Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th August, 1933.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

Steel castings and scrap.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What quantity of scrap steel has been sold to Hadfields, Ltd., and the conditions, and price per ton? 2, Has the Railway Department ever given consideration to the installation of an electric furnace at the Midland Workshops for the re-casting of scrap steel? 3, What is the total tonnage of steel castings that have been purchased during the past five years by the Railway Department? 4, From whom have the castings been purchased, and what is the landed cost per ton?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, For the five years ended 24th August:—Scrap turnings, 821 tons, 6s. per ton; general scrap, 2,365 tons, 10s. per ton; general scrap, 261 tons, 15s. per ton; scrap rails and tyres, 3,252 tons, 20s. per ton. 2, Yes, but it would not be a payable proposition. 3, 750 tons 14 cwt. 4, All from Hadfields (Aust.), Ltd., Bassendean. 9 tons 11½ cwt., 41s. 11d. cwt.; 202 tons 14½ cwt., 45s. 7d. cwt.; 461 tons, 47s. 6d. cwt.; 72 tons 16 cwt., 57s. cwt.; 3 cwt., 88s. 8d. cwt.; 4 tons 9 cwt., 130s. 2d. cwt.

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE ABATTOIRS.

Pleuro Restrictions.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What number of cattle has been railed to the Kalgoorlie abattoirs since the pleuro restrictions were raised? 2, What are the terms for railing cattle from Parkeston to the Kalgoorlie abattoirs, and the amount paid to the W.A.G.R. and the Kalgoorlie Firewood Company for such railage? 3, What number of cattle (if any) has been found suffering from pleuro since the raising of the restrictions? 4, When did the Director of Agriculture (Mr. Sutton) last visit Kalgoorlie? 5, When did the Chief Inspector of Stock (Mr. McKenzie Clark) last visit Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 1924/25, 2,352; 1925/26, 44; 1926/27, 3,602; 1927/28, nil; 1928/29, 2,065; 1929/30, 274; 1930/31, 193; 1931/32, 542; 1932/33, 2,903; total, 11,975. 2, Amount paid to railways, £5 per bogie truck; minimum five bogies Parkeston to Kalgoorlie abattoirs *via* Kurrawang. Amount paid to Kalgoorlie Firewood Company, £5 for first two trucks and £1 for each additional truck. Inspection fee, 1s. per head plus 2s. 6d. per head to cover interest on loop line built from the wood line into the abattoirs quarantine yards. 3, 21/3/25, 1 old lesion; 17/12/27, 1 pleuro pneumonia; 16/7/28, 1 pleuro pneumonia; 16/2/29, 1 pleuro pneumonia (old case); 15/11/30, 1 pleuro pneumonia (old lesion); 22/4/33, 1 pleuro pneumonia. 4, May, 1933. 5, July, 1931, and 15th instant.

QUESTION—ELECTRIC CURRENT.

Mr. LAMBERT asked the Minister for Railways: What is the price paid by Hadfields, Ltd., Bassendean, to the Government Electricity Supply Department for electric current?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: For the minimum of 50,000 units per month, .85d.; for any consumption in excess of 50,000 units and up to and including 80,000 units, .7d.; for any consumption in excess of 80,000 units, .65d.

QUESTION—FARMERS, SUSTENANCE AND TENURE.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: In view of the promises contained in his policy speech, as reported in the "West Australian" of the 25th February last, that—(a) Farmers should have sustenance, and that it should be a first charge against their crops; (b) Farmers are also entitled to reasonable security of tenure for two or three years;

can he state what plans the Government intend to take to give effect to those promises?

The PREMIER replied: These matters will be considered when the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment Bill is being submitted to Parliament.

BILL—METROPOLITAN WHOLE MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture, and read a first time.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. LATHAM (York) [4.38]: I intend to make a final appeal to the Minister not to pass this legislation until he first brings down a Bill comprehensively to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, in order to give effect to an obsolete measure. I listened to the grandiloquent speech of the Minister the other evening, and I can assure him that he did not impress the House. He has never missed an opportunity for airing his views on this, either to the local authorities or to the ratepayers, and I venture to say that at no time has he been asked by the ratepayers to bring down this so-called reform. He is merely trying to foist the policy on to the people. He did not make out a case the other evening when he spoke to the House, inasmuch as he did not give the information the people ought to have. If there is to be any extension of the powers of local authorities, why not tell them and the ratepayers what it means, and so offer encouragement for an alteration of the franchise? Had that been done, I would not have been on my feet to-day opposing the passage of the Bill. It is of no use this attitude, "If you do not do this, we will not give you anything." It is an utterly unreasonable, Mussolini-like attitude, the attitude of a dictator, this "If you do not take this, I will not give you anything." The Act is so stupidly obsolete that the Minister might even now reconsider his decision.

The Minister for Works: You were in office for three years, and so had a chance to bring the Act up to date.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. member is aware that we had to bring down a whole lot of salvage legislation, which I hope this Government will not have to introduce. I make this final appeal to the Minister not to proceed any further with the Bill until he first brings down a comprehensive amending Bill which will give effect to the wishes of the ratepayers. Never mind about the local authorities, for I agree in part with the Minister when he suggests that the last to be considered are the local authorities, because they have their own interests to serve. But the ratepayers, the people, certainly ought to be considered. The hon. member said the other night that for 19 years, even while a Minister of the Crown, he did not have a vote. Of course, if that were so it must have been that he was not the occupier of a house, but was boarding. He would not suggest that because he deals with a firm supplying goods he should have a say in the distribution of that firm's profit. The municipalities have but a very circumscribed power; all they are expected to do is to collect money from the ratepayers and spend it, as provided in the Municipal Corporations Act. They have not wider powers than that. So when the Minister decided that he would not be the occupier of a house, he was not entitled to a vote. If he is going to extend the powers of the local authorities and so bring them into line with the county councils of Great Britain, he has every justification for so doing. I appeal to the Minister not to proceed with this legislation until he introduces the Bill so urgently required to bring the Municipal Corporations Act up to date.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [4.41]: I do not know whether I ought to bother to reply to the hon. member, for he is merely indulging in political propaganda, repeating his old conservative, crusty ideas. It is purely political propaganda. That is all he is out for, and he will not face the issue. He says we should do what the ratepayers want. But we on this side of the House represent the ratepayers; certainly the municipalities do not represent them. How can the municipalities represent the ratepayers when one man has four votes against another man's

single vote, when I have four votes as against my neighbour's one. All that the municipalities represent is a mere handful of ratepayers. The hon. member has been swallowing what is put forward in the Press as purely political propaganda, repeating his old arguments. The municipal council of Northam the other night said that under the Bill a man with £20,000 worth of property would have but the same vote as the man who paid only 5s. in rates. But is it not possible under our existing law for a man with £50,000 worth of property in the City of Perth not to have a vote in Perth? If he owns even £100,000 worth of property in Perth which is let to tenants, they have the votes and he has not. So where is the argument? It is gratifying to know that notwithstanding all the propaganda that has been put forward against the Bill there is at least one municipal council which has stood up to the criticism and is prepared to take a broader outlook and come into the line of reform. I have had a communication —I am sorry I have not brought it with me —from the Geraldton Municipal Council, which has unanimously passed a resolution urging the Government to proceed with the Bill.

