sympathy, consideration, and assistance that any Minister or Government can give them. In all new fields the pioneering stages offer great difficulties. When a field is well established, the people engaged upon it are generally able to provide themselves with all their requirements, but in the early stages of a new field the difficulties regarding water supply and crushing facilities are great. I believe that the new find outside Kalgoorlie is fairly well placed in the matter of

water supply. I hope the Minister will not be afraid to provide crushing facilities even in the early stages of the field, and even if the departmental officers report that possibly it is not sufficiently developed to justify the expenditure of public funds in the erection of Government batteries. The amount involved would not be large. A sum of £5,000 or £6,000 would cover the cost of erecting a small plant. If it was shown that a State battery was not justified, assistance might then be rendered to any particular party who was willing to put up the necessary crushing facilities. At St. Ives the people stand greatly in need of crushing facilities. This field was discovered some time after the Hampton Plains. At Hampton Plains there is now invested a good deal of English capital, and some of the properties have been floated for large sums of money and are going on with development work. These shows will be able to provide all the crushing facilities that are required without need of outside assistance. Because the St. Ives field was found subsequent to Hampton Plains, the cream had been taken off the milk so far as it was concerned. The leases at St. Ives are chiefly owned by the local people of Kalgoorlie, Boulder, and other neighbouring centres. It is not a field that has been boomed, but I believe, had it been the first opened up, it would have shown magnificent results. Owing to these circumstances, it has been difficult for persons interested in St. Ives to obtain sufficient capital to develop the field, and it has devolved upon the local people, who are in the position to do it, to invest their own money for the purpose. Many of the local men of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, who are not in a big way of business, have individually put up several thousands of pounds in an endeavour to open up the field. I do not know the nature of the report of the officer who went to inspect the field.

The Minister for Mines: I have not seen it yet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think it was the superintendent of State batteries who went out to report on the advisability of erecting a Government mill there.

Hon. T. Walker: Quite recently.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the Minister for Mines will take a generous view of the position, even though the field should turn out a failure. We all know that there are bound to be some failures in any new mining field. It is better to have a few failures, however, than possibly allow some promising show to drop out of existence for the lack of assistance. I believe that if a mill were provided at St. Ives in the near future, the people there would be able to recover sufficient gold from the properties to develop the leases without the assistance of any outside capital.

Mr. Lutey: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I hope the Minister will look into that aspect of the question. During the last year or two our production of copper has fallen off, in common with gold and other minerals. This is to be regretted. It is a pity that such a promising field as that at Ravensthorpe should have been closed down for some time. I do not blame any one in particular for this. A district which carried a thriving population of 600 or 700 persons for several years is to-day languishing and has been almost abandoned. I do not know why this should be. There are also difficulties in the way of opening up new copper fields. Beyond Peak Hill there are deposits of copper showing much higher percentages than anything else we have in the State, and immeasurably higher percentages than are found on properties that are profitably worked in other parts of Australia. There are big deposits of copper beyond Peak Hill giving up to 15 and 20 per cent. ore. Owing to the cost of treatment and transport, it is a difficult matter to open them up. A large amount of money would be required to establish the necessary treatment works there, for otherwise there is no way of dealing with the ore. The cost of transport by road over a distance of 70 or 80 miles would be heavy, and on top of this there would be the freight over 600 or 700 miles of railway. These difficulties make it almost impossible to work even such rich deposits as these. It is a great loss to Western Australia that these rich mineral deposits should be lying idle at a time when the whole world is crying out for that which we have in abundance. Unfortunately, we are for the moment powerless to make use of our vast mineral resources. We are continually being brought face to face with the old situation. We are only a handful of people trying to develop a vast territory. There are but 330,000 people trying to develop a territory in size equal to another, carrying scores of millions of people, in some other part of the world. Had we the population and the money—for money would follow population, population in a sense being money—we would be in a much better position to open up these natural resources which we possess in various parts of the State. We have the Yampi iron deposits in the North-West. In my time these were taken up as a copper proposition. I remember providing the first assistance in the way of transport by boat and the necessary equipment for those who went up there. This was an amount sufficient to enable the party concerned to proceed to Yampi Sound. The rights were acquired by these people during the time I was in office owing to the assistance rendered by the Government of the day. We now learn that there are mineral deposits there worth millions of pounds. This is also true of minerals in other parts of Western Australia. The Greenough district is rich in lead. The people interested have been trying to develop these fields under the same difficulties that have existed in

Ravensthorpe and elsewhere. The problem facing these fields is that of treatment works. That is the hampering influence at Northampton, Ravensthorpe and other districts I could mention. This can only be overcome by the expenditure of large sums of money. These are times when money is dear and hard to get, and the Government are faced with difficulties in that respect. I hope the Minister will give substantial assistance in this direction wherever it is needed, so long as he is satisfied that the expenditure is warranted. No one asks that money should be thrown away on rash or doubtful propositions. If after due investigation it is found that the expenditure is warranted, I trust that the Minister will be generous in the assistance that he renders in the direction I have indicated.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [7.30]: Both the Minister for Mines and the leader of the Opposition remarked that there was nothing new to be said about the mining industry. By that one might be led to believe that there is nothing new to be done for an industry that has already done so much for the State, in order to give it an impetus again. There are several ways in which I think an impetus could be given to it, and I desire to mention one or two of these matters. Mining has been of great advantage to the State. Many millions won from the gold have been taken away from the State which while enriching the State also enriched men and companies outside Western Australia. Unfortunately the State has not taken full advantage of its power to levy toll upon those people who have taken the money away from the State. Each member of this Chamber is to blame. When we take into consideration the cost to the State of our mining industry, we have to realise that there is that bigger expenditure, which no money can compensate, namely, the loss of lives in our mines. Recently I went into the statistics regarding accidents, serious and trivial, and deaths on the mines. Taking the number of men employed in the mines up to 1913 and comparing the accidents and deaths in the mines, I found that our mines were responsible for a greater proportion, both of accidents and deaths, than were all but three regiments of Australian soldiers who went away to the Front. These figures are remarkable, but unfortunately I cannot present them to members, as the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson), to whom I lent them, is not present. I think that we should make a great endeavour to cut down this serious loss of life. Many systems have been spoken about and every Minister who has been in charge of the Mines Department has, I believe, done his best to assist mining. I believe, however, that the one thing we must take into consideration is not so much the quantity of air which is admitted to the mines, but its quality. I am convinced that

the air in the mines must be made much purer than it is at the present time. Every authority one can read, and one's own experience shows that it is the question of quality, rather than quantity. If the officials of the Mines Department devoted their attention more to the quality than the volume of the air in the mines, it would be a great achievement. We have heard references to the inefficient labour available. That inefficiency has been apparent ever since 1914 and for the reason one has only to remember that the 11th, 16th, and 23rd battalions, and most of the tunnellers' corps, were goldfields people. These men, who could break ore at a less cost per ton than was possible with black labour in South Africa, were most efficient workmen, and with their departure it was only natural that the efficiency of labour on the mines would be lowered. Some of those men who have come back from the war do not desire to go back to the mines, and others have returned in a condition which precludes them from doing so. We will have to evolve some scheme to secure a better class of worker in the mines, so as to raise the standard of efficiency. We must also take into consideration the question of how we can utilise the labour of those men who have to leave the mines. On the Address-in-reply I spoke in favour of vocational training and I feel certain that if that system were adopted, we would find the miners respond to it well. Some of the best settlers in the agricultural areas have been miners. Their training underground, where they learnt to be independent of the bosses, stands them in good stead. These men, who had to exercise intelligence in the mines, exercise that intelligence equally well in the agricultural industry. These men, who often have to leave mining on account of their health, are not able to attain to affluent circumstances, and naturally, if they had some other trade to which they could turn, it would be a great advantage to them. For this reason alone, I think members would find that a system of vocational training would be availed of by the men on the goldfields. That is one of the first things that the Mines Department should consider and if given effect to, I think it would do incalculable good to the State. There is another way in which I believe healthy conditions could be obtained on the mines. We hear at the present time that the Government intend settling men on the land. I have already mentioned that some of our most successful farmers are men who have come from the goldfields. These men, in some cases, have been forced to leave their occupations in the mines. I am one who only left in time. I think we could bring about a great measure of relief to these men if a system were adopted whereby, after a medical examination, they could be told that they must not continue working in the mines. Some such system would give these men an opportunity to avail themselves of assistance from the Government to go on the land. The

qualification could be their work in mines and a medical certificate, the production of which should entitle them to assistance from the Government. If we could take say 100 men from the mining districts and put them on clearing agricultural land and erecting cottages for the settlers, it would be a very great improvement on the existing system. The settlers could be charged more for their land but, on the other hand, their land would be all ready for a crop, and they would have a good chance of taking something off their holdings in the first year. A much discussed question is that of the working conditions in a mine. Many miners favour the day labour system. Although I believe that such a system is a good one, yet I am convinced that a majority of the men are in favour of contracts, conditionally on the contracts being let under equitable conditions.

Mr. Lambert: But the contract system on the goldfields has killed hundreds of men.

Mr. FOLEY: I appreciate that better than does the hon. member. I agree that the contract system has killed numbers of men; but on the other hand numbers of others have been killed under other systems. Given good air and improved conditions the miners, even when working on contracts, would enjoy a much longer life than they do to-day. If the contract system is to obtain, the Government ought to call together representatives of the mine owners and of the miners and draw up equitable conditions of contract. When first I came into the Chamber the mullockers in the Gwalia mine were being paid 11s. 2d. a shift. To-day they are making much more than that on contract. Miners generally are not getting anything like sufficient wages under the Arbitration Court award. Mining, now that it is in its decline in this State, requires much more attention than it did when it was flourishing. It is the chemist who will assist mining in the future. We see by the Estimates that there is an increase in the vote for the Geological Survey Department. To-night we heard the Minister say that the Geological Survey Department had almost reached vanishing point. That being so, I say that those fighting a rearguard action for the geological survey are receiving better treatment than they did when mining was at its zenith. If the Minister is desirous that mining should get the fullest possible results from the labours of the chemists, he should see to it that the departmental reports are more promptly made available. Nine months ago a geological survey was made of the country north of Leonora. It was clearly evident that the area contained some of the very best contact country. The report of that survey is not yet available. The Gwalia Mining Company were prepared to spend £5,000 per annum on prospecting that country. When a company thus show their bonafides they should be encouraged. The company wrote down asking for certain sections of that report to enable them to get their men out. The Minister readily granted their

request. Still, I contend that the report in its entirety should have been made available long ago. Only to-night the Minister said that one report—possibly the one to which I am referring—had been in the hands of the Government Printer for nine months. If the Government Printing Office cannot get out these reports in less than nine months, then in the interests of the industry the work should be handed over to a private firm.

Mr. Underwood: It is not the Government Printer who is at fault, but the official; this paraphrasing has to be done.

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member is making a fetish of this paraphrasing. It cannot be gainsaid that there is a big chance of a substantial revival in mining. Yet that revival will probably be seriously injured by the exorbitant price of all mining commodities. The Prices Regulation Commission should consider the cost of mining requisites.

The Minister for Mines: It ought to be more important than beer.

