

me—and I say this with deference because I do not know much about the Lotteries Commission—that this business has now been going so long that the commission rate might in some cases be reduced, or at any rate that there should be a maximum sum which any one agency or business can receive by way of commission on sale of tickets. There might be a certain commission up to a certain figure, perhaps £100 a year, and the rate might be 10 per cent. up to £100 a year and thereafter $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 5 per cent. I would like to limit the total of the commission payments received, and increase the amounts going to subscribers and charities.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 11th December, 1942.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (3).

WIRE AND WIRE NETTING ACT.

Agricultural Bank Interest Charge.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What rate of interest is charged by the Agricultural Bank on moneys advanced to settlers under the Wire and Wire Netting Act? 2, If the settler is unable to meet his interest payments when due is that sum added to his total indebtedness on which interest, at the rate stated

in answer to question No. 1, is charged? or, 3, Is he charged a different rate of interest on the unpaid interest, and if so, what is the rate charged?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Wire netting advances are dealt with under special agreement with the Commonwealth. The agreement provides that liability of the settler to the State shall be discharged if the settler pays to the State half-yearly for 25 years:—Sinking Fund contribution at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum of the amount of the value of the wire or wire netting supplied to the settler and interest at the rate of 5 per cent. for each £100 advanced over a period of 25 years. 2, Five per cent. and 2 per cent. for sinking fund are charged. If unable to pay full amount, moneys received first go towards liquidating interest charges. Collections have been insufficient from farmers to the extent of £56,800 and these liabilities to the Commonwealth have been met from General Revenue. Up to the end of October we have written off settlers' accounts £49,867. 3, Total interest rate and 2 per cent. sinking fund rate still apply on unpaid balances.

HEALTH.

Venereal Disease Effects, etc.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Health: 1, Regarding the list of diseases tabled by him on the 27th August last as directly or indirectly traceable to venereal disease, will he enumerate those which are directly traceable to V.D.? 2, Are medical practitioners obliged to report all cases directly traceable to V.D.? 3, Are chemists allowed to sell drugs for the alleged cure of V.D. and are they obliged to report such sales, with names and addresses of the purchasers? 4, If no reports are obtained from medical practitioners and chemists, by what means can the department compute a percentage of those suffering directly or indirectly from V.D.?

The MINISTER replied: 1, In the list tabled on the 7th August of diseases directly or indirectly traceable to venereal disease, the term "directly" referred to those conditions which occur relatively early in the disease or as a complication, and the term "indirectly" referred to later and more remote effects which can be referred to pre-existing venereal disease, and are known to result therefrom. Some of these remote conditions may arise also from causes other than

venereal disease, but those due to venereal disease may generally be determined by pathological and bacteriological tests. 2, Section 271 of the Act requires all cases of actual venereal disease in an infectious stage to be reported, but the names and addresses of patients are not stated. 3, (a) No. (b) No. 4, The Department has not attempted to compute any percentage.

LIQUOR SUPPLIES.

As to Shortage in Country.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: (without notice) asked the Deputy Premier: Is he aware that in country districts hotelkeepers and the public are being penalised? For a period of a week or 10 days, ended on the 3rd December, there was an absence of supplies of spirits, wines and beer and, to a lesser degree, cordials.

Mr. Cross: That applies to Perth.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Perth gets its ration every day, but country people have had to go without supplies for six to ten days. Is it possible for the Government to take action in the matter? It seems to be a breach of the licensing law, and this ridiculous state of affairs should be remedied.

The DEPUTY PREMIER replied: I am not aware of this difficulty in the country districts. The question of the manufacture and rationing of intoxicating liquors is entirely one for the Commonwealth. I do not know whether country districts have been unduly prejudiced, but complaints have been made all over the State about the rationing of the supplies. If specific cases were put up, the Government could make representations to the Commonwealth authorities. The State has no say whatever in the manufacture and rationing of intoxicating liquors.