Mr. Doney: That is only one out of 500.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should not care if there were not one. I say the municipalities do not represent the ratepayers. It is of no use the hon. member appealing to the Government to throw overboard their principles; the Government will not do it, for we intend to stand by our principles. All the appeals of newspapers, of Tories, and Troglodytes can go on eternally like the brook, but we will not deviate from the path we have set ourselves. Before there is any reform in local Government laws, or any comprehensive amendment, this plural voting must go. That decision will last as long as this Government lasts, and there will be no deviation from it. The Press report of my speech set out that I stated I would not bring in any amendment until this was brought about. The hon. member tried to get me to say that by interjection, but I did not say it. He said, "You will not bring in any amendment?" I replied, "I will not say that," because there may be some urgent matter, but there will be no amendments of any broad principle. The hon. member can get that well into his head. It will not come about so long as plural voting lasts. This is not the first occasion when we have tried to amend this law. So long as plural voting is there we will continue to make efforts to amend it, and will keep on hammering at the door until we gain our objective. Meanwhile there will be no departure from the stand we have taken up. With all the appeals that come from our opponents, those who stick to views that are diametrically opposed to our own regarding this legislation, can get it well into their minds that their appeals will not bring about a departure from the Government's principles.

Mr. Doney: Then there is no need for argument at all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think there is any need for argument where the hon. member is concerned. He is impervious to it. He will not listen to arguments. He does not understand them; he only understands prejudice. It is only waste of breath using any argument with him. It would not penetrate the hon. member's reasoning faculties. I should think the merest infant would understand the fundamental principles of this Bill, but the hon. member is so steeped in his old crusty conservative ideas that it is useless to argue with him. He thinks that a few votes in his electorate depend upon his attitude. That is all that is prompting him, his own self-preservation. I do not know whether I should have bothered to reply. It is palpable what is in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition, and what prompted him to make his statement. It does not amount to a row of pins with us. There will be no deviation from the principles for which we stand, and from what we have put before the people. This is something we shall insist upon before there is any enlargement of the functions of municipalities.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—SECESSION.

To effectuate.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.48]: I move—

That in view of the result of the referendum taken under the provisions of the Secession Referendum Act, 1932, this House is of the opinion that it is the indispensable duty of the Parliament on behalf of the people of

Western Australia to endeavour by a dutiful address to His Majesty and humble applications to both Houses of the Imperial Parliament to procure such legislation by the said Imperial Parliament as may be necessary to effectuate the withdrawal of the people of the State of Western Australia from the Federal Commonwealth established under and by virtue of the provisions of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (Imperial), and that a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed to consider and recommend what action shall be taken in relation to the preparation, completion, and presentation of the said address and the said applications in order to give effect to this resolution.

The Government have been faced with considerable difficulty in deciding the best method of giving effect to the will of the people as expressed by the referendum on the 8th April last. The vote of itself does not give the Government power to take any definite action. It was a vote on a referendum submitted to the people in order to ascertain their views with regard to secession. Notwithstanding the result of that vote, it would not be competent for the Government—this is the opinion I hold—to take action without the authority of Parliament. The vote certainly did place upon the Government the responsibility of taking initiatory action to give effect to the will of the people on the occasion in question. After very careful consideration the Government consider that the best method of carrying out the wishes of the people is embodied in the motion I have submitted to the House. I desire to say at once that the Government are not wedded to the terms of the motion, in any way whatsoever. If any suggestion can be made to improve the motion in order to give effect more entirely to the desires of the electors, the Government will be willing to consider such suggestion, and not offer any serious opposition. It is in the highest degree desirable that this motion should be discussed entirely free from party politics, and that whatever we may do, step by step, should be the decision and the will of Parliament, and not of the Government for the time being. It seems to me and the Government that it would not be doing a fair thing by the large majority of the electors of the State who voted for secession if any steps taken to give effect to the vote were encompassed in any way by party politics. When the matter comes up for consideration, as it undoubtedly will, by the Home authorities, the case will be stronger for the majority of the people if it can be said that it has the solid backing of the Parliament of Western Australia, and not only of the Government of the State of Western Australia. It is very desirable that we should consider the question fully and freely, apart from party politics, and at the same time support every move that we may make, step by step, with the backing of the Parliament, so that the case when finally presented to the authorities can be said to be the express decision and desire of the Parliament of this State as recently elected by the electors. I do not think it is necessary for me to deal now with the whole question of secession. That has already been decided. The arguments pro and con have been discussed for some years past in the Press and in Parliament. As a result of this, a referendum was taken as we know, and a decision given. That stage of the discussion it seems to me is past. The responsibility of Parliament to-day is to consider the best ways and means of giving effect to the vote of the electors, and not to consider whether the electors were right or wrong or whether it was possible to do what they considered ought to be done. The result of the voting was remarkable. I desire to quote a few figures in order that they may be embodied in the records of the House. The figures are all very well known to members and the people, but I think we ought to have them on record. For that purpose, therefore, I will repeat the result of the referendum. The votes passed for secession numbered 138,653, against 70,706, informal 7,921, or a total of votes polled 217,280. Of that the percentage was very high indeed, namely 91.6 per cent. of the total enrolment. Speaking from memory, I think the highest percentage of votes recorded over many years at an election, apart from a referendum, has been about 84 per cent., but on this occasion the percentage was 91.6.

Mr. Sampson: And 84 would be very exceptional.

The PREMIER: Very exceptional. The average in the case of general elections works out at between 70 and 75 per cent. I think I had the honour once of being elected, by a fairly narrow majority, on a poll of 85 per cent. I believe the highest percentage of votes that has been recorded for many years at an election was that particular vote. I know that 80 per cent. is very high, and anything over that is exceptional. The

majority of votes cast in favour of secession was 67,947. It is interesting to survey the electorates that gave the majority for secession, and those which voted against it. If ever a vote was cast in this or any other State of the Commonwealth that was entirely free, untrammelled, and uninfluenced by party considerations, it was this particular vote. We find that the Government side of the House is represented by 30 seats. It was believed in some quarters that our party did not support the question for secession, but rather supported the alternative of a convention to consider amendments to the Constitution. It is therefore interesting to survey the position. Of the 30 seats represented on this side of the House, 24 electorates gave majorities in favour of secession, and in many cases substantial majorities. I am glad indeed to say there was no party flavour in connection with the vote. Of the whole fifty electorates of the State, only six gave a majority vote against secession.

Mr. Stubbs: Were they not nearly all goldfields electorates?

The PREMIER: Yes. I was about to mention that. Those six were the electorate I have the honour to represent, which gave a majority of 753 against secession, the Brown Hill-Ivanhoe electorate, which gave a majority numbering 621, the Hannans electorate, which gave a majority of 439, Kalgoorlie 559, Kimberley 73, and Murchison 87. The other 44 electorates gave majorities in favour of secession. It may be interesting to quote some of the figures of those majorities in favour of secession as represented by members on the Government side of the House: Albany 1,311 in favour of secession, Bunbury 1,830, Canning 2,677, Collie 937, Forrest 741, Fremantle 2,897, North-East Fremantle 1,696, South Fremantle 3,234. It is significant that whilst my colleague the Minister for Works had the largest majority obtained in the general election, and I believe the largest majority obtained at any election in Western Australia——

The Minister for Works: With the largest percentage of votes recorded at any Western Australian election.