Mr. FOLEY: It ought indeed. Only a few evenings ago I read out a complete table contrasting the current prices with the pre-war prices of all mining commodities. That information is already in "Hansard," and therefore there is no occasion to repeat it. I will content myself by remarking that in the case of one commodity, whereas the pre-war price was £55, the price to-day is £130. In these circumstances it is very difficult indeed to profitably work a mining show. If a member represents mining, he should represent the industry as a whole, and not make out a case for one mine while neglecting the remainder. If we were to proceed on those lines there would be no industry at all in the course of a few years. Here is another mining commodity which, costing 2s. 1d. before the war, now costs £27. This shows clearly that the industry is at the mercy of some influence beyond the Commonwealth. If the Prices Regulation Commission can trace a line of groceries from the consumer back through the retail shop to the merchant's warehouse and thence to the factory, surely the same Commission can trace a mining requisite with a view to checking the price. Given mining requisites at a reasonable cost, and given efficient labour such as we had before the war, the industry would not be suffering from inordinately high costs. In very many instances the men in our mines are not so efficient as they were before the war.

Mr. Teesdale: They are not all wrecks, are they?

Mr. FOLEY: A large proportion of them are. Even those who escaped wounds and disease are considerably older than they were at the outbreak of the war. It must be remembered that physically none of the men working in the mines to-day will be worth much in ten years' time. Of course some of the mines are not so prejudicial to health as are others. One mine, while not having so great a volume of air as another, yet has a better quality of

air, which gives a man an improved chance. I am pleased that the Minister has at last seen his way clear to take action regarding the liens on leases. This has been a source of annoyance to various Ministers. When the present leader of the Opposition was Minister for Mines I saw him with regard to one lease over which there was a lien, and he was powerless to do anything. I am glad that the present Minister is altering the existing conditions in order to make it possible for some of these leases to be worked, instead of being held up as they have been for many years. Seven years ago the leader of the Opposition, who was then Minister for Mines, was asked to throw open a lease in the Mt. Ida district. Two thousand pounds had been advanced on that lease, and the people had given it a very fair run, but unfortunately they had come out on the wrong side of the ledger. This occurred 17 years ago. Because those people had not been able to repay the £2,000, this lease remained idle until the month before last, simply on account of a fool regulation by the Mines Department that the money must be repaid by any party wishing to take up the lease, a debt in the incurring of which they had had no hand. Now that the Minister for Mines has decided to remove the embargo relating to liens on leases, he should deal with each case individually. A party of men might work a mine for a time and then throw it up, after having obtained considerable assistance from the Government. Another party might then take over the mine, but this party might include the men who had the lease originally, and in this way they might make a good thing out of it. If the Government come to the assistance of any man, party, or company, they should be careful not to leave themselves open to being fleeced in this way. The Minister should recognise that the monetary assistance given for cartage is not what it should be. When a man working a show gets out a crushing, he is often doubtful whether it will pay. If he could get the crushing carted to the battery and tested, it would give him a better chance. Under existing conditions an application for such assistance has to go before the Superintendent of State Batteries. Any concession, subsidy or assistance given to an individual on his application to the Minister should be granted out of the Mines Development vote. It is of the greatest importance to assist the men working shows to ascertain whether there is any value in the ore they are breaking. I hope the Minister will consider this point. I trust that the mining industry will prosper. There is another point to which I referred the other night and which I wish to stress once more. We have a Government Analyst who is Chief Inspector of Explosives, drawing a salary of over £600, and a chemist who receives £480. When we have two such officials in the one department paid by the Government and working for the same people, there should not be such a decided difference of opinion between them as there is. A difference of opinion which must have the effect of retarding the mining industry.

I refer to the question of the treatment of alunite for manure. Dr. Simpson, who reputedly ranks among the five most highly qualified chemists in the world, has gained in this State practical experience that warrants us as regarding him as the best possible judge of this matter. When the alunite ore was broken, Dr. Simpson said the product was an excellent fertiliser. A private firm then started to make this fertiliser, and was successful. Trial lots were sent out, and in course of time orders were received from the farmers. In fact, the farmers were so satisfied that repeat orders were given. When the first orders were sent out, the firm relied on the opinion of Dr. Simpson that alunite was an excellent fertiliser. Then the Government Analyst, Mr. Mann, intervened and put an end to the industry, asserting that this was not a registered fertiliser and therefore could not be placed on the market.

The Minister for Mines: Not quite in that way.

Mr. FOLEY: That is the way it was put to the men who were producing this fertiliser. The head chemist said this fertiliser was of a certain value, and after the farmers had proved its value to their own satisfaction, they were not permitted to make additional purchases because Mr. Mann said that Dr. Simpson's word could not be accepted.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, no.

Mr. FOLEY: He said that Dr. Simpson's word could not be taken in this instance, because that gentleman was not an agricultural chemist.

The Minister for Mines: The point was that a fertiliser must have certain soluble contents and Mr. Mann said that this fertiliser did not contain them.

Mr. FOLEY: And Dr. Simpson said that it did. Irrespective of technical considerations, of which I profess to know nothing, this industry was and still is prevented from operating and employing labour. It was operating in the Kanowna district. The more industries we can start and the greater use we can make of our natural resources, the better it will be for the State. The Minister should inquire into the duplication of these positions. There was a difference of opinion regarding one matter of chemistry a few years ago, and on that occasion Mr. Mann put his opinion practically against the world.

Mr. Lambert: He only does that because there is not another world.

Mr. FOLEY: As a boy I was taught that there was another world.

Mr. Lambert: Not one to which Mann will ever go.

Mr. FOLEY: The same Mr. Mann put his opinion against the world in regard to spirits. Again, I am not an authority on spirits, but I contend that Mr. Mann did not come out on top on that occasion. There is evidence that the quality of the fracture, which until recently was being used in the mines, was not what it should have been. Much of the ill-health suffered by miners is caused by the use of bad fracture, and

there was a degree of uncertainty among the miners as to whether the best class of fractureur was being used. Again that same gentleman put his opinion against that of the highest authorities, but the fractureur now being used in the mines is not of the standard recommended by Mr. Mann. The fractureur being used is of a quality recommended by the best chemists of the world. I do not mention these things out of a desire to indulge in personalities or with any thought of victimisation consequent upon the recent happenings, but if any employee of the Government is not delivering the goods I, as one of the trustees for the people, intend to exercise my right to criticise him. I do not say that Mr. Mann is not doing his duty, but the Government are paying salaries to two chemists and are not getting the best results from them.

Mr. Lambert: Mann is the inspector under the Explosives Act and under the Fertilisers Act.

Mr. FOLEY: He is Inspector of Explosives, Inspector of Fertilisers, Government Analyst, and everything else. I would be opposed to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into this matter. I have never yet voted for the appointment of a select committee, and I never shall unless I alter my views a good deal. There should be a departmental inquiry, preferably conducted by the Minister, into this duplication. If these two chemists cannot agree—

Mr. Lambert: Give them a holiday until they can.

Mr. FOLEY: If I am working with a man and I disagree with him it is necessary that one of us should leave.

Mr. Lambert: And the other fellow would leave.

Mr. FOLEY: If I were employing men and knew that I was not getting the best results consequent on disagreement between two of them, and if I were not capable of judging which of the two was in the right, I would be unfit to have men in my charge. If the duplication is allowed to continue, it must prove extremely detrimental to the best interests of the State.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [8.15]: The House should have some explanation from the Minister regarding the appointment of the present assistant State Mining Engineer. I know that the appointment is not one for which the present Minister was responsible, but in some mysterious manner Mr. Blatchford has been taken from the Geological Department and appointed to the position of assistant State Mining Engineer. I understand that Mr. Blatchford is a geologist, and that he had been working on the field staff of the Geological Department for a considerable time. What particular qualifications the Minister may suggest the officer has to fill this new position, hon. members are at a loss to know. A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery,

but it is unnecessary for me to dilate upon it. If an assistant State Mining Engineer is required he should be a man who is possessed of the varying qualifications required to fit him for the position. I do not suggest that any hon. member is qualified to demonstrate the different branches of science and industry in which such an officer should be versed, to fit him for the position which he will presumably be called upon to fill at some later date, but I do hope the Minister will give the House some information on the question. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) made some reference to the Government Analyst, Mr. Mann. We should have set before us a clear idea of the duties of the various posts which Mr. Mann is called upon to fill. The hon. member said that he possessed a thousand times more knowledge on this subject than I did. He then proceeded to refer to the necessity for chemists in Western Australia. I fancy that if we had a chemist in this State possessing all the knowledge and ability to separate conceit from knowledge, the hon. member would get an awful shock, if anything at all could shock him.

The Minister for Works: How do you express that in a formula?

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know of any formula that would embrace the hon. member's qualifications. The Minister must know full well that the time has arrived when Mr. Mann's duties should be clearly defined. We should have a common sense assessment of his ability to fill the respective positions he now occupies. I believe he is a good analyst, and upon that score I have no desire to speak. He has certainly boxed the compass in the range of his investigations, and he has dabbled in all sorts of things, from alunite to pot-still whisky. Although the member for Leonora has only a crude knowledge of the subject, he did strike a half truth, as he invariably does.

Hon. P. Collier: He struck it accidentally.

Mr. LAMBERT: He stumbled over it, however, both in his manner of speech and in the matter of knowledge, just as he stumbles over most things. There has been a conflict of opinion between Mr. Mann, and the different chemists who have ventured to range their knowledge alongside his. I can instance the experiments carried out by the Mines Department in connection with alunite. After a considerable amount of experimental work, Dr. Simpson recommended the use of raw alunite direct to the soil with a certain addition of calcium carbonate as being soluble, or at all events sufficiently soluble, to justify its use as a fertiliser. I think these experiments cost between £1,000 and £1,500. By the expenditure of a two-penny stamp, I received from the Bureau of Mines in Utah, in the United States, considerably more information than has been obtained from the experiments. I do not blame the Minister for what occurred.

The Minister for Mines: Was it not an O.S. stamp?

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and it was money well spent. At the very moment when the Mines Department were experimenting in the calcination of alunite on the eastern goldfields, to test the solubility of potassium salts for use by the farmers, at Utah the Bureau of Science and Mines was engaged in making similar experiments.

The Minister for Mines: That shows that we were up to date.

Mr. LAMBERT: Not at all. I have not yet heard the results of the local experiments. I casually mentioned this to the present Minister when the idea of calcining alunite on the Eastern goldfields was first mooted. The Minister was right in having these experiments conducted if he thought he could not get the necessary data from some other part of the world. But his responsible officers should have known that important experiments, based upon the need for potassium salts for the soil were being conducted at that time, and by the expenditure of twopence could have obtained a considerable amount of data of great value.

The Minister for Mines: Why did you not advise us?

Mr. LAMBERT: I did say I thought it was a foolish act on the Minister's part to sanction the expenditure of any sum of money in calcining alunite on the Eastern goldfields. I am not finding fault, for probably he thought it would be right to give the experiment a trial, but if the course I have suggested had been followed, a sum of £1,000 or £1,500 could have been saved to the State. If these experiments were not being conducted elsewhere, the departmental officers would have been justified in recommending that they should be conducted here. This is one of the conflicting functions of Mr. Mann in which he differs from Dr. Simpson. Dr. Simpson has before him the data in connection with that experimental work, and he and his assistants have been making their own experiments regarding the solubility of potassium salts in alunite. After being applied to the soil, he has arrived at the conclusion that alunite in its raw state, with the addition of a little calcium carbonate is then readily accessible as a plant food. The seriousness of the position is that, after conducting these experiments for a period of several months at a cost of a considerable sum of money, Mr. Mann, in his capacity as the inspector of fertilisers, has disagreed with Dr. Simpson as to the solubility of the potash contents of alunite, and will not sanction this fertiliser to be registered. He is quite within his province in taking up that attitude under the Fertiliser Act. I blame the Minister for Agriculture for this position, because some 12 months or two years ago there was drafted an amendment to the Fertiliser Act which to a certain extent might have remedied the difficulty. That is not the only trouble affecting the mining industry of Western Australia. Alunite is not the only valuable constituent in this State

containing potassium salts, which are so essential for the soil. We have also great bodies of felspar and feldspathic material containing a large quantity of potassium salts, which would be most valuable as a plant food and fertiliser if they were only ground and applied almost as they naturally occur. If an industry of that kind were started, it would immediately be found that Mr. Mann possessed the full right under the Fertiliser Act to prevent its use in Western Australia, notwithstanding the fact that our lands are starving for the want of that necessary commodity. In our State departments we have the geological laboratory, and that attached to the office of Government Analyst and Inspector of Explosives, and we have another in the Railway Department under the railway chemist, all under separate jurisdiction. We should have some co-ordination and co-operation between these different departments. They should all be under one department and one head official.

