

The Honorary Minister: Who wrote that piffle?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is not piffle.

The Honorary Minister: I am speaking of the reference to the farmer.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not offer any objection to the amendment to strike out the word "six," but I am not prepared to accept the extraordinary conclusions drawn by the writer of the letter with the facts contained in the letter as a basis. He spoke of a farmer's wagon having  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inch tires. Tires of this size would have a total bearing of 18 inches, on which the writer says they are accustomed to carrying five tons. If we allow 7 cwt. for the tires, we get a total weight of 6 tons 6 cwt. from which must be deducted 1 ton 5 cwt., the weight of the wagon, leaving 5 tons for the load. Seven, instead of 6 cwt. would meet the case put up in their letter, whereas the proposal to make it 10 cwt. would mean that the farmer would be entitled to carry, inclusive of the weight of the wagon, a load of 9 tons. This clearly shows that the suggestion that it ought to be 10 cwt. is not at all consistent with the facts set out. I do not offer any objection to striking out the word "six." I would point out that repeated conferences of road boards representing the very people that some hon. members here are representing have gone into the matter thoroughly and have looked at it from the interests of the farmer himself and their recommendation was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cwt., but the Government did not think this was enough.

Hon. V. Hamersley: To the inch of bearing surface on the tire?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not prepared to say whether that was exclusive of the weight of the vehicle, but even so it would not have made a difference of more than one cwt. The provision in the Bill is for a greater weight than that recommended by the road board conferences. If we go to the 7 cwt. we shall meet every reasonable case.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not favourably disposed towards the amendment. While 8 cwt. may be quite satisfactory so far as 5-in. or  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. wheels are concerned, it is not satisfactory for the 3-in. wheel.

The Minister for Education: Quite!

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was under the impression that the 3-in. tire would do more damage to a road with a much smaller load than the  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. tire would do. The lesser load should be on the smaller sized tire, and the greater load should be on the greater sized tire.

The Minister for Education: That is what the Bill provides.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The amendment provides that the same load will be carried on the 3-in. tire as on the  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. tire. The logical way of dealing with the matter is to have a sliding scale, and I would suggest 6 cwt. for a 3-in. tire, 7 cwt. for a 4-in. tire, and 9 cwt. for a  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. tire. If we fix a scale, the wagon builder, if a man wants  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -in. or 4-in.

tires, will make the superstructure as strong as he would in the case of a 5-in. or  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. tire in order that the farmer may carry the maximum load provided. The main arguments surrounding the whole question of width of tires is the question of the load and the damage it does to the road.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The principle suggested by Mr. Cornell is admitted in the Bill. When we come to the 6-in. tire we can carry as much as we like. The sliding scale suggested is worthy of support.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Mr. Cornell's suggestions are sound. The sliding scale, however, should start with a 2-in. tire. The ordinary cart with about a 2-in. tire does most damage to the roads. From 4-in. to 6-in. we might carry 8 cwt., and from 3-in. and under 6 cwt. is sufficient, judging by the amount of damage which is done to the road.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I hope the Committee will not agree to insert the word "eight." If there is a general feeling that the clause could be improved by some form of sliding scale, I have not the least objection in bringing the matter before the Public Works Department.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I understand that is the recommendation of the Public Works Department.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am prepared to report progress.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 5th November, 1919.

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

### QUESTION—GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY STOPPAGE.

Mr. DUFF asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether in view of the great inconvenience, annoyance, loss of time, and expense incurred by passengers ex Perth to the Eastern States on the train held up at Kitchener, by the strike, he will undertake to see that preference in rebooking on the first out-going West-East train is given to those passengers? 2, Will he undertake to recommend to the Commonwealth Government that a free railway fare from Perth to Kitchener be allowed those passengers who returned to Perth at their own expense in the hope of securing sea passage to their destination? 3, Further, will he recommend to the Commonwealth Railway authorities that all extra fares incurred and reasonable hotel expenses be allowed such passengers?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. Preference in rebooking will be given to passengers who have been delayed, in the order now booked. 2 and 3, Representations will be made to the Commonwealth Government.

### QUESTION—WATER SUPPLY, DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: When will the reports of the (a) Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department; (b) Agricultural areas water supply; (c) Goldfields water supply be laid on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: (a) On Tuesday, November 11th; (b) and (c) are included again this year in the Public Works Department Report. Owing to the influenza epidemic the work of the Accounts Office has been delayed. The report is in print, but the financial statements will not be completed, for reason stated, until about the 18th inst. Every effort will be made to expedite same.

### QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAY, ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS.

Extension to Norseman.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Hon. T. Walker) asked the Premier: Does he intend to introduce a Bill this session to continue the Esperance Northwards line to Norseman?

The PREMIER replied: No.

Resumption of Construction.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (for Hon. T. Walker) asked the Minister for Works: When is it intended by the Government to restart the construction of the Esperance Northwards line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: At as early a date as possible.

### BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- 1, City of Perth Endowment Lands.
  - 2, Postponed Debts.
  - 3, Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act Amendment.
  - 4, Sale of Liquor Regulation Act Continuation.
  - 5, Licensing Act Amendment Continuance.
- Introduced by the Attorney General.

### ANNUAL ESTIMATES 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Vote—Office of Colonial Secretary, £9,858.

Item, Under Secretary and Comptroller General of Prisons:

Mr. TROY: There is an increase here of £36. I suppose it will be said by the Colonial Secretary that the increase is consistent with those increases given to other under secretaries. I am not in favour of the increase in this instance. I would not have any objection to increases to lower paid servants, but have considerable objection to the increases to the higher paid officials.

The Colonial Secretary: Others are getting it.

Mr. TROY: I particularly object to those increases when the finances of the State are in anything but a satisfactory position. I was considerably amused by a caricature of the Premier which appeared in the last issue of the "Western Mail." He is depicted as wading through a bog on to a dry spot, which is called "Financial economy." It struck me that instead of getting out of the slough on to a dry place he was simply getting further into it. Do Ministers know or care how we are to get the money to pay our liabilities? They evidently hope, like Micawber, that something will turn up, and that Providence in the shape of good seasons will come to their aid. I admit the justification for increases to the lower paid officers, if only on the score of the increased cost of living, but there is no justification for increases to the higher paid officers, who have many privileges not enjoyed by others. I move an amendment—

That the item be reduced by £36.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope hon. members will not agree to the amendment. It has been already explained that this is a grade rise made to heads of all departments. This officer is most reliable and deserving, is very old in the service, and has plenty of work to do. Without remuneration, he some time ago took over the position of Comptroller General of Prisons, for which office £750 had been previously paid.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like to know what these increases are based upon. If the Committee decides that permanent heads shall have increases, I see no objection to

this officer getting his increase with the others, but I cannot yet understand on what these grade increases are based. We have already passed increases to permanent heads amounting to, in some instances, £75. Now we are told that a grade increase for an officer drawing £600 a year is £36.

The Colonial Secretary: The bigger the salary, the greater the grade increase.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course, but we see officers on the same salaries getting increases of respectively £50 and £75, while in this case it is only £36. There appear to be some inconsistencies in these grade increases.

The Honorary Minister: If the maximum is £600 it carries a £24 grade increase, whereas if the £600 is the minimum it carries a £36 grade increase.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But these permanent heads have neither a maximum nor a minimum; they are not under the Public Service vice Act.

The Premier: Quite so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But I understand the Government are applying the principle to these officers, notwithstanding that they are not under the Public Service Act. Is that so?

The PREMIER: Quite true. All salaries are divided by twelve. It saves a great deal of work in the pay office. This officer is not under the Public Service Commissioner. His grade increase is based on his salary. He has had to accept responsibility for the prisons, for which he got nothing extra, notwithstanding that the amalgamation saved a salary of £750.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He has been Comptroller of Prisons for many years.

The PREMIER: And has got nothing for it. I am quite willing both to pay the departmental heads well and to make a change if any officer proves unsuitable. Any apparent inconsistencies in the grade increase can be explained by the special circumstances of the individual cases. I realise that the men on the lower rungs of the ladder ought to get increases, but at the same time it has to be remembered that the higher officers have not had an increase for seven years, some of them for very much longer periods.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Certainly the officer in question is one of the lowest paid of the departmental heads. Indeed, there is only one on a lower salary, and he has not long been appointed to his position as Under Secretary for Mines. But I still have not got these grade increases cleared up. We are told that a £600 salary carries a grade increase of £36, and that the higher the salary the higher the grade increase. Yet we find that the Under Secretary for Works, on a salary of £650, is receiving a grade increase of only £22.

The Minister for Works: He was raised from £600 to £650 last year, which gave him a grade increase of £36 and £14 over.

Hon. P. COLLIER: See the inconsistency! Last year some officers were singled out for increases, the Under Secretary for Works

being one. He was receiving £600. He obtained an increase of £50, which was not voted by the Committee. The Committee voted him only £600, yet he was paid an extra £50, although no other under secretary obtained a rise of any sort.

The Minister for Works: The Government saved £600 on the deal.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Now, on top of the £50 of last year, he gets £22 this year, which, we are told, is a grade rise. Apparently he gets two grade rises.

The Minister for Works: Yes. He got one and a bit last year, and the balance of the second this year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: He has two grade rises in two years, yet the officer who has all the work of controlling the prisons piled on to him has to be satisfied with one grade rise, although he got none last year. In five years the Under Secretary for Works has passed over the head of this Under Secretary. Again, the Under Secretary for Mines, who has held that post for only a year, is within £20 of the officer whose claims to recognition I advocate.

Mr. TROY: I have not said a word about the efficiency of this officer. I believe him to be very capable. But in addition to his former duties he has taken over the office of Comptroller General of Prisons, a post which formerly carried a salary of £700 a year. The irresistible inference is that either Mr. North has not been fully occupied in the past, or Mr. Burt was doing very little. Something is wrong either in one case or in the other. The Premier says the Government expect economy in administration from the Under Secretaries. In that case, what justification was there for an increase in Mr. Black's salary? I have been told by two ex-Treasurers, and not in confidence, that Mr. Black is absolutely incompetent. I do not know Mr. Black personally. My belief is that we shall not have effective management of the departments until we get new, active Under Secretaries. Every Minister who has been Mr. North's chief has described him as a very good man. However, I protest against the principle of granting increases to civil servants in receipt of, at all events, reasonable salaries, at a time of financial stringency. Incompetent officers in charge of departments should be displaced for capable men.

The Premier: I entirely agree with that.

Mr. JONES: I believe this officer to be one of the most competent men in the State service. The main business devolving upon him is, I understand, to act as buffer between the men who really control the work of the department, and the long-suffering but sometimes indignant public. In that respect I do not doubt the present Under Secretary is very competent indeed. I have never met a man better qualified to deal with angry people, and to satisfy them that he intends to do something or other, while in fact he intends to do nothing. As a diplomat he stands alone. That is why every Colonial Secretary has described Mr. North

as a most competent man. However, I do not know whether that sort of capacity is any good to the public. A man named Andinach is murdered at the Perth Public Hospital, and this diplomat hushes the matter up. When the Inspector General of the Insane has been desirous of victimising certain returned soldiers, I have gone in the dead of night to this Under Secretary to get the matter fixed up. If there is anything wrong with the hospitals under the control of the department, just a word whispered in the ear of this highly competent officer, and the head of the department will be saved considerable trouble in dealing with the matter. I support the amendment of the member for Mt. Magnet. Is an Under Secretary necessary in this case at all? He seems simply to exist in order to act as a buffer between the Minister and this House and the public. Regarding his duties as Comptroller General of Prisons, I agree with the member for Mt. Magnet that he has nothing particular to do in that respect. Whenever I have come in contact with him regarding grievances of the men working in the gaol, he has hardly even questioned, let alone varied, the decisions of the gaol superintendent. I fail to understand the Ministerial explanation of these grade increases, which vary in every instance, from £106 down to nothing at all.

Amendment put and negatived.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Aborigines, £5,268.

Item, Chief Protector, £456:

Mr. JONES: Here again the grade rise is only £12. There is a decrease in the vote of over £7,000 and I should like an assurance that this does not mean that the natives are being looked after less well than before. Since the white man, with his organisation, has taken better control of the pastoral industry, the pastoralist has sweated, bled, and lived upon the labour of the original owners of this country. The station owner, who was once content to act as a slave owner, in many cases is now forced to pay some wages.