Mr. Boyle: It is a matter for the Customs Department.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: Yes. The Government could make inquiries about specific cases but it has no power to deal with the matter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver and Venereal Case.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER: May I make a personal explanation, Mr. Speaker? The other day the Minister for Health replied to a question I asked about a case of venereal disease in which the woman, Mrs. ——— had to go to hospital.

The Minister for Health: You need not mention the name.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The Minister said that the woman had been moved from her address. I do not for one moment wish to impute that the Minister was aware of it, but most of the statements were incorrect.

The Minister for Health: Is this an explanation or a reply to a statement made by me?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am trying to ascertain what it is.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Subiaco will proceed.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The point is I interviewed the woman, and I think that in fairness, as the statement made by the Minister appears in "Hansard," I should be permitted to say that most of the statement is incorrect. The woman did not leave her dwelling.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not a personal explanation. It is a reply to some statement made by the Minister.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Would you please tell me, Mr. Speaker, when I can bring the matter up?

Mr. SPEAKER: It might be brought up on the Estimates; but this is not a personal explanation.

Point of Order.

Mr. Fox: I would like to know whether it is possible for you, Mr. Speaker, to make an order that the name of the lady mentioned by the member for Subiaco in connection with a V.D. examination be not published in "Hansard" or in the Press. Personally I do not know the lady, but I do not think her name should go either into "Hansard" or the Press.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have already asked for that to be done.

Mr. Speaker: In reply to the member for South Fremantle, the Speaker has no authority to censor anything, but as the member for Subiaco has signified her willingness to have this name expunged from these records I have already issued orders for that to be done.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BUSINESS NAMES.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 1st December. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Registration under repealed Act to be deemed registration under this Act:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 6, to which Hon. N. Keenan had moved an amendment as follows:—

That in lines 9 and 10 the words "one year from the commencement of this Act and no longer" be struck out and the words "one year after the conclusion of the present war" inserted in lieu.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I understand that the Minister intends to accept an amendment to Clause 1—for which purpose the Bill will have to be recommitted—as a result of which the measure will not be proclaimed until the beginning of 1944. In that event, I do not propose to proceed with my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Signature and attestation of statement required for registration:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (1) after the word "signed" the words "if in Western Australia" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (1) after the word "declarations" the words "and if elsewhere than in Western Australia in the presence of a person having authority to administer an oath in the place where such statement is signed" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the proviso the following paragraph be added:—

(iv.) Where an individual carrying on business under a business name or all the members of a firm so carrying on business is or are absent from Western Australia, the foregoing provisions of this section shall be deemed to be sufficiently complied with if the said statement be signed by a person who has previously filed in the office of the Registrar a statutory declaration that he is duly authorised by and on behalf of such individual or firm to carry on the business of the individual or firm in Western Australia.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 28, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Repeal:

Mr. McDONALD: I am obliged to the Minister for the consideration he has given to the representations made in Committee as to allowing additional time before the Bill comes into force, owing to the dislocation of business due to manpower restrictions and other causes. I have discussed the matter with him, and I now move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2) of Clause 1 the following words be added:—"and not earlier than the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty-four."

The CHAIRMAN: Before the hon. member proceeds I would point out that a resolution was carried by the House for the recommitment of this Bill to deal with Clause 2. The hon. member's amendment deals with Subclause (2) of Clause 1. The Committee is completely out of order in considering Clause 1. I shall have to report to the Speaker.

As to Procedure.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have to report, Mr. Speaker, that there was apparently an error in the resolution carried. The House desired a recommitment of Clause 1, instead of Clause 2, although the motion was for the recommitment of the latter.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, Bill again recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 1.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title, commencement:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2) the following words be added:—"and not earlier than

the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty-four."

The result will be that the Act will not come into force for approximately 12 months and by that time we hope that conditions will be more normal, and that firms will be in a better position to comply with the provisions of this measure.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with a further amendment, and the reports adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1942-43.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day; Mr. Withers in the Chair.