The Minister for Mines: It is largely a question of housing.

Mr. LAMBERT: To a large extent, that is so. I think that if the Minister were to speak to the Minister for Works on the subject he would not fail to find some suitable accommodation for the housing of the Government laboratories.

The Minister for Mines: I will put the proposition to him.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister for Mines could give him carte blanche, and I am sure he would find a place that was suitable. It would not be the first time that the Minister for Works had shown his versatility. He did so before in connection with the civil service strike, when he acted as his own paymaster. If all the civil servants had ceased work I think he would have taken on the lathes at the State Implement Works. Surely he has sufficient versatility to find a suitable building in Western Australia for all our chemists. I hope a note will be made of this matter. Some little time ago, partly through departmental jealousy, there was a good deal of underground engineering with regard to the control of the sub-departments of Mines. We had on the one hand certain officers of the Mines Department proper fighting for the control of the entire department; and on the other hand we had the Geological Department demanding full control. No finality has ever been reached. For some time past a good deal of criticism has been levelled at the administration of the Mines Department. Most of the officers of that department, I believe, are doing their best; but until the entire department is placed under one head, the position cannot be satisfactory. If the State Mining Engineer is performing the functions he should be performing as State Mining Engineer, then he should have full and direct control of all the branches of our Mines Department. It is nonsensical for the Geological Department to contend for control. I hope the Minister will make

an endeavour to place all the ramifications of the department under one head. If the State Mining Engineer is not capable of taking control, this House and the country should be told of it.

The Minister for Mines: He is an excellent geologist.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not referring to Mr. Montgomery's qualifications in any particular branch of mining. Some time ago a section of the Mines Department recommended the establishment of an experimental plant in Kalgoorlie. Apparently a small experimental plant was put up at the School of Mines in Kalgoorlie, and this was a very commendable move. It is to be hoped that the students at the school will find the plant advantageous in their pursuit of that knowledge which is so essential in their calling.

The Minister for Mines: It should have been established at Coolgardie.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are undoubtedly many deposits of ore in this State which could be concentrated at the treatment plant erected in Coolgardie. In connection with that plant, let me say that the Chief Inspector of Batteries was sent all over Australia in order that he might gain sufficient knowledge to enable him to put up a concentrating plant. He could have written to the Eastern States and found out from the various Mines Departments there, at the cost of a twopenny stamp, all that he wanted to know. I contend that as Chief Inspector of Batteries he should have been in possession of sufficient data and information to design a plant suitable for the concentration of scheelite. However, the plant was designed and erected, and it treated two or three small parcels of scheelite ore. One parcel in particular was treated experimentally, and the extraction of scheelite was not very good; and I do not know that the owner of the parcel gained very much from having it treated experimentally by the Government. The plant cost £5,000 or £6,000; and I wish to point out that while there is perhaps not much scheelite in the district, a considerable quantity of molybdenite is to be found in this State, and that with some little alteration this plant could be utilised for experimental purposes.

Mr. Underwood: For experimenting on what?

Mr. LAMBERT: The recovery of molybdenite.

Mr. Underwood: There is no molybdenite there.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. I have seen molybdenite which would probably carry 15 or 20 per cent. However, of that matter I know little except from hearsay. The plant has all the power crushing and milling capacity necessary for experimental purposes. For example, practical experiments in connection with oil flotation could easily be made at that plant. I believe the big mines would contribute something to-

wards the cost of experiments with the oil flotation process. If the plant is ever going to be of any use to Western Australia, and if it is not required for scheelite, the responsible officer should find out whether there is any other ore deposit suitable for treatment at the plant. We have the rich corundum ores of the Kimberleys, which have never yet been tackled; and that mineral is worth £60 or £70 per ton after dressing. Again, there is the molybdenite. The plant is in a good central position, and in saying that I am not at all adopting a parochial view. I would never put forward the claims of Coolgardie on a parochial basis. The plant is situated in a central position, and readily accessible from the railway system of the State. Now let me revert to the experimental plant at the School of Mines in Kalgoorlie. Some few weeks ago I was told there that the school required, among other things, a small battery. At the very time the Kalgoorlie school was requiring this battery, the Director of the Perth Technical School, or some other person responsible, was clamouring to throw one out. It was, in fact, thrown out, and sent to the State Implement Works to be smashed up for scrap. Is not that so?

The Minister for Works. I believe that is correct.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and the battery must have cost £600 or £700.

Mr. Underwood: A three-stamp battery would be better scrapped.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly some people would be ungracious enough to think that that remark would apply to the hon. member interjecting. I hope the Minister for Mines will have inquiries made and ascertain who is responsible for the bungling in connection with this battery. If what the Kalgoorlie school required was a battery capable of crushing a little stone, and demonstrating in a practical way what can be done as regards experimenting with ores of a complex nature, the battery scrapped by the Perth Technical School was highly suitable for that purpose. Actually, while one school was sending out a requisition for the battery, another school was clamouring to have its battery smashed up for scrap. I bring this matter to the Minister's notice in the friendliest way, and not in a spirit of criticism. I take it the duty of a member of Parliament who knows of happenings of this description is to bring them before the Minister, so that he can bring to book the officers responsible. It is a great pity that the department is not of such a nature as to admit of absolute control by the Minister. I would like to see the Mines Department conduct a mining bank in the same way as the Agricultural Bank. The Mines Department should have a fund from which they could draw to purchase mining machinery of a suitable nature, which could be repaired in a depot and then sent out for

departmental use or for the use of prospectors.

Mr. Smith: de Bernales is doing that.

Mr. LAMBERT: Mr. de Bernales dislikes me, I know; and I like his dislike. Probably he will thank me for offering this suggestion, which, if adopted, would result in the saving of a considerable sum of money to the department and the prospectors. As regards the prospector who applies for assistance, he should be financed in much the same way as a settler on the land. Under present conditions the prospector who makes a find must immediately root out all the ore possible and send it to the nearest battery so that he may meet his financial obligations. The Minister knows as well as anyone that such a proceeding is unsound and unscientific. I contend that the Minister should have at his disposal a sum of money from which advances could be made to prospectors on sane, sound, commercial lines, to enable them to develop their mines until the stage is reached when the property is ready for an equipment of its own. That system would be infinitely preferable to the present slipshod fashion of financing prospectors. The Minister however, cannot adopt it until a fund is established.

The Minister for Mines: We are doing it.

Mr. LAMBERT: But not in the manner I suggest it should be done. If a prospector approached the Minister to-morrow and stated that he had discovered a payable reef or lode and wanted to go down a couple of hundred feet on it, the Government would not have the money to advance to enable him to do that.

The Minister for Mines: We have.

Mr. LAMBERT: Give me one instance.

The Minister for Mines: Phillips River.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister is referring to the smelting works.

The Minister for Mines: And some of the gold mines as well.

Mr. LAMBERT: Well I do not know of any.

The Minister for Mines: We are doing it every day.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister may be advancing money, but he is not doing it in a sufficiently big way to enable the policy to have a lasting benefit on the industry. The Minister should have at least a quarter of a million at his command and the moment a man had developed his property sufficiently to justify the Government sending a responsible officer to report on the property, the advance should be made if the report was favourable. It is only in this way that we can secure a continuity of operations so far as the mining industry is concerned.

The Minister for Mines: You ought to be made Minister for Mines in the next administration.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that that will bother me very much.

The Minister for Mines: You would want a sound policy; not one like that which you are advocating. At any rate I would not like to be the Treasurer.

Mr. LAMBERT: If there is to be a new administration next year that administration should do everything possible to assist in the fostering of every enterprise.

The Minister for Mines: Are you making a policy speech on behalf of your leader?

Hon. P. Collier: We will do all things necessary.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and leave it at that.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no need to specify.

Mr. LAMBERT: We will put forward an attractive policy, one that will absolutely astound the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member we are discussing the Mines Estimates.

Mr. LAMBERT: No one appreciates the resources of the State better than hon. members on this side of the House, and if we embark on any big developmental scheme it will be done on sound lines, and on lines that will command the support of right thinking people.

Mr. Smith: Why did you not do it when you had the opportunity?

Mr. LAMBERT: We are Scotch you know, and there is no harm in thinking the matter over. We have in Western Australia, ports on our Western coast that lend themselves by their situation to the exploitation of our varying mineral resources. We have Geraldton which claims that we should erect lead smelting works in its vicinity.

Mr. Hudson: Is that part of your policy, too?

Mr. LAMBERT: The leader of the Opposition will refer to matters of policy.

The Minister for Mines: You then are only the spinning jenny, a sort of side show.

Mr. LAMBERT: A good claim can be advanced for the erection of smelters at Geraldton provided the matter of fuel can be satisfactorily got over, and if so, there is no reason why the resources of that district should not then be smelted on the spot.

The Minister for Mines: Why did you not establish your chemical works up there?

Mr. LAMBERT: They would not be sufficiently near to the resources we are exploiting. Possibly within 12 months our company will be utilising the port of Geraldton to the extent of 50,000 tons a year.

The Minister for Mines: Only exporting material; what about treating it there?

Mr. LAMBERT: If the Minister will show sufficient interest in the treatment of that ore, we may be ready to discuss the matter with him.

The Minister for Mines: You are pretty warm; you want us to do the job for you.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not, further than is absolutely essential. But I can assure the Minister that I will not trouble him to a great extent. A claim can be made for the smelting of lead at Geraldton. I know that

the Minister has at the back of his head the question of establishing big metallurgical works, and every member who is conversant with the mineral resources close to the coast of Western Australia, will agree that the time has arrived when we can no longer afford to continue to give tiddlely-winking encouragement to the mining industry. A comprehensive policy should be carried out in connection with the utilisation of the raw products of the State, and what should weigh with the departmental heads is the resources and the position of the respective ports such as Bunbury, Fremantle, and Geraldton.

The Minister for Mines: What is wrong with Albany?

Mr. LAMBERT: I understand there are ores in that district that could be turned to commercial use. I would like to say a few words about the iron deposits which exist at Yampi Sound. Not only have we those valuable deposits there, but similar deposits exist in places like Mt. Victoria outside of Southern Cross, where there are millions of tons of iron ore suitable for smelting. If the present Government are going to remain in control, a comprehensive policy should be advanced for the establishment of iron and steel works in Western Australia, for after all, such works are the key of our future prosperity. The Government should make a serious attempt to establish big secondary industries in the State. At the present time the majority of those who constitute the Mitchell Government look upon the establishment of secondary industries in an unfavourable light.

The Minister for Works: Not a bit of it.

Mr. LAMBERT: Did not the Government announce from the house-tops that at the first opportunity they would sell the trading concerns?