The PREMIER: Yes. The electorate, while giving a majority of 4,000 odd votes in favour my colleague, also gave a majority of 3,234 in favour of secession.

Mr. Stubbs: The electors there did not believe Mr. Lyons when he came over.

The PREMIER: Well, they did not have a chance of hearing him. Then, continuing with seats represented on this side of the Chamber, Gascoyne gave a majority of 336 in favour of secession, Geraldton 918, Guildford-Midland 1,416, Kanowna 211, Leederville—which returned his Honour the Speaker with a large majority—2,123, Maylands 1,492, Middle Swan 2,282, Mt. Hawthorn 1,818, Northam 1,364. Even Mt. Magnet, which was supposed to be a Labour stronghold, gave a majority of 120 in favour of secession. The majority at Perth was 1,718, at East Perth 1,759, at Roebourne 130, at Subiaco 1,499, at Victoria Park 1,984, and at Yilgarn-Coolgardie 612. I mention those figures not because they have a party significance, but because they show that no party significance attached to voting on the referendum. Of the 30 seats represented on this side of the Chamber only six gave a majority against secession. Taking the whole of the 30 seats held by Government supporters, the majority in favour of secession was 32,473.

Mr. Latham: About half.

The PREMIER: Yes. Turning to the twelve Country Party seats, we find that each one of them gave a substantial majority in favour of secession. Indeed, the lowest majority recorded for the 12 seats was 1,451, at Avon. From that minimum the majority rose to 2,695 at Greenough. Of the eight seats represented on the cross-benches by the Nationalist Party, each one gave a substantial majority in the same direction. Pilbara's secession majority was as low as 79, but the highest, Sussex, amounted to 2,377. I mention the figures in order that they may be on record, so that any steps which may be taken subsequently by Parliament to carry out the wishes of the people may be buttressed by those figures. Taking it all in all, the vote in favour of secession was a remarkable vote. The motion before the Chair is to appoint a joint committee of both Houses to consider ways and means of giving effect to the wishes of the people. I hope hon. members will study the motion carefully, because it really means that the committee will recommend only ways and means and steps to be taken in order to do what the people of this State desire should be done. Whilst not desiring for one moment to express an opinion as to the duties and responsibilities of the committee which may ultimately be appointed if the motion should be agreed to, I may say that I personally would place the widest possible interpretation upon the powers to be con-

ferred upon the committee. Speaking for myself, I should say that it would be an obligation of the committee, if it should be appointed, to consider every aspect of the question. To give an illustration of what is in my mind, the committee should, I think, consider whether the case for secession should be presented by petition alone, or presented in some other form by personal delegation, and whether a committee should be set up to prepare the case. My own view is that that is about the only way in which the case can be handled—by the setting up of a committee. I also consider that the joint committee, if appointed, should go even further, and recommend to the House not merely whether a committee to prepare the case should be set up, but also the names of members of such a committee. The House would, of course, not necessarily be under any obligation to accept the recommendations of the joint committee, but it ought to be informed what, in the judgment of the joint committee, ought to be done, and what is the best way of doing it. I hope we shall be able to carry the matter through step by step, so that whatever move is made will be approved by the Parliament of Western Australia, and so that ultimately it can be said, when the case does go before the Home authorities, that it has the backing not only of the Western Australian people as expressed at the referendum, but also of the Parliament of the State as returned at the recent general election. I offer those as a few ideas bearing on the subject. However, I repeat that if any suggestions can be made to improve the motion, or to take some other move that will be preferable to what is possible within the four corners of this motion, the Government will be quite willing to give such suggestions or alternative moves their favourable consideration. Accordingly, without occupying more of the time of the House, and without covering ground which really represents past history and has already been fully considered, I submit the motion that stands in my name.

MR. LATHAM (York) [5.13]: In order to facilitate this business, I shall not ask for an adjournment of the debate. The motion is simple, and the Premier has stated in simple language what is in his mind with regard to it; accordingly I accept the motion. I do not think the House can do better than agree to it. It is our bounden duty to give effect to the wishes of the people. That could have been done from the Government side entirely, without making Parliament a party to the procedure. By the Premier's motion this House and another place will be given an opportunity of stating their views, through the joint committee, with regard to submitting a case which may eventually secure the wish of the people. On first reading the preamble to the motion I felt rather worried, because I thought it might operate restrictively; but in view of the information given by the Premier, I believe that the scope will be wide enough to give effect to the wishes of the people without our hands being tied in any way by the preamble. The committee which it is suggested should eventually be appointed will, I presume, prepare whatever may be necessary to be submitted to this Parliament. The Premier suggested that a case for submission to the Imperial Parliament might be prepared, or that possibly it might be necessary to send a delegation to Great Britain to state a case on behalf of the people of Western Australia. I do not think anything further I can say would impress the House, in view of what has fallen from the Premier. I am indeed glad that this is a non-party question. That justifies the action taken by the Premier. As he pointed out, majorities in favour of secession were recorded by most of the constituencies represented by members in this Chamber, and in respect of the few that returned a majority against secession, the majority in each instance was very small. It cannot be argued that a convention would do all that was necessary because the people definitely decided against the holding of a convention. I propose to endorse the opinions expressed by the Premier and to support the motion.

MR. MOLONEY (Subiaco) [5.16]: I waited for one of the Opposition members to rise, but all seemed rather tired and consequently it was left to a mere neophyte like myself to fill the breach. I was disappointed at the action of the Leader of the Opposition in skimming over the subject in the manner he did, and also in the inference to be drawn from his remarks that the onus rests with the Government. I am indeed pleased to be associated with a Government who are so desirous, in the generous sense

indicated previously by the member for Northam (Mr. Hawke), of securing the co-operation of all members of the House in dealing with such a momentous subject as that embodied in the motion moved by the Premier. At the recent election I was not in accord with the advocacy of secession, but my opponent was a rabid follower of the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) in that regard. The verdict at the election showed that the people were not wedded to any particular person. I told my constituents I was prepared to support the implementing of the mandate of the people, whatever it might prove to be. We received a mandate from the people and the Government are now carrying out their promise to give effect to the will of the electors. I am pleased to find that the Government have not arrogated to themselves the right to appoint what might possible have been a biassed committee, but have decided to secure a committee representing all sections of both Houses of Parliament, and have further visualised the possibility of sending an envoy to London who will speak on behalf of the whole of the people of this State. He will need to be a man possessed of characteristics such as those that distinguished the late Mr. E. A. Harney, who was formerly a Western Australian member of the Federal Parliament and later a member of the House of Commons. The man to be appointed must be one who will be able to place before the Imperial authorities the disabilities under which Western Australia has laboured, respecting which so many members of the Opposition, particularly during the recent election, were so eloquent. Without further stressing the matter, I support the motion. I recognise in it a gesture on Labour's part that, from a national point of view, is quite futile. From the standpoint of the Commonwealth there is one way only by which Australia can advance and that is by remaining one consolidated nation. By separating from the nation, Western Australia will take a step that will be detrimental to the Australian Commonwealth.