Vote—Mines, £117,991 (partly considered):

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [11.25]: I do not propose to delay these Estimates, but they contain one or two features to which I wish to draw the Minister's attention before I join forces with him in being sorry that the goldmining industry, which is the major industry in our metalliferous mining, is so depressed. I draw his attention to the fact that numbers of men who have been compulsorily taken from the goldmining industry for purposes other than to be absorbed in the various active Fighting Forces of the Commonwealth have not yet been covered by law. These men have been taken from the industry and compelled to go to other works and, although not actually engaged in the fighting, they are obliged to render service to those who are. If these men remain out of the industry for the specified period, and are not legally protected, they will lose their rights to compensation.

I referred the matter some time ago to the Minister and he assured me that he would go into it with his expert officers. I have no doubt that he has, but now that his memory has been refreshed I would like him again to give consideration to it, because these men were compelled to go from the industry and if they are not actually in the Fighting Forces they will lose their right to compensation. The men who are in the services will not lose their rights. I do not think either the Minister or any other member of this Committee would desire that that should be the case, but that is what will happen unless we take the necessary action to protect

them. Some of them might have been in the industry for a long time.

The Minister for Mines: This is under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: So long as they are examined they are all right.

Mr. MARSHALL: But they cannot be. Some are in the North-West and some I believe, in Darwin.

The Minister for Mines: We discussed the matter this morning.

Mr. MARSHALL: I hope the Minister will look into it again with a view to finding out what is the exact position of these men and protecting them.

Hon. N. Keenan: How are those on active service protected?

Mr. MARSHALL: We passed an Act to cover them. The Minister was very prompt in that regard. Many men have left the mining industry and volunteered—in the same way as men volunteered to join the A.I.F.—to enter into such work as could be said to be war work in munition factories. I am doubtful whether they would lose their right to compensation. I hope the Minister will give immediate consideration to these aspects. Time is progressing and I do not want to see complications arise or injustices done to these fellows. I agree with the Minister that it is a tragic factor, particularly in the lives of those who have been associated with the goldfields, to observe the decline in the goldmining industry which has, to a large extent, been responsible for the welfare of this State.

We have at times heard many eulogies directed to the primary producers; but I think the goldmining industry fostered the rural industries. It brought into this country some of the greatest men the Commonwealth has ever known. They migrated here from all nations. They were men of courage, vision and determination. They were self-reliant men and went forth without any request for Government assistance or inducement other than their own personal initiative and ambition. Some of them have lived to serve the State well. They made their mark, not only as prospectors and miners but as politicians, and helped in the progress of their adopted country. But apart altogether from that phase, let members contemplate the many deeds of heroism associated with the development of goldmining in this State. Some of

the bravest deeds in history, many unrecorded, can be placed to the credit of some of the old battlers who pioneered goldmining here. Some of them were almost unbelievable in their heroism.

Let me cite just the instance of Bayley and Ford. Let members contemplate the deeds of those two men who left the Kimberleys and, although I believe quite untutored in the art of navigation or surveying, were able to traverse vast stretches of country, and on through what is now known as Nannine to Southern Cross. In those days the location of water supplies was completely unknown to white men, and Bayley and Ford had to travel through country where the blacks were particularly hostile. That was a wonderful performance, particularly in those early days. That instance is one of dozens that could be cited. While many survived their ordeals, others lost their lives. Of those that survived quite a number have left their mark on the history of the State. Some did not live to do well for themselves, but some few received their just reward. Western Australia has much to thank the goldmining industry for, and I believe that the State may be in that position again in the future. I have given close study to the writings of orthodox economists in particular, who deal with the question of what may or may not happen to gold as a monetary unit.

I am convinced that very much depends on what people themselves will demand to be the standard as to whether gold will in future play the prominent part as the basis for the currency issue it has in the past. If some of the authorities on this subject can convince themselves that by an increase in the actual price of gold it can still be used as a monetary unit and the basis for the currency issue, something may yet happen in that regard that will make gold as valuable in the future as it has been in the past. Up to a certain point, automatically the gold standard worked well, but on the declaration of war in 1914 it vanished and has never really been in existence since that date, although some people will argue that it has. At least its importance has declined, and for it has been substituted the expansion of bank credit and controlled prices. Gold deteriorated as the basis for currency issue, but it still holds an important place in the international life of the world because of its acceptability. All

nations will accept it as a basis, and as a unit of account it still holds the grandeur it has possessed throughout history. I do not desire to argue against it as being indispensable as an international unit of account; I adhere to the idea that there are still sufficient individuals who will profit by it and are influential enough to maintain it. They will put up a very bitter struggle to retain gold as the basis of currency issue and international adjustment. Having regard to that phase, I believe that the goldmining industry will surely recover from its present depressed condition.