The Colonial Secretary: You have told us that before.

Mr. JONES: The day has gone when the squatter was able to say to the aborigine, "Here is 4s. for a pair of trousers you had and 4s. for a pair you did not have," and beat him that way. When natives are employed at shearing time as shed hands, the union shearers see that they get something like decent wages, but they cannot be sure that the bulk of it is not paid back to the employers for stores. I do not say that every pastoralist would be guilty of this, but these wretched natives have been exploited in the past, and I am sure some of the pastoralists would not be averse to taking back much of the wages in the form of increased prices for the stores they supply. Though a native may be credited with having earned £3 a week by his work,

he may be charged £3 for a suit of clothes or a flash pair of boots; a few red handkerchiefs are of wonderful value to the aborigines, and thus the squatter is able to continue his nefarious practice of getting all he can from the native who is forced to work for him. Unfortunately, the labour organisations have no control over the natives working as station hands. The member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) will bear me out that a great many aborigines are employed by station owners at practically no wages at all. If the Chief Protector can evolve a scheme to watch over such pastoralists and compel them to keep a list of the wages actually paid, he will achieve a good work. The Minister and the Chief Protector should be prepared to stop the practice of squatters employing poor, uneducated members of the child race and paying them next to no wages. This sort of thing is no good to the country or to the aborigines. The decrease in the vote is probably due to the fact that many of these natives are able to earn decent wages which the squatters have been forced to pay owing the action of the union men. The natives are thus able to provide for themselves during the winter, and they need less in the shape of blankets and food from the Department. We cannot forget that we owe something to these men whose country we have taken, and we must see that they are not exploited too heavily. I do not know whether the £12 increase to the Chief Protector represents the grade rise. The secretary of the department is receiving a rise of £40. If the Premier will call in the assistance of the Under Secretary he might be able to explain it, or a professor of mathematics, armed with a blackboard, might be able to enlighten us how these grade rises are calculated. I hope the Chief Protector is seeing that the natives are not exploited by the profiteering squatters of the North-West.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The grade rise for the Chief Protector is £24. Only £12 is shown on the Estimates because the increase was given as from the 1st January.

Item, Secretary, £360:

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The Minister should explain why this officer is to receive an increase of £40. The most important officer in the department is the Chief Inspector. He is also Secretary for Immigration and will have great responsibilities on his shoulders if the effect is given to the Government policy for immigration on a large scale. I believe the Chief Protector is a very good officer, but why should the secretary receive an increase of £40? A statement from the Minister would be illuminating as to whether the secretary is overworked. During the last few months representative deputations in three of the States have waited on their Governments asking that large areas be allocated for the purpose of aboriginal reserves.

The Colonial Secretary: We have them here.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and that fact has led to a reduction in the cattle killing business that was so rampant a few years ago. The problem of dealing with the aborigines—a dying race—is largely solved; consequently the functions of this department must be becoming less important.

The Colonial Secretary: How is the problem solved?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Large areas have been set apart for the aborigines who are not employed by pastoralists, and I have heard very little dissatisfaction with this scheme. The natives at Moora and along the Great Southern are fairly well provided for, and are getting along as well as can be expected for such a class of people. I wish the Minister to explain this contrast between the two officers. I fail to see that the secretary is so overwhelmed with work that he should be voted an increase of £40 when other officers cannot get an increase of even £4.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The grade increase to this officer is £24 per annum.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why should he be as important as the Protector?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The amount is shown as £40, two increments being added for an officer employed during portion of last year.

Item, Clerks, £715:

Mr. LUTEY: There are five clerks to divide £715, giving an average of £143 each. That is not a decent living wage. I would like to know the individual salaries paid to these officers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Previously the accounts were all under the control of one department. Now there is an accountant for each sub-department, and the accountant is solely responsible for the accounts of the sub-department. That, together with the increments, accounts for the increase.

Mr. LUTEY: I wish to know what amount each man receives. If all five are accountants, they are getting a miserable salary of £143 each.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: One is an accounts officer. The others, I take it, are boys receiving small salaries.

Mr. O'Loghlen: What do you call boys?

Mr. Lutey: What amount do the juniors receive?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have not the individual amounts.

Item, School teachers, reserve managers, medical officers, nursing and domestic staffs, boatman, etc., and temporary labour, etc., £3,986:

Mr. PICKERING: Can the Minister tell us the outcome of the little trouble that occurred recently which led to the writing of a letter by the Chief Protector to a certain

Great Southern road board in respect of some aborigines suffering from influenza?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have a slight recollection of some trouble or inconvenience, but I cannot tell the hon. member the details. If he particularly desires to know, I shall be pleased to secure the information for him. There was nothing in the objection taken to the natives being there. The Chief Protector was not at fault.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Fisheries, £5,222.

Item, Chief Inspector, £504:

Mr. JONES: I should like to know where the item concerning the "Penguin" is to be found. I understand the Fisheries Department are taking over the boat as a trawler.

The Premier: You will have an opportunity of discussing that on the Loan Estimates.

Item, Secretary, £180:

Mr. PICKERING: This officer is also secretary to the Aborigines Department, and I understand that one-half the salary is charged to Fisheries and the other half to Aborigines.

Item, Temporary labour, allowances, etc., £1,054:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is this temporary labour or any of it to be employed fixing up the "Penguin"? If not, where are we to find the provision for the work?

The Colonial Secretary: It is on the Loan Estimates.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Are you going to repair an old boat out of Loan?

The Colonial Secretary: The Treasurer is providing the money for the repairs.

Hon. P. Collier: And where is the provision for working the vessel after she is repaired?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The information is not on my notes, or at all events I cannot find it. It was only recently decided that the boat should be taken over for this purpose, and although the provision is not shown here, it will be taken out of funds to be provided by the Treasurer.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Trust funds?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, and the provision will be shown on the Estimates next year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is not long since the present Minister for Mines sustained a rating for taking money out of trust funds, to enter into a State trading concern for the supply of fish, without a vote of the Committee. It now appears that the same system has been adopted by those who previously complained of it. The only remedy open to us is to keep down the amount allocated to the Treasurer for unforeseen expenditure. Of course, if the Government have realised that they made a mistake in closing up the State fish shops, and intend to introduce State fishing again,

I can only compliment them, but they should honestly confess their mistake and not attempt in this way to cover up what they are doing. When the State fish shops were open we at Fremantle used to get a little fish occasionally, but we very rarely see it now. This is the place where provision should be made for working the "Penguin."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have discovered the missing information. The provision allows for the necessary steaming between place and place and is based on the time the "Penguin" will take for that and for trawling purposes and the quantity of coal and stores that will be used. The estimated cost of running the vessel is £140 per week, or a total of £3,640 for a period of 26 weeks.

Hon. P. COLLIER: How is it proposed to distribute the fish?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The "Penguin" will go to the nearest port where there are facilities for handling fish.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Having regard to the scarcity and high price of fish, this is rather an important question. Fish are entirely beyond the purchasing power of the working class people to-day. Any move made by the Government to produce a plentiful supply of fish is a good one, but I am afraid that whilst the Government will spend £140 a week in increasing the supply of fish, the chances are the net result will be nil, that the price of fish will remain at what it is to-day. If the people are to get the benefit of the move, it will be necessary for the Government to see to the distribution as well as to the catching of the fish. This is the only remaining part of the Labour policy which the present Government have not taken up, and they might as well complete the list. It will be necessary for the Government to open fish stalls in order to give the benefit to the public; unless indeed they are able to meet the difficulty with their price-fixing proposals. There is a most complete ring among those controlling the catching and distribution of fish.

The Colonial Secretary: And they are the people who are making the profit.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They have had the consumers in their grip for years past. I know of men whose wealth has been built up out of the fish supply. At Kalgoorlie, at Boulder, and on the Murchison, fish can be obtained only from one source, while in the metropolitan area there is no competition whatever amongst the members of the ring. Those people will quickly arrive at an understanding in regard to the price they will pay for Government fish.

The Honorary Minister: You have to catch the fish first.

Hon. P. COLLIER: But surely the Government know that they can catch them!

The Honorary Minister: What does anybody know about trawling?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Would the Minister have us believe that this is merely an experiment? Have the Government not assured themselves of the probable results before investing money in the venture? Is it not known by the Fisheries Department that the trawling scheme is likely to be successful?

The Minister for Mines: They have a fair idea.

Hon. P. COLLIER: According to the interjection of the Honorary Minister, it is merely an experiment. The fish around our coasts could supply the world.

The Honorary Minister: But it is not all the grounds that you can trawl on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The high price of fish has not been due to the scarcity around our coast-line.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think any hon. member will object to the statement of the leader of the Opposition that we have any quantity of fish around our coast-line. But the great difficulty is that we are not seafaring people, and not too many will take on the work of fishing. Therefore, we have had to depend on foreigners. I dealt with the question recently of trying to decrease the cost of this commodity and to keep up the supplies. It will be remembered that we had a great shortage of meat at the time, and it was also at a period of the year when the fish supply, so far as the Swan river was concerned, was falling off. I took into my confidence the men engaged in the fishing industry in the river, and they assured me that if I were to make further reaches of the river available for netting, they would do their part. It was decided to open up a fair area of water which previously had always been closed, the understanding being that the fishermen would not ask an increased price for the fish they might catch. We had not proceeded far before we discovered that some of the fishermen were prepared to profiteer if they got the chance. A day or two after the announcement was made, I was communicated with by the town clerk of Perth, who said, "I suppose you know that all the fish caught in the Swan river has to go through the city markets to be inspected." I said I did not know that and, moreover, I pointed out that the city council might have control over what happened within their own boundaries, but as the river was outside their boundaries this was no affair of theirs. We, however, discovered that we were up against an obstacle, and it was that by distributing the fish outside the city markets, the price of the fish in the city immediately rose. Then the fishermen in the city demanded the same price as those who were distributing it outside were receiving. The price went up from 1s. 4d. to 2s. 9d. a dozen, and I would not like to say that that was not by arrangement. Notwithstanding our protest, we were not able to do anything, but I know that the president of the

fishermen's association threw up the game because he refused to be a party to that kind of thing after having entered into an honourable understanding with the Government. We found then that we had a pretty hard task to control the matter satisfactorily from the point of view of the consumer. It all meant bunce to the fishermen but not to the consumer. Recently we had a report from the Commonwealth authorities regarding the operations of the trawler "Endeavour," which carried on its work in the Great Australian Bight east of Eucla, and the report stated that from a trawling point of view that ground was probably the best on the Australian coast. That was as far as the "Endeavour" came. The State Fisheries Department are of the opinion that we should fit up a ship as a trawler and explore the waters on the western side of Eucla towards Albany, and probably we would then find grounds which were as good for trawling purposes as those which the "Endeavour" discovered on the other side of Eucla. In the event of such a discovery, it would be possible for the Government, or for a company who knew something about trawling operations, to take up the business and supply our people with fish. The steamer "Penguin," while not a trawler, may be satisfactorily fitted up for the purpose of testing those grounds.

The Colonial Secretary: A trawler would cost £36,000 to-day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Our main object is not so much experimental as it is exploratory.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought your Government would not enter into State trading?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is hardly State trading.

The Premier: It is State feeding.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have been extremely fortunate in connection with this matter, inasmuch as quite recently there arrived from England a gentleman who has practically all his life been engaged in trawling operations in the North Sea. Before leaving England he was engaged in sweeping for mines. Prior to that he was in charge of a fleet of trawlers. I happened to meet him here and it is proposed now to secure his services in connection with the fitting out of the "Penguin," so that operations may be carried out for a month or two. The skipper of the "Penguin" in that time will gain a knowledge of trawling and will receive valuable assistance from this expert, who will help us to introduce the best methods. Trawling has been revolutionised at Home since the war started, and the gentleman to whom I refer has a complete knowledge of its operations. We are therefore very fortunate in being able to get the benefit of his experience.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I only desire to make a few remarks to show the apparent inconsistency between the deeds of the Govern-

ment and their professions. They are going to be responsible for launching what appears to be another trading concern, and I have no doubt that the Chamber of Commerce will look upon it as a fishy proposition, financial and otherwise. When members on this side of the House were wooing the suffrages of the electors, the air was full of denunciations of State activities. Now we have a proposal put up to further demonstrate our latent wealth, a proposal which will involve the expenditure of a large sum of money. I have no objection to it; I am pleased that the Government are so enamoured of the utility and benefits to be derived from collective ownership. The settled policy of this country, it was claimed, was disturbed as a result of the last elections; the trading concerns were to be sold up.

