

Legislative Council,*Wednesday, 25th September, 1929.*

Question : Mining, Southern Europeans employed...	PAGE 873
Papers : Main Roads Board, appointment of member	878
Bills : Transfer of Land Act Amendment, (No. 1.) report	873
Royal Agricultural Society Act Amendment, 2a.	873
University of Western Australia Act Amendment, 18.	875
Mines Regulation Act Amendment, 2a.	875
Land Agents, 2a.	890

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

QUESTION—MINING.*Southern Europeans Employed.*

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: 1, How many men are employed in the mining industry? 2, How many of them are Southern Europeans? 3, How many of the Southern Europeans are naturalised? 4, How many of the Southern Europeans are not naturalised? 5, What are the respective percentages of naturalised and not naturalised Southern Europeans to the total men employed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, 4,756. 2, This information is not available, but of 3,415 men employed in gold mining, 2,791 are British subjects, and 624 are aliens prospectors excepted. 3, There are no means of ascertaining this information. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, The percentage of aliens to British subjects employed in the gold mining industry is 18.25 per cent. of the total, prospectors excepted. During 1928 the average number of men employed in the mining industry in this State was 4,756. Of that number 3,766 were employed in gold mining, and investigations have been restricted to that number. Returns have been received from all the larger mines and a number of small gold mines, showing that the total number of British or aliens employed therein is 3,415. These returns account for all men employed in the gold mining industry, except prospectors. Of the 3,415 men accounted for, 2,791 are British subjects and 624 are aliens; the number of aliens employed is therefore 18.25 per cent. of the total. We have no means of discriminating between British-born and naturalised subjects. Of the

aliens employed predominating numbers are doubtless Southern Europeans, but there are no practicable means of determining their nationality. The question, as set forth, could not be answered without involving a special investigation, which would require a considerable expenditure of time and money, but the information supplied may be sufficient to meet the requirements of the hon. member.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I am quite satisfied.

PAPERS—MAIN ROADS BOARD.*Appointment of Member.*

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.35]:

I move—

That there be laid on the Table of the House the file relating to the appointment of Mr. W. H. Young to the vacancy on the Main Roads Board.

I am moving the motion with the idea of obtaining information as to how such appointments are made and whether recommendations have been applied to them.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.36]: I have no objection to the motion.

Question put and passed.

**BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT
AMENDMENT (No. 1).**

Report of Committee adopted.

**BILL—ROYAL AGRICULTURAL
SOCIETY ACT AMENDMENT.***Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.38] in moving the second reading said: The Royal Agricultural Society Act, 1926, of which this Bill is an amendment, merely provides for the affiliation of agricultural societies with the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia, and controls the holding of agricultural shows and the making of by-laws, etc. The Bill which I now submit has two purposes; to exempt the Royal Agricultural Society's lands now held, or acquired in the future, from rates under the Municipal

Corporations Act, 1906, or the Road Districts Act, 1919, or any other Act that may be substituted for them; and to enable the Royal Agricultural Society, or any other agricultural society, to mortgage its lands with power to the mortgagee to sell the land freed from any trust, or restriction as to its subsequent use. Dealing with the question of exemption from rates, the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, Section 336, Sub-Section 5, provides that land vested in trustees for agricultural or horticultural show purposes shall be exempted from rates. It appears that some of the land held by the Royal Agricultural Society is so held "in trust solely for the purposes of an agricultural show ground in connection with the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia." But some of the land held by the society has no such trust mentioned in the deed. Where land is purchased by the society in the ordinary way of business, of course the title is clear so far as a trust is concerned. The Act provides that all such land held by the society shall be exempted from rates.

Hon. E. Rose: Will that apply to kindred societies as well?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. This appears to be desirable as the society is an institution of a purely educational character. With regard to the question of mortgaging the property, there are two Acts at present in existence which deal with the matter, namely—the Public Institutions and Friendly Societies Lands Improvement Act, 1892, and the Associations Incorporation Act, 1895. The former Act enables public institutions, including agricultural societies, to borrow money and to mortgage with the consent of the Governor for buildings. In such cases the mortgagee may, in default, enjoy the land freed and absolutely discharged from the trust to which the same may for the time being be subject. It will be noticed that money may only be secured on mortgage for buildings. The Associations Incorporation Act, 1895, enables associations registered under that Act to mortgage their properties with the consent of the Governor, but the mortgagee can only sell the land in default subject to the trust, and the restriction as to its use, which of course would make it impossible to sell. The Royal Agricultural Society is incor-

porated under the Associations Incorporation Act, and the restriction as to the use of the land still applies where the land has been granted for the purposes of an agricultural show ground. The Bill which I now submit contains in effect the same provision as appears in the Public Institutions and Friendly Societies Lands Improvement Act, 1892, but as the Act is restricted to borrowing money for improvements only, it did not go far enough in that the money which it is desired legally to secure the mortgagee covers purposes other than actual building, and it may be that any agricultural society would also desire to borrow money for purposes other than building to enable it to carry on. The Bill will permit it to do so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.45]: I do not wish to oppose the second reading; but I should like to be clear on one point, and that is whether, in the event of an agricultural society granting a lease of some of its lands, the lessee who may be using the lands will be exempt from rates. I have just casually glanced at the Bill, which says that any purchaser or lessee from a mortgagee shall hold the lands free and absolutely discharged from any trust or restriction as to the user thereof to which the land has been subject prior to the date of the sale or lease. The lands, until freed from the trust, are not rateable; and the point is whether such lands in the hands of the lessee, until the sale has been completed and the land freed from the trust, would be subject to rates. I think it would be unfair for an agricultural society to hold lands on trust and then lease them for purposes quite outside those of agricultural shows, and for the lessee to pay nothing whatever towards the rates of the municipality or road board. I should like to be clear on the point before the measure is finalised.

HON. E. ROSE (South-West) [4.47]: I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. My personal view is that it is most necessary to have a measure of this description enacted. In the past there has been a good deal of worry in connection with the Royal Agricultural Society's show ground at Claremont over rates and taxes. Lands of such educational value, and used for the benefit not only of the rising

generation, but of all the people in the State, should be free of any imposts whatever. After all, what are we putting in our time for and what are we guaranteeing mortgages for except the benefit of Western Australia as a whole? Agricultural societies have done an enormous amount of good to the whole State, not only by way of advertising but also educationally. Many of us have been guarantors for agricultural societies at various times in respect of agricultural grounds, and I am pleased to see that the societies are to be enabled to raise funds on mortgage if further improvements are required. I hope the Bill will be carried without amendment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [4.51]:

Anyone who looks at the Bill must realise that it presents some awkward complications. In order to get the subject satisfactorily defined, I have set down a number of questions which I desire to have answered by the Honorary Minister, because I consider that the replies will contain information which should be in the possession of hon. members. My questions are as follows:—

1, Has the Minister responsible for the Bill taken into consideration its effect on outback mines? 2, Has the Minister considered the effect on the attitude of the investor in gold-mining? 3, In view of the serious economic outlook, is it wise to introduce legislation that may reduce gold production? 4, Is the Minister assured that British labour is available for goldmining, especially skilled machine men? 5, Will not the same effect be achieved by a rigid enforcement of Regulation 42? 6, Is the Minister satisfied that this is being enforced? If not, will he see that existing legislation is in full operation before imposing new?