Mr. Sampson: Are you speaking on secession.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the member for Subiaco will not discuss the merits or demerits of secession. That matter is not before the House.

Mr. MOLONEY: The people of Western Australia have expressed their desire and the electors in my constituency desire that secession shall be secured. I bow to the will of the people, and I agree that we must place our case before those who have the ability to say yea or nay. For that reason I support the motion.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.20]: I do not think the present occasion warrants any debate, especially on the merits or demerits of secession. The motion has been moved by the Premier and, in a sense, it is purely a formal proposition designed to bring into existence a body consisting of members of this House and another place who will, in their wisdom, determine what steps are to be taken to give expression to the will of the people as evidenced by the vote on secession at the last general election. I do not consider for one moment the present occasion a proper one upon which to discuss the merits of secession. This Parliament does not sit as an appellate tribunal to review the decision of the people taken on a question of that description. It exists only as a body whose proper function is to give effect to the decision of the people. The language used by the Leader of the House in moving the motion made that perfectly clear. It may well be that I might suggest some other means of giving effect to the votes of the people. It might have been that a Bill could have been brought down and passed by both Houses of Parliament setting out in a schedule a petition such as Parliament would agree to. I do not for one moment put that forward as an alternative proposal to that advanced by the Premier. I think that the Premier's proposal should not be criticised by advancing a further proposal; so for that reason, although I might have preferred another course to be adopted, it is not one that I would put forward as an alternative.

Mr. Hawke: The committee might recommend what you suggest.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Possibly. I consider the motion moved by the Premier, and the language with which it was moved, entirely appropriate to the occasion, and they have my hearty concurrence.

Question put and passed.

Committee Appointed.

Ballot taken and a committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Collier, Hawke, Keenan, Latham and Withers.

On motions by the Premier, resolved:

That the committee have power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, to confer with any similar committee appointed by the Legislative Council, and to report this day two weeks.

That a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, requesting concurrence in the resolution, and asking that House to appoint a similar committee with power to confer with the committee appointed by this House.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT (Hon. J. J. Kenneally—East Perth) [5.36] in moving the second reading said: This is a short measure rendered necessary to facilitate the work of the department over which I preside. It seeks to alter the Police Act to prevent people from claiming or receiving or continuing to receive sustenance from the funds made available for the relief of unemployment when not entitled to do so. The Crown Law Department consider the legislation necessary if the object mentioned is to be achieved. Power already exists to proceed against a person who claims sustenance without being entitled to it. Almost every week recently there have been prosecutions, and convictions have been secured, and as a result of the prosecutions the payments from sustenance have been reduced by over £30 a week. That is the saving arising from the striking off of names after conviction, but hundreds of other people have gone off sustenance on finding that the law was being put into motion. People, however, make false statements to obtain sustenance relief work and the law makes no provision to prosecute them. While we can prosecute a person who receives relief in the form of sustenance, if the person works for the money after having made a false declaration regarding his family responsibilities, we are unable to take action against him. There have been instances, too, of a man's circumstances improving while working under the relief scheme. Cases have come under notice of a man being in receipt of more than the basic wage in addition to the proceeds of the relief work. Under the existing law, it is impossible to prevent that, but this Bill endeavours to do so. The Crown Law Department hold that as the false declaration made in such instances is not a declaration permitted or required by law to be made, the making of it is not actionable at law. The proposed amendment makes it an offence for any person who, by wilfully making any false statement or representation as to his identity or circumstances, obtains or attempts to obtain, under any scheme for the relief of unemployed, destitute or indigent persons, any work, employment, or benefit in money or money's worth for himself or any other person. An additional amendment provides that any person continuing to receive or attempting to receive any such work, employment or benefit, after he shall have become disentitled to it, shall be guilty of an offence. We are endeavouring to place men in work and to give relief where relief is necessary, but each person who, by making a false statement, receives Government money to which he is not entitled, prevents others from getting an additional mede of assistance. We desire to place as many men as possible in employment and adequately to care for everybody requiring assistance. I do not wish to weary the House by giving a lot of instances, but I shall quote a few. A man received assistance for himself, wife and child for three years, and they had not been supported by him for over seven years. The wife had maintained the child by her own work. The existing law, however, does not permit of any action being taken against the man. Another man received sustenance for himself and wife, but for over fours years the wife had been earning her own living. The latter couple had been on and off sustenance since 1925. Another man received sustenance for himself and supposed wife for two years, but the wife had not been with or dependent upon him during the whole of that period. Another received sustenance for himself and wife for nine months and the wife had not been with or dependent upon him during that time. When I say "sustenance" I am referring to sustenance relief work. Another man received sustenance relief work for almost two years, and obtained work which precluded him for many months from getting sustenance. However, he reported about one-third of his total earnings, and continued to receive sustenance. Another man received sustenance for himself and family stating he was destitute. He had drawn £63 from the bank the day sustenance was granted, and he received sustenance for 14 months while he still had the

money. Another man received sustenance for himself, wife and one child for 18 months, whereas the earnings of three children over 14 living in the home amounted to £7 14s. 6d. a week. There was another receiving sustenance for himself and family; he had worked during the same period off and on and on several other occasions. His reported earnings were £43, whereas he actually earned £159 over the period that he reported the £43. Another received sustenance for himself, wife and one child, and at the same time was earning £4 19s. weekly. Another received sustenance for himself and family and he had two sons over 14 who were earning more than £8 weekly. Still another was drawing sustenance for himself and his wife for 18 months, while his wife was not with or dependent upon him. Members will readily realise it is necessary that action should be taken in circumstances such as these. What has already been done has resulted in a saving of over £30 a week, while in addition as a result of the publicity given to what was being done, no fewer than 300 men have fallen away from sustenance. I am not going to make any guess as to where they have gone. It is satisfactory to know that it is at last being realised that it is not possible to impose with impunity on the Government of the State simply because it happens to be the Government. Of course there are others who will have to be watched. As a matter of fact, there will shortly be a thorough investigation, more thorough than we have had time to carry out up to date, in regard to all these cases, and as the result of that investigation I have no doubt a number of others will go off the list. No person in actual want is able to say that he has not had a sympathetic hearing at the hands of the present Government, whose desire it is to increase the benefits, and to do that, authority is required. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILL—SOUTHERN CROSS SOUTHWARDS RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [5.50] in moving the second reading said: The country to be covered by the proposed railway was the subject of the Advisory Board's report some time back. The board reported not only regarding the particular area to be served, but all the country eastward of the line which runs through Yilliminning and Kondinin to Narembeen and Merredin. The board were asked to report on the areas east of that line and as far south as Lake Grace, and the report was comprehensive in character. Since the report was made, the Lake Grace-Hyden Rock railway has been constructed and the country along that area dealt with. There is not, however, a separate report in regard to the country to be served by the Southern Cross-Southwards line. I intend to lay the Advisory Board's report on the Table. This is a simple proposition and it deals with one particular area of country known as the miners' settlement, south of Southern Cross. Members will be able to acquire all the information that is available by a perusal of the board's report.