The Premier: Are you in favour of that?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: No. That is why I am supporting this item with a good deal of enthusiasm. This action of the Government now will result in one of two things: either they develop the fishing industry by means of trawling for the benefit of a private company, and perhaps ultimately for the benefit of the State, or they must operate it themselves. If the fish are here some good must come from the proposition. All the Ministers sitting on the front bench have gone back on the pledge they made. To-day they are prepared to launch out and go further ahead. I am glad they have profited by experience.

The Premier: Come over here.

Hon. T. Walker: No; you come over here.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There is no need for us to go over there.

Mr. Munsie: We will be over there soon enough.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am convinced that the party on this side of the House has no right to go over there until the public are educated to support the proposals they stand for. I am satisfied also, in regard to this proposal, that it is sound, and that public opinion is behind collective ownership rather than private enterprise, at any rate in the matter of feeding the people. A group of some 20 returned soldiers who desired to go in for the industry of fish preserving had received an offer of a boat and required some assistance, but I do not know what came of the matter. A deputation waited on the Premier to urge that assistance should be given. It was claimed by these men that they had the necessary experience, and that if they had some help they might improve the present position. Some of these men were not formerly engaged in the occupation, and the Repatriation Department would not assist them. If a clerk comes back from the war the Repatriation Department will find him a clerk's position, but if he is a pearler and desires to set up again in that industry, the amount that is offered him is too small to enable him to do anything. It rests with the State Government, therefore, to see

whether it is worth while to put our fish on the market by engaging such groups of men as I have mentioned, provided they have the necessary experience and knowledge. The Minister for Mines says he has secured the services of a man from England who is going to help through the venture. I am glad to hear it.

The Minister for Mines: We are paying him for the job.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That does not worry me so long as the man is doing his job. Other men have come here who have been going to do a great deal for the benefit of the State, but they have failed. I hope this new-comer will prove more successful than they did. If this fish enterprise will assist us, then it will have my hearty support.

The PREMIER: The matter in connection with the "Torrens" is being gone into. I hope we will be able to do something for these men. I believe that our sea is full of wealth, and this ought to be turned to account. The Government are determined that something must be done to keep down the cost of living, and a cheap fish supply is one means of doing this. I asked the member for Wagin (Mr. Stubbs) and Mr. Kingsmill to meet Mr. Aldridge, the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, and discuss the matter with him. They did so. The result was that the "Penguin" was fitted up. Considerable work was done by the "Endeavour."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If the fish is landed at Albany the rail charges will have to go against it.

The PREMIER: Grounds have been located, and we believe that other grounds will be found near Albany. It is the duty of the Government to see that the people get a plentiful supply of fish at a cheap rate. We know that this boat cannot be fitted up permanently as a trawler. She will be fitted out with proper gear and the fish she gets will be placed on the market. If it can be determined without doubt that fish are available in large quantities, we will see that the people of the State get it at a reasonable price.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a good proposition.

The PREMIER: If we can locate the grounds our troubles will be over. We shall get a plentiful supply of fish in our own waters, and the people will get the benefit. The only great need of the people of this country is cheap living, and I am going to remedy that difficulty with all the means at my command.

Hon. T. WALKER: I am in doubt as to how far the Government propose to go.

The Premier: We are going to fish.

Hon. T. WALKER: What is going to be done with the fish when it is caught?

The Minister for Mines: Hand it to the member for Fremantle to sell. What a voice for selling fish!

Hon. T. WALKER: It should be a profitable monopoly. I understand the Government are going to see whether there are any

fish or not, and are going to start where the "Endeavour" ceased her trawling.

The Honorary Minister: The point is to see whether there are suitable trawling grounds or not.

Hon. T. WALKER: That has been demonstrated further East. There are excellent trawling grounds from which to supply the world's market. The mere conveyance of the fish by water is a bagatelle. The Minister for Mines put facts before us in regard to his endeavour to cheapen the fish supply in Perth. His very effort produced a rise. The ring started to create such friction that the man who was in charge of the fish shops had to give up as he was helpless. Prices everywhere went up, and fish to-day is at a prohibitive price. In many parts of the world it is practically the main article of diet on account of its cheapness, but not so here, because it is in the hands of those who rig the market and have the full control of it. Fish has been brought into market, purchased and destroyed, and we have had to pass legislation to prevent such destruction. Tons of fish have been wasted. The Minister for Mines hinted at the only thing that can be done to prevent this, namely, that we must break down the ring, and have a distribution that will take the supply out of the hands of the ring and give it to the consumer with as little additional expense as possible.

The Minister for Mines: If you get the quantity you will soon succeed in that.

Hon. T. WALKER: Not necessarily. We have seen combines and trusts who have had unlimited supplies at their command, but once they have the command they regulate the supply to the consumer. Whilst the market is controlled by a few persons, no matter how great the supplies may be, the distribution to the public is small.

The Minister for Mines: Our present idea is to arrange with returned soldiers for its distribution.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is a good thing. Unless we can break down the ring this waste in fish will go on. With the abundant supply we have at our doors it is almost a crime that we cannot have sufficient supplies for the feeding of our citizens. The mere fixing of a price will not overcome the difficulty. It will be necessary first to make an inroad upon those who now have the monopoly.

The Minister for Works: We should make it a penal offence to interfere with the food of the people, or we should hang those who do so.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. JONES: I am sorry the Minister is not able to give the Committee an undertaking that the Government will embark not only in the catching of fish but also in the distribution of fish, without which they will be simply playing into the hands of the fishing combine.



The Premier: I promise you that will not happen.

Mr. JONES: Unless the Government are prepared to undertake the establishment of State fish shops I do not see how they will avoid it.

The Premier: The sole purpose is to make a supply of fish available at a cheaper price than at present.

Mr. JONES: I hope that even if they refuse to establish fish shops they will at least supply the Government institutions with State fish. It is not seemly that public money should be spent in fitting out a trawler that a private monopoly should get the advantage of selling the fish.

The Premier: I promise that nothing of the sort shall happen.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I have been informed that there is not much probability of success for trawling on the west coast for the reason that where fish are to be found there is a bad bottom, unsuitable for trawling, while wherever there is a good sandy bottom there are no fish. I admit that I got this information from a member of the fishing combine and, therefore, perhaps it ought to be discounted. However, I trust the Government will take that contingency into consideration and will thoroughly test the coastal waters in many localities. If the trawling proves successful it will result in considerable benefit to the people.

Mr. ROCKE: The fact that trawlers have to go long distances suggests that the fish in localities nearer to the metropolitan area have been depleted. That is true, and unfortunately it has been brought about by preventable causes. For some years the fishing industry has been monopolised by foreigners who have been using nets of a mesh so small that the very young fish have been unable to escape. For 20 or 30 miles along the coast north and south of Fremantle, millions of small fish are to be seen lying dead on the sand. It proves that the men in charge of this department are incompetent; if it were not so they would not have allowed such destruction of fish life to go on. It has been suggested that the "Penguin" is to do work of an exploratory nature. That has been done already by the "Endeavour."

The Colonial Secretary: Not on the west coast.

Mr. ROCKE: The reports we have of the west coast are not very encouraging. It was found that the bottom was of a rocky nature and the damage done to the trawl was not recompensed by the catch. The water found to be satisfactory is that lying to the east of Albany in the Great Australian Bight, in about latitude 35. This bank has some 300 feet of water on it. To send the "Penguin" there would be courting disaster, because it is not possible for her to work in that latitude. She might be successful in trawling for gilgies in Monger's Lake, but the Government ought to reconsider their plans before spending £3,640 on a project doomed to failure. If we could obtain an

ample fish supply it would be helpful to the people, but the way we are going about it is not very encouraging. We had a boat, the "Una," a North Sea trawler, at one time. A vessel of that description would be satisfactory for that purpose. Anything smaller or of a lighter construction is inadequate and useless from a practical standpoint. If the "Penguin" is to achieve any success she must be sent north into the smooth water.

Mr. ANGELO: The project of sending out the "Penguin" to prospect for fish is unjustifiable. It is like a man with a gold mine looking around for other fields instead of working what he has got. Within 40 hours' sail of Fremantle we have all the fish that Western Australia can consume.

The Premier: It is too far away.

Mr. ANGELO: I doubt whether within 40 hours of Fremantle you can possibly get anywhere else the fish known to be in Shark Bay. A past Government launched a scheme but had an unsuitable boat, namely the "Una," which was far too slow to bring down the fish. If we had a decent boat for a transport between Shark Bay and Fremantle, the fishing industry would prove very successful. For six months in the year small sailing boats go up from Geraldton every week to fish in Shark Bay, but they have to beat back against a strong sea breeze and sometimes ten days are spent on the return journey. The whole difficulty is that of transport. If the Government could overcome that difficulty the fishing would be successful. Rather than fit out the "Penguin" as a trawler, it would be wise to fit her with refrigerating space and let her bring down the fish.

Mr. Willcock: The fish combine do that now with a small auxiliary steamer.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, and if they can do it with such a boat surely we could do it with the "Penguin." If there was once a market established by a steamer calling at regular intervals, the question of settling returned soldiers in the industry would be simplified. A fishing boat operating in Shark Bay would only cost about £150. The whole difficulty is in regard to transport. If the "Penguin" were fitted up for this purpose, the "Bambra" fitted up with cool storage space, the "Eucla" similarly fitted up, and the refrigerating space on the Singapore boats, which was not being used, were taken by the Government, we should get down at least one boat a week, if not more, for the conveyance of fish to the metropolitan area. When I was at Shark Bay the other day, three lads went out in a 16-foot boat and came back with one ton and a half of schnapper in one day. On another occasion a friend of mine threw out a net and caught 150 large mullet. This shows that fish is very plentiful in the district of which I speak. The fishing boats would only require to work within a radius of about 50 miles from the place at which the steamers would call.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Friendly Societies and Registry, £8,711.

Item, Registrar of Friendly Societies and Actuary, also Registrar General and Government Statistician, £672:

Mr. JONES: Last year we voted for this office £636. This was raised by £18, and we are now asked to give another increase of £18. I do not know whether it was intended to mislead the Committee into believing that the rise was only £18.

Item, Clerk of Arbitration Court and Clerks, £1,260:

Mr. JONES: I hope this total amount includes a grade rise for the clerk of the Arbitration Court. This officer was brought down from the goldfields and is an exceptionally able man. He held a position in the court in Kalgoorlie, and was brought to Perth at a less salary than he was getting there. So much depends upon this officer in the matter of the ease with which the various employers and employees can approach the court in connection with an alteration in wages and conditions. I trust that a substantial rise will be given to this officer in order to bring him up to the salary he sacrificed at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I should like the Minister to inform the House as to what rise this officer is getting?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am unable to answer the question, but will look into the matter and see whether the position is as stated.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The position of clerk of the Arbitration Court is an important one, and that being so the position should be set out separately in the Estimates. This officer was in the Mines Department when I was the Minister controlling it. He was clerk of courts and mining registrar at Southern Cross. In accepting the position at the Arbitration Court he made a financial sacrifice. I understand that since then his salary has been increased beyond that which he was drawing prior to accepting the position. I hope this officer is going to share in the increase to a greater extent than some of the other officers in the service. His position is a responsible one and he is a capable man.

The Colonial Secretary: The item will be shown separately in next year's Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Gaols, £24,315:

Mr. JONES: I should like the Minister to say what the position is regarding the superintendent of the Fremantle prison.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We have at present an acting superintendent. I am sorry to say that the superintendent himself is unable through ill-health to take on the position again.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Who is acting?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Badger. The matter is now under consideration. I take it that Mr. Badger will

be appointed to the position if he is considered suitable.

Hon. T. WALKER: When the amendment to the Criminal Code was before the House, I took exception to the provision regarding the indeterminate sentences. I said that it was a farce to introduce that measure, and that we would not be able to put it into effect, that we had not the man to carry on the requisite work for the purpose of reform or for the general treatment of those who were not criminals by nature. I was assured that there would be no playing with the matter, that men who were qualified by training and by a study of this special branch of human pathology would be selected. We on this side take great exception to the appointment of the customary go-as-you-please board.