Mr. North: Then we win both ways.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so. Of course, one cannot say with any degree of confidence what will actually happen, but I certainly hope the future prospects will be brighter. My views are fairly well-known. They are inherent in me because I have studied this question from all angles and have read books on the subject, particularly those written by the orthodox students of economics. I am convinced that gold can be dispensed with without adverse effects on the countries that produce it. There is a school of thought that believes that so much has been paid for gold, particularly for the bullion that now rests in vaults at Fort Knox which is situated somewhere in America, that the amount paid for it would make the dispensability of gold absolutely impossible. All I can say to that school of thought is that they know very little about banking methods when they attach that much importance to gold. All the banks did in connection with the purchase of that gold was to furnish a cheque, which meant merely bank credit. Not a single penny of legal tender was paid for one grain of that gold. Think of the position regarding the Russian international debt when during the Revolution £900,000,000 worth of indebtedness was repudiated with one sweep of the hand, and not a solitary individual missed the money because it was merely bank credit created by inserting a few figures in the ledger. That is the position concerning the price paid for gold. Nevertheless we must not be unmindful of the fact that the industry has been very beneficial to Western Australia. Speaking personally, it provided me with a very lucrative livelihood for many years, and it is to me most re-

grettable that the industry is so rapidly on the decline.

What the outcome will be I cannot say, but I want the Minister and the Committee to understand that on this topic "all that glitters is not gold." In the production of that commodity we have had to pay a big price and have had to sacrifice the lives of many men. Thousands of them have spent their last days in anguish and misery, due to the diseases peculiar to the goldmining industry. Thousands have been killed outright in the course of their occupation on the mines. From that standpoint, the industry has been costly to the community, but nevertheless it has provided a reward for some associated with it. It has been beneficial to our public economy and has improved to a degree the social life of the community. One can only repeat that it is deplorable to note the decline of the industry. However, a war is in progress and our first duty is to maintain our full war effort because, if we fail in our duty in that respect, the industry and the State itself will vanish. It can only be of importance to us in the event of our being victorious in the present struggle. Failing that, the industry will not be of much value to anybody. To win the war must be our first object. Therefore I cannot castigate the Commonwealth Government for its attitude towards the industry. If men are required for the battle fronts, and are available in the goldmining industry, they will have to be used for the battle fronts; but I think there has been a complete lack of organisation in the matter.

I understood from the Minister that we were to have 4,500 men left in the industry, but it seems to me there has been some misunderstanding amongst the parties interested, or that some doubt exists. We find that Reidy's has closed down, that the Big Bell is on the verge of having to close, and that there is a struggle to maintain the manpower at the Wiluna mines. Wiluna is important not only for its gold production but because it is also producing antimony and arsenic, both of which play an important part in the production of war material. The Commonwealth has gone to the extreme measure of subsidising the Blue Spec in the Pilbara district to the extent of £30,000.

The Minister for Mines: No, £15,000.

Mr. MARSHALL: I understood the amount was £30,000. However, a subsidy

of £15,000 indicates the importance attached to the Blue Spec. Though it is a small mine, compared with Wiluna, it is none the less important. As the Commonwealth has provided £15,000 of the taxpayers' money for that mine, it shows the importance attached to it. Wiluna is a large producer of antimony and arsenic, both of which I believe are used extensively in the manufacture of explosives. I am inclined to think that the Mines Department and the Chamber of Mines have not been sufficiently active. I think there is a lack of co-operation, organisation or understanding between the parties, and that this is one of the reasons why we are experiencing difficulty in maintaining sufficient manpower to keep the Wiluna mines going. The company is putting its shaft down still further, and it will be tragic if the men—very experienced men—doing the development work are taken away. Particularly does this apply to the shaft men. The sinking of a shaft is one of the most important jobs in a mine. If the men capable of doing that work, especially in a shaft such as that at Wiluna, are taken away, the mine will soon close down.