Mr. Stubbs: It will run from Southern Cross and link up with those areas that were known as the 3,500 farms scheme.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, and probably the new line will link up with an extension of the Hyden Rock railway. Alternative proposals were considered and it was decided that the country between Karlgarin and Southern Cross, including the miners' settlement, south of the latter town, could best be served by extending the Lake Grace-Karlgarin line in a north-easterly direction for about 30 miles, and that a spur line running southerly from Southern Cross should be constructed for a distance of about 32 miles, leaving a break of about 30 miles. There will then be left a tract of territory of about 30 miles between each railway terminus. This is a comparatively small proposal. When it was first considered, the intention was to carry the railway 32 miles south of Southern Cross, but on further surveys being made it was found that from a railway standpoint, and also for the convenience of the settlers, it would be more satisfactory to establish the terminus at the 28-mile post. Regarding the cost, the original estimate was £4,300 per mile. Now that the survey has been made, it is estimated that the cost will not exceed £3,500 per mile, and included in this latter estimate is the important item of water supply at a place known as Frog Rocks. The proposed line will serve 150 farms with a wheat yield, it is expected, of 120 tons per farm or a total of 18,000 tons. The

number of sheep would probably be about 250 head per farm with a wool production of 1,400 lbs. per farm, or a total of 94 tons. The superphosphate required would be 10 tons per farm, or 1,500 tons in all. The board's report deals with the whole of the area and because of that it is difficult to learn exactly the extent of land that will be served by the proposed railway.

Mr. Seward: From where to where?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: From Hyden Rock that railway will eventually serve the greatest number of settlers.

Mr. Mann: Will it serve those who are settled to the east of Narembeen?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The line will be considerably east of Narembeen.

Mr. Mann: The settlers east of Narembeen are 30, 40, and 50 miles away from a railway. It will be of no use to them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If they were 30 miles from the railway, it would be of use to them, but it would not be of much use to those 40 or 50 miles away. The area of first-class land reserved is 365,000 acres and of third-class land 774,000 acres.

Mr. Doney: Would you call it safe country from the point of view of rainfall?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the light of our experience and with proper farming methods, and favourable conditions, I should say yes. We in this State are blessed with a good average and regular rainfall, not like the other States where they sometimes require three good seasons to be able to withstand two seasons of drought. The country to be served is excellent from a wheat-growing standpoint, and a few years ago it was ahead of the whole State with an average of 18 bushels.

Mr. Stubbs: It is excellent land for wheat.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, it seems to be the peculiarity of Western Australia that the further east you go, the better the country becomes, but to get the best results we must have reliable rainfall. The heavier the country, the lighter seems to be the rainfall. Nearer the coast the country is not so heavy and crops could be produced there with a lighter rainfall. If we could only reverse the order of things, we should have better results all round. The country to be served by the proposed railway is in an area that has a comparatively light rainfall, but with proper methods of farming the results should be satisfactory. I should like to pay a tribute to my colleague the Minister for Lands for having inaugurated the fallow system and refusing to encourage anyone to grow crops on this area without fallow. The miners who are settled there have not had much experience, but it has been demonstrated that an immense amount of good has been done by the establishment there of an experimental farm. If Parliament authorises the construction of the railway, and if in the next year or two the line can be built, it will be a comparatively easy matter to establish sidings.

Mr. Latham: Who will take the responsibility?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The responsibility will be the same as in respect of wheat which is stacked at ordinary sidings at the present time.

Mr. Latham: The Commissioner? That is all right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner does not take responsibility for wheat stacked at sidings to-day.

Mr. Latham: He takes a fair amount of it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Probably before any dumps are established, the earthworks will be sufficiently advanced, and so the dumps will be under some sort of supervision.

Mr. Marshall: Would it not be much cheaper to construct a road and let motor transport take on the work?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The ex-Premier, Sir James Mitchell, called for a report on that, on what they term road trains. That has been subject to analyses and tests and specifications by the engineers of the Public Works Department, and they find that the cost of transport would be too great. It is estimated at 6d. per ton per mile for the carrying of produce over such a road. That is apart altogether from the cost of the road.

Mr. Marshall: It is remarkable that motor transport can so successfully compete with the Railway Department, even in the haulage of goods from Perth to Wiluna. Why should we always nurse the baby?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That is one of the questions to be dealt with when the Government formulate their policy of transport. We are anxious to see whether railways

or road transport can give the better return, taking into account the capital cost of the railways. Wherever it appears that a district can be better served by one method of transport, that method will be adopted for that district. But notwithstanding all that is claimed for road transport, we find that throughout the country people are extremely anxious that railway construction shall be undertaken to give stability to a district.

Mr. Hawke: And give value to the land.

Mr. Marshall: To increase the value of their properties, so that they can get out at the expense of the taxpayers.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It does not mean very much expense to the taxpayers, for the department pays the cost and 2½ per cent. interest on the capital invested in the system. We are not nearly so badly off as are some of the other States; our interest costs are not very high, and we have rendered excellent service to the people of the State.

Mr. Latham: Without the railway system the agricultural areas could not have been opened up when they were, could not be opened up even at this stage.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is not now necessary that we should discuss the relative methods of road transport and railway. The Government are satisfied that the best interests of the district to be served will be served by a railway.

Mr. Marshall: That is only to haul the unprofitable freight, leaving the profitable freight to motor transport.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In the near future the hon. member will have opportunity to discuss transport generally, when I hope we shall have his support.

Mr. Marshall: But we pass a tax and——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Railways had better proceed with his speech.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have very little more to say. The country to be served by the railway is excellent agricultural land. To be properly developed, it must have a railway, for the settlement is very far from the existing line, and much public money has been spent on the carting subsidy.

Mr. Seward: I take it the settlers were promised railway communication when first they went out there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That has occurred in many districts. The Government have spent a considerable amount of money in assisting the people in this area to cart their produce to the railway. Something like 9d. per ton per mile has been granted in carting subsidy in various districts. An aggregate of £17,000 has been thus spent, but I cannot say how much went to this district. The building of the railway will lessen the burden imposed by this carting.

Mr. Doney: Is there much low-grade land in the district?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Not very much; there is a large area of first-class land. On one occasion, the settlers produced the highest average wheat yield of all the districts. I have here the plan of the railway and a copy of the Advisory Board's report, both of which I will lay on the Table. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Ferguson, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Returned from the Council with amendments.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 24th August.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [6.10]: Members may wonder why I, an agricultural member, should be interested in mining. About three years ago the boundaries of my electorate were extended to include Ravensthorpe, which contains an immense area of mineral wealth. But apart from that, for many years past I have been interested in everything appertaining to the welfare of mining, so mining members may regard me as an ally who will always endeavour to achieve the best legislative results for the mining industry. The Bill is to amend Section 145 of the Mining Act, which was consolidated in 1926. Last year a Bill was passed to amend the 1926 Act, including Section 145. Somehow, in the Committee stage, an anomaly occurred and eventually became law. It is this anomaly which the House is now asked to rectify.