These questions have a bearing on the Bill, and I think that before the measure is

passed satisfactory answers to them should be given. The first aspect I wish to discuss at this stage is, what is the present position on the mines? When the Bill was brought forward I made it my business to interview not only individual mine managers, but also tributers, contractors, underground foremen and general workers. My desire was to get a really good general opinion as to the employment of foreign labour. This question, as everyone knows, is not new. It has been pulled backwards and forwards on the gold-fields for many years. Mr. Harris, in his remarks last night, referred to the fact that the question was a burning one many years ago, and he instanced certain activities which took place with regard to the introduction of legislation to deal with it. The present position, as I have gathered from many inquiries, is this: there is a shortage of skilled miners, a very serious shortage.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not now.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have here certain statements in support of that assertion. Perhaps the hon. member, when he has heard them, will be able to deal with them. The present position, as stated by mine managers and the men generally, is that a serious shortage of skilled miners exists. As to that phase, let me point out that the men who came over here from Ballarat and Bendigo, the men who formed the backbone of the mining industry in the early days, who helped to make possible the tremendous gold production associated with Kalgoorlie, have many of them unfortunately gone. Mr. Williams pointed out what had been the result of the almost callous neglect—I can find no more appropriate term—of ordinary ventilation precautions. Many of those miners have passed away. Many of them have been withdrawn from the industry owing to the ravages of tuberculosis and of dust. Many of them have gone away. Among the men engaged in mining, a general impression has been created that one is better away from the industry than engaged in it, if only on account of the health conditions. Steps are now being taken to improve ventilation conditions in the mines, but they are a long way from perfect yet. Some considerable time must elapse before ventilation conditions can be considered such as will ensure to the men adequately hygienic circumstances in which to work. Mr. Williams stated that many of the sons of these miners were unable to obtain em-

ployment on the fields. I have it on the authority of more than one mine manager that the young men cannot be induced to take on machine work.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you believe that?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I consider my informants to be men whose statements must be regarded with respect.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Anyhow, men with experience of machines are not to be got.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The statement of the mine managers was that they would be only too pleased to give these young men the opportunity of obtaining work on the machines as soon as they had become acquainted with underground conditions. The answer returned in more than one instance was, "No fear! I am not taking that job on. My father was killed by dust." That is an illustration of the attitude adopted by many of our young people on the fields towards gold mining, and no one who has studied the statistics of the industry can blame any young man for taking that view. My contention is that any young man, with the outlook existing in gold mining to-day, with the record associated with gold mining in the past, would be justified in avoiding employment in the industry if he possibly could. Apart from that, it must be recognised that at present there is no organised attempt to train young men to the industry of mining.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Nor has there ever been.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That interjection supports my statement. Although from time to time references have been made to the desirability of training young men to mining, the fact remains that the men who were trained in Ballarat and Bendigo during the early days, trained practically from youth to become efficient miners, are not being replaced by trained and skilled machine men. There is a distinct shortage of young men, both for prospecting and for machine work. From what I know of certain activities associated with new rushes, I can testify that it is extremely difficult to get a good hammer and drill man. That type of man is now almost extinct. As regards the position at the outback mines, I am informed that it is still worse. Here other factors enter into the consideration.

The first factor is that there is a general reluctance to leave the towns and go outback. That statement has been made to me from more than one quarter. I do not know whether members of this Chamber generally have had much experience in travelling outback, but I can assure the House that if one realises the conditions under which men have to live in outlying mining camps, one cannot altogether blame them for going there. In the first place, a man who goes to an outback mining camp has to make his own arrangements for accommodation, and moreover has to make them at his own expense. As a result, he is immediately faced with a certain amount of expenditure on that head. The life of an outback mine is as a rule a short one, and always more or less uncertain. There again the man is faced with the fact that his employment is precarious. Further, the accommodation offered outback is not the kind of accommodation a man brought up on the modern standard of comfort would like to take his wife to. If he takes his wife and family to a remote mining centre, they live under conditions which certainly try the housewife, conditions which unfortunately do not provide the best of education, conditions which certainly do not offer opportunities for the children. The result is a general disinclination on the part of workers to accept employment in outback mines. In fact, goldfields members will support me in the statement that there are hundreds of men who have left the goldfields in the last few years because their families have grown up and they have seen no opportunity to get their young boys and girls into occupations that would give them a chance in life. For that reason alone many parents have been compelled to leave the goldfields. That state of affairs in itself has conduced to bring about a shortage of labour, especially in the outback districts. As instances, I might quote the Lancefield mine, the Sons of Gwalia mine and again, to a large extent, the Wiluna mine, which is being opened up. Against that state of affairs we have to recognise that this is where the foreigner comes in. The foreigner is quite prepared to go outback, work there, and live under outback conditions. There has been a migration of this class of labour into the outback mines, and it has established for itself a reputation for good work,

reliability and contentment with existing conditions.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The same thing applies now to the prospector.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes, the prospector might now be said to be rapidly disappearing. The prospector to-day is a rarity. I have made these statements because I want the Minister to answer them when he replies. I want the Minister to give us an assurance that the Britisher will work in the mines outback, and that he will stay there. I consider that before the introduction of legislation that will have such a wide effect as the Bill before us, the whole of the circumstances should have been investigated and an authoritative statement made.

Hon. C. B. Williams interjected.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The inducement for the Britisher to work outback is not there. In support of the statements I have made, I should like to quote some figures that I obtained from some of the mining companies. There is a slight difference between those figures and the figures that were read by the Chief Secretary this afternoon. That difference is due to the fact that those I obtained relate to the principal mines, whereas those of the Chief Secretary refer to the whole of the mining operations. Regarding the outback mines, comprising the three principal mines, my figures show that there are 374 Britishers employed, 40 naturalised foreigners and 257 not naturalised foreigners. That total comes to 671 and the percentage of foreigners is 38. With regard to the Kalgoorlie mines, the position as it has been related to me is that the number of British employed totals 1,715 and the number of foreigners 306, or 2,021 altogether. In this case the percentage is 15. Totalling the two sets of figures we get a percentage of 20 of foreign workers engaged by the mining companies. The figures quoted by the Chief Secretary give the percentage as 18.25. The managers of the mines are very definite. They declare that the Britisher will not go outback, and that if he does, he will not stay. There are further statements made and one is that while the present economic depression may force certain unskilled labour outback, that unskilled labour will only remain until work can be got elsewhere. Thus it is claimed that the effect of the Bill will be to create a very

serious position with regard to maintaining the continual operation of the mines. When the Bill was being introduced, by way of interjection I inquired how it would operate. The Minister seemed to be under the impression that it would only apply to workers to be engaged in the future. As I read the Bill, the only conclusion I can come to is that it will apply to all men now engaged in the industry. The result will be, if it is put into operation—and I can scarcely conceive that the Government would introduce legislation if they did not intend to put it into operation—that a considerable number of these men will be displaced, not only in Kalgoorlie but outback, and, as I have shown that the percentage outback is so high, work will be affected to a considerable degree. The Minister referred to the opening up of Wiluna and the opportunities for employment of a large number of men in the industry. It must be remembered that the Bill will apply throughout the whole of the gold-mining industry. References have been made in this House, and outside as well, that preference is not given to Britishers. In the course of his remarks the Minister declared that the mine managers had extended preference to foreigners rather than to our own people. As I found that the general impression to-day is that preference is given to foreigners, I took it upon myself to bring the statement under the notice of the Chamber of Mines. That body has amongst its members responsible men who have charge of the management of mines and I considered that the question should be answered by that Chamber. It is undoubtedly public opinion that our own people should get preference of employment, especially in a time of economic depression such as exists at present.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They should ask for it in the court.

The Honorary Minister: There should be no necessity to ask for it of anybody.