The Colonial Secretary: What board do you refer to?

Hon. T. WALKER: I am referring to the board which deals with indeterminate sentences. It is astounding that we have passed the Act, that the attention of our judges have been drawn to it, and that long ago they have put these provisions into operation. There are prisoners now undergoing their sentences; yet there is neither reformatory nor any such provision as was indicated by the hon. member in charge of the measure. There is an announcement now that the Government intend to make Rottenest the place for a reformatory. This should not be done until the House has been consulted, and special expert knowledge has been obtained as to its fitness, as regards distance from the metropolis, and general supervision. The prisoners sentenced by the judges to the reformatory and to the indeterminate sentence have been misled by the Government, by the Parliament, and by the law of the land. We have been led to believe that we had this reformatory. We have the law; yet we have not one iota of provision to carry out the law.

The Colonial Secretary: We are making provision now.

Hon. T. WALKER: But prisoners have been sentenced under this Act. The Government are making provision now for men who do not know what fate is to be theirs in future. I pointed out what a farce it was to pass measures of this kind without any adequate provision to meet them. There was nothing on the Estimates for the purpose, and I ask the Minister how much he has put on these Estimates for the purpose. The farce is going on. We have the vague promise that the Government are now making provision. Yet prisoners have been sentenced under the Act. It is a fraud. We put men in gaol for breaking the law, but Ministers are breaking the law. They are allowing judges, under false pretences, to pass sentences upon men fraudulently, to send them to a reformatory, and there is no reformatory; to sen-

tence them to indeterminate imprisonment and there is no provision to deal with such cases. Can we call ourselves intelligent human beings when we have such a tragical farce as this? The Government have gone so far as to get a board. Who are the members?

Hon. P. Collier: And their qualifications?

Hon. T. WALKER: Hann is one, is he not?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. T. WALKER: There is a nice specimen! I believe he is a well meaning man; I have nothing to say against him personally, but we know he has committed most egregious blunders. He is under suspension now.

The Colonial Secretary: You are wrong.

Hon. T. WALKER: Well, he is under medical treatment.

The Colonial Secretary: That is a very different thing.

Hon. T. WALKER: But he was under suspension.

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Mr. Jones: He has been several times.

Hon. T. WALKER: What is the Minister telling me? When Costigan was flogged illegally at Hann's instructions, what action was taken?

The Colonial Secretary: If the hon. member knows, let him say.

Hon. T. WALKER: He was suspended, was he not?

The Colonial Secretary: I do not know.

Hon. T. WALKER: This is how the laws of the country are administered—by men who do not know. This is a matter of the most vital importance to the welfare of the community; yet the Minister does not know. Here is a branch of human pathology utterly ignored. The very man who ought not to be there, even were there not that to be said disparagingly of him as a qualification, is there. He ought not to be there because he himself is concerned in the administration of the gaol. He is in every sense of the word the chief gaoler—call him by any soft nomenclature you like—and he is not the man to have the judgment. His advice, his information, his records of facts might be of assistance to the board, but he should not be there in the capacity of gaoler and judge, because his own conduct is concerned in the treatment of a prisoner, and he is really a judge of himself and of his own methods. He is the very last man who should be on the board in a judicial capacity.

The Colonial Secretary: He will not be there.

Hon. T. WALKER: Is not he on the new list?

The Colonial Secretary: He will not be there in a judicial capacity now.

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not mean judicial in the usual form. I mean quasi judicial. He has to sit in judgment and, when a man exercises judgment, he acts in a judicial capacity. Surely the Minister is not quibbling about the exact technical application

of terms. He is acting by the exercise of judgment as to the fitness or otherwise of a person to stay under his guardianship or treatment, or to be abroad in the world amongst his fellow citizens. I know nothing that requires more judicial temperament than that. There must be no bias, no disturbing deflection to correct judgment by undue sympathies or antipathies. He must be able to clearly judge on the facts physiological and pathological. Hann's position will not permit that attitude of mind; yet he is a member of the board, practically a guiding spirit of it. That should not be so. I was berated and belittled in this House by those in charge of the measure at the time because of my opposition to it. What I said here then has proved true to the letter. There is the same old goody-goody. I do not say it sneeringly, but for want of a better word to express those kindly meaning individuals who like to be interfering with their fellow men with the best of motives but who have not the faintest qualifications for the position. This is how the Government are carrying out reforms. What happens now? A man is awarded the Kathleen Mavourneen sentence and he may as well be sent to the lunatic asylum. He has no chance of coming out; he is kept there, for ever isolated. The old Bastille where men were plunged and forgotten, and their names were changed and no one could find out whether they were alive or dead, was on a par with this very thing. But it is of no concern. No one cares. All the spreadeagledism and high falutinism of those in charge of the measure was merely dust thrown in the eyes of the public, making the people believe that we were becoming more humane. We are worse off than ever we were. Under the veil created by the assurances of Ministers and the endorsement of that measure by vice-regal assent, I ventured to ask one of our judges to sentence an offender of that class to the indeterminate sentence with a view to giving him the necessary care and treatment and moral strengthening that would enable him to keep out of gaol for the future. It galls me to think I should have trusted and believed that in good faith and perfect honour the Bill was introduced into this House, when it was a fraud, a sham, and a lie. There is upon me now the feeling that I have done a great wrong to a fellow human being in trusting the Government of the day and trusting our Acts of Parliament. I do not know what will become of this man now. The feeling of helplessness of one to do the right thing is upon me and when one knows the thing called crime is a defect in nature that needs treatment and care and not vindictive punishment, it is terribly humiliating to know one can do nothing. He is thrown into the dungeon, as it were, and has no one to care for him in any sense unless it is to pamper him, or whisper hope that is still further deluding, or make pretence of attending to his welfare and doing nothing. There is no machinery whatever to help a fallen mortal the Gov-

ernment has created, and yet they have had all the kudos and glorification of passing a measure of this kind—Press-bespattered and pulpit-belauded, but nothing done. If private companies did such a thing they would find themselves in gaol for false pretences. A deliberate fraud upon the public and a fraud that plays upon the most tender spots of the public conscience! Is there not to be any change? I am afraid I would be misunderstood if I were to designate the committee by terms that would exactly fit them. There is not one on that committee in any way qualified for the position he holds. Good men they are in their walks of life, but in no other sense qualified for the posts they have been given. Has the Colonial Secretary thought about it, or is he merely a machine for the operation of the underlings of his department? Is that the position he occupies, or has he an independent mind? Instead of decreasing the cost of the gaol, the gaol costs will increase considerably in the future. By our indifference and callousness we are in our administrative functions creating criminals, not curing them or preventing them. The whole method is a dogging of humanity and treating the fallen sisterhood or brotherhood as though they were devil-possessed, or creatures with the sulphur of hell upon them, shunned and despised, with the utmost abhorrence. That is the spirit we exhibit towards the unfortunates of human society! These are the by-products of society as a whole. Just as of old we used to treat the lunatic as a criminal, just as we treated the delirious as devil-possessed, so are we now treating the weak-minded, the degenerates and the cripples as devil-possessed, shutting them out of the world, blinding our eyes and steeling our hearts, keeping them there as a pretence that we are doing some good to society by having high walls and iron gates to keep them inside. I am aware that some of the officers are studying advanced works on this subject, but nothing has reached the Minister. It is a subterfuge, a pretence, a gigantic public fraud, contemptible in the highest degree, inhuman, uncivilised, tolerated by all of us, with apparently nobody in this House to move a finger or raise a voice against it, and not a word in the public Press next morning. The sins of the Government are screened by the silence of the Press. The public have no chance. These poor voiceless unfortunates have no opportunity whatever. They have no one to defend them. Mr. Chairman, you know what happens when a man gets ill of soul, ill of mind. It is like a man possessed of leprosy; no one wants to take him by the hand, no one wants to press him to his bosom. Out of sight as soon as possible, bury him from view and from consideration. Let him be as the people of the underworld, to be occasionally heard of to create and excite horror, but never to get one shred of light from that darkness, from that dismal existence which is his. I think when we are treating with cases of this kind, in nine cases

out of ten they are the result of a diseased mind, a diseased organisation. An habitual criminal, like the kleptomaniac or the dipsomaniac, or even a man who is brutalised and is guilty of repeated acts of violence—in nine cases out of ten he is disordered from birth. He brought the disorder with him in his system. It was transmitted to him. He never asked for it. It was imposed upon him, and with those defects upon him he has to struggle with society, and on his first slip is flung into the cataract of destruction. What is going to be done? Are we to have an Act administered as it should be, as it was pretended it would be when it was introduced? Are we to have a person at the head of the board who knows something of criminology, of mental diseases, of nerve affections, of pathological conditions produced by congenital or pre-congenital causes, of the subsequent effect of surroundings, environment, or accident; or are we to go on in the same old jog-trot way we have done hitherto? We are only fraudulently hypocritical if we do this. It is a standing farce to pretend to be doing a thing, or to be doing it so as to mislead the judges of our courts and our magistrates, so as to get the credit which is not deserved. Has the Colonial Secretary given any thought to the subject? Whom has he consulted, or has he just allowed Mr. North, whom I respect, Mr. Hann, and one or two more of his underlings—and that is not said contemptuously—to dictate to him? Has he no original force at all? In other words, is he a Minister or is he a puppet to be pulled by strings, or has he power of independent action?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** It has been pointed out that a board was appointed to carry out the provisions of the Act. I desire to tell the member for Kanowna that the Board was appointed with the approval of Cabinet.

**Hon. T. Walker:** All the worse.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** We have every reason to believe that the board will carry out their duties, and that is all that is expected of them. So far as the reformatory is concerned, it was pointed out to the House last night that we have now set apart a reserve at Rottneest and work will be commenced as soon as possible. The Government recognise that we must have a reformatory, to enable us to carry out the provisions of the Act which has been passed, and when the building is completed it will be taken over for reformatory purposes. Prisoners will be taken to the reserve to assist in building bungalows, which will be required for the accommodation of the officers. No better site could be found than that at Rottneest.

**Hon. P. Collier:** Will the reformatory be separate from the portion of the island visited by the general public?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Yes; it will be away altogether from the tourist site. The area reserved comprises 400 or 500 acres.

Mr. Jones: When will the work be started? There is no item for it on these Estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The work will proceed as soon as the reserve has been gazetted, which will be done on Friday next.

Mr. JONES: I wish that in his reply to the member for Kanowna the Colonial Secretary had given the names of the members of the Indeterminate Sentence Board, together with their qualifications for judging what treatment their fellow-men should receive. As a matter of psychological interest I should like to trace the workings of the mind that appointed this most extraordinary board. It is indeed strange that at this period of the social history of the world, when it is recognised that criminality is a disease just as much as insanity, any so-called social reformer who has shown a desire to figure on charitable or patriotic committees or in other limelight stunts should be thought a fit and proper person for appointment to this board. To me the thing is simply appalling. I hope the Colonial Secretary will give an assurance that the new head turnkey will not be appointed to the board. The position will be more than Gilbertian if the gaol superintendent is to make recommendations to himself as Chairman of the Indeterminate Sentence Board, to be finally reviewed by himself as Under Secretary in the Colonial Secretary's Department. I believe the Colonial Secretary wishes to give a fair trial to the absurd measure inflicted on Parliament by the late Attorney General. If so, I hope the Colonial Secretary will not further hamper the cause of reform by appointing an absolutely impracticable board. During the twelve months that the Act dealing with this subject has been in existence, nothing whatever has been attempted, or even mooted, to arrange for the treatment of prisoners under indeterminate sentence. We find those prisoners in even worse case than prisoners sentenced to hard labour; we find them immured, isolated, for 22 hours out of the 24 in separate cells, certainly roomy, but in which they are required to eat and sleep and perform the offices of nature. They are allowed only two hours' exercise in the fresh air daily. A hard labour prisoner gets the chance to mix with other inmates of the prison and to occupy his mind with some useful occupation. I do not wonder that the late Attorney General, though within the precincts of the Chamber, was ashamed to come here and face the criticism of his measure by the member for Kanowna. I do not know how far the Colonial Secretary's responsibility goes in the appointment of the Board; but I urge that, in order to give the Act a chance, he should appoint a board of men who know something about the subject. Would the Minister think for a moment of putting a board selected from the Women's Christian

Temperance Union in charge of the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont, or in charge of the Perth Public Hospital? He would not. Then why should persons of that description be appointed to the Indeterminate Sentence Board? In the interests of humanity at large, and in the interests of the unfortunate members of our community, I implore the Colonial Secretary to appoint a decent board.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Harbour and Light, £19,802.