There are two classes of agreements recognised between tributers and mine owners. In one of those agreements, the tributer and the lessee of the mine share the expense, and share equally in the results obtained from mining and treating the ore. Under another agreement the tributer mines the ore and takes it to the shaft, where the lessee hauls it to the surface. The Warden has to sign all agreements, and one result of the anomaly set up last session was the compelling of the Warden to fix a scale of charges before it was known what the charges were to be. The Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, explained the situation very fully, and I am convinced that in the interests of the mine owners and the tributers the Bill should go through without very much discussion. I will support the second reading.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. LATHAM (York) [7.30]: Members will recollect receiving a letter from the Chamber of Mines dated the 3rd November, 1932, when the Act this Bill proposes to amend was before the House. The Chamber pointed out that in the event of the Bill becoming law they would determine all the tribute agreements in existence as soon as possible, and would not relet any because of the conditions laid down in the Bill. They informed members that those conditions were unworkable. No one, however, seemed to take any notice of those remarks. The Minister in charge of the Bill said the tributers were getting what they were asking for, and that all the necessary arrangements were to be made with the mine owners. I think the present Minister for Mines concurred in that statement. The Chamber pointed out in their letter that owners who did not possess their own treatment plant would not be able to get their ore treated, and that the customs mills would not treat the ore under the conditions laid down in the Bill. When we get these circular letters, it is advisable to consider them. If consideration had been given to this particular one at the time, and an inquiry had been held, probably there would have been no necessity for the Bill. I hope the tributers will now be satisfied, and will agree they are getting all they want. I also trust that the measure will satisfy the mine owners, so that the tributes may be continued, and that in effect both parties will be satisfied.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [7.32]: I remember the circular referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. It was in this House that the amendments I am now withdrawing from Sections 104 and 105, and placing in Section 145, were made. The trouble has arisen because the amendments were not made to the proper sections of the Act, not that the customs mills would not treat the ore at the price. If they could get the royalty as well as the price, they would be prepared to treat the ore under those conditions. The Act was so amended, however, that they were debarred from the royalties. I am glad the House has accepted the Bill with so little discussion.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 24th August.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [7.35]: I support the second reading. It is essential that the Act should be amended in this direction. When the mine workers' relief measure was first under discussion, members were under the impression that those people, in connection with whom the question whether they were T.B. cases or not had been raised, would still be entitled to come under the provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act. Many men were declared to be suffering from T.B., and could have been prohibited by the Minister from working in the mining industry, but were working in such places as made it possible for them to continue to work. It was assumed by members that these cases, when the disease had made further inroads and the men were no longer capable of working, would come under Section 8 of the Miners' Phthisis Act. As a result of legal interpretation, I understand it was

found not to be so. It was held that in their case the question of work had been raised and determined. The Act requires to be amended to give those workers the rights they are entitled to under the original Miners' Phthisis Act. Amendments are also necessary to cover those who were prohibited from work between the time of the cessation of the old Act and the proclamation of the new one. The Bill before us makes the necessary provision to cover that point. It also provides for compensation starting from the day the miner ceases work. A case came under my notice of a mine worker having ceased work because he was not permitted to get back the ticket which entitled him to return to work. He could not be re-employed as the Laboratory took the ticket from him. Some four or five weeks were required to settle the issue as to whether his compensation should start from the day he ceased work, or whether he would have to wait until he received the prohibition notice. The Bill clears up all difficulties connected with such cases, and provides that the mine worker who is working, and is then prohibited from working, shall receive his compensation from the day on which he ceased to work, and that if he is not working he shall receive it from the day he gets his prohibition notice. Under the Bill no complaints can possibly arise concerning the conditions for lump sum settlements. I understand that either the employer can make application for the settlement of a compensation claim by a lump sum, or the employee can make application for a lump sum settlement under the old Act. It is not quite clear, however, what the compensation is to be, and the Bill will make that clear. Certain clauses of the Bill give the board power to supplement the compensation in certain cases of hardship. That is a very desirable provision. The power is extended to the board when the compensation allowable to the mine worker amounts to £3 10s. or over, calculated on the basis of half wages and 7s. 6d. for each child. This is only in the case of hardship. This amendment postulates that hardship only arises in connection with the number of children there are to support, and gives the board power to deal only with such cases of hardship, where the compensation will be £3 10s. or over. I should prefer an amendment giving the board power to supplement the compensation in any case of hardship. As things stand now, it will assist certain employees who, in the past, were on a better wicket than many of their fellow workers. Compensation at the rate of £3 10s. a week is not only reached by means of the number of children there are to support, but by the wages the employee was receiving when working as a mine worker. Take the case, under the Act as it stands, of a man working for tributers and receiving £1 a day for his services. The single man would receive £3 a week under the Act, (that being half his wages) by way of compensation. But a man on the basic wage of 14s. 4d. would receive, if single, only £2 3s. per week, and if married he would still only receive £2 3s. per week. That is either a glaring anomaly or a glaring injustice. Personally I see no virtue in the provision for half wages, though it may not be practicable to fix compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act on any other basis. Still, it is a pity that a flat rate cannot be arrived at, entitling the injured worker to, say, £3 per week and 7s. 6d. for each child. After all, workers on 17s. 8d. and workers on 14s. 4d., if reduced to half wages with 7s. 6d. for each child, will alike find it very hard indeed to meet their obligations. On the various rates of pay obtaining in the mining industry, ranging from 14s. 4d. to 20s. per day, no man will receive any benefit under this Bill until he draws the £3 10s. per week on the basis of calculation I have outlined. It is not until we get to the man on 15s. 10d. with three children to support, and therefore drawing £3 10s. per week, that any benefit is derived. Thus the first man who draws over £3 10s. per week as the result of half wages and 7s. 6d. per child is the man who formerly drew 16s. per day and had three children to support. Under this Bill all the men over that rate and having three children to support will be entitled, if the board consider the case one of hardship, to draw from the board an amount sufficient to make up the compensation to £3 17s. 6d. weekly.

The Minister for Mines: There may be extra dependants, but the board cannot go beyond the amount fixed.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Possibly an injured worker might require special treatment, and that might be considered a case of hardship. The phrase "Cases of hardship" is fairly broad. However, there is the man with a wife and three children who formerly received 14s. 4d.: the total compensation he

will receive under the Bill will be £3 5s. 6d. per week. The man on 14s. 10d. with three children will receive £3 7s. The man on 15s. with three children will receive £3 7s. 6d. The man on 15s. 4d. with three children will receive £3 8s. 6d. The man on 15s. 10d. with three children will receive £3 10s. In none of those cases, whether hardship can be proved or not, are the board empowered to grant extra assistance; and this no matter how great the hardship may be. It appears to me that the case of the man who has been battling along in the mining industry on from 14s. 4d. to 16s. per day and is prohibited from working in the industry, is likely to present more features of hardship than the case of a man who has been earning up to £1 per day. I should like the Minister to give consideration to that aspect of the Bill and see whether something cannot be done to empower the board to extend their beneficence to cases of hardship, to men who have always had a pretty hard lot, working for 14s. 4d., or 14s. 10d. per day in the industry. Otherwise, the Bill is certainly an improvement on last session's Act. When that Act was passed, it was pointed out that the legislation was experimental. I regard it as still in the experimental stage, and trust that as time goes on we shall be able to make improvements which I consider highly desirable and necessary.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [7.53]: Hon. members will recollect that the main object of last session's Act was the taking-over of a fund conducted on a voluntary basis, because there was always a danger of one of the parties defaulting and the whole system breaking down. It will be recollected, too, that last year's measure was subjected to a considerable amount of criticism. There was some from the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), and I think the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Cunningham) said the miners had not asked for the measure and did not want it. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) said it was the stupidest Bill he had ever seen. His main objection was, if I remember aright, that it would be impossible for the board, with the finances at their disposal, to carry out the obligations imposed on them.