Hon. E. H. Harris: By asking, you sometimes get things that you would not otherwise receive.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The people associated with the Chamber of Mines are responsible men who are in charge of the management of an important industry, and the statement to which I have referred is a reflection on them directly or indirectly. If they are a party to the allegation, they

must say so and definitely take the responsibility. If they are not a party to it, it is their duty to make an investigation to ascertain to what extent it is true. So I contend that the Chamber of Mines should have been approached and given an opportunity to reply. I have here a letter from Mr. Anderton, secretary of the Chamber of Mines. I think hon. members have received copies of it. He says—

In the outback districts the experience has been that unless they are hard-pressed, few British workmen will seek employment underground and, furthermore, do not remain in that employment for any length of time, whereas the workmen objected to invariably settled down in those districts.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is a deliberate lie.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The hon. member does not believe that the statement is correct.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I say it is a deliberate and wilful lie, and you know it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Then if what the hon. member interjects is correct, the responsibility rests with the Government to take up the challenge and have an investigation made.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Hear, hear! I agree with that.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The letter goes on—

With regard to the allegations that have been made in Parliament and elsewhere that these foreigners work for lesser wages than prescribed by the Arbitration Court, the Chamber unhesitatingly states that there is not the slightest foundation for any such statement.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I guarantee that what he says there is also a lie.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The secretary continues—

The major portion of these men are members of industrial unions who are particularly active in policing their awards. It has been stated that persons in authority who engage men receive some remuneration from the foreigners so engaged. The Chamber's answer to that statement is that during its long experience no such case has ever been brought under its notice, nor does it think any such practice exists. If any specific instances were brought under its notice, an investigation would follow. Practically the whole of the foreigners who would be deprived of employment if the Bill were passed are members of the union whose party has brought forward the measure. The point has been stressed that foreigners will take more risks than Britishers by working in dangerous places.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not on your life! That is quite wrong.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The letter continues—

That is not true. Statistics of accidents that have happened to foreigners as against Britishers working in bad ground will disprove the statement made.

Hon. C. B. Williams: My word, it is true. A foreigner will not go where the Britisher will go.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The letter concludes—

Having regard to the present state of the goldmining industry, the Chamber is strongly of the opinion that it would be most unwise to inflict any further legislation which will become a burden on the industry, and it sincerely hopes that you will use your best endeavours to prevent the passage of the Bill which is specially directed against one of our primary industries.

I was not satisfied with that letter because statements had been made to me by men whom I regard as responsible and who declared that in their opinion there were cases where bribery had taken place. Therefore I followed up the matter, and I received another letter from the Secretary of the Chamber dated 11th September, 1929. This reads—

With reference to the statement made that officials on mines receive remuneration from foreigners for securing employment for them, I am directed to advise you that this matter was discussed by my executive council at its meeting yesterday, when I was directed to inform you that the Chamber would welcome the making of an inquiry into any specific case that may be stated, and if it is found that the official mentioned has been guilty of this practice, then he will be discharged from the particular mine on which he is engaged, and steps will be taken to see that he is not employed by any other members of the Chamber so that he may perpetuate the offence.

Hon. J. Cornell: I suggest they should go to a two-up school on Sunday and watch one or two of the bosses.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is as good an answer as I could give.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I thought it my duty to bring this statement before the House. It is over the signature of the secretary of the Chamber of Mines. The letters have been sent by him under instructions from that Chamber; therefore they are entitled to receive the fullest publicity. If they contain untrue statements, the responsibility

lies upon the Government to prove they are untrue, and to have a thorough investigation made into the state of affairs connected with the industry.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I agree with you. A Royal Commission would do us nicely.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In the face of these letters I ask members to look at the matter from this standpoint and imagine any officials taking the risk of laying themselves open to a charge of accepting bribes.

Hon. C. B. Williams: These letters are from the general manager, not from the under-studies.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The managers are referring to their understudies. Could members imagine understudies taking the risk in the future of giving preference to foreigners, all things being equal, or of accepting bribes when they would never know whether they were being watched and were being made the subject of a frame-up with a view to catching them in some pernicious practice.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But the managers do not know what is going on.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is a wide statement to make.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is true.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I know of one instance in which the manager in charge of the mine makes it his business to have brought before him every day a list giving the names of the men who are engaged.

Hon. C. B. Williams: He is only one of many.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Before a man is put on to the mine permanently, the manager checks up everything and gives his authority.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is not the general practice.

Hon. H. SEDDON: This manager takes upon himself, before anyone is employed by the mine, to investigate the circumstances and he then gives his sanction.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you know of any other case where managers are doing that sort of thing? This is the manager of the Perseverance.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I do not wish to mention names. I am merely quoting one instance where the manager is cognisant of what is going on in his mine.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Would not the Chamber of Mines use its influence to have this very admirable practice adopted universally?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Further statements have been published on this vexed question.

I have here a letter given to me by a man who was associated with the mining industry for many years. He is an underground man and is particularly keen about ventilation. In the course of the letter he wrote to me he referred to certain statements made by Mr. Cornell when speaking on the Bill. According to the letter Mr. Cornell is supposed to have deplored the fact that sufficient scientific thought had not been devoted to removing the cause of miners' diseases instead of curtailing foreigners; that they had tried to make conditions so favourable underground that their own people could work with comfort, but that the time was ripe when some other investigation by a proper tribunal should be undertaken. This man makes certain definite statements in commenting upon Mr. Cornell's remarks. He says that the Act bearing upon this matter has never been enforced, and is not enforced now. He says it cannot be enforced because of the resistance of the mine workings being too great for the power employed. He says the proof of this may be found in the men working a 6-hour shift in hot, steamy and humid places.

Hon. J. Cornell: Because of the inefficient ventilation.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is what he is taking about. He says—

The constant re-breathing of impure air without any addition of natural fresh air is the chief cause of miner's complaint. Compressed air cannot be taken into consideration because it only fouls what little natural air (by diffusion) finds its way into the working places of a mine.

This man remarks that proper ventilation as provided for in the Coal Mines Regulation Act will remove the cause of miners' complaints. That is a broad statement. He goes on to say it is criminal for the Mines Department to allow these conditions to continue. If the working place is unhealthy for the Britisher to work in, it is unhealthy for the alien to work in, whose life and health are just as valuable as our own. The language test has not been enforced in connection with the employment of foreigners in these mines according to the Act.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Who is the authority?

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not so according to scientific investigation.

Hon. H. SEDDON: This man has been engaged in mining for many years, and has

certificates with regard to ventilation. I have gone into the question of ventilation before. I am assured by the mining authorities that they are endeavouring to improve the conditions, and they say they are very much improved to-day compared with what they were two or three years ago. This man goes on to say that it would be effective to employ a man who was competent to check up the quantity of air going into the workings and the ventilation scheme of the mines. This man could give definite information as to how far the ventilation requirements are being complied with. He finishes up by saying that the following are the remedies:—

1, Increased ventilation power by mechanical methods.

2, Proper coursing and distributing of air current; 3, Concentration of air current in the places where men work; 4, No short-circuiting of the air current or leakage of the same; 5, To preserve the lives of the men and the life of the mines the foregoing principles must be strictly observed.

I referred a little while ago to Section 42 of the Act. Before going on with that I should like to make use of another statement. The Returned Soldiers' League had a committee appointed to examine the Bill. They made an independent report which was published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" on the 14th September. In the course of that report they make use of the following statement:—

The arguments given by the Minister in favour of the amendments are:—(1), There are many Britishers unemployed; (2), that a large proportion of the money earned by the aliens is sent out of the country; (3), that there is ample British labour available; (4), that the aliens were not skilled miners on arrival.

They then summarise the position as follows:—

The following must be very carefully considered:—(1), The possibility of international complications; (2), the impossibility of deportation, this being under the control of the Federal authorities, who may not be disposed to act; (3), the transference of the aliens from one industry to another without any real remedy; (4), the effect that the proposed changes may have upon mining costs in general. Mining costs are high in this State, and anything that may increase the expense of production without a corresponding benefit should not be recommended lightly; (5), that the heavy manual labour in underground workings in unhealthy places, however well looked after, is not desirable work for Britishers. In other countries practically all this class of

work is done by aliens, mostly by Southern Europeans in America and niggers in South Africa. In other words, it is not considered a white man's job.