Item, Chief Harbour Master, £528:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We have in this officer one of the best public servants in the State, but the acting harbour master is an official of a board. Until the late chief harbour master was retired on account of ill health, he always held the position of chief harbour master at Fremantle in conjunction with the same position for other ports. We are told that economy is being practised nowadays, and I want to know why the present chief harbour master, Captain Winzar, cannot also be harbour master for the port of Fremantle? When the late chief harbour master held the dual positions, the business of the port of Fremantle was considerably more than it is to-day, or has been for the last three or four years. The falling off for 1917-18, the latest year for which figures are available, was at the rate of about 50 per cent.

The Colonial Secretary: That was due to the war.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I admit that. Why is it necessary for the Trust to pay another harbour master when it was the intention of Parliament that the Chief Harbour Master of the State should also be the harbour master for the port of Fremantle? I think the provision was put in the Act to prevent the Harbour Trust from appointing another harbour master. The question is whether Captain Winzar, the Chief Harbour Master of the State, should not also be the Chief Harbour Master of Fremantle. Captain Morrison, who is the acting Chief Harbour Master of the port of Fremantle, is also chief pilot. He cannot carry out both offices and it must affect the amount paid for additional pilots. If the Chief Harbour Master of the State could do the work of harbour master at the port of Fremantle in 1913-14 he ought to be able to do it now when there is a smaller number of ships calling at the port. In addition, it would have the tendency of keeping the Government more in touch with the work of the harbour.

Item, Wharfingers, jetty and tramway wages, relieving wharfinger, £8,500:

Mr. ANGELO: A considerable amount in wages and the time of consignees could be saved if more space was given for storage of goods in the sheds connected with the tramways. Large cargoes arrive by steamers trading on the North-West coast and there is too much cargo for the space allotted.

That means that extra men have been employed in piling the cargo almost to the top of the sheds. If double the storage were supplied, there would not be the necessity for this. The cost of extra storage space will be more than repaid in a year owing to the labour that will be obviated. As I passed through Narrogin and Spencer's Brook I noticed that the wheat sheds were empty. If the iron could be purchased from the Wheat Pool, it would be very useful in supplying the accommodation necessary in the North-West ports. Considerable damage is also done to wool because there is no storage.

The Colonial Secretary: I will look into the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Immigration, £1,302.

Item, Clerks, temporary labour, etc., £982:

Mr. PICKERING: I notice that there is no increase in the salary of the secretary in charge of the Department of Immigration, and this in view of the fact that we are expecting a large number of immigrants at an early date. I would like to know when this large number of immigrants are expected.

The Colonial Secretary: I cannot say. Probably they will not start before February or March or even later.

Mr. PICKERING: In view of the statement that they are coming to the number of 12,000 a year, I think there should be more on the Estimates for receiving these immigrants and dealing properly with them on arrival. But probably there is no foundation for the statement.

The Colonial Secretary: Provision will be made as previously.

Mr. MALEY: I ask the Minister to make an effort to find out the policy of the Government as to immigration.

The Colonial Secretary: The Premier has explained the Government's policy.

Mr. MALEY: We are told that 25,000 immigrants may arrive each year, but there is no extension of the vote.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree with the Minister that there is no chance of getting any immigrants for the next 12 months. Provision is made from loan for immigration; nothing is provided on the revenue Estimates. I was connected with immigration for some years and the Government at that time made a practice as far as possible to get the right class of people. We made an attempt in England to prevent false statements being circulated in regard to immigration and as a matter of fact had a man sent to gaol for six months. We got desirable people here, and without being egotistical, I may say that I perused every nomination form, and inspected every immigrant ship when it arrived. There is no doubt that the future of this State, after we have settled the soldiers, depends entirely on immigration.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Inspection of liquor, £550.

Item, Inspector £350:

Mr. LUTEY: I see there is only one inspector for the whole of the State.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There used to be two inspectors. One was cut out with the view of the Health Department making the inspections. There have been quite a number of inspections made during the year—I have a list of them here if the hon. member wants it—but not so many as in the previous year, as owing to the influenza outbreak the department did not have time to make as many inspections as they would have liked to do. I admit that it means a lot of work for the single inspector and he is not able to get around the country often enough and it is desirable that frequent inspections should be made.

Mr. PICKERING: I should like to know the result of inspections during the last year, whether they have demonstrated the necessity for the appointment of more inspectors. I think there is sufficient work for one inspector in Perth alone. Also I should like to know what qualifications the inspectors have for testing liquor.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think they are properly qualified. During the year 8,381 inspections were made. Fines totalling £89 were inflicted.

Mr. PICKERING: It bears out my argument that there is work for more than one inspector.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Labour Bureau, £3,184:

Mr. WILLCOCK: Last year I stressed the point that officers in charge of smaller centres should be given a little more discretion in respect of issuing railway passes to penniless applicants for work. In Perth the secretary can write out an authority for a railway pass and the applicant can go off to his job, but in Geraldton or Kalgoorlie, where there is not a large volume of business, the question of issuing a railway pass has to be referred to Perth by letter, and in the meantime the applicant for work has nothing to do and no money to take him out of the town. Even if the local officer in charge had to consult the resident magistrate before providing the railway pass, it would be a very great improvement on the present system. I should like a promise from the Minister that I shall not have to bring up this matter again on next year's Estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The question has not previously been brought under my notice. I will look into it and if it is possible to carry out the hon. member's suggestion, it shall be done.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Lunacy and inebriates, £70,100:

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am going to move that consideration of this vote be postponed until we reach the end of the other Estimates. In the circumstances I think

it is only a fair request. There is at present a select committee inquiring into the management of this institution, and we should be entirely lacking in our sense of responsibility if we were to pass the vote for this institution before we have the report of that select committee in our hands. I do not think there will be any opposition to this motion. During the past week or two we have frequently postponed whole divisions. If we can do that, I think we can postpone this vote.

The Colonial Secretary: What is the object of the postponement?

Hon. P. COLLIER: At the present time a select committee of this House is inquiring into the whole management of the institution.

The Colonial Secretary: That will not affect the vote.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Most certainly it will. The report of that select committee may be in such terms as will warrant the Committee in taking action in regard to the Estimates. If the Estimates shall have been already passed, our opportunity will have gone. Of course we shall have a chance for a general discussion on the report of the select committee, but we can have no effective voice if in the meantime we pass the Estimates. I understand it is likely that the report of the select committee will be available next week, before we shall have reached the end of the Estimates as a whole. I move—

That consideration of the Vote be postponed until after the other votes shall have been considered.

Motion put and passed; consideration of the Vote postponed.

Vote—Observatory, £1,791:

Mr. MALEY: I should like to know for how much longer the position of Government Astronomer is to be described as "Acting Government Astronomer." If the Observatory is to be continued, it is time the Government confirmed the present astronomer in his appointment.

Mr. LUTEY: I intend to move that the vote be struck out. This should be a charge on the Commonwealth Government. On the last occasion this vote came before the House it was only the eloquence of the member for Kanowna that saved the Observatory. While the State is prepared to go on paying for this non-revenue producing department I am satisfied we can continue to do so till the crack of doom. I move—

That the vote be struck out.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Negotiations have been going on with the Commonwealth Government to take over the Observatory. No one, however, would care to see the Commonwealth take over the fine grounds attached to the building. The Observatory is serving a useful purpose.

The Minister for Mines: They undertake to close it down as an observatory if they do take it over.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We do not want to lose this institution, and I hope the motion will not be agreed to.

Mr. MUNSIE: All these matters connected with the Observatory almost entirely belong to the Commonwealth. I do not see why the State should pay for them. If the Commonwealth want an Observatory in Western Australia to do their work, they should pay for it. What benefit are we receiving from this expenditure of £1,782? Can the Minister tell the Committee one useful purpose which this institution is serving?

Mr. ANGELO: Whilst I should like to see the expenditure handed over to the Federal Government, I do not want to see the Observatory done away with. The telegrams that are sent from that institution to Nor'-West ports are of great service to shipping people, in that they foretell the approach of storms. In my opinion if this system had been in vogue at the time the "Koombana" was lost the disaster would not have occurred. At the same time the Observatory can do more good than it does. In Mr. Cooke's time people were invited to visit the Observatory, and he usually gave them an instructive and pleasant evening. Mr. Curlew should be advised to follow in his footsteps. School children might also be invited occasionally to hear something about astronomy.

Mr. JONES: The motion has not gone far enough. The hon. member should have included such votes as the Zoological Gardens, the Museum, the Art Gallery, the University, the Education Department and others.

Mr. Munsie: Tell us something of use that the observatory does.

Mr. JONES: The member for Gascoyne unfortunately mixed up the Commonwealth Meteorological Department with the State observatory. The only connection between the two is that the Commonwealth Department use the observatory to keep their instruments in.

Mr. Duff: Then they ought to be charged rent.

Mr. JONES: The existence of the observatory advertises us to the rest of the world. The observations taken and the scientific knowledge gained there are listed in common with other recognised observatories of the world, so that in the scientific world, Perth gains a status which it would not have if we possessed no observatory. The member for Hannans must understand that science is relative and interdependent one branch upon the other, and if we fail to encourage and assist one particular branch, we shall weaken our education system generally. As the knowledge of the medical man depends upon what the geologist has discovered, and conveyed to the biologist, so does the knowledge from the geologist depend upon the scientific knowledge that the astronomer has discovered further back. Sci-

once being interdependent, we cannot afford to neglect one branch of scientific research and, to do away with the observatory, would be to throw us back into the dark ages. I am not prepared to trust the Commonwealth. Perhaps next year, when we have a Labour Government in power in the Commonwealth, it will be safe to get them to take over the observatory. It is not safe to vote to hand over the observatory to such a Government as the present one.

Vote put and passed.

Vote, Public gardens, £1,966—agreed to.

Vote, State children, £73,091:

Mr. MULLANY: I ask the Minister to postpone the consideration of this vote for the same reason as another division was postponed. A select committee is inquiring into the department and discussion upon the vote would be hampered. I move—

That the Vote be postponed until after the consideration of the remainder of the Estimates.

Motion put and passed; consideration of the Vote postponed.

Department of Mines, Woods and Forests, and Police. (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister.)

Vote—Mines £59,992:

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. J. Scaddan—Albany) [9.35]: Members will notice that there is but little change in the expenditure under the various divisions on this occasion as compared with last year. Under mines generally, there is a decrease of just over £1,000 while, under the other headings, there is a slight increase which in the aggregate amounts to £2,690 inclusive of £784 provided under the Council of Industrial Development that was previously under the Industries Assistance Board. The bulk of the increase in these departments is made up of grade increases to the officers of the various departments and, to some extent, by the increased cost of material necessary for the efficient carrying on of the various departments controlled by the Minister for Mines. It is some time since the Minister for Mines stood in the happy position of being able to tell the House, and through the House the country, that to-day we are commencing to make such strides in the mining industry as we have not enjoyed for many years. It would be unfair to claim that my advent to the Mines Department was responsible for that, because it would be tantamount to saying that those who preceded me were responsible for a revival not occurring sooner.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Seeing that the Minister for Lands has claimed credit for the good harvest, why do you not claim credit for this?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not propose to do that. It is due to many causes. During the period of the war, the mining industry particularly suffered tremendously, due to some extent to the lack of experienced

miners. It was difficult to obtain men of experience because many of the young, able-bodied men enlisted and went to the Front. Then there was a tremendous drawback owing to the increased cost of commodities required in the industry. In some cases there was a dearth amounting almost to a famine of supplies so essential to the industry. Then again we suffered so far as base metals were concerned owing to the restrictions imposed by the Federal Government, both in regard to the investment of capital in new ventures and the restrictions in connection with the treatment of base metals. At the time, these restrictions were considered to be essential in the interests of the nation, but now we have in a large measure returned to normal conditions. True, we are still suffering to some extent owing to the high cost of essential commodities, which means an increase in mining costs and makes it impossible to work low-grade propositions. What we are liable to suffer from mostly is a continuance of the restriction on the employment of capital in new ventures. We are doing our utmost to encourage, by prospecting, the finding of new fields, but it is not of much value to discover new fields if we cannot obtain the essential capital for their development.