Mr. Marshall: But you have to remember that the board will have no more responsibility until three or four years later.

Mr. PATRICK: Yet to-night the hon. member in question said that the board's obligations under the Bill were not heavy enough. The Minister said that if the payments made by the three parties to the agreement were insufficient, the State would have to come to the rescue and make up the deficiency. I contend that such an industry as the goldmining industry, with the price of its product artifically enhanced, cannot in fairness ask the State to contribute.

Mr. Marshall: Did you ever express that view with regard to railways?

Mr. PATRICK: The mining industry should carry its own burden. After all, the Bill proposes only reasonable amendments, mostly minor in character. From last session's criticisms one would have thought that the measure was in every respect unsatisfactory. I think the only mining member who debated the Bill reasonably was the hon. member in charge of the measure. The proposed amendment to Section 3 of the Act merely preserves the right of workers to do light work on the surface when prohibition is deferred. Another amendment is that no beneficiary shall be a member of the board, which is perfectly sound. It is also just that a man should receive compensation——

Mr. Marshall: You do not object to shareholders being on the board of directors of a company, do you?

Mr. PATRICK: That is a different thing altogether. The amendment proposes that a man should receive compensation from the time he ceases work, if he is prohibited from continuing such work, and it takes some time for him to be examined.

The Minister for Mines: It is not from the date the man ceases work in all cases. In some cases it is from the date the man is examined.

Mr. PATRICK: The amendment relating to the amount of compensation payable in cases of extreme hardship is reasonable. However, such an amendment would be largely governed by the finances at the disposal of the board. Here again the industry should carry its own responsibilities, instead of the State carrying them. If, as the Minister said, it is necessary for the sake of clarity to amend the conditions in respect of workers voluntarily accepting lump-sum compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, there can be no objection

to that. On the whole it is evident that last year's measure is not so unsatisfactory as some hon. members indicated at the time. Every measure in actual practice discloses small defects, and the amendments proposed by this Bill are merely minor amendments which have been found necessary. I support the second reading, but I hope the fincial position under the Bill will be carefully watched; perhaps the Minister will be able to give us some information on that aspect. Naturally everyone sympathises with the unfortunate men who, owing to the ravages of disease, come on the funds of the board. It is to be hoped that as the mining industry continues, conditions will so improve that the need for this class of legislation will be largely if not entirely obviated.

HON. J. CUNNINGHAM (Kalgoorlie) [7.59]: I support the Bill, which has for its purpose the amendment of the consolidation Act passed last year. It will be remembered that I opposed that measure. I realised then that the measure had been introduced for the express purpose of relieving the Treasury from heavy calls made upon it in the cases of workers excluded under the provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act. That was the real object of last year's Bill. As a result of the passage of that Bill, workers have suffered. Payments under the provisions of the Miners' Phthisis Act have been reduced in accordance with the payments made under the Third Schedule to the Workers' Compensation Act. We knew the real objective of the Minister and the Government who introduced the consolidating Bill of last Parliament. The amending legislation presented by the Minister in the Bill before us now will have the effect of removing a number of anomalies and will clarify certain provisions of the parent Act. With regard to the proposal to vest the board with power to subsidise payments to workers securing assistance from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, I am glad to have the assurance of the Minister that that provision is not intended to apply only to workers who, after the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act and the Miners' Phthisis payments have failed, become dependent on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. I was under the impression that, in accordance with the wording of the provision, the payment of £750 would have to be exhausted before any additional subsidy would be payable and therefore the subsidy would be payable only to workers in respect of the scale in connection with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. We have the assurance of the Minister that that is not the position, and I therefore support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.2]: When the Mine Workers' Relief Act was before Parliament last year, I strongly opposed its provisions on three grounds. In the first place, I objected to the workers being obliged to contribute one-third of their own benefits; secondly, I objected to those benefits being reduced and, thirdly, that we did not know what the beneficiaries would receive at the expiration of the time involved in the payment of the compensation of £750 in weekly payments or in a lump sum. The member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) seems to know little or nothing about the legislation. I fail to see eye to eye with him in respect of all he appears to view as good in the Bill. The workers have suffered because of the Mine Workers' Relief Act. According to my reading of the measure, it means that three or four years hence, when the benefits payable under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act to men who were formerly provided for under the Miners' Phthisis Act, which does not now apply, have lapsed, the beneficiaries will not receive anything like the amounts that would have been payable under the old Act.

Mr. Patrick: Then you still attack the old Act?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes; I am consistent. The member for Greenough argued that because gold at the moment has materially increased in value, the gold mining industry should stand on its own legs. I agree, in principle, with the argument that when the amount payable for the product of industry is in excess of the cost of production, the industry involved should stand on its own legs, but did the member for Greenough and others interested in agriculture, adopt that attitude and see to it that the wheatgrowing industry stood on its own legs and refused to take concessions from the railways at a time when 9s. a bushel was paid for the product of their industry?

Mr. Patrick: At no time did I receive 9s. a bushel for my wheat, so I cannot say.

Mr. Thorn: Perhaps the hon. member himself did.

Mr. MARSHALL: At least I attempt to be consistent. When the gold mining industry receives a fair reward for its product, then I agree that it may be expected to stand on its own feet. I want members of the Opposition to be consistent and to adopt a similar attitude when those they are alleged to represent receive an excessive price for their wheat. I merely draw attention to that phase in order to indicate how inconsistent some members really are. We will have an opportunity to discuss that phase when another Bill is placed before us to-morrow night. I still stand definitely opposed to the parent Act, but I can agree to support the amendments that are included in the Bill with one exception. It may be that the Minister will be able to correct me if I have misinterpreted his remarks. The Bill is fairly complicated and it requires some study to enable a member to appreciate what effect it really will have on the parent Act. When he moved the second reading of the Bill, the Minister said that a slight penalty would be imposed upon the beneficiary who might desire to accept his compensation in a lump sum. I want to ascertain what position is likely to arise under the Bill, and I shall state a supposititious case to the Minister. I do not know whether it would be possible under the Bill, but if what I suggest is correct, I desire to know from the Minister if it is in accordance with what he has in mind. In quoting the instance, I will assume that an individual who computes his benefits and desires to accept a lump sum in settlement will get a 50 per cent. decision. That means that if he is entitled to the full £750, his payments will be cut down to £375. We will say that he has already received £144 in weekly payments spread over six months. If the amount were to continue to be payable at the rate of £3 10s. a week, without computing the benefits with a view to settlement on a lump sum basis, the full amount would last the man for approximately four years. At the end of that period, he would then be able to transfer to the benefits available under the scale of payments by the Mine Workers' Relief Board. Should the man, however, compute his benefits and secure a 50 per cent. decision, that would mean he would receive £375, of which £144 had already been paid to him. That would leave him with a balance of £231. The man would probably desire to draw that amount with a view to investigating it so as to make provision for his wife. Unlike the position under the Miners' Phthisis Act, wherein provision was made for a wife, the Act we are amending makes no such provision. Therefore a married man would probably desire to take the course of action I have indicated. Whereas under the Miners' Phthisis Act if a man died from tuberculosis, his wife would be entitled to £2 a week; under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, she would receive nothing. Let us assume that the man's investment failed and within six months his £231 was gone and he had no income whatever. If I interpret the provisions of the Bill correctly—this is the only objection I have to the Bill itself—it would mean that the worker would have to remain off the relief for a period of more than nine months. As I read the Bill, the Minister would say to such a man, "As you have agreed to a lump sum payment, you cannot go on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund until such time as a period will elapse as will be necessary for the full £750 to be worked off at the rate of £3 10s. a week." If that is the meaning of the amending legislation, I do not agree with it. It would be bad enough if the Minister were to say that such a man should not become entitled to the benefits of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund until such time had elapsed as the amount of the money actually to be received—in the case I have indicated the amount was £231—had been wiped off at the rate of £3 10s. a week. I ask the Minister if that is what his Bill means.