Incidentally I wonder exactly what is the opinion of the alien upon these remarks. Apparently he is not only offering himself for work that other men will not take, but is also going to take on work in which it is almost certain he will be subjected to very serious damage to health. I obtained from the Chief Secretary answers to certain questions with regard to the effect on the alien of the mining conditions. I asked this question because there has been an idea that these men can stand up to underground conditions better than our own.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They cannot stand up to anything.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The figures given to us show that the alien is suffering as much as our own people because of the unhealthy conditions under which he is working. There is therefore nothing in the contention that he does not suffer equally. There is every reason for supporting the remarks of Mr. Cornell that the whole question of ventilation should be stirred up and gone into.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Have you finished reading the report?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The report was prepared by the Returned Soldiers' League because it was thought, being concerned in the employment of men in the mines, that they should investigate the position and furnish their considered report. Their committee considers that the following suggestions might reasonably be expressed:—

1, The number of aliens that are now working and that are not naturalised be weeded out, such weeding out to be spread over a period estimated to cover their absorption into other industries without undue flooding. 2, That the English language test (made more difficult), together with a safe amount of underground knowledge, be more rigidly enforced, thus preventing the possibility of accidents through ignorance by the quota of aliens that would be engaged under the amendment.

Hon. C. B. Williams: These are the same people who in Kalgoorlie tore down buildings in order to kick out the Italians. Do you remember that?

Hon. H. SEDDON: If we are going to enter into the question of riotous behaviour—

Hon. E. H. Harris: We could quote a number of things that happened in 1919.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Many things occurred before the returned soldiers took action that might be worthy of comment. It is not desirable to enter into that aspect of the question.

Hon. J. Cornell: If the hon. member had consulted me he would never have quoted that report. It is not the opinion of the Returned Soldiers' League as a whole but the opinion of only three. The report was sent along to Kalgoorlie to see what the league there thought of it.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The returned soldiers did pull down a building there.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I know of a man who met his death as a result of riotous behaviour in Kalgoorlie at the hands of men who were working on a mine because they wished to enforce their brand of unionism on the workers there.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is wrong. He drank a bottle of rum in the bush and died of the effects.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I make this statement after due consideration. Mr. Cornell has referred to the report. The point in connection with it, and the reason why I have introduced this matter, is that the report was made public property in the Press. There are certain findings set out in the course of the report that should be placed before hon. members who have to decide the fate of a Bill such as that now before us. The report goes on to say, with reference to the position of aliens in the mines and the test in English language,—

This is of supreme importance, and in spite of the Minister's assurance to us that his inspectors have been putting the above into force, it is a known fact by all the British workers that it is not so, and many aliens are working underground with not sufficient knowledge of the English language and underground experience to prevent their being a menace to their fellow workers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That confirms what the Honorary Minister said.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The report goes on—

It will be obvious to everyone that, in case of accident and emergency, it is essential that those working below should understand perfectly and quickly what is said to them, and be able also to give information clearly themselves.

I made a statement regarding the shortage of skilled machine men.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did you read last week's report from the Lake View mine?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I will quote a statement that I received in the course of the last few hours. It comes from a prominent member of the A.W.U., and, for hon. members' information, I will say that it did not come from Mr. Williams. The statement was made last week by an organiser of that union to a mine manager.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There is only one organiser.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I did not say so. The statement he made to the manager was as follows:—

There is not a single machine man out of work in Kalgoorlie. I do not know where you can get any machine men to replace the foreign machine men if you have to put them off.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are plenty of them at Broken Hill.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is the statement made by the union organiser to the mine manager I refer to.

Hon. C. B. Williams: When was it that the organiser made that statement?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Last week.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Then it is incorrect, because last week that man was in Leonora.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He may have made it at Leonora.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The organiser left Kalgoorlie by last Monday's train at 7 a.m. for Leonora. If he said it, he could only have said it at Leonora.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Who is addressing the House?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not you.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have not mentioned any names.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But you know there is only one A.W.U. organiser there.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member will have an opportunity presently to address himself to the House.

Hon. H. SEDDON: He made that statement clearly and the statement came from the manager, who read it carefully after it had been taken down. Here is a statement made by a man who should know.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I deny that it was ever made.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would remind hon. members that the Bill will be taken into Committee, and there will be opportunities for members to correct any misstatements that have been made.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am not making this statement because I wish to create a sensation. Here we have a responsible Government representing the Labour Party. Here we have a serious statement made regarding an important matter which has been hammered at for years and years. We have heard the statements that have been made outside the House and inside this Chamber. The responsibility rests upon the Government to have a thorough investigation conducted to ascertain to what extent these responsible statements can be borne out and how far the contradictions made in this House and elsewhere can be substantiated. I think I am quite justified in bringing this matter under the notice of the House, because here we have before us a Bill that, according to statements of responsible men in the mining industry, will affect vitally the future of that industry. In the course of his remarks Mr. Harris referred to Section 42 of the Mines Regulation Act. That section provides—

(1), No person shall be employed in any mine as manager, under-manager, platman, shift boss, or engine-driver unless he is able to speak the English language readily and intelligently and to read it, whether printed or written.

(2), No person unable readily and intelligently to speak the English language shall be employed underground in any mine.

(3), The manager, owner and agent shall be responsible for the strict enforcement of this and the four last preceding sections, and shall be deemed guilty of an offence against this Act if any breach thereof is committed.

(4), An inspector shall have full power to require the immediate dismissal of any person found working a mine who does not, in his own opinion, after examination in the presence of the manager or other responsible person, comply with the requirements of this section, and any manager failing to dismiss such person, on being required by the inspector so to do, shall be guilty of an offence against this Act.

Hon. G. W. Miles: In view of that section, the amendment suggested by Mr. Harris is unnecessary.

Hon. E. H. Harris: But my amendment will bring the men underground on the same plane as the managers regarding this question.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have read the section in order that hon. members may realise its effect. They will realise the position in view of the statements that have been made outside and also in this House. We had the

statement made by a responsible Minister that hundreds of the men engaged in the mines had not a proper understanding of the English language.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is not right; there are not!

Hon. H. SEDDON: But that was the statement made in this House.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Evidently there is a conflict of opinion.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The fact remains that the statement was made. We have a Labour Minister in charge of the Mines Department; we have mining inspectors whose duty it is to see that the provisions of the Act are enforced. On top of that we have the workmen's inspectors. Whatever may be said about pressure being brought to bear and influence in various directions, the fact remains that we have workmen's inspectors, elected by the men themselves, who are on the mines to look after the interests of the men in particular. In view of the statements that have been made by one responsible Minister in particular, I may well ask: What are the workmen's inspectors doing? They are answerable purely to their organisation, and we have a Labour Minister in charge of the department.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Your statement is not correct about the workmen's inspectors, for they are not paid by the organisation but by the Government.

Hon. H. SEDDON: What was the object of appointing workmen's inspectors?

Hon. C. B. Williams: I do not know; I do not agree with the principle myself.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. H. SEDDON: But what was the object in view when they were appointed? At the time the question arose, it was pointed out that such inspectors were necessary so that the interests of the men themselves should be properly safeguarded. Here we have the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act in which the responsibility is clearly and definitely laid upon the workmen's inspector to see that the provisions of the Act are carried out.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What about the Government inspectors? Why refer only to the workmen's inspectors?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I would remind Mr. Williams that it is Mr. Seddon who is addressing the House.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I thank you, Mr. President. I thought he omitted something; that is all.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In my opinion, in view of what I have said and the position that confronts us, it is up to the Government to appoint a Royal Commission or a select committee to investigate this matter.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We could appoint a select committee ourselves, with Mr. Williams as chairman!