Hon. P. Collier: Have not the Federal authorities removed that restriction yet?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; they will insist on us getting the permission of the Federal Treasurer to use capital in the development of mining, and have imposed quite a number of restrictions at different times which were not altogether desirable. We have to bear in mind the fact that mining is very different from other propositions. It is to some extent a gamble. If we could tell by the divining rod where gold existed and in what quantity and at what cost it could be taken out of the ground, and thus remove the gambling element, mining would no doubt lose a good deal of its fascination. While gold-bearing propositions might be discovered, we have to employ capital and frequently lose a good deal of it in getting propositions which will return interest on the capital invested. The Federal authorities require us to set out the possibilities of the return of the capital. A proposition may be sound from a mining point of view, but the Federal Treasurer might not be satisfied that it is a good investment and, therefore, he might prevent the essential capital being provided for the purpose of developing our mineral resources.

Mr. Munsie: Have they objected to capital being employed for the development of Hampton Plains?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, although they have imposed certain restrictions on the amount of money raised. I do not say that this applies in Australia only. I believe it applies in the Old Country also. During the last day or two, we have been communicated with by the Agent General as to whether we would back an application for additional money required by the Hampton



Plains Co. to enable them to carry on operations in connection with the new find. There is evidence of the fact that restrictions exist which, from a mining point of view, are undesirable and are certainly retarding the development of the industry. Although we are returning to normal conditions, there are still many things that hinder the progress we desire. Notwithstanding all this, we are doing our utmost in the way of encouraging those who desire to prospect our mineral areas by giving them information and rendering them assistance. We have provided parties with essential equipment and, in some cases, have even supplied sustenance to enable prospectors to go out in search of new fields. Considering this to be the essential matter requiring attention, I asked the principal officer of the Mines Department to act, with representatives of the Mining Association and later the Returned Soldiers Association, as a board to consider a scheme for putting prospecting on a basis which would give us some hope of a return for the expenditure. I had made certain proposals—

Mr. Troy: Who are the Mining Association, bona fide prospectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are not quite that, but they are certainly men interested in mining and, after all, I do not know they are there for its detriment. They are only giving us advice. They have power only to advise, and, up to date, I am not quite certain that they have not helped us materially to deal with this question. On one occasion when I visited Kalgoorlie, I took up quite a number of files built up in the Mines Department containing the ideas of all and sundry on the subject of conducting prospecting in a way which would be beneficial and would give good results. These suggestions came from men who have been definitely interested from the point of view of having put extensive capital into mining and also those who themselves have done prospecting. I spent about two days in going through the files in order to find something which would be of service to introduce a definite scheme. Finally I put on paper to the Under Secretary my own ideas, failing anything coming from the source whence I thought it should have come. After all, our responsible officers should realise it is their duty to keep in touch with mining operations, and render advice to enable us to carry on this industry more successfully than in the past. The board have been sitting and have been giving consideration to this matter. The board have a basis for discussion, and I am hopeful that some good will result from it later. Already good results have been achieved by portion of the scheme having been put into operation.

Mr. Lambert: Who compose the board?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The principal officers of the Mines Department, together with two representatives of the

Mining Association and two representatives of the Returned Soldiers' Association.

Mr. Troy: Where does the bona fide prospector come in?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He comes in in Kalgoorlie. We have asked him to sit on the board at Kalgoorlie. Arising out of that, we have at present a great number of men out in our mineral belt prospecting for gold and other minerals. I have called upon the Geological Department to give some practical evidence of its value to the State. I have asked the Government Geologist not only to sit on the board but to render practical assistance to prospectors. After all, we must not lose sight of the fact that it is in no small measure due to the Geological Department, to the report of Mr. Honman when field geologist, that the Celebration line of lode was discovered. The Geological Department can render assistance and has done it, and I think will render it to a still greater extent in future. At present we have 67 parties in the field, comprising 85 men, of whom 43 are returned soldiers. Most of them are being helped by the provision of equipment, while others are provided with both equipment and sustenance. Still, as far as possible, we ask them to produce their bona fides by providing their sustenance which, as hon. members know, is very often furnished by their backers.

Mr. Lutey: Will the Repatriation Department help them on those terms?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: So far the Repatriation Department has had nothing to do with it.

Hon. P. Collier: They set aside £5,000 at the beginning.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amount provided by the Repatriation Department has been expended. The Repatriation Department insists that the whole of the expenditure shall be entirely in the interests of returned soldiers. We are approaching the Repatriation Department to see whether we cannot arrive at an agreement in cases where both the Mines Department and the Repatriation Department consider it desirable that a practical man should be attached to parties of returned soldiers. The Mines Department will render its portion of assistance by providing equipment or sustenance and maintaining a practical man, not a returned soldier, attached to the party. I am willing that we shall do our part in this respect if the Repatriation Department will permit parties of that nature to be formed. Of the assisted prospectors, Messrs. Leitch and Brown have obtained 334 ounces from 18 tons of stone, and Messrs. Pattendon and Woolf recently crushed 48 tons for 81 ounces. We have also favourable reports from other prospecting parties. That deals with the question of prospecting new fields; but outside of Kalgoorlie, Day Dawn, and a few parts of the Coolgardie field, we have done little else than merely scratch about.

Pioneer prospectors have had to rush after rich chutes and then abandon the district. Therefore, while it is desirable that we should discover new fields, it is equally desirable that we should endeavour to further prospect partly abandoned fields where we might again discover, if not rich chutes, at least payable lodes. Over and above that, it is the duty of the department to do its utmost to prevent the fields from petering out, to continue their life by, if necessary, boring in an endeavour to discover the continuance of lode formations or reefs. I have submitted to the board for consideration the question whether it would not be desirable to establish a number of boring plants operated by the Mines Department under the control of a board comprising the principal officers of the Mines Department and others, the board to decide where that boring should take place, keeping in mind the desirability of boring in those districts where mining is petering out. Then, again, I have suggested the possibility of the Mines Department, with the approval of Parliament, equipping definite prospecting parties and placing them under control to the extent of sending them out into areas selected by the department to be prospected, and giving them sufficient interest in any find they might make to encourage them to show the best possible results. I think we could do much in that direction, although I pin my faith rather to the man who goes out himself, always having in mind that it is a gamble and therefore doing his best. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Tray) will be interested in this: Realising that there is something almost in the nature of a boom in prospecting, and knowing that there are men out in the field other than those assisted by the department, I have instructed the under secretary to get into touch with the Lands Department and arrange for the cancelling of all leases of commonages in mineral areas. Because of the falling off in prospecting during recent years we have allowed the commonages to be leased for grazing purposes, and we now find the prospectors very much inconvenienced through the commonages not being available to them, and so we have asked the Lands Department to cancel the leases in order that the prospectors may have the use of them. Of course we have to render assistance in many other directions. Under the Mines Development Act we render assistance to prospectors who have discovered chutes which give promise. In many cases where, after working their properties, the prospectors have lost rich chutes or bodies of payable ore, in order to enable them to further prospect the show we have rendered them assistance. We do not usually look for a return of this money, but we impose the condition that in the event of a discovery of payable gold the advance made shall be refunded to the department. In

many cases mines have been abandoned after the expenditure of moneys advanced by the department, the mortgage still hanging over the lease, and the department having to carry the burden of the expenditure. Of course a new party taking up that lease would not be called upon to repay the money advanced by the department unless they too subsequently found payable gold, and then only to the extent that they had made use of the expenditure. For instance, if a shaft were sunk an additional 100 feet by the assistance of the department and the show was then abandoned; and if other men came along and used the shaft and found payable gold, the new party would be expected to refund the advance made by the department. The difficulty is to get the prospecting parties to understand that.

Hon. P. Collier: They are growling about a difficulty which does not exist.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. When payable gold is discovered the payments are not difficult to meet. I think it is 10 per cent. on the profits derived from the payable gold. I merely mention the point in an endeavour to get members to appreciate the fact that we do not impose the repayment unless we are satisfied that the prospecting party have made use of that developmental work on which the money advanced by the department was spent, and then only after they have discovered payable gold. Notwithstanding all that, there still exists a feeling in the minds of prospectors that it is not worth while touching abandoned shows upon which advances have been made, and the result is that many of those shows are not prospected as they should be. I doubt whether the time has not arrived when we should clean the slate in order to encourage further prospecting of abandoned shows.

Mr. Munsie: They will soon be prospected if you do clean the slate.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it would pay us to do so and have a fresh start made in many of these properties. Speaking of recent discoveries, I suppose most of us are enamoured of the possibilities of the new find at Hampton Plains. Of course we should have been very much better satisfied had it been on Crown land. Hon. members should understand that when their freehold was first granted to the Hampton Plains Company, the minerals within the area still remained in the possession of the Crown. But for some reason a subsequent Government—I think to encourage prospecting in the district and, from what I have gathered outside the department, also because it was felt that the Hampton Plains company had been unlucky in missing the Golden Mile—agreed that the company should have the right to the gold in their freehold land. We are up against the position that the gold contained in the Hampton Plains freehold belongs to the company under certain regulations, which are almost in conformity with

the regulations in the Mining Act. But they still have the right to impose further conditions and, generally, it is not quite as satisfactory as if the discovery were on Crown land.

Mr. Munzie: The mere fact that they have the right to take every alternate block is bad enough.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, that in itself will serve to retard full development. I only mention the matter by way of indicating that we have not the same control in the case of Hampton Plains as we have on Crown lands. The definition of the leases on the Hampton Plains is not a matter concerning the Mines Department. Let me mention another discovery which strikes me at the moment as being of equal importance, though little has been heard of it yet. It is the discovery made midway between the Golden Mile and the Celebration Lease, by what is known as the Hit or Miss Syndicate. It is situated about 10 miles south of the Golden Mile, and consists of a payable ore channel. A shaft sunk on the lode formation to a depth of 20 feet exposes lode material over a width of 5 feet. The bottom of the shaft averages 25 dwt. The indications and character of the lode show promise of its proving another payable ore channel of considerable importance. The Oversight mine in the Broad Arrow gold-field has given some excellent prospects recently, and some rich ore, going as high as 100 oz. per ton, has been obtained; 1,100 ozs. have been picked, and 200 tons at grass may reasonably be expected to produce 3 to 5 ozs. per ton. An important discovery is a lode of a permanent character entirely differing from the formations and values in the upper levels, from which good returns are being obtained. The Tara mine is also a proposition in this field, on the northern boundary of the Oversight, which has given evidence of equally promising results. The finders of these mines have already divided £40,000 as a result of their labours. There is a note of optimism throughout the gold-mining centres generally. This revival should lead to the opening up not only of new country but of mines that have been turned down in the past owing to want of sufficient capital for their development. But let me say here that I have heard lately criticism of the attitude of the Mines Department in these times of so much satisfaction in the direction of the discovery of new mines. People want to know what the Mines Department are doing. I have been in the public life of this State a few years, and I have seen other discoveries, and have noted the attitude adopted sometimes by Ministers and sometimes by others in regard to new discoveries. I think the last thing the Mines Department, as representing the general community and the best interests of the mining industry, should do is to intervene at such a time as this in order to promote a boom, which may not be

justified, by overstating the position, or, on the other hand, make statements which would have a depressing effect on the investment of capital in the development of the new discoveries. Speaking on behalf of the Mines Department, I say that we will do our best to place the facts before the public if the facts are given to us. I have only recently been furnished with copies of a number of London cablegrams and articles bearing on these new discoveries, and in them I observe references to the Bullfinch, and warnings to intending investors to remember that episode before proceeding too far. The Mines Department are not going to be forced into making statements which may result in the investment of money in the wrong direction. The discoveries I have mentioned are of exceeding value and importance, but the nature of gold mining is such that no one can foretell their eventual result; and the Mines Department should render whatever assistance they can, but should not in any instance take action or make pronouncements which might tend to the over-booming of any proposition. Quite naturally, we pride ourselves on the fact that our gold mining industry is of magnificent value. Most of us realise that during the war period gold was a very much desired and sought after article, but I think even the people of Western Australia do not realise what an assistance in the prosecution of the war this State's production of 300,000 sovereigns per month must have been to the Empire. Altogether Western Australia has produced, to the end of September last, 32,970,816 ounces of fine gold, representing a value of £140,051,123—not a bad record for our small population. During the nine months of the current year ended on the 30th September, our gold output has been 574,332 fine ounces, of a value of £2,419,609. The dividends paid by Western Australian gold mining companies for the same nine months total £218,244, whilst for last year the total dividends were £368,295. The aggregate dividends paid by Western Australian gold mines since the discovery of gold here to the end of September, 1919, amount to no less a sum than £27,304,664. We have other minerals than gold, and during the first eight months of 1919 our coal production was valued at £172,565. However, I attach no great weight to the expressed value of coal in these times, seeing that the value has been going up to such an extent and that it represents greater cost to the community, the Railway Department being one of the largest consumers of Colliery coal. Of minerals other than coal our production for the first seven months of this year is valued at £99,496, and for the 12 months of 1918 at £338,075. I regret that the outlook for our base mineral industries is not quite so good as in the case of gold mining, but hon. members will realise that the position in regard to base metals is due to causes over which the Gov-

ernment have no control. There are, for instance, the restrictions imposed by the Federal authorities, for the removal of which we are pressing so far as we can legitimately do so, having regard to the interests of Australia. I am hopeful that most of them will be entirely removed. However, if our protests eventually have the effect of bringing about the one final solution of the problem—namely, the establishment of up to date smelting and refining works in Western Australia—our base metal producers will not have suffered in vain. The time is opportune to press for the Federal Government's financial assistance in the establishment of such works. I believe that Commonwealth Ministers are serious in the matter, and, at all events, I propose to put them to the test. Most of us realise that Western Australia's principal metals are gold, copper, coal, and to a lesser extent, silver. But we have other metals as well. In fact, there is hardly a single mineral of commercial value of which Western Australia does not possess large quantities or at all events traces.