The Minister for Mines: Partly and partly not, because it would be impossible for a man to get a 50 per cent. decision.

Mr. MARSHALL: I shall not enter into details. I am dealing with the principle involved. If that is the position, I ask the Minister if he considers it fair.

The Minister for Mines: Personally I do.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not, and I will ask members who represent goldfields constituencies whether they approve of it.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He gets his full compensation, less the capital value.

The Minister for Mines: It is impossible to get a 50 per cent. decision under the Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not say it is, but I do contend that it is possible for a man to compute his benefits and accept a lump sum much below £750.

The Minister for Mines: It would be possible, but hardly probable.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is what I am afraid of; it could happen. The Minister will have an opportunity of explaining the position later on. I still adhere to my objection to the parent Act and while I will support the second reading of the Bill, I regard the amendments as reasonably good ones to a particularly bad parent Act.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply [8.15]: I thank members for the manner in which they have received the Bill. Only two complaints have been made, the first by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) regarding the empowering of the board to increase the payment over and above the £3 10s. a week in cases of hardship. I was not asked by any party—board, mine owners or unions—to do other than what I have provided in the amendment. When the parent measure was before us, I analysed it fairly accurately in my second reading speech. I took seven points against the Bill and five of them were rectified. It was thought that the point regarding the payments had also been rectified, but actually it was not. Under the Workers' Compensation Act, when a man is drawing his £750, he is prohibited from drawing a larger sum than £3 10s. per week, regardless of his responsibilities. That is the maximum he can draw under the Workers' Compensation Act and under this measure. It was pointed out that a man might have a large number of children under 16 years of age and that considerable hardship might be caused. The man would be withdrawn from the mines and not allowed to follow his occupation, but the most he could receive to support his family would be £3 10s. a week. I was asked that, if there were dependants to carry the amount above the £3 10s., the board should be empowered to pay up to the basic wage to which the man was entitled when prohibited from working. That is the object of the clause. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe used sound argument, but he could have used the same argument against the basic wage. I realise that a man on 14s. 2d. is not as well off as a man on 17s. 4d., but I do not feel disposed to ask the taxpayers to allow the board to rectify anomalies in the various grades of the basic wage for the mining industry. It is unfortunate for the man on the basic wage, but we cannot rectify it under this measure. Consequently the whole argument of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe could have been successfully raised against the present grading of the Arbitration Court for the basic wage, but not against this Bill. When a man is drawing the £750 under the Workers' compensation Act, and the board consider it a case of hardship owing to the number of dependants, they may, under the amendment, grant up to the amount of basic wage. The only other argument against the Bill was that raised by the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) regarding lump sum settlements. He quoted a supposititious case that would be impossible under this measure. Under the Workers' Compensation Act a man might be unable to work and might appeal for a settlement. He may go before a board of doctors and the board may say he is 50 per cent. incapacitated from a disease specified in the Third Schedule of the Act. Therefore he would be entitled to only 50 per cent. of the workers' compensation. That, however, cannot happen under this measure. The only men who can come under the Act are those suffering from T.B., from miners' phthisis plus T.B., or from miners' phthisis advanced. In each and every one of those cases there can be no 50 per cent. incapacitation. Directly a man is declared under the Act, he is entitled to the full £750. If a man applies for a lump sum settlement and it is granted, he can never come back on to the funds of the board. I have provided in the amendment that if a man applies for a lump sum settlement and gets it—he cannot do so until he has received compensation for six months, because it is under the Workers' Compensation Act—he shall have the same right as has the employer to go to the court for a lump sum settlement, and the only deduction that can be made then is the capitalisation of the amount over the period that it would have taken him to draw it at the rate of half wages plus so much for each child. I wish to discourage to a certain extent applications for lump sum settlements. I do that in the interests of the men and particularly of their wives and families. All men who receive lump sum settlements may not use the money to advantage. At the same time, I am anxious to give a man the right to a lump sum settlement when he is likely to use it to advantage. In those circumstances, he has a right to get it. The employer has the right to take a man to court and compel him to accept a

lump sum settlement. When the amount is exhausted, at the rate he was receiving, the man is entitled to go on the relief fund, but if a man elects to take a lump sum settlement, he cannot go on the fund. I wish to give him the right to appeal for a lump sum settlement and then go on the fund when he has exhausted the full £750 at the rate of £3 10s. a week, or whatever amount he was receiving. The 50 per cent. settlement cannot happen under this measure. It could happen under the Workers' Compensation Act. A case was brought to my notice at Kalgoorlie recently. A man was certified by the laboratory authorities to be suffering from silicosis early, and that is not compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act. He became so ill that he could not work. He revisited the laboratory recently and his complaint was still certified as silicosis early. He could not work, and decided to appeal to the court for workers' compensation. The insurance company took the laboratory decision that he was suffering from silicosis early and desired to have the man's disability assessed before they would pay. He went before a board of doctors who unanimously agreed that the man was totally incapacitated by silicosis. On the board's decision, he is entitled to the full £750, but he does not come under this measure. He will be paid under the Workers' Compensation Act in the ordinary way. That was an extraordinary case. I do not know whether the laboratory authorities would still say he was suffering from silicosis early. I was asked why that man could not come under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. The answer is that I cannot serve him with a prohibition notice. The only people who can be brought under the Act are those suffering from T.B., T.B. with silicosis early or advanced, and advanced silicosis. The rest come under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned 8.30 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th August, 1933.

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

QUESTION—BULK HANDLING.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE asked the Chief Secretary: Will he be good enough to lay on the Table the report concerning bulk handling, compiled and presented by the departmental committee?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: This request will receive early consideration and decision by the Government.

QUESTION—STATE EMPLOYEES.

As to financial emergency reductions.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, When is it anticipated that the Government will fulfil its promise to State employees to restore all or any portion of the 18 per cent. to 22½ per cent. of financial emergency reduction in wages and/or salaries? 2, How much of the money proposed to be collected by the passage of the Financial Emergency Assessment and Emergency Tax Bills, now before Parliament, will be utilised to relieve those employees?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No such promise was ever made. 2, The money received from the Financial Emergency Tax will be paid into Consolidated Revenue, and will be utilised by the Government in the directions which they consider to be the most important in the interests of the State.

QUESTIONS (2)—NECESSITOUS FARMERS.

As to Commonwealth Financial Relief Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secre-Secretary: If it can be done, will the Chief Secretary be good enough to furnish the