The Minister for Mines: The trading concerns are not all secondary industries. At any rate it is unkind of you to make such a statement when the Government assisted you to establish a secondary industry.

Mr. LAMBERT: I mean that secondary industries should be directly or indirectly established by the Government.

The Minister for Works: Selling the trading concerns does not mean closing them down.

Mr. LAMBERT: Some of the trading concerns are secondary industries. Take the brickworks and the timber mills as an example.

The Minister for Mines: What about them?

Mr. LAMBERT: The announced policy of the Government was that they would sell those works at the first opportunity.

The Minister for Works: They could not be taken out of Western Australia.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not care whether secondary industries are established directly, or by way of subsidy, I prefer that they should be State enterprises. But I do say that a serious attempt should be made to establish steel and iron works in the State.

We have at Collie an almost unlimited supply of coal.

The Minister for Mines: What are you going to do with it?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is certainly not of a kind that is suitable for coke, but it would be suitable for the generation of electricity on a large scale at the pit's mouth, and current could be sent to Bunbury for its proper utilisation. There are 20 different industries that could be immediately established if we had a big scheme of power generation at the pit's mouth, and if we could send current to the nearest port.

The Minister for Mines: It could not be generated any cheaper than we are doing now at East Perth.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are large quantities of waste coal and slacks that are not utilised at the present time. The member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) has informed me that the quantity runs into between 50,000 and 60,000 tons per annum. This should be turned into electric energy to enable us to start secondary industries.

The Minister for Mines: We are producing current cheaper than any State in Australia. Why is that not used?

Mr. LAMBERT: Why does not the Minister encourage people to use it? Let us see what some of the essential industries are that should be established in Western Australia. Take the fixation of nitrogen. When war broke out Germany found that she had a paltry few thousand tons of Chilian nitrate with which to make explosives. What did she do? Did she fly the white flag? She started off to develop her own fixation of nitrogen industry which is so essential in Australia to-day. One of the greatest possible blots on the Federal administration to-day is the fact that they have not tackled this all-important question. We talk about military training and the defence of our country, but if we have not the explosives at the critical moment we are absolutely helpless. What have the Federal Government done? Have they shown the slightest disposition to profit by the experience of the war? Let me read an extract from an article published in the "Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering"—

One of the most far-reaching achievements of the German War Ministry was the development of the nitrogen industry. While Germany before the war was obliged to import something like 100,000 tons of nitrogen a year in order to meet the requirements of her agriculture and industries amounting to 220,000 tons per year, she is now able to meet her greatly increased demands solely from domestic manufacture. Before the war there was produced in Germany each year in coke ovens, gas plants, and other by-product installations, a total of 120,000 tons of nitrogen. The nitrogen plants built during the war for the production of lime nitrogen and ammonia when completed will be in a position to produce about 380,000 tons of nitrogen per year, so that the total

yearly production will amount to over 300,000 tons of nitrogen.

That is what Germany had to do when at war with Great Britain and practically with the rest of the world. It may possibly be thought that the fixation of nitrogen has no significance for Australia. The very fact that the Germans were able to do this and to produce munitions of war at a time when they were passing through such a terrible ordeal, means that the production of 500,000 tons of lime nitrogen per annum increases the productivity of the soil of Germany twofold. She has her domestic supply for all time, and if she were confronted with the necessity for going to war again, she would not be dependent upon Chili or any other portion of the world. A steel ring could be put round Germany and she would be self-contained. Is it to be thought that that position has been arrived at by men who have shown a callous indifference to the industries that our civilisation depends upon? Many an Australian industry depends, in the first instance, upon the establishment of this very important industry. What is required to establish it? There are hundreds of thousands of tons of coal at Collie, vast quantities which will never be exploited probably within the next 500 years. Almost immeasurable beds of coal are there, suitable for the production of electrical energy. At Lake Clifton we have vast deposits of calcium carbonate, which is highly suitable for industrial purposes, and this is a most significant thing not only for the State but for the Commonwealth as a whole. It means that we have lime suitable for all our industries for numberless years, and if the Commonwealth Government do not intend to establish the nitrogen industry to take advantage of these deposits, the State should step in and do so. It is all very well for Ministers to say: "This is another State enterprise." Even conservative Great Britain, the vast dollar-exploited America, and almost every civilised country of the world, have made this a national monopoly. Only the other day Great Britain handed over to Messrs. Brunner Mond & Co., under the strict supervision of commissioners, her big lime nitrogen plant, established during the war. Even the establishment of such a plant on a small scale would give Western Australia not only adequate supplies for cyanide production, but for the manufacture of explosives required in Australia. There is no other State in the Commonwealth which, by virtue of such vast resources, is in so unique a position, enabling the establishment of these all-important industries. We have certainly many other mineral resources that could be utilised. We have hundreds of thousands of tons of magnesite. Only a few days ago I applied for the forfeiture of several mineral leases at Bulong, and they are now open for exploiting. That is an industry the Government could establish in Western Australia. This product is required

in connection with the Bessemer steel furnaces, and is used in the inner lining. At Guildford, electric steel furnaces are being put up, and the whole of the magnesite necessary will be produced in the State. The whole of the artificial flooring which will be put into the new post office buildings, will be drawn from magnesite produced in Western Australia. At the present time it is only produced in a trivial manner. Western Australia has deposits of a magnitude sufficient to establish an industry worth half a million per annum. Magnesite supplies are also drawn from New South Wales, but in Western Australia we have at Bulong resources which are ten times greater than those existing in any other part of the Commonwealth. Yet to-day the whole of this valuable deposit lies idle.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot do very much with it yet, you know; we want population.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes, and industries to absorb population.

The Minister for Mines: But we have to get the population first.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Minister should not get it into his head that I am criticising him in connection with this important matter. As a matter of fact, the Administration is not so much to blame as the disloyal attitude of many business people in the State. Let me give one instance in which a big firm in Perth was concerned. I said a little while ago that we have hundreds of thousands of tons of magnesite in Western Australia. I went to this firm and informed them that we could produce quantities of this article for which they were paying £70 per ton, and asked them if they would buy from us if we produced it. The firm requested a sample. I asked them whether they would know a sample if they saw it. As a matter of fact, I do not think they would have known the difference between a sample of magnesite from this State and a sample of the article they sold. It should not be a question of a sample, but whether it was suitable. To test that, it was only necessary to apply heat. The firm afterwards informed me that they were unable to do anything as it would interfere with their commercial interests. That was an experience with one of the biggest firms in the State, yet such men go to the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Manufactures and so on, and there wail about the amount of taxation the State Government requires them to pay. For my part, I would tax them out of the commercial life of the country, disloyal creatures that they are. People of this type should be classed alongside the I.W.W., and it would be well to throw them all out of the country.

Mr. Teesdale: Hear, hear!

Mr. LAMBERT: Then again, let us consider the vast salt deposits we have in Western Australia. The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) will appreciate this aspect

of the question, I know, for he controls some of these deposits. Three years ago I submitted particulars—I was not interested other than in getting the particulars—to the then Minister, showing the possibilities of the establishment of alkali works in Western Australia for the electrolytic generation of caustic soda and other allied products. I submitted the same particulars to experts in America, giving them the cost of labour, details regarding the salt, its value and so on, and these experts showed me that it would return practically 100 per cent. on the capital outlay. Yet nothing has been done here despite the fact that we have salt lakes where the deposits are equal to the requirements not only of Western Australia but of the whole of Australia. Care should be taken to foster the industry and yet nothing has been done. Let us see what South Australia has done. In an article I read, it stated—

Towards the end of 1918 a committee, consisting of representatives of Australian chemical firms working in conjunction with the Bureau of Science and Industries, prosecuted inquiries concerning the possibilities of successfully establishing the alkali industry in Australia. The committee visited different parts of the Commonwealth to inspect suggested sites for works, but nothing tangible arose out of its inquiries. Meanwhile, however, other interests were at work on the subject of alkali production in Australia.

The article goes on to state that as a result of these further inquiries, the Standard Salt Company of Australia are spending £75,000 on the establishment of electrolytic works to treat the salt in that State.

The Minister for Mines: When Brunner Mond gets going, you will not know that those people are in existence.

Mr. LAMBERT: If 50 Brunner Mond's started, the Standard Company will have their plant going still. They can compete with any other large firm.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, but not of the same magnitude.

Mr. LAMBERT: Personally, I hope Brunner Mond will start.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate, we should not interfere at the present time. They should have a chance.

Mr. LAMBERT: The manufacture of caustic soda is only one of the many ramifications of the industry that Brunner Mond will enter into if they establish works in Western Australia. It does no harm at any rate to draw attention to these big deposits which can be utilised for our requirements. There is another interesting feature, for it shows the unique position possessed by Bunbury, as the natural centre for the production of cheap power and distribution thence for utilisation in connection with industry. I believe that Bunbury, from a geographical standpoint, is admirably situated for this purpose. As I said previously, I believe we would be justified in launching a scheme to metallurgically

treat the whole of our raw materials. I understand that this question is engaging the attention of the Minister. It has been considered in a sort of academic way in the Mines Department, and I think the Minister must be alive to the necessity for putting up central metallurgical works not only to deal with copper and lead but also the other ores and minerals we have in this State. Take the position at Northampton in connection with galena. It is most suitable for making white lead. The ore required for the Tasmanian electrolytic works is taken from Northampton and sent to Tasmania, and we have to buy our white lead back from there. We could do just as well, and buy our white lead just as cheaply, if we utilised our galena here as in Tasmania.

The Minister for Mines: So we will here.

Mr. LAMBERT: Where?

The Minister for Mines: At West Guildford.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is an electric smelter there. An electrolytic plant is a different thing altogether.

Mr. Treasdale: They are quite different plants.

The Minister for Mines: They are not carrying on smelting there only.

Mr. LAMBERT: I think I know what they are going in for, because I am supplying some of the material for them. I know it is not an electrolytic plant. I hope that they do utilise their plant there to show the possibilities of electric lead smelting in this State. There is a lead smelter operating in Fremantle at the present time, but I do not think that the firm there would say that the plant is other than out of date and expensive to operate, and further, that the prospectors are not getting that return from the ore which they would get if a modern smelter were established in Western Australia. I hope the Minister for Mines will actively engage the attention of those under his control in dealing with these problems that I have mentioned. It is pleasing to note that Portland cement works are to be established on the Clifton lime deposits. I think that the valuable nature of the lime deposits in the Swan River should also be made known. If we were to produce three or four times the quantity of Portland cement which the present company can make, it could all be sold in Western Australia, or at all events in other parts of Australia. There again lies a unique opportunity for starting a big industry. All the constituents required are to be found in the Swan River in hundreds of thousands of tons.

Mr. Hardwick: We could supply the algae for it.