Hon. E. H. SEDDON: If they do not go to that extent, they could at least have an investigation outside the ordinary official channels, with the object of seeing how far the statements made are borne out by facts, and to what extent statements made in this House are correct.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Why not move for the appointment of a select committee?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am placing the position before the Government because I regard it as their responsibility. Here we are asked to approve of legislation. I have quoted legislation that we know has been ignored. How are we to know that the Bill now before us will not be treated in the same way as the Mines Regulation Act? There is another point. What is the necessity or urge for special legislation of this description when all that is sought to be achieved could be done merely by the enforcement of legislation that now exists?

Hon. C. B. Williams: You are putting all the blame on the workmen's inspectors.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No, I have simply shown the position of the workmen's inspectors and their duty to their own men.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why not deal with the Government inspectors?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Their duties are laid down and apparently it is the responsibility of the Minister who is in charge of the department to see that the duties are carried out. It should be the duty of the Government to take cognizance of the rumours that are being circulated and to investigate statements that are made by responsible people, with a view to ascertaining their truth or otherwise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Who are in charge of the workmen's inspectors? Are the Government not in charge of them?

Hon. H. SEDDON: They are answerable to their union.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They say the union is in charge of them.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: I asked what the position was under the Act.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The actual position must be clear to hon. members. The mine managers are very definite in their statements that it will be impossible to carry on the mining industry outback, without the assistance of foreigners. If that is the position, what will be the effect of the Bill on those outback mines? It is contended that the mines will have to close down if this legislation is agreed to. Hon. members will remember that an investigation was carried out in Kalgoorlie some little time ago by a Federal Royal Commission. They submitted a report in the course of which they referred to the position of mining investors. They pointed out that the mining investor is a man who, as a rule, engages in investments that are of a most speculative description. They pointed out that if the men could not get a good price, it would be impossible to induce them to engage in mining speculation. I will follow that up a bit further. What will be the effect of this legislation on those mining companies that are finding money necessary for the development of Western Australian mines? I want to make a point at this stage. I have seen a good deal of mining speculation during the many years I have lived on the goldfields. The only mines that are being developed on sound lines to-day are those that are being supported by foreign capital. Our experience has been that where Australian capital has been availed of to finance the mines, only too frequently those mines are allowed to collapse and go down because difficulties have arisen and not sufficient funds have been available to enable those in charge to overcome the trouble. The survival of some of the Kalgoorlie mines is due in a marked degree to the fact that foreign capital has been available. Investors have gone without their returns in order that funds might be forthcoming to overcome difficulties that threatened to close down operations. In support of that statement, I would instance the difficulties experienced with regard to the treatment of refractory ores in Kalgoorlie during the early days. Many thousands of pounds were spent there then, and men were brought from

all over the world to carry out the necessary investigations so that a satisfactory method of treating the ores could be obtained. Again I ask, what effect will this legislation have upon investors in this State when the companies receive from their responsible managers reports that legislation of this description has been introduced by the Government, the members of which have created an impression that they are in favour of advancing the interests of the mining industry. I will refer to the development of the Wiluna mines. The Government have committed themselves to large expenditure in the construction of a railway to Wiluna. The people who made available the money to develop the mines of that centre went to considerable expense in having an investigation made regarding the treatment of ore from the mines. After making the necessary investigations, they went ahead and expended a considerable amount in development. We are told that at least 1,000,000 tons of ore have been opened up now for treatment when the machinery is placed on the ground and is ready to operate. After having gone to that expense and committed themselves to the development of the Wiluna district, they now find that this legislation has been introduced by the present Government, and responsible mining authorities say that it will have a very serious effect upon the mines outback. What will be the attitude of those who are finding the money necessary to develop the Wiluna mines once they find that legislation of this description has been placed upon the statute-book by Parliament?

Hon. E. H. Harris: They will probably test its validity.

The Honorary Minister: Do you suggest that they raised money merely to employ foreigners?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Certainly not, and the Honorary Minister suggests an unfair inference when he makes that remark. The people who are developing the Wiluna mines are determined to get that ore out as cheaply as they can. Responsible mining men have said it is not possible to get British labour to go outback. In those circumstances, what are the mines to do? Close down and stop working, or take the labour that is available? There is a responsibility that lies on the present Government, namely that they should have con-

sidered the effect of this legislation. Those questions I have asked are obvious, and the Government should have given consideration to them before this legislation was introduced.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: According to Mr. Williams there are scores of fine young men looking for work in the mines.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have the statement of a union organiser to a mine manager that there is not a single machine man out of work in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A select committee would do to investigate this.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is a matter very much bigger than should be handled by a select committee. The responsibility lies entirely on the Government. They have brought the legislation before the House. Here are certain questions regarding that legislation, and I say the responsibility lies on the Government to deal with those questions now and say what they are going to do in the matter. A Royal Commission would have far greater powers than any committee of the House. A Royal Commission could be appointed by the Government from men entirely outside the House, and they could then get these statements and investigate them and go into the whole question of the employment of men underground in the mines. I want to deal with the economic effect of this regulation. Everybody knows of the serious position existing, not in Australia alone, but in every European country, because of the shortage of gold. In Australia we are facing a very serious financial crisis. If we could suddenly discover a rich gold deposit, and if that gold could be made readily available to the Governments of Australia, the effect on prices would be tremendous, while in regard to overcoming the difficulty in obtaining loans the effect would be most marked, and the economic position would be eased all round. There is no other commodity so urgently needed at the present time as is gold.

Hon. J. Cornell: What is going to happen economically when finally it peters out?

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is quite another problem. The position at present is this: Here is a measure which responsible men tell us will have the effect of limiting the production of gold and therefore intensifying the awkward financial position Australia is in at the present time. I have read the assurances of mining companies

in regard to bribery, and I have the equally definite statement of Mr. Anderton for the Chamber of Mines and individual managers that where it is possible even outback they give preference to Britishers. They say they will defy anybody to instance a case of preference of employment on mines being given to other than Britishers. When we talk of preference, my own idea is that Mr. Hall was right last night when he said there is one preference above all others, namely preference to the returned soldiers.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is not in the agreements being made.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I contend that the man who fought for this country is entitled to preference of employment.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The men who fought are no longer able to go underground.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Perhaps not, but where preference can be given, that is the one ground of preference that demands the support of all people in the community. I place these statements before the House for consideration. If the House in its wisdom decides to carry the second reading and go into Committee, I will then suggest that instead of a hard and fast regulation like this, the Government could obtain their object by introducing a simple clause providing for preference to British workers. That would overcome the difficulty and still leave the opportunity open to the mining companies in the event of British labour not being available. In conclusion, I wish to ask another question that has been asked already by another member, namely, why is it that the Government are singling out mining for the imposition of a regulation on the employment of foreigners? If the Government are sincere in their idea—I believe the object of the Bill is to find employment for Britishers—why have we not had introduced similar legislation dealing with the timber industry or with, say, farm work?

Hon. J. R. Brown: They can deal with only one at a time.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Then can the hon. member tell the House whether other similar Bills are in the offing?

Hon. J. R. Brown: No, we first want to see how this one gets on.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It might help the passage of this Bill if it were known that other Bills of the sort are to be brought down.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They are not forecast in the Governor's Speech.