I must, in part, subscribe to the arguments advanced by the member for Mt. Magnet. I have a petition from the Prospectors' Association at Cue for presentation to the Minister. The association has been in existence for a long time and is an active organisation. At this centre there is a number of old prospectors—not so old in years that they cannot work but old in the industry—men who have been prospecting all their lives. Some were prospecting at Moolyalla; others were prospecting on wolfram, tin, scheelite, and other mineral deposits. In their petition they pray the Minister not to grant reservations in the vicinity of known deposits of base metals. I have a petition from the people of the district praying that reservations will not be granted. Some of these deposits are very rich, but so far as the work done has disclosed, they are not what might be called big deposits. They include wolfram, scheelite, molybdenite, tin, feldspar, and other valuable minerals now required for the war effort.

Wherever those little rich deposits are known to exist—and there is a record of them in the Mines Department—we shall

have the go-getter seeking them very quickly. He will endeavour to get areas around well-defined ore channels and repeat what he did in the goldmining boom. He will take up the country, not with the object of seeing how much money he can get to develop the proposition, but how much money he can get out for himself. I hope the Minister will be careful about granting any reservation at all. I understand that a deposit of wolfram not far from the Big Bell Mine was opened up many years ago and that analysis showed it to be one of the richest deposits in the world. But it is not a big deposit. Still, who can say that further prospecting will not reveal it to be a very big deposit? All we can say is that further prospecting is necessary in order to discover what is there.

So far, not much work has been done on these deposits. I want the Minister to ensure that there is no repetition of what happened at the Moolyalla tinfield. There the Government of the day issued fairly large parcels of land to individuals who merely held it up for a considerable time, not with a view to getting money put into the proposition but to see how much money they could get out of it. Finally, the areas had to be forfeited, and the prospectors went in, and for years a number of prospectors have been doing really well there. Would-be companies do not prospect at all. As far as my knowledge goes, they never have done so. They will take up propositions on well-known and well-defined ore channels and do some boring, if that can be called prospecting; but to go into new, virgin country is not within their category at all. I hope the Minister will be careful regarding the many requests which are bound to be made to him for the granting of this, that, or the other. If he finds it advisable to grant a request with a view to attracting capital for development, he will not find me hostile; but I assure him that if I find large areas held up, as has been the case in past years, without a sign of activity about them, and in many cases no intention of displaying any activity, the Minister and I will be at daggers drawn immediately.

I have no wish to prevent development of any of these propositions, but the Minister would be well advised, with a view to getting further prospecting done on them if he gave consideration to the suggestions of the member for Mt. Magnet.

In those localities all necessary facilities are available, with battery managers and right-hand men and staffs. The plants are sprinkled around the goldfields, not immediately adjacent, but in close proximity, to many valuable minerals. The State Battery manager should be made a Government agent. Our Minister for Mines should be in touch with the Federal Minister in charge of these forms of deposit. I do not subscribe to that part of the utterances of the member for Mt. Magnet in which he declared that only during the continuance of the war would the deposits be valuable. I am hopeful that when this war ends we shall not prove retrogressive, going back to the old system of allowing everybody else to produce all we require of a secondary character while we send away our wheat and our wool. Under a proper monetary system with a sane and logical Government in charge of our Commonwealth, I visualise a rapid post-war development, and one of some permanency, in this State with all its known huge deposits of valuable requisites in the manufacture of all kinds of things badly needed by our community. I do, however, subscribe to all that the member for Mt. Magnet said in regard to taking advantage now of the high prices paid for these minerals. There the hon. member struck the right note.