Mr. LAMBERT: Two or three years ago a proposition was put up to the House for a concession to dredge the Swan River for the shell and sludge to make Portland cement. However, it was thought that it would pollute or in other ways interfere

with the river. Hon. members would be foolish to take that view of it, for while serving to establish a big industry, it would also improve the river. I believe this will be one of the big key industries that will engage the attention of an advanced political party in the near future. Even if it is not tackled straight away, the time must come when, by the very force of public opinion, assistance will have to be provided, either by subsidy or by bonus, for the encouragement of this industry. However, for the moment I am not concerned about that; rather am I concerned about these great unworked resources that would mean so much to Western Australia. I believe that every member is fired with enthusiasm to see Western Australia go ahead. It is only by the constant advertising of those resources, not merely on the floor of the House, but by a regular campaign throughout the country, that we can attract capital to exploit them and cut off those money grubs in the Eastern States that have for so long held us in a financial stranglehold. We get members like the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) who fancy that we should throw down our fiscal barriers and allow our markets to be exploited by outsiders. Then we have other hon. members who question our attitude towards the Federal Government and the influence that Government have had on our finances. Possibly the influence of that Government upon our finances has not been as great as the influence of our own criminal indifference to our resources. If the State Government proposed to-morrow to spend two or three millions in the establishment of industries in the State, we should then be showing a commercial activity which we have never yet displayed. I contend that we ought to manifest an appreciation of what we have, advertise it to the world, show that we are prepared to attract capital, and explain what possibility capital has of succeeding in this State. I trust that before we are much older many of our valuable resources, which have been for so long left untouched, will be worked. The Government would do well to come forward with some comprehensive policy for developing our neglected resources. I hope that, roughly on the lines I have indicated, some little assistance will be given to the mining industry. I trust that, instead of the prospector being exploited by the machinery merchant, something will be done to assist him. The question of the safety of the miners has been fairly well debated, and therefore it is unnecessary for me to say anything more on the subject. I hope the points I have touched upon will engage the attention of the Minister and that by co-operation and advice our departmental heads will do something to encourage the working of our valuable mineral resources. It is stupid to keep our professional heads in their respective offices instead of letting them get outside to see what

the world is doing. I do not wish to particularise unnecessarily. I am not setting one officer above another, but I believe that we have in Dr. Simpson, of the Geological Department, a man who has shown practical sympathy with the development of our mineral resources. There are other excellent officers, some of them attached to the School of Mines in Kalgoorlie, but they are all unfairly handicapped by being kept at home when they should be sent abroad to investigate.

The Minister for Mines: What has become of the twopenny stamp?

Mr. LAMBERT: It is all very well for the Minister to treat the matter lightly.

The Minister for Mines: But a little while ago you suggested that we could do all that is necessary with a twopenny stamp.

Mr. LAMBERT: I suggested nothing of the sort. I said that, with valuable experiments going on in America, we should not be conducting similar experiments here when a twopenny stamp would bring us all the necessary information. I would not in the slightest degree discount the work of our officers; I only say that we should not carry out unnecessary experiments. There is very necessary experimental work to be done in Western Australia, and in addition there is the cataloguing of the whole of the mineral resources of the State to be carried out. With efficient officers having the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge, we should be doing something to advertise and utilise our very valuable mineral resources, which would mean so much to advance the financial and commercial interests of Western Australia.

[Mr. Munsie took the Chair.]

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [9.23]: I congratulate the hon. member on his interesting speech, and I suggest to my friends opposite that if they again come into power they should place him at the head of the Mines Department, and supply him with a few million pounds to spend, in the hope that he will give a fresh impetus to the industry. I shall be glad if the Minister, when replying to the debate, explains the position in regard to boring for coal on the Irwin River.

The Minister for Mines: I think you had better leave that alone.

Mr. MALEY: Possibly from the point of view of the department it ought to be left alone. There is a general feeling throughout the district that no proper investigation was made before the actual boring operations were commenced, that the boring plant was simply loaned to a prospector working there for a small Kalgoorlie syndicate, and that no investigation was made by any officer of the department. I understand it was never expected to find anything before the bore reached 800 feet, and that the bore is not yet down to anything like that depth. There

can be no doubt that the coal is there. As to its value, that can only be proved by boring. The district is entitled to an explanation as to what has actually been done and as to whether any proper investigation was made before the boring operations began.

Mr. Smith: What was the angle of the underlay?

Mr. MALEY: The angle of the underlay of the hon. member's mind would be far more interesting. The feeling throughout the district is that the boring has not been given a proper trial, and I should like the Minister to make a clear explanation as to the progress of the work.

The Minister for Mines: Why did not some of you protest when the boring was commenced?

Mr. MALEY: The general feeling in the district is that, owing to the fact that the coal deposits are surrounded by concessions to the Midland Railway Company, the boring will not get a fair trial. It was interesting this afternoon to hear that a geological survey bulletin in connection with the Northampton district was issued as far back as 1902 or 1903. I do not think that up to that time sufficient work had been done in the district to furnish satisfactory data for a geological survey. The developments during the past 15 or 16 years in other parts of the district would give much more satisfactory data. I am pleased to know that the Minister intends to bring the geological survey of the district up to date. The Minister, when in Geraldton recently, was approached on the subject of the establishment of smelting works. It is gratifying to learn that he still maintains an open mind on the question.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think you can close it?

Mr. MALEY: I do not know. It may be that my mind is closed because, naturally, I wish to see the works established in my own electorate. It is only reasonable to hope that we shall get a fair deal in this connection. There are several factors which have a bearing upon the opening up of the port of Geraldton, and this is one of them which we cannot afford to overlook. If we can get freezing works, smelting works and, eventually, grain elevators established at Geraldton, the port will then be coming into the consideration which it deserves. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) said that in connection with a new venture north of Meekatharra, he and his company would probably be sending anything up to 50,000 tons of manganese ore per annum through the port of Geraldton, if shipping arrangements could be completed. I shall not occupy any further time because I realise that the bona fide mining representatives on the Opposition side of the House are entitled to ventilate their views regarding the industry. I am pleased to say that the mining industry in my district is in full swing once more,

and we are hoping that it will progress and develop into a tremendously big industry.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [9.31]: The Minister, in introducing his Estimates, referred to the lack of labour on the mines. There are several reasons to account for this. Large numbers of miners enlisted and many of them, unfortunately, never returned. Others again have gone into different walks of life. Among other causes is the low rate of wages ruling on the Eastern goldfields, a rate which is not attractive to men to seek a livelihood in the mines. Some of the men left the deep mines for the new fields 12 months ago. Many of them I know personally. Since the Hampton Plains boom subsided, some of these men have returned to the Boulder district, and it is remarkable how their health improved during the few months they were working in the shallow mines in the Hampton Plains district. Some of these men are quite afraid to return to work in the deep mines. They realise the danger of working in mines at a depth of over 3,000 feet and in the wide stopes, and only economic pressure will compel them to return to the deep mines after having had a spell out of them. There is the additional fear of contracting miners' phthisis, not only underground but amongst the dry crushing plants. I have a list of the accidents which have occurred in the mines during the years 1901 to 1918 inclusive. In 1901 there were 45 fatal and 123 serious accidents; in 1918 there were 23 fatal and 542 serious accidents. Whereas in 1901, 16,755 men were employed, in 1918 only 7,790 men were employed. The total number of accidents for the years 1901 to 1918 was 597 fatal and 8,096 serious accidents. These figures convey some idea of the risks and dangers to which the men employed in the mining industry are exposed. I believe that the Minister and the departmental officials are seized with the necessity for taking every possible precaution to minimise the dangers. The Minister, in referring to cases of miners' phthisis, inferred that many of the men left it too late before deciding to quit the industry. There are large numbers of miners who enjoy apparently good health up to a certain point, but when they finally go into the sanatorium, it is found that the disease has reached such an advanced stage that there is very little chance of their recovery. When I first entered the House I spoke of the urgency of instituting some scheme for miners on the lines of the repatriation scheme adopted by the Commonwealth Government in the interests of returned soldiers. It is absolutely necessary that the Government should do something in this direction. There should be an annual inspection of miners in order that timely warning might be given them of the state of their lungs, which inspection should go hand in hand with a scheme for settling these men on the land or in other avocations. I wish to direct attention to the paper which was read by Dr. Mitchell,

of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, at the recent health conference. His remarks bear out what has been said in this House on many occasions and, coming from such an authority as he, they are worthy of being recorded in "Hansard." On the subject of the occurrence of tuberculous disease in miners, Dr. Mitchell said—

Out of 1,738 cases of respiratory diseases treated at Wooroloo since its opening in May, 1915, there were 432 miners, 788 males in other occupations and 518 females. There were many of the 788 labelled as "other occupations," however, who had been previously engaged in mining. When we consider that the majority of these men should have been in their prime instead of, as in most instances, at death's door, or advanced in fibrotic disease, superimposed tuberculosis, and bankrupt in reserve strength or recuperative power, surely it is time something was done to save them from themselves by preventing them from continuing to work in an industry when they have reached a certain stage. Here my claim of the misfit is obvious. The man becomes of no use to himself, his employer, the community, and last, but not least, his wife and family. It is not sufficient to give his family or himself a dose of relief when he should never have been permitted to get to the stage he has reached. Some will tell you it is the man's own fault, that he should not continue. But if he knows nothing else, where is his outlet? In my annual report I recommended that vocational training synchronous with work in the mining industry should be practised, and if what is looming on the horizon—a 44-hour week—ensues, surely this is practicable. It does not seem good business to wait until there is a breakdown in health. Let us then consider from a public health point of view the treatment of tuberculosis. Firstly: Safeguard the dangers of the predisposing causes; and secondly, ensure facilities for early diagnosis and treatment. I am no advocate for institution or sanatorium life. I say life advisedly, for by the time they are sent to the State Sanatorium, in the majority of cases, they have passed the stage of so-called cure. Failing compulsory sanatorium treatment, then free treatment at home, under supervision, the same as for venereal disease; careless consumptives not observing conditions to be compulsorily segregated, maintenance of families, insurances, etc., to be carried out; vocational training for consumptives fit to work. We in Australia talk at present a lot about the creation of industries. Then let us, with the benefit of the experience of others, see that health conditions are rigidly created and conserved in the best possible way. A high wage with plenty of spending silver is not everything. Nations which will not hawk on the public

health of their people cannot expect their material finances to prosper or balance. I cannot see any hope of dealing with the public health aspect of tuberculosis unless sympathetic and generous legislation is introduced and carried out. Any of us may become the accidents of this disease. Why not insure against it by avoiding predisposing causes, and let us help misfits or those in a vicious circle. We must have insurance whereby a patient having been put on to the road of permanent health, does not return to his previous position in a vicious circle. Legislation, however, which is oppressive against the sufferers must defeat its own ends.

I hope the Government will give serious attention to this matter and will not be content merely to talk about it. They should get down to business and see whether something tangible cannot be done to preserve to the State the lives of these men. It would be an economic advantage to the State if the Government brought down some concrete proposition to deal with this question in a sensible manner. There are numbers of miners who have suffered the loss of limbs in the mines. I have in mind one individual who has lost both legs. I refer to Dawson, who is known to the Minister. Many years ago he met with an accident. The artificial legs with which he was provided have worn out, and it is necessary to him to procure a new pair. He thought that he might be able to obtain them from the Defence Department artificial limb factory, but it seems that they refuse to supply anyone outside returned soldiers. If the Government made representations to the Commonwealth they might be able to arrange for these disabled industrial soldiers to be supplied also. This man is prepared to pay for them. If he has to go to Melbourne, it will cost him about £40 to procure the artificial limbs over and above the expenses of the trip. The Government should endeavour to help such men in order to avoid the unnecessary expense of travelling to Melbourne and back. I had intended to deal with several other matters, but as the hour is late I shall refer to only one or two. I wish to again speak of the deep boring at the north end, where there has been a good development at Mayman Cools within the last few days. If the Government undertook deep boring in this particular centre, I feel confident that new finds would be discovered. Seeing that it is so close to the Kalgoorlie railway, this would be particularly beneficial to the State. The Government should assist in every possible way the people to carry on deep boring in this part. The tributary question was dealt with extensively last evening, and I shall not touch on it beyond saying that if a Bill is introduced, I should like it to include a provision that tributors should receive the amount of wages ruling in the district before any royalty is deducted from the value of their pro-

duction. The Minister referred to Mr. Ives as a very old prospector. It might be of some information to him to know that Mr. Ives has been travelling through the auriferous belts of our back country for the last 25 years, and that he has kept a diary of his travels. I had the pleasure of reading the diary kept during the trip when he discovered St. Ives, and it made very interesting reading. I think it would be well worth while if the Mines Department got somebody to collaborate with Mr. Ives and put that information into book form for the benefit of the people of this State. I think he would be only too willing to place it at the disposal of the Government. If the remainder of the diary is as interesting and contains as much information as the portion I have read, it will be of value not only to the Government but to every prospector. I hope that the report of the supervisor of Government batteries on the St. Ives district will be favourable. I know the possibilities of that district. If a battery is installed it will assist some of the poorer men who have promising mines there, but who do not know when they will be provided with crushing facilities. If the Government do decide to instal a battery there at once it will take some months before it is in operation. If it were known that the Government intended to erect the battery there, it would prove a flip to the work in the district. In my opinion the district promises to be almost another Golden Mile. I hope the Minister will give the question his sympathetic consideration.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [9.47]: I am sorry that more interest is not being taken by hon. members in these Estimates. I am also struck by the fact that the newly formed Primary Producers' Association, which has branched out so as to cover every primary industry in the State, is not represented in the Chamber to-night.