Hon. H. SEDDON: There is another aspect of the question to which I would refer. There is no doubt the introduction of a Bill of this description is going to stir up amongst us the racial prejudice that unfortunately exists in the community.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Are you thinking that the non-naturalised alien would become naturalised without the Bill?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am not considering that aspect of the case. But here in our midst are men who have established a reputation as law-abiding citizens, sober and hardworking, and here is a Bill penalising them and restricting them in their employment. It is bound to arouse a great deal of opposition, because these people are members of the white race. If we look into the history of that race we find that these Italians have a record for which we as Britishers must admire them. Some of their forefathers indeed made their way to Britain, and there had a very material influence on the civilisation of those islands. Yet we have had members of the House circularised by the Australian Natives' Association, and in the course of that circular there are used certain remarks regarding foreigners, and the general impression given is that they are most undesirable people. The Australian Natives' Association at its inauguration held some very high ideals. I understand that in the establishment of that association it was desired to set up a very high standard of racial life, a standard that everybody could admire. I want to know exactly how the Australian Natives' Association justify that circular of theirs in view of the evidence, given on all sides, of the calibre of the Southern Europeans who are working here. I also want to know what effect this attitude is going to have upon the next meeting of the League of Nations, when the White Australia policy comes up for consideration. Because if it can be shown by legislation such as this before us that the White Australia policy simply resolves itself into a closed-door policy against races from outside Australia—

Hon. J. R. Brown: This does not close the door.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am just pointing out that if that attitude can be justified as the result of legislation such as this, the whole question of the White Australia policy

is going to be brought into very serious consideration by the League of Nations. That is another reason why the Government should have taken thought and deliberated at length before bringing such a Bill before Parliament.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does the hon. member think this is the only State or country taking such precautions as are contained in the Bill?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am not concerned with that. I am instancing the effect of legislation of this sort introduced into a responsible Parliament. It will have a very bad effect in the councils of Europe, where so many people are living on a very much lower standard than ours, desirable people with a civilisation that goes back 1,000 years, people with an historical record that can stand very favourably beside our own.

Hon. G. Fraser: Are you not aware that other European countries are taking similar action?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am simply pointing out this aspect. I think the European people will be justified in their resentment when they hear that this Bill has been introduced into a responsible Parliament of Australia.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You believe in letting them all come.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Everybody knows that for many years past Australia has deliberately ignored and violated well-known economic laws and principles, and that the present unemployment in Australia is entirely due to the fact that Governments and people alike have persistently ignored those laws. And now this Government attempt to evade the inevitable result by introducing trumpery legislation of this description.

The Honorary Minister: How do you think you would get on if you were seeking employment in Italy?

Hon. H. SEDDON: I have some information on that very point. I am given to understand no restriction is imposed upon the employment of aliens in Italy, and I am further informed by responsible mining men in this State that a very considerable number of mining officials are at work in Italy and that some of them have been taken from Kalgoorlie. Indeed, I know some of them personally. Those men are occupying responsible positions on mines in Italy and are doing very well, assisting in the production of wealth in that country. I understand

that in Italy the watchword is, "Work is the first consideration."

Hon. E. H. H. Hall interjected.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No, Italy has been pointed to because a large number of the Southern Europeans in Western Australia are Italians. In conclusion, I repeat that I want definite answers to the questions I have raised in the course of this debate. I think the House would be justified in asking that the whole question be thoroughly considered by the Government, with due regard to statements made inside and outside the House. It is beyond being merely a matter of discussing the amending of an important Act of Parliament. It now resolves itself into a question of investigating the whole position in regard to the employment of aliens, and the position of the mining industry.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East) [6.0]: It is not often that I find myself in a state of indecision regarding a Bill before the House, but I must confess that until Mr. Seddon spoke I was undecided how to cast my vote. Mr. Seddon, however, has done a good deal towards helping me to reach a decision. If I change my mind, it will be because of the defence submitted by the Honorary Minister in his reply. In moving the second reading the Honorary Minister described the Bill as a very simple one. Looking at it on the file, it appears to be a very abbreviated measure and one would be inclined to agree with the Honorary Minister. The debate, however, has shown that the measure contains many intricacies and complications, and I am reminded of the old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Mr. Seddon has submitted a number of questions to which he desires answers. I can only conclude that the intentions of the Government regarding the Bill are good. I find myself rather at variance with Mr. Harris, who last night said that there was no good intention on the part of the Government but that they were animated by a sordid motive inasmuch as the Bill was merely political propaganda for the coming election. Possibly Mr. Harris is a much better judge than I am of the truth or otherwise of that. When it comes to a matter of political propaganda or intrigue, I am something in the nature of an innocent abroad, but I am always inclined to give everybody, whether Government or individual, credit for

good intentions. I hate to suspect the had or the sordid, or to think there might be a nigger in the wood-pile. If we reach a frame of mind when at every turn we suspect a nigger in the wood-pile, or form the habit of looking for sordid motives everywhere, well, it is a bad frame of mind. Mr. Hall picked on Mr. Cornell. I did not hear Mr. Cornell's speech but evidently he said that if the statistics of the great number of deaths in the mining industry quoted by Mr. Williams were true, he questioned whether it was wise to perpetuate the industry. Mr. Hall, in mentioning that, wondered whether it was really the view of Mr. Cornell that, because of the large number of deaths, the mining industry should be allowed to go to the pack, and Mr. Hall wanted to know the attitude of Mr. Cornell when the Bill for the construction of the railway to Wiluna was before the House.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think I stated my view.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: If the mining industry were confined to the men underground and those men were dying as we have been told they are, I would say sincerely, dogmatically and without hesitation or qualification of any kind, "Let the wretched thing go to the wall; we would be better without it." But there is another angle from which the industry must be viewed. I remember when there was an agitation that the Federal Government should offer a bonus on gold in order to sustain the mining industry. If my memory serves me aright, the president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr. Hamilton, urged the necessity for a bonus because of the great number of people dependent on the mining industry. He quoted figures to prove that for every man working in the mining industry—not merely underground but also above ground—nine people were living on the fields as general population dependent upon him. It is not merely the few affected men working underground that enters into the question of the mining industry being perpetuated or otherwise. I believe that at one time there were 30,000 people on the Golden Mile, and on Mr. Hamilton's figures, on the nine-to-one basis, there would not have been a great many employed in the mines to support that population. I assume that his figures were based on the whole of the men engaged in

the mines. The men engaged on the mine surface are in as healthy and congenial surroundings as are people engaged in any other occupation.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I think you are a bit wide of the mark there.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I do not think so. There may be a few men engaged in mills and dry processes, but generally speaking by far the greater number of men employed above ground are working in healthy surroundings. Further, the whole of the men who go underground are not working in unhealthy surroundings. I believe that the men who work in what are called rises and dusty stopes become affected very quickly, but as truckers, mullockers-up, and in all the other occupations underground, it is quite possible for an ordinary healthy individual to remain at the job the whole of his life and not die of miners' phthisis.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is not possible.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I know it is possible.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not one in five.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is very improbable.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Not only the few men working underground in the mines, but the great population of nine-to-one dependent upon the miners have to be considered. If there were 30,000 people in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, it is just possible that there were 5,000 or 10,000 people in the metropolitan area directly or indirectly getting their daily bread because of the mining industry. Let us take the wide aspects of the question into consideration. I hope we shall hear no more of the statement that because a few men engaged in the industry are dying—we regret their deaths—it is justification for not carrying on the industry.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You had sense enough to get out of the industry long ago.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I am not questioning the sense of any man. I repeat that if we had to consider only the poor wretches working underground, the industry would not be worth perpetuating for 10 minutes longer, but we must remember that, had it not been for gold mining, we might not have been here to-day. It is possible that in this State there are yet mining potentialities that will give the in-

dustry another flip, so why talk silly nonsense about putting it out of existence?

Hon. C. B. Williams: It is not nonsense for those who are left in the industry.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Quite a wordy warfare occurred between Mr. Holmes and Mr. Williams regarding preference to unionists. Mr. Holmes said that the foreigners engaged in mines had to take out union tickets before they could get a job, and that having done so, it was only logical to allow them to earn a living. Mr. Williams was very dogmatic in replying that the foreigners did nothing of the sort.