The Minister should be prepared to assist towards the further prospecting of maiden country. I consider that he should also help in the development of the present known deposits by giving reasonable rewards to the manpower now available—rewards of, say, £2 10s. or £3 per week, as suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet. If State battery managers were agents of the Government, the prospector's ore could be bought and paid for on the spot. A prospector cannot follow his ore right up to the point of realisation; but he can do as he does now with gold ore, take it to the State battery and say, for instance, "There is 15 tons; analyse it. After you get the analysis of the ore, you can arrange with the Commonwealth Government to pay the value." That is done with gold-bearing ore. Having regard to the present value of these products, I am positive that there would be very little chance indeed of the Government's losing anything by paying sustenance to prospectors when prospecting for such ores. They exist all around Mt. Magnet.

'One can go out from Gullewa northward and there find some of the finest deposits of metals known in the whole world. The member for Pilbara represents country that is almost in a virgin state so far as prospecting is concerned and yet carries deposits of platinum, silver lead ore, wolfram, scheelite, tantalite and other valuable metals. Now is the opportune time for that hon. member and the member for Mt. Magnet.

The Government being alive to the facts, it is now possible to get prospecting done. The prospectors are men able and willing, though too old to be picked up for war purposes. There is a lot of work in them yet, and they are fairly honest and conscientious. I cannot see the Government losing on this proposition, because these old fellows know where the deposits are and how to work them. For the time being they will be able to make a good livelihood once they get a start, and provided the Government rewards them by immediate purchase. I hope that the present opportunity to get well-known deposits further prospected will not be let slip. I am especially desirous that the district of the member for Pilbara should be prospected thoroughly. I have been through a good deal of that country. I know that platinum exists there, and that copper may be found there in abundance, as on the Murchison. I have great confidence in the Under Secretary for Mines, and hold him in the highest esteem. He is a very able young man. I have been informed by him that there is a new invention for copper concentration of ore. The plants are pilot plants, suitable for handling by prospectors: they are stated to be highly efficient. By their help, metals can be extracted without much trouble, even from ore of large size; there is no need to pulverise the ore. There are many copper deposits such as that at Mt. Fraser, just out from Peak Hill. It will be a tragedy if while these metals are bringing such largely enhanced prices we lose the opportunity of getting our known ore bodies well defined and discovering more.

We ought not to be afraid of importation of metals into this State; our objective ought to be to export metals. I desire to inform the Minister and other members, who have not had my experience in Malaya, that cheap labour does not count very much in these days. That it is a factor I admit, but with up-to-date machinery and the application of science to production, we can over-

come many difficulties and produce efficiently and cheaply, so much so that the wage factor will prove to be not so important as many people think it is. If we apply scientific methods to our production, we shall be able to compete with those countries where labour is cheap, and where it is used extravagantly, inefficiently and uneconomically. We should take advantage of science and accept it as a blessing rather than a curse. I do not want the Minister to lose any opportunity to exploit our base metals. I was inclined to think for a time that he had become obsessed with the Civil Defence organisation which has been taken over by his department.

The Minister for Mines: Why bring that up?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not want the Minister to make the Mines Department a Civil Defence department.

The Minister for Mines: I have not.

Mr. MARSHALL: Nor do I want the capable Under Secretary to think that he is under an obligation to place on one side the possibilities of our mining industry in order to worry about the Commonwealth regulations governing civil defence. I do not think he will, nor do I think the Minister will. There is much in what the member for Mt. Magnet said last evening. Now is our opportunity to exploit our base metals, when prices are high. Now is our opportunity to establish this industry. I recently handed the Minister a petition and made some propositions to him, about which I hope we shall both be soon able to confer. I trust he will be able to make available the State batteries and the services of the battery managers to treat these ores. He could arrange with the Commonwealth Government for the ores to be analysed and for the prospectors to be paid. The Commonwealth Government should accept that responsibility. If we take advantage of the present high prices of base metals, we shall be encouraged to search for and find other deposits, in addition to those already known. Prospectors are asking the Government to provide them with sufficient money to enable them to develop the deposits already known and to look for new ones, and it would be a tragedy if the Minister did not make some arrangement to meet their wishes. It is wrong to imagine that the prospectors, because they are old, cannot do this work. That is not so. The Minister knows that,

even if they are old, they are cunning and understand their work. They are experienced and can break ore in greater quantities than can younger men, who are ignorant of how to set about the job.