The Minister for Mines: They leave it entirely in my hands.

Mr. TROY: The Minister is present because he is obliged to be here to handle his own Estimates. The interest that this new party takes in the mining industry is truly remarkable.

Mr. Teesdale: Judging from the empty benches they are pretty broad in their ideas.

Mr. TROY: I appreciate the handicap with which the Minister is faced in his administration of this industry. Of all the industries in the State the mining industry is most sadly embarrassed by present conditions, and has been most embarrassed throughout the war. Neither the Minister nor the department has been able to further the interests of the industry in the way that we should have liked. The fact that this industry is so sadly hampered to-day is a reason why the Government should afford to it some generous consideration. Particularly is this so in view of the importance of the industry

to the State, and the great importance it has been to us in the past. Despite what has been said about agriculture and other industries, it is a fact that were the bottom to fall out of the mining industry, Western Australia would be shaken to its foundations. I regret that, although the Press of the State can find room for the verbatim accounts of pressmen who accompany Ministers to the agricultural districts, regarding what is being done in those localities and the birth of new ideas for the still further development of the agricultural industry, very little regard is paid to mining. It is a notorious fact that the "West Australian," the leading newspaper of the State, pays but scant attention to this industry. If we turn to the back page of that newspaper we may find an extract from the "Kalgoorlie Miner" or some other country journal with reference to, say, some mine at Hampton Plains. A prospectors' conference was recently held at Mt. Magnet. There were present at this conference a number of men who had been engaged in the industry for upwards of 25 years. Not one representative of the metropolitan Press was present, and I have no recollection of ever seeing any of the resolutions submitted to the Minister there or his replies published in any metropolitan newspaper.

The Minister for Mines: They were.

Mr. TROY: I did not see them. The "West Australian" had nothing to say upon the matter, and yet we are asked to believe that this is a national newspaper having at heart the interest of every industry in the State. Let the Premier go to Lake Grace, Wyallcote, or Benjabbering, and his every word is reported in the paper.

Hon. P. Collier: And it is kept up for a week.

Mr. TROY: His very conversation is reported. We are told that the wisdom of a dozen Solomons is expressed by him and conveyed to the readers of that journal. The whole attention of the pressmen accompanying him is given to listening to scraps of conversation in the expectation of the discovery of some new idea. I remember reading in the Press the other day the account of a discussion which took place in the train between the Premier and the Commissioner for the Wheat Belt (Mr. Sutton). They were discussing the value of second or third class land, and as to what should be done with it. The pressman, with both ears strained, was listening to grasp the brilliant idea. He heard Mr. Sutton say, "Grow oats; feed it off." To the Pressman this was indeed a brilliant conception. That unfortunate pressman was not aware that the settlers of this country have been following out that idea for the past ten years. Whilst I admit that attention should be given to every industry, I regret that the mining industry, which has made so prosperous the Press of the State, receives so little consideration from it.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier is at Narrogin. Look out for the next few days.

Mr. TROY: The Minister has drawn attention to the importance to this State of the mining industry. Apart from dividends amounting to £27,000,000, the gold mines of the State have been responsible for an expenditure within the country, in wages and on commodities required in connection with the industry, of £114,000,000. This is a remarkable sum, and it has been the means of laying the foundations of the agricultural industry. It has also led to the foundation of the pastoral industry. Notwithstanding the present prosperity of the pastoralists, there are some who were obliged to struggle for years on the Murchison until the advent of the mining industry. The best market the agriculturist and the pastoralist has is the goldfields market, where the people who are engaged in the production of gold have to buy everything they require for their everyday needs. I am not concerned about the loss of £500,000 on the State batteries system in a period of 25 years, when one compares that loss with the loss on the railways in one year of £400,000, £300,000 of which is debited to the agricultural industry. The loss on the State batteries system does not amount to much when we consider the loss incurred to the State on other industries, on which by far the greater portion of our loan revenue is being expended. I have nothing to say against the expenditure on the agricultural industry, but I do object to this everlasting reproach that the State batteries are losing propositions, and the statement that the mining industry cannot be helped for the reason that this or that system does not pay. I listened with interest to the speech of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert). It was a brilliant speech from a technical standpoint, but I think we should require to be possessed of Brewster's millions to put into effect every suggestion made in it. I am fully aware of the extensive mineral resources of Western Australia. If we had a population of 5,000,000 we could do all these things and properly develop the State, and would of course have a much larger local market for our products. Much as I want to see the mining industry go ahead, I would not say that the Minister was justified in spending millions of money on the prospect of creating industries, to maintain which the population is altogether too small.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot establish them without the population.

Mr. TROY: We should not be pessimistic about the industry. The Mines Department should be just as optimistic regarding the future of the mining industry as are the officers of the Agricultural Department regarding their particular industry, and I do not say they are not. The officials of the Mines Department have been criticised to-night, but I have always found them most courteous and obliging and up to date in all matters that I have brought under their

notice. I have frequently interviewed the Under Secretary and other officers of the department on subjects affecting my constituents, and on every occasion I have met with most sympathetic consideration. I speak of them as I find them. Possibly some men do get tired in their positions and get a feeling that the industry is going down without their being able to help it. If such an impression gets abroad there will be no enthusiasm in the service.

Hon. P. Collier: Their positions are more difficult than those of officers in other departments. They have a more anxious time of it than the others.

Mr. TROY: There is no question about that. In other industries nature comes to their aid. The agricultural or the pastoral industry may be in a bad way this year, but next year may see it right again. This does not hold good so far as the mining industry is concerned, and that is all the more reason why the department should be optimistic as to the future. I hope when the Loan Estimates are brought down they will provide a sum of money to assist the development of mining in the direction of opening up new fields. I place great reliance on the State battery system. I hold the opinion that the person who has been engaged in elementary mine development has been more assisted by the State battery system than any other. When the Minister for Mines was at Mt. Magnet recently many matters were brought under his notice, the great majority of which were associated with the management, control and charges of that system. I was pleased that the Minister received the representations of the conference in the way he did. I realised at the time that probably the Minister could not grant all the requests, although some of them in my opinion, were essential, particularly that as to the charge for treatment of sands. I went to Magnet prior to the Minister's visit and told the delegates appointed to wait on him, "Get down to bed-rock; do not ask for impossible things." To my mind the Minister dealt as fairly as he could with the delegates at that meeting, and I think they appreciated it. This brings me to the fact that the Minister's visit to the Murchison was the first visit paid by a Minister to that district for about six years. That is wrong. If Ministers can find time, as they do every week, to journey to other places, they ought to visit the goldfields. Apart from the actual good resulting from such visits, Ministers have the advantage of coming into personal contact with the men who are pioneering the industry and of having a good heart to heart talk with them. I consider that the Minister for Mines ought to pay a yearly visit to the goldfields. He has a car at his disposal, and to pay a yearly visit would not be very hard. Every week some member of this Government is to be found in the agricultural districts meeting the settlers and inquiring into their grievances and showing the agriculturists that the Government take an in-

terest in their welfare. One matter discussed at that Magnet conference and agreed to by the Minister I have not yet seen in operation. I know that various matters discussed there have been put into practical operation, but the establishment of advisory boards in connection with assistance to mining in various localities I have not yet heard anything of. The conference was held on the 7th September, and it is due from the Minister to put the principle of advisory boards into operation at the first opportunity. What embarrasses the mining industry to-day is, in my opinion, the high cost of production; and some of this high cost is due to the high railway rates. I was surprised to learn the other day that, despite the promise given by the Minister, railway rates had again been increased on those commodities which are required in gold production. I think that is deplorable. When the Committee remembers that the value of gold is fixed, that all the commodities required in gold production must be carried over hundreds of miles of railways, and that the people engaged in the gold mining industry do not, like the agriculturists and pastoralists, share in the increased prices of the commodities produced, members must recognise that some consideration is required by the goldfields in the matter of railway rates. When the farmers of this country were in trouble and made demands for Government assistance, I said, "The need of the farmers is greatest now, and their demands should be met." I am convinced, despite the apparent sympathetic interest of the Minister, that the Government have not taken up that attitude. With regard to the increased railway freights, I cannot excuse the Minister for Mines. I think the freights should be so arranged as to press least heavily on that portion of the community which lives in the most remote areas of the State, and the industry of which is sadly handicapped by heavy burdens and cannot exist if those burdens are increased. That is the chief difficulty as regards the mining industry to-day. Another matter is the question of wages in the industry. As a fact, the lowest wage provided by the railway award is higher than that received by the miners working in some places underground. The Arbitration Court, to which men are told they must go, is always prepared to give an increase to civil servants, apparently because the Government can tax to raise the amount of the increase. On the other hand, the court refuses to increase wages in the industry which is the worst in the country from a health point of view. I am amazed at the fact that the Arbitration Court insists in connection with the mining industry on a condition which would be considered most unfair in connection with a Government industry. The Arbitration Court considers it an improper thing for the miners to ask for paid holidays, but in connection with the Railway Depart-

ment the court considers such a demand entirely proper, and similarly in connection with private businesses, where the increased cost can be passed on. In connection with the mining industry, which I now do not advise anyone to enter, which I now advise everybody to get out of, the court considers that a decent wage cannot be borne. The result is that the condition of the men working in that industry is to-day the worst in Australia. I do not make these statements in order to inflame the miners. I do not wish to play up to any section. I am making these statements dispassionately and calmly and deliberately, because I believe them to be absolutely correct. The men engaged in the industry which is the most detrimental from a health standpoint to be found in Western Australia to-day, are placed in the worst position to-day by the Arbitration Court. As a result the mining industry is not attractive to the men, and many are getting out of it.

Hon. P. Collier: Twelve shillings and sixpence a day at Kalgoorlie!