Hon. C. B. Williams: And I stick to it, too.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I say that both members are right and both wrong. When I got a job in the mines I knew as much about unions as a bull knows about bank holidays. I had come from a rustic community in New South Wales, and the fact is that I got a job in ignorance of unionism and without a ticket. I believe that it is still possible to do so and that Mr. Williams was right when he said it was not necessary to have a union ticket to get a job. Where Mr. Holmes becomes right is in what occurs after the man without a ticket gets a job. Let me explain what took place and why I became a unionist. I maintain that every man who gets benefits from a union should be a unionist. If he derives the benefits, he is not a man if he does not become a member. The second day after I started in the mine a union steward approached me and asked, "What about joining the union?" I did not know anything about the union and hardly understood what he was driving at. He did not see me again and I did not see him, but in less than a week I found out that I could not disregard the little request that I should become a unionist. On the levels of a gold mine there are generally 15 or 20 men; at least there were in the mine to which I refer, the Lake View, and we all rolled up to one spot to have our crib. Previous to rolling up, it was customary to snuff a candle over which to heat our tea. I fixed up my crib—can over the candle and returned later to have my crib, but found that my can had been kicked over. Strange to say the very same thing happened on the second day, and again on the third day.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Were you young then?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I am still young—in spirit, at any rate. I became rebellious and asked the company present, "What is the strong of it?" Not a soul answered, but when I dodged back to my work, I remarked to my mate that the kicking over of my can could not have been accidental and asked the explanation of it. His reply was, "A few days ago the steward asked you to join the union. Now just be sensible and join up and you will be more popular."

Hon. A. Lovekin: That bears out what Mr. Holmes stated, that a man must have a union ticket.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Mr. Holmes said a man must have a ticket before he gets a job.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Anyhow, he must have a ticket before he keeps a job.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: But owing to the atmosphere in which a miner has to live after he has got a job, it amounts to the same thing.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Someone said there was no compulsion.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I found that there was compulsion, anyhow, and I still believe that compulsion prevails. Mr. Williams made a good speech, but I could hardly understand much of his logic. He spoke of the fine specimens of young manhood reared on the goldfields, anxious to get a job in the mines, and then he referred to mining as the most rotten occupation in the world. Where is the logic of such argument? It was said that if the foreigners could not get work in the mines, the inference was that they would get work elsewhere in more congenial surroundings and possibly at better remuneration. I do not think there is much logic in that contention. I have yet to learn that a foreigner is such a bone-head, or so stupid as not to take the best job he can get, and irrespective of any percentages of alien to British labour employed in the mines, the foreigners will take the best jobs offering on the goldfields or in other parts of the State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Early in my remarks I referred to Mr. Harris' allusion to the nigger in the woodpile. He saw the political ambitions of the Government in a measure of this nature. I said that I

preferred to give the Government credit for good intentions, but that if there was one thing more than another in Mr. Harris' speech that would lead me to believe there was political propaganda in the Bill, it was the hon. member's statement to the effect that Mr. Munsie, in another place, had said there were more foreigners engaged in the Kalgoorlie mines in 1912 than there are now. If that is so, it brings us to the question of the need for the Bill. I would say that if there were more foreigners engaged on the mines in 1912 than there are now, it cuts the foundation clean out of the percentage bases proposed. I also referred to the disconnection in some of the remarks of Mr. Williams. The hon. member's speech was like the curate's egg—good, but with patches not quite so good. I hardly understood the hon. member when he said there were numberless able-bodied Australian-born young fellows on the fields waiting to take jobs that might be offered them in the mines. I expected him to connect a declaration of that kind to the extent of saying that if they are there in such large numbers waiting to take what he termed rotten jobs, why bother with a percentage of one in ten at all? Why not go the whole hog and say, "We will not have any foreigners employed in the mines?" I expected him to say also that if our own Australian people are wanting these jobs and are unable to get them because of the foreigners, there is no logic in declaring that we will have one in ten of foreigners—we should have none of them there. I would also expect the hon. member to say something about what is to become of the foreigners. If he will not have them in the most rotten occupation in the State, it may be presumed that he will have them somewhere else, though I do not suppose that is his desire. I expected him to connect his logic to the extent of saying that we should get back to the point of first entry of foreigners into the Commonwealth, and suggest to the Commonwealth Government that they tighten up the immigration laws, or else entirely prohibit the entry of these people.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They will not do it.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I expected Mr. Williams to say something of the kind, because apparently his attitude is one that leaves the foreigners in the wilderness,

leaves them to starve to death. The hon. member also failed to connect, so far as I was able to perceive, when he mentioned the language test. That test is applicable to the mines, and also to any other place where the foreigner might be. He is a danger to the people he works with, and a danger to himself, if he has not at least a smattering of English. The beginning of this phase should be the same as the beginning of the immigration law: the language test should not begin when a man gets a job in a mine, but should be administered upon his first entry into Australia. Reverting to a speech made by Mr. Williams some time ago—I think it was the first speech he made in this Chamber—all things being equal, no Australian or Britisher would give preference to a foreigner. I was wondering what was the cause of the greater percentage—it must be a greater percentage in the opinion of Mr. Williams, or he would not be so anxious about the Bill—of foreigners being engaged. I must revert to statements made by him in the speech to which I have alluded, statements to the effect that the foreigner could get a job if he greased the palms of the shift bosses. I would still like to know if that is the qualification which enables a foreigner to get a job on a mine—his being compelled to pay £5, or give a gold watch or something else, to the man who is going to tell him what to do.

Hon. C. B. Williams: There are many ways of greasing palms.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I was pleased to hear what I may term a Christian tone introduced into the remarks of some hon. members who addressed themselves to the Bill. To me it seems a relic of the barbarous past if, having come to the conclusion that mining is a rotten industry which kills the men employed in it, and that it is not fit for a white man to engage in, we ask the black man or the foreigner to take it on. History tells us that the highly-born had it in their minds for generations that the lowly-born should be hewers of wood, drawers of water and muck rakers all through their lives. It is remarkable that a number of the lowly-born should have thought they were created by Providence to do such work. The Christian tone, infused into the debate, appeared to me as a reversion to certain

lines of Bobbie Burns, to the effect that whether a man is white or brown or brindle—

“The rank is but the guinea’s stamp,
The man’s the gowd for a’ that.”

If the industry is not fit for the white fellow, it is not fit for any fellow. Now may I make a passing reference to a matter that is just a little beside the Bill under discussion, but yet connected with it. It has been said that possibly these percentages have to be controlled because of the ability of the foreigner to get a job by reason of a susceptibility to bribery in certain quarters. It has also been stated that the foreigner generally is not always concerned about getting a job in a mine, but secures work in the farming community, and that he is being exploited by the farmer. Mr. Gray, by way of interjection, several times expressed that view. Mr. Gray may know a good deal about other aspects of legislation, but I am afraid he shows lamentable ignorance in his statement as to the farmer exploiting the unfortunate, ignorant foreigner. Undoubtedly the foreigner is exploited in connection with clearing contracts, just as possibly he is exploited in the mining industry. It is not, however, the farmer who is exploiting him, but the foreigner’s own kith and kin. I may illustrate from my own district. In that district at present is a foreigner who has anything from six to ten, and sometimes as many as 15 Southern Europeans working for him. I know for a positive fact that the man has never taken a single contract for which he has not got the ruling rates for clearing: this because of the great satisfaction he has always given. It occurs to me that possibly the foreigner is giving satisfaction at the mines. Reverting to the illustration from my district, I know that the new chums who work for the foreign contractor work night and day—some of them as much as 16 or 18 hours daily.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Is that something you advocate?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Certainly not. They are only getting four or five shillings a day from their fellow-countryman. That fellow-countryman, however, is making £50 or £60 a week. The farmer is not getting that amount. The farmer is paying the foreign employer even more than contract prices, simply because he does his job.