Mr. Maley: We produce quite as much lead as copper.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, when lead is being produced. There again we are up against the difficulty of mining on private property which does not come under the corresponding Act. That brings me to one of the difficulties we shall have to face in the establishment of smelters at Geraldton. We have no guarantee that the owners of mines will be willing to send their ores to the State smelters if established. I suggest that the members for Greenough and Geraldton might devote the recess to obtaining guarantees from mine owners in this connection. The Geological Branch, I wish to point out, have been busy during the last 12 months in assisting the Department of Industries, which was for some time controlled by the member for Canning, with respect to valuable minerals that were not being utilised. Indeed, we have been importing some of them in large quantities. Practical uses have been found for a fair number of these minerals. For example, we have one glass bottle works already established in Western Australia, and another in course of erection. There follows the necessity of finding suitable sands for the manufacture of bottles. In the course of the investigation we have found not only sands suitable for that particular purpose, but also sands suitable for the manufacture of high class glass. We are hopeful that when the latter fact is appreciated, the manufacture of glass for other than bottle making purposes will be taken in hand in Western Australia. At the present time there is a great deal of activity in the direction of prospecting for oil. Most members will realise that if we can make a discovery of oil here it will be more valuable than the recent discovery of gold at Hampton Plains. But I find, on looking through the departmental files, that practically the whole of the South-West of

our State is being held up by a few individuals, who have the right to prospect for oil to the exclusion of everyone else. It may be that they are entitled to some consideration, because they started these prospecting operations, but at the same time I do not feel disposed to agree to a continuance of the policy of allowing a few individuals to hold up that big area which it is impossible for them to properly prospect.

Mr. Troy: Have they done much work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In fairness to the department I would prefer not to express an opinion at the moment. I propose to retain the opinion I hold to myself, and to show later on the view that I take of the matter by the conditions I intend to impose. I am not going to permit a person to take up a huge area of country to the exclusion of everyone else merely on the payment of £12 per annum, that person having the right to do nothing except perhaps to drive a horse and sulky over the area of country. There must be evidence of a genuine desire to prospect the South-West, otherwise we will compel the forfeiture of deposits which have been lodged and the areas taken up. I believe there is a sum of £10,000 waiting in the Federal Treasury for the first person who can discover oil of commercial value. That, of course, offers some encouragement, but in the meantime a feeling exists, though it is against the advice of most of our geologists, that there is a possibility of discovering oil here. There are many indications, and naturally there is a great desire on the part of individuals to endeavour to discover it. There has not, however, been a great expenditure of money in prospecting. We have no Act of Parliament that enables us to define a lease in the event of oil being discovered, and nothing to permit us to properly control this product or to say whether it should be retained as a national asset or whether a royalty should be paid on it. A draft Bill is in existence in the department, but it has not gone beyond that stage. I have perused the draft, and I am asking that the Bill be framed for presentation to Parliament at a later date, and that whatever leases or reserves are made available for prospecting, these will be the subject of any Act that can be passed or regulations that may be framed.

Mr. Pickering: Will the Bill be introduced this session?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. If we take action now on the basis of an actual discovery of oil before the discovery has taken place, we may prejudice prospecting. I want it to be generally understood that oil is a national asset of tremendous value, and Parliament will have to be careful how it handles the question. Most of us have heard a good deal about bauxite having been discovered in our midst. Bauxite, as hon. members are aware, is largely used in the preparation of aluminium. Generally speaking, we have easily accessible as well as splendid deposits of bauxite in the

Darling Ranges adjacent to the railway system. We are in communication with the Federal Government in regard to the possibility of working these deposits. At the present time the best deposits are obtained in Western Australia.

Mr. Lambert: Is it aluminic clay?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is in the rocks in the hills and it is well distributed and in payable quantities. There is no serious difficulty in connection with the transport of this mineral and we can undertake its exportation without any trouble. I may mention that a good deal of information with regard to these bauxite deposits is contained in Bulletin No. 67 of the Geological Department. Bauxite requires to be treated by electrical process and an important factor is that we have in Perth a power station which is capable of generating current cheaper than any other power station at present operating in Australia, and this power station is quite adjacent to the deposits.

Mr. Pickering: You can take some credit for that power station.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think so. The site of the power station is merely a step from the locality of the discovery of aluminium deposits in the ranges, and with the establishment of the necessary furnaces for the purpose of treating the aluminium, I am hopeful that with assistance from the Federal Government, who are directly interested in the matter, we shall set the industry in motion in this State. There is another matter I desire to mention which may be of interest to members. It is the question of the discovery of ochre deposits, which are of considerable value. We were previously importing large quantities, but now we supply all our own requirements. The discovery of alunite deposits is also a matter of considerable importance. The other day I was informed by a gentleman who has a thorough knowledge of the value of alunite that he had seen our deposits in the south-west and expressed the opinion that they were amongst the richest he knew of in the world. I hope this is correct and that he is not overstating the position. If what he says is correct these deposits will be of tremendous value to the agricultural industry of our State.

Mr. Pickering: And the deposits are just where they should be.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It will not be necessary for me to deal with the various departments to any extent, because we can discuss the different subjects when we come to each division. But I want to make mention of one, namely, the Explosives Department. Hon. members will know that for some time there has been a good deal of controversy with regard to the explosives imported into Western Australia, and some discussion took place between the late Minister (Mr. Robinson), the Chamber of Mines and others, and certain regulations were framed in order to permit of what were termed cheaper explosives to be brought into

Western Australia. The Government Analyst considered that it would be inadvisable to allow sodium nitrate and potassium nitrate compounds to come in under the name of gelignite, and he considered that the makers should be compelled to specify the name. Finally the Minister decided that both should come in as gelignite. Then we were up against the difficulty that it was not possible to state definitely which explosive was in use, and when one was found to be injurious, to be able to say which gelignite it was, so that that particular brand should not be permitted to come into the State to injure the men who were employed in the mines. The matter was held up by me, but eventually we arrived at a satisfactory solution. I got into touch with the agents and the Chamber of Mines, and discussed the matter with others on the goldfields who use these explosives, and finally it was decided that we would not object to the explosive coming in as gelignite, but that each packet would have to be branded potassium nitrate and sodium nitrate, so that those packets would be recognisable at once. With these few remarks I submit the Estimates, which are very much on all fours with the previous Estimates submitted to the House. Hon. members can accept the assurance that so far as the Mines Department is concerned, with the money available, we are trying to make ourselves active in the direction of developing the industry which has done so much for us.

Mr. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.28]: We are all very pleased with the optimistic note sounded by the Minister for Mines as to the future of the mining industry, and it is also satisfactory to know that at last a serious attempt is being made to encourage mining on something like a practical basis in this State. Recently the Mines Department have displayed a greater activity than they did previously, and in this direction they can certainly go on increasing that activity until such time as we have many of the neglected fields in Western Australia thoroughly prospected. I do not intend to say very much under the general heading of the Estimates, but I would like to say that it is pleasing to know that the Minister is seriously considering the question of utilising the diamond drilling plant to exploit the more inaccessible ore deposits of the State. Where the geological features are favourable, such as in the localities where low-grade ore deposits exist, and are not accessible or workable by the ordinary prospector, the State should certainly step in and by means of diamond drilling, as they do in South Africa, try to locate payable ore deposits. We certainly have in nearly all the known goldfields of Western Australia large lines of lode that have been practically neglected and will be neglected so long as capital is not directed to this State, or at least until such time as the Government take some

practical means to open up those deposits. I hope the Minister will not lose sight of the possibility of the area north of Kalgoorlie. I think money should have been spent there by some of the big English companies who have taken gold out of that field, but put none of it back. While the big mining companies have for many years past been prepared to spend money in Nicaragua, in South America, and other countries, they have shown a disinclination to spend money where their wealth came from, and the time has arrived when some restriction should be placed on dividends so that some continuity might be assured in the mines those companies own. Instead of that, the big mines in Kalgoorlie to-day, with the exception of half a dozen, are relying on tributors to work the properties. I hope the Minister will see if he cannot devise some better system on which mines can be let on tribute. This has been a big question for the past quarter of a century in the Eastern States, particularly at Bendigo. Many tributing parties are working under very unfair conditions. The amount of royalty those big companies are asking before a prospector is allowed to go on the lease is altogether preposterous, and I hope the Minister will see whether we cannot have some reasonable safeguarding provisions so that prospectors who desire to secure tributes on those leases shall not be exploited by the representatives of the English companies. Many other features of prospecting could be touched upon. For instance, there is the favouritism shown in the letting of tributes. Some brake should be put upon the local representatives and the manner in which they let the ground to the men applying for it. I hope the Minister will see whether it is not possible to put the whole basis of tributing on a more acceptable footing than it is at present. The Minister spoke of the necessity for opening up low grade deposits in this State. In my own district of Coolgardie we have many big low grade deposits which deserve attention. In the past men looked for ounces to the ton, but those days are past, and if the existing crushing facilities were made more favourable possibly some big low grade deposits adjacent to Coolgardie would be immediately worked. It is essential that those mining centres should be saved at any cost. In Coolgardie the only thing done for prospectors has been to afford cheap battery treatment. The Mines Department has certainly brought down the cost of crushing, but in the case of a big ore deposit where one might get 2,000 or 3,000 tons in a month's run, something more might be done in that direction.

Mr. Angwin called attention to the state of the House. Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. LAMBERT: In all the known gold-fields we have big low grade ore deposits that could be exploited if favourable conditions existed. Apart from the proposed

scheme of diamond drilling for big low grade ore deposits at depth, I hope the Minister will see that the State batteries bring down the charges to the lowest possible basis. We also have attached to the Coolgardie State battery a plant, the existence of which has not been made known as it should have been. That is a scheelite and general treatment plant. The Government, at an expenditure of £5,500, put up a very complete treatment plant. It would be quite amenable to the treatment of many ores of like nature, yet they treated only about 100 tons before the plant was closed down. I know there are deposits of ore that could, possibly, be treated at this plant. The Minister will realise the importance of utilising this compact little plant to initially test those deposits. The plant was opened with a flourish of trumpets; it was an expensive plant, and its installation will not be justified unless it is to be used for the purpose it was intended for. There are several important scheelite and molybdenite deposits on the Murchison and other fields, and some system of favourable railway rates might be granted so as to permit of testing those deposits. I went as far as Comet Vale and had a look at the deposit where most of this ore comes from. Without being able to express any very definite opinion upon it, I say it is sufficiently encouraging for the Minister to give some attention to its development. It appears to me a shame that, having put up an expensive plant of this description, little or no effort is being made to use it for the purpose for which it was intended. When the Minister was speaking to-night upon the utilisation of different ore deposits in the State it occurred to me that a great deal of good would accrue if, instead of keeping the whole of his officers in the Geological Department and the School of Mines, he were to send one or two of them abroad. This is particularly applicable in the utilisation of ores known to exist in the Darling Ranges, and the commercial utilisation of bauxite and many other minerals. Dr. Simpson of the Geological Department and others of the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, instead of being kept in the laboratory, should be sent to America and other places in order that they might become thoroughly acquainted with the latest treatment and the commercial utilisation of these minerals. We have in the department some very valuable officers who have received no encouragement, in that they have had no opportunity to go to other parts of the world to ascertain on the spot the best means for utilising these valuable deposits. I have suggested this before, and I hope the Minister will consider the necessity for it. I am glad the Minister is getting around him some advisory board to assist him in the expending of the money for prospecting. It was absolutely suicidal last year that we had a vote of £50,000 for developmental work, and only a paltry few thousands of it were spent.