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. TROY: Let it also be remembered that places like Sandstone and Magnet and Youanme have not had a resident doctor until the last few months. In fact, during the whole period of the war there was only one doctor on the Murchison. The wives and children of the miners are just as dear to them as their wives and children are to the residents of the most closely settled districts of Western Australia. Removed from the advantages that other people enjoy, the miners are getting full up of these conditions. It is up to the Government to give proper consideration to people who do pioneer, and who work in the unhealthiest areas of this State. They should receive consideration rather more than should the people living in healthy districts under better conditions. There is another matter to which I may refer in passing. We are frequently told that this is a time when production is essential if we are to make good and pay our way. We are told that the worker must set his mind on producing if the cost of living is to be reduced. To-day there is an industrial trouble on the Murchison. The Arbitration Court has, in effect, given an award, and the miners at Meekatharra and Cue have pulled out because the Chamber of Mines will not observe the award in the spirit and the letter. The worst feature of the business is that the Arbitration Court did not sit as a court, for the reason that the unions concerned were not registered under the Act. Through having joined the A.W.U. they had forfeited their registration for the time being. But both sides agreed to accept the Arbitration Court as a tribunal. The court gave its award, one of the conditions of which was that "the men employed shall begin with

the whistle on the surface and end with the whistle on the surface." That means the bank to bank system. The Chamber of Mines have absolutely refused to recognise that principle, notwithstanding that when the claim for the principle was made by the miners the Chamber of Mines agreed to it before referring the dispute to the court at all. That is the whole cause of the present trouble on the Murchison, and I do ask the Minister for Mines to use whatever influence the Government possess with a view to obtaining recognition of the principle, so that peaceful relations may be re-established. The Chamber of Mines agreed to that principle in their answer to the claim, and the principle is in operation at Collie and elsewhere. But it was refused on the Murchison, with the result that the miners pulled out. The Chamber of Mines cannot be sued for breach of the award, because the award is not a legal award. Though it is morally binding, it is not legally binding. I consider the attitude of the Chamber of Mines to be most reprehensible. Having agreed to the principle, they ought to stand by it. Since the award is only for a period of 12 months, they will have an opportunity to appeal to the court for revision of the matter after a comparatively short lapse of time. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) dealt with the question of molybdenite. I have been much concerned as to what can be done with regard to this mineral. At Warriedar there is said to be one of the biggest molybdenite deposits known. Mr. A. E. Morgans holds an option on the deposit. There is a hill 200 feet high containing, I understand, a very fine body of molybdenite. Mr. Morgans is said to be quite satisfied on that point. Mr. Hudson, when Minister for Mines, had agreed to erect a mill there to treat the ore; but he temporised and temporised, as he usually does in most matters, and there was no result. I would like to ask the Minister for Mines what has been done lately in the matter, and whether there is any possibility of a market being found for the sale of that ore, because there are men in the district now engaged in sandalwood getting and shearing who are waiting for the day when that mineral will be mined. Turning now to the question of the health of our miners, let me say that I was struck by the Minister's speech to-day. It is the first time that I have heard a Minister other than a Labour Minister make a reference showing concern and regard for the health of our miners. When the Minister was making his statement it struck me that something ought to be done to "repatriate" miners before their condition becomes too serious, "repatriate" them so that they may remain useful citizens of the country. To-day we are reaping the fruit of the policy which was condemned in years gone by from this side of the House, our condemnation of it, however, being entirely ignored. The present Minister for

Mines was one of those who then pointed out what must be the result of the policy encouraged by the members of the then Liberal Government. I am glad to know from the speech delivered by the Minister for Mines to-night that he is still consistent. We pointed out years ago that eventually the mining industry would be crippled by reason of the health of the old miners becoming so bad, owing to unhealthy conditions, that they could not carry on their occupation. To-night we have heard the Minister for Mines acknowledging that there has come to pass that condition which we spoke about for years past, which we tried to obviate and which our opponents did nothing to prevent. Had Mr. Gregory listened years ago, in all probability by now some practical means would have been adopted to cope with the disease, which is so widespread in the goldfields at the present time. There is yet time to do something and I hope that the Government will give this matter their most earnest consideration. I have before me a letter which gives some particulars of one of very many such cases. Writing from Meekatharra on the 6th October this man says—

I am writing a few lines to you to let you know I am out of the hospital, as you know how my arm was when you were here, fighting our cause. That was in May last. He has been in hospital ever since then.

I can tell you I have had a very hard time of it. I returned to the mine to work but had to leave through my health again. I am completely settled for underground work. The doctor told me not to go underground again, so I took a job wood-cutting for the Fenian gold mine. I borrowed a turnout but they may take it from me any day and then I will be settled. Seeing that I have been from 25 to 30 years resident between Magnet and Meekatharra, I thought you might be able to secure a Government turnout to help me carry on my living for my wife and five children.

I know this man well. He is an able worker and yet his case is but one of many.

Hon. F. Collier: And he has been from 25 to 30 years in the back country.

Mr. TROY: Yes, and he married there.

Hon. F. Collier: He deserves a pension for life.

Mr. TROY: He is a hard worker, and I knew by the shortness of his breath, when he spoke to me at Meekatharra, that he was settled. So it is with a big majority of the men, and a great number of them are looking for an opportunity to get away from the mines. When I was in Meekatharra last I was spoken to by quite a number who were anxious to get away and take up land. I have had a letter from one of them, a Mr. Plunkett, who is quite a young man, saying that he was anxious to go on the land. I went to the Lands Department in an endeavour to get land for him along the Won-

gan Hills line. I was told by Mr. O'Dell at the department that there was not an acre of land available there. I was surprised for I had travelled there and found thousands of acres where not one tap of improvement had been done. I made it my business to travel home last time via the Wangan Hills line, and the member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) and I saw thousands of acres of first class land where not an axe stroke had been put in. Here are mining men anxious to go on the land and do the pioneering work. How is it possible that any set of men are allowed to hold such land all these years without making the necessary improvements? I know that this is not altogether a matter that can be discussed under mining, but I speak in the interest of the health of the miners I refer to. Such a thing as I have described is utterly wrong, and it is up to the Government to take action. I have nothing more to say regarding the Mines Estimates. My remarks would have been more extensive had it not been for the fact that the Minister for Mines visited Mount Magnet recently, and all the matters which were regarded as acute were discussed with him then. May I express the hope that as the Minister gave satisfactory replies concerning 95 per cent. of the matters brought before him, I will have nothing to complain of regarding his promises being put into operation. Personally, I shall be very glad to help the Minister in any way that I can in connection with the mining industry. I know what it has done for the country and what it means to the State. Other industries should help this industry because it provides the best market for the people engaged in them. It is up to the Government to give the mining community a measure of fair treatment, for they are pioneering under the worst conditions.

Mr. Maley: The industry is getting assistance like the farmers.

Mr. TROY: That is ridiculous. What is the good of talking like that? They are not getting 9s. a day like the farmers.

Mr. Maley: We were told this afternoon there was a loss of a million and a half sterling.

Mr. TROY: I showed that whereas there is a loss of £600,000 on the State battery system over 25 years, there was a loss of £400,000 on the railways alone last year, largely due to the agricultural industry. So far as the relative merits are concerned, both industries are entitled to fair consideration from the State. The farmer on the land getting 9s. a day—

Hon. P. Collier: Creating capital while he is there.

Mr. TROY: And with the Industries Assistance Board behind him to gamble on, he is in a happy position. I do not know of any man who is in a happier position, and it is up to that industry to give consideration to those who are not in so fortunate a position.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) [10.23]: My remarks on this vote will be brief. I would not have risen at all had it not been for a desire to draw attention to the disgraceful condition of affairs in the House during the discussion on the mining Estimates.

Mr. Maley: It is always the same.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: During the debate, thoughtful speeches have been made and yet members have been absent from their places in the Chamber.

Mr. Maley: You should be the last to draw attention to that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I fail to see the point of the interjection.

Mr. Maley: I fail to see the point of yours.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member belongs to a party claiming to take a deep and abiding interest in the mining industry, and only during recent days we have seen a feature made of their desire to broaden out their support of the primary industries. We have listened to-night to some thoughtful, constructive speeches—and I do not remember ever listening to any more thoughtful speeches on this vote for the past 12 years—pertaining to the mining industry, and those who have sat in the House opposite deserve commendation. For the most part, benches on the Ministerial side have been empty for the last hour and a quarter, while real, logical, instructive facts relating to the mining industry have been advanced. Members sitting on this side of the House have given fair and reasonable attention when agricultural matters have been under discussion, not only listening to the debate but giving every encouragement to agricultural members when they advanced their interests. It is a regrettable incident, and I trust that any other members speaking on this vote will get the attention which the subject deserves.

Mr. Maley: What about your side of the House?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Our side! On your side there are 34, and not more than five have been listening for the last hour and a quarter.

Hon. P. Collier: And not a primary producer there.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Not one, until the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) came in a few minutes ago to hold the fort. I believe it is only a fair thing to direct the attention of members who are present to the duty and obligations which rests upon members as a whole.

Mr. Maley: I have been here most of the night.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not drawing particular attention to the hon. member. The fact remains that this position is unsatisfactory and I trust that the members representing primary production, will be prepared to give greater attention to matters affecting the mining industry in the future. It is no wonder that the mining industry languishes when public men do not take any interest

in its prosperity. A large percentage of members have not displayed that interest which the industry warrants and which this country has a right to demand from them. I sincerely trust that on any future presentation of the mining Estimates, there will be a fair number of members present, and that we will not have the spectacle of acres of empty chairs gazing at the speakers.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [10.28]: I realise the difficulties which this industry has faced during the war period on account of the rise, ranging from 100 to 200 per cent., in the prices of mining requisites, the three rises in railway freights and the increased cost of commodities used by the miners. There are ample reasons to be advanced why, at the present time, sufficient skilled labour is not available. It must be that the calling is not made attractive enough from a monetary or health point of view, to induce young men to engage in it. It is essential that improvements shall be made by the better ventilation of the mines. Provision is made in the coal mines for not less than 100 cubic feet of air current passing through the working places in the mine. In the gold mines it is sufficient that an adequate supply of air shall be circulated, "adequate" being defined as a sufficient current of air to deflect a candle flame from the vertical. The difficulty in getting young men into the mining industry is to be found in the bad ventilation of our mines. It is provided that explosives used in mining shall be tested. But they are not tested under the conditions in which the men are working. The testing should be done in the rises or dead ends where the work is carried on. The men are inhaling the gases while underground and this, as we all know, is most prejudicial to their health. Only the other day Dr. Mitchell, of the Wooroloo Sanatorium, stated that of 1,788 patients who had passed through his hands, 432 were miners, while many of the remainder had previously followed mining. This, of course, is nothing like the actual number of miners stricken down by phthisis. When I was secretary to the miners' union in Day Dawn, practically every man who worked for a few years in the rises or dead ends of the Great Fingal mine contracted phthisis. Men working under the contract system which obtained there soon became wrecks, and other men working in healthier parts of the mine at much lower wages had to levy on themselves to keep the stricken men and their dependants. In four years we collected £950 for the upkeep of phthisical men who previously had been working on contract at much higher remuneration than that of those who contributed to the fund. To my mind the industry responsible for the great mortality amongst miners should maintain the dependants of those men. A royalty should be imposed on every ounce of gold won, and the fund should be devoted to the relief of phthisical miners and their dependants. We on the Murchison have advocated that for many years, but

nothing has come of it. Much has been heard of assistance to prospectors, At the present time very few men are out prospecting. A few years ago £50 would equip a couple of men and maintain them in the field for six months. To-day £100 is of no use to a prospecting party, owing to the high cost of stores and equipment. Greater assistance should be given to prospectors opening up a show. If the Government would advance on assays, it would be a means of opening up many new fields. I give every credit to the department for the work done in my district in the provision of water supplies. We have had no difficulty with Mr. O'Brien, who has done everything possible to provide water outback. Some attention should be given to the frequent evasion of manning conditions on mining leases. Whenever a new show is discovered, parties in motor-cars get out and take up all the available land, with no intention of observing the manning conditions. Locking up the country in this way, these men prevent development by legitimate prospectors. The inspector of mines ought to visit such fields at least monthly and enforce the manning conditions. The leader of the Opposition referred to the copper propositions beyond Peak Hill. I have learnt at first hand that the men out there could not handle anything that would not assay up to 25 per cent. It cost £8 to bring it in to Meekatharra by camel team, after which there was 600 miles railage to Fremantle, where extra wharfage handling had to be paid for, since most of the stuff went to Port Kembla for treatment. All under 25 per cent. was left on the spot. The Government should certainly establish an up-to-date smelter for the treatment of our metalliferous ores. I realise that a lot of our mining problems such as the treatment of refractory ores, will have to be solved by the metallurgical chemists. One of the biggest mining propositions in this State cannot be handled on account of the antimony in the ore, and progress will only be possible when the metallurgical chemists discover means to overcome this difficulty.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [10.40]: I have listened with a good deal of interest to the scathing indictment of members on the cross benches by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen).