Hon. C. B. Williams: The Australian buys our products, and the foreigner does not.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I wish the hon. member, if he knows all about mining, knew as much about everything else. The bane of our existence is that a majority of our own people, our own clearers, get into our bad books because they do the work badly, collect their cheques, and leave the storekeeper moaning. We do not love foreigners, but we do love satisfaction. However, that is but a passing reference. I merely wished to dissipate an idea held by some people who, though they may know all about industrial conditions in the city and on the mines, know nothing about corresponding conditions in the country.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I have faith in my breed, and you have none in yours.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I have faith in my breed but none in Mr. Williams.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: God forbid that I should not have as much faith as the hon. member has. Some time ago I said that I had an open mind on this Bill. I may add that I had a perfectly open mind until I heard Mr. Seddon’s speech. Even now, I am not going to be dogmatic. If the Honorary Minister can put up a plain argument to combat the points raised by Mr. Seddon, I do not say that I will not vote with the Government. At the present moment, however, I see no alternative to voting against the Bill.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND AGENTS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th September.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.45]: I do not intend to take up much time in discussing the Bill, but there are a few clauses to which I wish to refer. I agree with the remarks made by other members who have spoken in opposition to the Bill, and I, too, intend to vote against the second reading. It is a very unjust measure and will not have the effect desired by the Government. To my mind it will not touch the people called “go-getters,” in respect of land transactions. My greatest

objection to the Bill is that it will single out and penalise a section of the community who to my mind conduct their business with the utmost integrity—I refer to the land agents. As most of the objectionable clauses have been touched on by Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Holmes, I will endeavour to confine my remarks to others to which I take exception. In the first place, I do not agree with the term “land agent” which, according to the Bill, “also includes any person whose business is the selling, whether as owner or otherwise, of land in allotments.” That is very unfair and quite unnecessary. For instance, within 300 or 400 yards from this building there are several blocks of land that the owners have held for a number of years. The rates that have been due on those properties have always been paid and the land has frontages to two or perhaps three streets. The owners may desire to have the blocks subdivided and may themselves then wish to sell them in their reduced sizes. But according to the Bill they will not be allowed to do so unless they allow themselves to be classed as land agents and comply with all the conditions set out in the Bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The effect will be to create small agents.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Yes, and it is not right. I notice also that certain persons are exempt, solicitors, for instance, and that the provisions of the Bill are not to apply to land sold at public auction. It is just possible that some complications may arise out of the latter provision. The clause reads—

The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any land or interest in land sold at public auction, or to any contract for the sale of any land or interest in land sold as afore said, and no person shall be deemed to be a land agent by reason of the fact only that he acts as agent in respect of the sale or other disposal at public auction of any land or interest in land.

Most hon. members are aware that the greater part of land or property submitted for sale by auction is very rarely disposed of in that way. There was an instance recorded only this morning where two valuable properties were put up yesterday and high prices offered for them. All the same the properties were not sold; they were passed in for private negotiation because the reserve placed upon them by the owner was not reached. What position would the auctioneer in such a case occupy under the Bill if

it became an Act? He does not sell the property because it does not reach the reserve, and then disposes of it privately. Under the clause, I take it, he would not be considered a land agent. To my mind he cannot be anything else, that is, if we take into consideration Clause 3 which reads—

For the purposes of this Act every person shall be deemed to be a land agent whose business is to act as agent in respect to the sale or other disposal of land or of interest in land, or the purchase or other acquisition of land or of interest in land.

That is rather a puzzle to me, because I consider that if an auctioneer refuses to accept the highest bid and then treats privately with the intending purchaser he becomes a land agent under the Bill.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Or the owner might conduct negotiations and become a land agent.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Yes, it means the same thing. When the Honorary Minister replies I hope he will give me an explanation of that position which is occurring every day. The next clause I desire to refer to deals with the duty of land agents respecting moneys received during the course of business. It is set out that these moneys shall be paid into a trust account. It seems to me rather unfair to call upon land agents to place these funds in a trust account when other people, such as commission agents who sell goods on consignment, are not expected to do anything of the sort. For instance, metropolitan markets have recently been established and practically the whole of the produce that comes into the metropolitan area, other than wheat, oats and chaff, all of which come along in truckloads, is sold in those markets on consignment on behalf of the growers. If it is necessary that the land agents should pay the moneys received by them into a trust account, then it is only reasonable that all commission agents and those who sell goods on consignment should be expected to do the same thing. Under Clause 26 a land agent must furnish accounts to his principal. But the most remarkable thing is that the land agent is given credit; he is allowed 28 days in which to hand over the money he has received from a purchaser of land. I do not agree with that. The ordinary procedure regarding land transactions is that as soon as a land agent sells a property and gets the money he

hands over the money directly to the seller. That is only right and just, but under Clause 26 he has 28 days in which to furnish an account and pay the money. It should continue to be a cash transaction.

Hon. G. Fraser: There is nothing in the Bill to prevent the money being paid straight away.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: But the land agent is not likely to do so if he has 28 days' grace. Another clause to which I object is 36. Under this a purchaser may cancel a contract at any time within six months of the making of it unless the land agent complies with certain conditions which to my mind are absolutely unreasonable. I consider it is just as much the business of the intending purchaser to make inquiries about what he is about to buy. If any man trusts entirely to the seller, he is quite likely to be caught in some way or other and if he has any common sense he makes investigations or has it specified in the agreement that everything is straight and above board. Personally I can see a lot of trouble arising out of this clause if it is permitted to become law. It has been pointed out on a number of occasions that we are passing through a period of financial stringency, and it is possible that land values—although at the present time the market is very firm—may slump to some extent. Naturally enough, when a man buys a property his desire is to make a profit out of it, and if he finds after having entered into an agreement, values drop £5 or £10 a foot, he may set to work to discover a flaw in the regulations which will enable him to cancel the agreement. That is very unfair. Then the provision with regard to the duty of salesmen set out in Clause 39 is very arbitrary. Practically every employee in the office of a land agent takes an interest in the business and naturally is anxious to effect sales. If by any chance an intending purchaser comes along and the land agent happens to be out of the office, the employee's one desire is to make a client of the caller. The man may say he has called about a block of land, and is shown a plan. The young fellow may be energetic and keen on bringing off a sale. He suggests to the would-be purchaser that the block is a good one, and thinks it would be a good speculation. He says it is cheap and advises the

man to buy it. Thus he becomes a salesman and has to be registered. When I was managing my business it did not matter who came into my place, if he wanted to buy anything, any member of my staff would be interested enough to push a sale if he could. I take it the same thing applies to employees on the staffs of the land agents. Clause 60 will compel land agents to have their accounts audited. That is another injustice to these people. There are hundreds of other businesses, such as those of commission agents and persons who sell on consignment who at present are exempt from any such necessity. Within the last week or two four commission agents have sold 20,000 bales of wool, worth approximately £300,000. That wool was sold on behalf of various people. If it is necessary for land agents to have their accounts audited, why should not the same principle apply to wool brokers, commission agents, and others doing the same kind of business? It is unfair to pick out the land agents and allow commission agents, brokers and others to go free. The other clauses to which I object have already been referred to by previous speakers. The Bill is unjust to one portion of the business community. I am of opinion that it will not have the effect desired by the Government, namely of reaching those unscrupulous people who sell land and endeavour to catch the unwary. If the unwary are not caught by land agents, they will be caught by some other section of the community. We cannot legislate for that class of person. For these reasons I intend to vote against the Bill.

On motion by Hon. A. Lovekin, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.5 p.m.