The Minister, realising as he does the importance of mining to this State, should see that whatever money is voted by the House is expended, and expended wisely. It would be a good idea to have small advisory boards in different centres to give the fullest consideration and advice in regard to applications for assistance. I do not say that the personnel of the advisory board mentioned by the Minister is all that could be desired. If he looked around, he would find in the Kalgoorlie district men who were thoroughly capable and willing to assist him in many directions in which their services would be valuable. He should not allow the permanent officers of the Mines Department to control the policy of the department, as has been the case in the past. I am satisfied that all the advice that goldfields members can give the Minister will be given readily and freely. I trust he will not neglect the industry we represent, but will see that this year we have an adequate sum expended for the proper development and the opening up, not only of the existing goldfields, but possibly of new fields. I join with the Minister in expressing pleasure at the prospect of a mining revival. The Mines Department should be alive and realise the necessity for activity on their part. If they do their part, the optimism so pronounced in our Premier will be reflected in the gold and other metalliferous mines in the State.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [10.43]: I congratulate the country on the discovery of new goldfields in different portions of the State. I trust these discoveries will turn out as satisfactory as the Minister and all of us hope they will. I do not wish to minimise the importance of the gold mining industry to the State, but there are other phases of mining to which I should like to refer. There is a motion before the House in connection with the establishment of a refinery at Geraldton.

The Premier: I thought you wanted it at Fremantle.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Then the Premier is under a misapprehension.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I want them to find the mines first.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The Minister said a good deal of money is to be spent in prospecting. A little of it might be spent in the district to which I refer. If £7,000 or £8,000 were spent in that district, several good payable lead propositions could be opened up. The importance of these mines is not always fully realised. Some people think that the discovery of a 1oz. gold mine is of vast national importance. A lead mine which goes 30 or 40 per cent. is worth as much as 2oz. or 3oz. gold, but people do not realise the relative importance of the two propositions. In connection with the Geological Department, the Minister has referred to the different metals to be found in this State. We have in and around the Northampton district many valuable pigments which require only exploitation and the expenditure of a little money,

to justify the establishment of paint works, and thus render the State self-supporting in this respect. There are pigments in large quantities and of many different colours. During the last two or three months, I have taken to the Geological Department samples of 20 different colours and have received a report stating that they are absolutely satisfactory and will produce ochres of great commercial value. The Minister made reference to potash. We have potash in the Northampton district. I have taken samples of it to the Geological Department and have received satisfactory analyses. The trouble is that the Geological Department require more analysts. When we take a sample there, three or four months elapse before we get a satisfactory analysis. The potash from the Northampton district has been pronounced to be very valuable. We realised the importance of this commodity during the war, when it could not be obtained anywhere except in Germany. When we remember that potash is absolutely necessary for fruit growing and potato growing, this industry should be encouraged to the full by the department. I wish to speak more particularly on the Irwin River coal deposits. The existence of these was discovered 30 or 40 years ago by a man named Johnson, and sufficient coal was raised to bring a steamer from Geraldton to Perth. Owing to different circumstances, no practical work has been done since then. Johnson, during the 20 or 30 years of his useful life in the State, spent £1,000 of his own money in developing this project. The importance of the discovery of another coalfield in the State does not require to be stressed. We have a fair quality of coal at Colliie, but I understand that the latest samples taken from the Irwin River deposits give a higher calorific value than Colliie coal at present gives. It is not necessary to emphasise the importance of having coal deposits in two or three different parts of the State. Some months ago we heard of a coal deposit at Woolgar and it was darkly hinted that there was another at Donnybrook, but I have not been able to find out anything about the latter. As to the Irwin coal deposit, the coal is there and only needs exploiting, and the Mines Department would be well advised to spend some money in ascertaining whether the coal is of commercial value. I understand there has been some little difficulty with the Midland Railway Company. The lode dips into their property, and the difficulty was as regards an arrangement between the company and the Mines Department and the people who want to prospect the company's lands. However, I have been assured just lately by the Midland Company's attorney that the company are prepared to guarantee that in the event of any money being realised from the exploitation of coal on their property they will pay to the department up to £1,500 out of the first proceeds. Obviously the development of a northern coal field would be of advantage to the State in many respects. For instance, the Midland Company at present use no

native coal whatever and in this connection the development of the Irwin deposit would undoubtedly save the importation of large quantities of Newcastle coal. If coal were found on the Midland country, the company would unquestionably use it in preference to the Newcastle. The Government would benefit directly by the revenue from another coalfield. They would collect royalty, unless they pursued the same policy as at Collie, where the coal mining companies have been allowed to operate for 20 years without paying royalty. On the basis of a royalty of 1s. per ton, and of a production of 1,000 tons per week for local requirements, leaving aside altogether the more important aspect of shipping requirements, there would be a direct revenue of £50 or £60 per week in the event of payable coal being found in this area. It is time the Government made a definite pronouncement of their policy in the matter. The Midland Company are prepared to do their part. They only want an assurance from the Government that they will be permitted to build a line to the coal deposits, if these prove payable. They expect the Government to deal with them fairly and justly. I believe every obstacle has been removed from the way of the Mines Department as regards assistance to some prospector.

The Minister for Mines: I have not yet heard that all the difficulties have been removed.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I understand that the Midland Company are prepared to afford every facility to the Mines Department or to any private person who desires to go on with the matter. The man Johnson, to whom I referred previously, is now in Boulder; and he has been promised the use of a bore. The man has spent about £800 of his own hard earned money, and in view of that fact, and of the importance of the matter, every assistance should be given him for the thorough exploitation of the field and the definite ascertaining of the value of the coal there.

The Minister for Mines: Subject to conserving the best interests of the State.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Conditions to that end could easily be imposed. I do not think anyone wants to get a strangle hold on the State in connection with this matter, or to discover coal and then let it lie dormant. It is a standing disgrace to this country that a deposit of coal should have been known for 30 years to exist without any adequate measures having been taken to exploit it or ascertain its value. But for the existence of the Collie coalfield, this deposit would have been tested long ago. I do not definitely suggest that the vested interests in Collie have been successful in preventing developments in the northern portion of the State, but I do suggest that in the public interest this northern deposit should now be properly tested. The importance of the matter from a State point of view is such as quite to justify the making of a little money by somebody.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The discovery of a field there should greatly benefit the Midland Railway Co.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Yes; and from the conversation I had with the company's attorney I gather that they are prepared to do the fair thing. They should be given the right to run a line of railway in, so that they can get the coal for their own use. The proximity of the deposit to the port of Geraldton would enable the coal to be shipped, and thus a new avenue of industry would be opened up. Moreover, the development of a coalfield there would give a great impetus to the industries we hope to establish at Geraldton.

Hon. P. Collier: When the Minister looks up the file on this subject, he will see that I have made a good many representations.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It is just about time those representations were finalised in some way satisfactory to the country generally. If the Midland Railway Co. are blocking the exploitation of the field, I shall be glad to know how they are doing it, and I shall be prepared to support any action for the purpose of eliminating their opposition. During a visit I recently paid to New South Wales I was struck by the fact that by reason of coal mines being in close proximity to Sydney that city was absolutely a hive of industry. In spite of the seamen's strike and the influenza everything was going on satisfactorily. There were no men out of work, except those on the wharves. In every other respect the whole city was completely prosperous. Four or five hundred miles away, Melbourne, without coal in close proximity, was in a state of industrial chaos, with 50,000 or 60,000 men out of employment, and families starving. All this was due to the lack of coal in close proximity to the capital. It was necessary to bring the coal by sea because land transport was too costly. The same thing would apply here. I do not expect to see industrial chaos in Western Australia as the result of troubles at Collie, but if we had another coalfield to depend on we would not be at the mercy of one particular section of the State for our coal supplies. I should like the Minister to go into the matter. If there are any obstacles I shall be glad to give every assistance in the direction of having them removed.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [11.10]: If the Minister will look at the report of the State Mining Engineer in 1908, in regard to the old mineral freeholds, he will see some recommendations that were made by him under the direction of Mr. Gregory when Minister for Mines, which will go a long way towards solving the position of the old mineral freeholds in the Northampton district and the erection of smelters at Geraldton. The lead position is distinctly improving, and the quotations during the last month in the metal reports show a continual advance. Lead today is within almost £1 or so of the highest price that obtained during the war period. The market collapsed three or four months



ago almost to £20 a ton, but has gradually crept up until now, according to the "West Australian," it is quoted at £32 a ton and forward at £32 7s. 6d. Some optimists have told me that lead is going up to £40 within the next three months. It is encouraging to know that operations have recommenced in the Geraldine area. I understand that the Fremantle Trading Co. are also contemplating the resumption of operations in the near future. If lead is going up like this the mines will recommence work. With the resumption of operations at Geraldine, I want the Minister to realise certain representations I have made in regard to the extension of the railway to Geraldine. A permit at all events will have to be granted by Parliament before the session is over, so that tramway facilities may be provided. The proprietors of the Surprise Mine, Green Bros., will require some concession to enable them to work their proposition in a satisfactory manner. These people have undertaken a contract to export to British smelters no less than 30,000 tons of concentrates. If that amount of concentrates is to be carted nine or ten miles to a railway siding it will handicap those who are endeavouring to promote the industry, and will cause enormous expense to the Government in maintaining the roads. This production is from one mine alone. I am given to understand that the Three Sisters leases, in addition to the Surprise mine, will also be working soon. Although the export of concentrates has been suspended during the last six months, the Three Sisters mine has in sight about 10,000 tons of ore. There is going to be a tremendous volume of production in one particular area in the next 12 months. The first shipment of ore from Geraldine on contract is to leave in January. The extension of a railway connected with the base metal fields is altogether a different proposition from railways to the goldfields. On the one hand the production is brought to the metropolis in ounces of gold, and on the other it is brought in tons of ore. If any Act is required to extend this railway or tramway I hope its introduction will be expedited, and that the Bill will be considered before the House adjourns for Christmas.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

#### BILL—SUPPLY, £975,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

#### RESOLUTION—TRADE WITH STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND JAVA.

Message received from the Legislative Council asking concurrence in the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House, in view of the necessity for the encouragement of production by the provision

of adequate markets for the results of such production, it is advisable that the Government of this State should take steps to develop trade and commerce between this State and the Straits Settlements and Java."

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 6th November, 1919.

	PAUSE
Bills: Wheat Marketing, 3s. ....	1241
Land Tax and Income Tax, as to Committee stage ....	1246
Traffic, Com. ....	1249
Prices Regulation, 2s. ....	1253
Motion: Taxation on unimproved land values ....	1240

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

#### BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

##### Third Reading.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.34]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [4.35]: I must ask the indulgence of the House in taking the somewhat unusual procedure of delivering a speech on the third reading of a Bill, but owing to my position as Chairman of Committees it was impossible for me to make several statements during the Committee stage which, perhaps, would have been better made there. However, I will take the opportunity of making them now. Since the Bill was considered on the second reading, there have been certain events which, to my mind, have created a new atmosphere about the question of wheat marketing. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth since then has made his policy speech, and has said that the 1920-21 harvest is to be guaranteed to the farmers at 5s. per bushel. As in the past the guarantee has been carried by both the Federal and the State Governments, I take it that this guarantee also will be shared in by the Western Australian Government. Hence the matter concerns us. I take no exception to the principle of giving the guarantee, which is done quite rightly. The Governments give these guarantees to the farmers so as to induce them to put in as large an area as possible under grain. But at this stage the question arises, by what