I would suggest that millions of tons of these base metals will be required in this State in the near future, that is, if we can accept what we are told by some authorities on the new order. I have my own view about that order and about what those authorities say; but I also have much confidence in the people and I am satisfied they will ask for what they want. The job of those authorities will be to give the people results. We have ships to build, works to build and homes to build. We can make this State extremely attractive and increase our population rapidly. But now is our opportunity to establish base metal industries. I appeal to the Minister not to turn down the proposition made to him by the Prospectors' Association of Cue, but to get to work with the Commonwealth Government with a view to obtaining finance. If he takes heed of what those prospectors say, the proposition will not be costly. The services of departmental experts could be availed of, as well as the facilities of the department. If he does this, I am sure the State will prosper, and in time to come the name of the Minister for Mines will be indelibly impressed on the minds of the people of this State. In conclusion, I trust the Minister will not forget the men who have been compelled to leave the mining industry. I hope he will not permit them to lose their rights to compensation.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara): While it is to be regretted that war conditions have necessitated a drastic reduction in the number of men engaged in the goldmining industry, it is pleasing to note that we have in this State—especially in the north-western portion—a variety of base metals. The member for Murchison enumerated quite a number of them and mentioned that some of the more important deposits were in the Pilbara district. That is true. At the outset of my brief remarks, I desire to congratulate the Mines Department upon its having brought under the notice of the Commonwealth Government the large and valuable deposits of base metals in this State. As an instance, the Blue Spec mine, which was mentioned by the member for Murchison, was a potential

gold-producer, but unfortunately few men were working on it. As a fact, gold production had ceased for some time; but there were deposits of antimony in the mine and, after examination, the Commonwealth Government advanced £15,000 to the company to enable it to produce antimony. At present, approximately 40 men are employed on the mine. It is hoped that ere long that number will be increased. Within a few miles of the Blue Spec quite a large quantity of white asbestos has been mined but for some years those deposits have not been worked.

While mentioning asbestos I might say that in the Roebourne district, adjacent to Pilbara, there are deposits of blue asbestos which I believe are recognised as being amongst the most wealthy in the world. Two years ago the Minister for Mines had an opportunity to see those deposits, and I have no doubt that in the near future a number of men will be engaged by the Commonwealth Government to work them. There is plenty of tantalite, which is a most important mineral at the present time. Until two years ago, works were being carried on at Strilley, about 30 miles from Port Hedland and at Wodgina, 65 miles from Port Hedland. There were 30 men employed but, due to circumstances, the works were closed down. However, tantalite is most essential for Commonwealth Government purposes. I understand that the ex-manager has been taken out of the Military Forces and sent back to the mines, and that within a very short time 50 or 60 men will be engaged in winning tantalite. More men are employed at the Comet Gold Mine, six miles south of Marble Bar, than at any time since it first started to produce. Approximately 100 men are engaged. From conversation with one of the officials of the mine I gathered that the mine was also starting to produce arsenic. Every man able to do so has joined the V.D.C. and these men are doing a very fine job in the confines of Marble Bar.

As far as other metals are concerned, such as tin, there are vast quantities in the Pilbara district, and I believe that the Mines Department and the technical officers attached to it are fully seized of the importance and necessity for bringing under the notice of the responsible authority the potential wealth existing in the North-West portion of this State. I would also mention the wonderful deposits of iron ore at Yampi