Mr. Thomson: That was only a little pleasantry.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would inform the member for Forrest that I listened to the Minister for Mines, the leader of the Opposition, the member for Cue, the member for Mount Magnet, the member for Lenora—

Hon. P. Collier: You are a good listener.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I would just like to mention that I have listened to seven speeches on mining and to only two on agriculture, so I think I can claim to have

given the subject of mining very fair attention. There is one branch of mining which is of considerable interest to me, namely, that relating to the deposits of alunite. I do not know whether any member has made reference to this.

Mr. Thomson: You have listened to seven speeches on mining and have not heard the references to alunite!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The report on this subject is most unsatisfactory. After what the Minister for Mines told us last year, I thought that something would have been done to reach finality and prove whether these deposits were of any value or not. The Government Analyst (Mr. Mana) in his report states that it had been planned to carry out a series of field trials to test this local product, but unfortunately supplies were not forthcoming for the purpose of these trials. It seems that something is radically wrong. There is a dispute between the chemists as to the solubility of the alunite contents, and now we are informed that the chemists could not get supplies of the stuff in order to carry out the tests. I hope that something will be done to definitely decide whether or not these deposits are worth working.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.43]: There are just one or two matters which I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister, and I hope that he will be able to give me some information regarding them when he replies to the debate. I congratulate the workmen's inspectors on the good work they have done to date. I would again impress upon the Minister the necessity for treating the workmen's inspectors as the Government inspectors are treated in the matter of passes. During the last 18 months there have been three fairly prominent mining developments in Western Australia, namely, at Hampton Plains, St. Ives, and Mt. Monger. I believe that six or seven of the Hampton Plains mines will be worked for a considerable number of years; the outlook is certainly favourable. I trust that the Minister will keep the inspectors up to the mark in the matter of seeing that the conditions regarding employees are not permitted to drift as they were in the case of the Golden Mile. It is in the early stages of a field that there is an opportunity for this to be done. If the inspectors are kept alive to their responsibilities, they will see that conditions do not get so bad as they were on the older goldfields of this State. Some little time ago I believe that the Government entered into negotiations with the Lakeside Wood Companies for running a wood line through the Hampton Plains goldfields areas. Under the concession granted to the wood companies, I understand that the Government have the right to fix the freights and passenger fares to be charged by the wood companies. I would like the Minister to inform us whether this is so and what charges the companies are per-

mitted to make. Everything that can be said in the interests of the mining industry has been said, and I hope the Minister will take note of the many suggestions which, if given effect to, will prove of immense benefit to the industry.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany—in reply) [10.47]: Most of the points which have been raised by the various members require some attention by the Mines Department. I make it a practice to call upon my clerk to go through the "Hansard" report of the speeches delivered on the mining Estimates and to make a note of each point raised so that inquiries might be made. I propose to follow that practice on this occasion. One of the matters on which I feel it necessary to speak at this juncture is the statement made by the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) with regard to the boring for coal. It is the first intimation I have had that there was any feeling of discontent or dissatisfaction among the people regarding these boring operations. I have not heard a single complaint from any source. If there have been any complaints, they have not come to my knowledge. We have bored 500 feet without any success and I have received a recommendation from the Government Geologist that the geological outlook is such that no further boring operations should be carried on.

Mr. Maley: Who suggested that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Government Geologist. I am now placed in the position of having to decide whether we shall ignore the recommendation of the Government Geologist or proceed with boring operations somewhere else.

Mr. Troy: Where is this?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: On the Irwin River.

Mr. Troy: There is coal there.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, we have bored through one or two shallow seams of coal, but they are of no commercial value. So far my intention is to continue boring on the plan on which we started. We had three different sites selected and we started at No. 1. It is suggested that we should now continue boring on sites No. 2 and No. 3. If I accepted the advice of the Government Geologist, probably we would do no further boring there. That does not prevent anyone else who has sufficient faith in the possibilities of coal beds of sufficient value being discovered from boring for them. To suggest that we are deliberately playing into the hands of the Midland Railway Company in not giving the district a fair deal is an unfair reflection on the officers of the department.

Mr. Troy: How could that help the Midland Railway Company?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I had not the slightest idea that there was such an impression abroad until to-night. I still am not aware that a report was not made as to

the most likely place to put down such a bore. I was astonished at the statement of the hon. member, and will have inquiries made.

Mr. Maley: I wanted the explanation.

Hon. P. Collier: I hope the Minister will go thoroughly into the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My present inclination is to continue the boring as far as we promised to go. We have spent so much money to begin with, and I think we ought to carry out the scheme to its completion. The matter, however, requires some consideration. I feel disposed to go on with the programme rather than take the risk of having it said that because our first effort gave no indication we had missed an opportunity of discovering coal of commercial value.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the depth of the bore?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is over 500 feet.

Hon. P. Collier: I thought the intention was to go to 800 feet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Under Secretary and the State Mining Engineer saw me yesterday and told me that, in the opinion of the Government Geologist, the geological strata and indications in the bore were opposed to the possibility of the discovery of coal at a greater depth.

Mr. Maley: I understand that boring was originally started with the intention of boring down to 800 feet.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If a certain strata is struck at 500 feet, which is unfavourable to the discovery of coal at a greater depth, it naturally upsets the previous ideas of the officer's concerned. The matter, as I have said, requires consideration. I had not intended making this much public just now, but the hon. member's remarks were unfair to the department and I was compelled to make this statement. Two points were raised by the member for Hannans in connection with the mining conditions at Hampton Plains. On each occasion that I have visited Kalgoorlie I have spoken to the inspector there with regard to the conditions prevailing at the new finds. He says he has not lost sight of the necessity for compelling the companies in the early stages to do that which is essential to their work at a greater depth. I have had no complaint that he has not been doing this.

Mr. Munsie: He should compel companies to see that there are two exits.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He is keeping that in mind as the companies are proceeding with their work. With regard to the wood line, the matter has been brought under my notice two or three times with a view to some arrangement being made. If the Government were to ask the wood line company to do a certain thing I suppose that company would expect not to answer until it had received some consideration. I have therefore refrained from putting forward any proposition, feeling sure that the company would come forward with one. Only to-day a re-

presentative of the company submitted to me a request for a permit to enable it to connect up with the line they are constructing to Hampton Plains, with a view to continuing into the bush, and to work under an old permit. I am considering the question and the conditions under which the operations will be carried on. One of the conditions is that the company shall carry the commodities that are required at rates to be fixed by the Governor in Council.

Mr. Munsie: How about passengers?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the company has proper accommodation for passengers. It may be, however, that we can arrange for this as well. Until such time as the Government are satisfied that they can construct a standard line to connect with the rest of their system they ought not to prevent facilities of this kind being made available to Hampton Plains, and St. Ives if necessary, and at as cheap a rate as possible. It is possible that arrangements may be made for providing some light coaching facilities. We might bring into use some light coaches that are hardly fit for our ordinary service.

Mr. Munsie: They run a coach at certain times on the Kurrawang woodline.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know whether that is done on the Lakeside woodline. I have promised the company that I would obtain the decision of Cabinet on Tuesday next. I do not think there will be any difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory arrangement.

Mr. Munsie: I have been asked whether the company will be able to charge what fares they like.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. The permit in the first instance is only issued to enable the company to take firewood over the line, but we can make conditions to provide that they shall carry any other commodity at rates fixed by the Governor in Council, and issue a conditional permit in accordance therewith.

General debate concluded; items discussed as follows:—

Item—Inspectors of Mines, £3,354.

Mr. LUTEY: Why has the number of inspectors been reduced by one? Could not railway concessions be given to workmen's inspectors in the same way that they are given to the permanent inspectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is one inspector less owing to the resignation of Inspector Wilson. We went into the question, and without doing any injury at all we found we could effect the saving of one man.

Mr. Munsie: Do the eight inspectors include the workmen's inspectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. I am afraid that to give to workmen's inspectors the railway concessions given to Government inspectors would create an innovation that would be undesirable. There are hundreds of semi-government men who would all want the same thing.

Mr. Munsie: Are they being paid wholly by the Government?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In some cases they are.

Mr. Munsie: Then they should have the same privileges as the Government officers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am prepared to consider the matter.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am glad to hear the Minister say he will consider the request. There are only four or five inspectors concerned, so that no considerable amount is involved. They have as much claim to consideration as have the tramway employees, who, though not in fact connected with the Railway Department, are granted a free pass over the railway system when on their annual leave.

Mr. TROY: Some time ago application was made—I believe it has been made repeatedly—for the Murchison workmen's inspector to visit Baddera, Narra Tarra, and the other lead mines in the Northampton district. He certainly should do so, and I hope the matter will receive the Minister's attention without further delay. Contrary to the forecasts of those who argued against the system of workmen's inspectors, these inspectors have worked very satisfactorily with the departmental inspectors of mines.

Item, Clerks, goldfields staff, £1,301:

Mr. CHESSON: I desire to call the Minister's attention to a young man, 19 years of age, who holds a clerkship in a mining registrar's office, who supports a widowed mother, and who receives a salary of £1 per week. I can give the Minister the young man's name. Is any provision being made to pay a living wage in this case?

Mr. Troy: I know the case, and it is a real scandal. The young man is over 19 years of age.

Mr. CHESSON: The duties he performs are important.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will inquire into the case.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.5 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 19th October, 1920.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—POLICE SERVICES IN WAR TIME.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN asked the Minister for Education: 1, What was the amount paid by the Federal Government to the Western Australian Government for police services during the period of the war? 2, What amounts, if any, were paid as a bonus to senior officers of the Police Department?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, £8,075 17s. 1d. 2, £125 was distributed by the Defence Department to two inspectors, two detective sergeants, and one detective constable.

MOTION—MUNICIPALITIES ACT, TO AMEND.

Rating on Unimproved Value.

Hon. J. E. DODD: (South) [4.34]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Municipalities Act, 1906, should be amended so as to allow of rating on the capital unimproved value of land.

I have to make a few remarks in vindication of this motion and of the Bill which I introduced. An expression of opinion by this Chamber is advisable upon the motion in view of the almost universal demand for the principle which it embodies, and I am encouraged to believe that perhaps if the motion is carried here, the Government may be induced to bring in the necessary amending Bill. Last session, in connection with the Parliamentary Allowances Bill, the subject was first brought before another place by way of motion, and after the Government had seen that the Bill was likely to be carried they introduced the necessary measure to give effect to the wishes of members. I think something like that might be done in connection with this matter, because I believe there is a general wish on the part of members that municipalities and road boards should have the optional power of rating on the unimproved value of land. I may also point out that only last session a comprehensive measure dealing with rating was carried through Par-