Sound where over 100,000,000 tons are accessible at high water mark. I have no doubt that in the future these deposits will be worked on behalf of the State or Commonwealth. There is only one other matter I would like to mention and about which I think something could easily be done. I hope that when the travelling laboratory next visits the Pilbara-Marble Bar district the Mines Department, or the responsible official, will give ample notice to the workers and the employers in that area, because the mails are irregular and if the travelling laboratory proceeds to Marble Bar without giving ample notice to all concerned, it is quite possible, as happened some years ago through a misunderstanding, that a number of men will remain unexamined after the departure of the laboratory. In my dealings with the Mines Department I have received every courtesy, and I feel sure that the officers will look after the interests of Western Australia so far as its potential mineral wealth is concerned. I have no doubt that whatever they can do in collaboration with the Commonwealth Government will be done in the interests of the war effort, and when peace returns I hope that base metals will continue to be won from the earth.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I do not propose to push my long nose into the mining Estimates but I want to make one comment on a remark by one of the previous speakers as to whether gold is going to be used after the war. It so happens that the House of Lords debated this question in July, and I have here a copy of a question and answer on the subject that might interest the Committee. Even if it is correct that gold will not be needed as a basis for credit there are other uses to which it could be put. I have been told that if the existing gold stocks in the world were used in the cure of rheumatoid arthritis, that disease could be removed from the world. I would sooner see no people afflicted with that disease than see gold stored in vaults. The question that was asked in the House of Lords came from Lord Strabolgi—whose name I am given to understand is pronounced with a hard “g”—and was as follows:—

May I ask the Lord Chancellor if it is possible for him to reply, with convenience, to a specific question? I have not given him notice of it, but I should be glad if it could be answered. Is there any hankering now in Treasury circles—by which I mean banking,

financial and money-lending circles in the city who all work together—for a return to the gold standard after the war?

To that question the Lord Chancellor (Viscount Simon) replied—

My noble friend, Lord Strabolgi, also showed great consideration in what he put to me, but he was entitled, in view of that, to ask me one specific and formal question, which I will answer as well as I can. He asked this question: Is there any prospect of our returning to the gold standard? Now, I am not a prophet or the son of a prophet, but we have had our experience of returning to the gold standard last time. That experience did not turn out to be a very happy one and I have heard no whisper and no echo, from the secret conclaves on which the noble lord looks with some suspicion, of any intention to repeat our former experience in that matter. I trust that that will be regarded as a straightforward answer; I can hardly be expected to say more.

That, of course, is only what may be thought in the House of Lords. I am told that New York has other ideas on the subject. As a city member who takes a great interest in the prospects of the goldmining industry and those that follow it, I feel that there is a tremendous lot of use to which gold could be put besides that of supporting credit. I trust that the answer of Viscount Simon, which might be staggering to members representing goldmining districts, will not be regarded as harmful after all.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans): I am sorry that on this occasion I am quite unable to draw a bright picture of the goldmining industry. At the present time that industry is almost defunct on the Eastern Goldfields. People who have been accustomed to travel through that district and to see the number of people there are inclined to say now, in the words of the Yank, that it is twice as dead as the Chicago cemetery. There are only a few young people in the district and the elderly people are wondering what is going to happen. Most of the mines are working from day to day, dreading that at any time the few remaining men will be taken away. We were given a promise by the Commonwealth authorities when we went as a delegation to them on this matter. Some of them did not appear to be inclined to give us much consideration, but the Prime Minister was very considerate and understanding. He realised what the mining industry meant to this State and helped us in every way possible. We were permitted to have the services of

4,500 men, the position to be reviewed in three months.

Hon. N. Keenan: How long ago was that?

Mr. LEAHY: At the end of May or June. Members can readily understand the effect on the industry of reducing the number of employees to 4,500. It looks to me as though the industry is going to be very badly attacked in the future. People who are actively engaged in and know something of military operations have personally told me and written me letters, that they have more men in the forces than they can equip. But still we seem to be in the unhappy position, in the goldmining industry, of having men regularly taken away. It has been repeated throughout the ages that gold some day would lose its value. Today gold is more valuable than it ever was. The people in London, who deal in goldmining shares on the London Stock Exchange were, some little time ago, intrigued by a suggestion put forward from the United States that that country should lend 2,500,000,000 dollars in exchange for a lien on the gold produced for five years in the British Empire. If that be so, it goes to prove that the United States of America has supreme confidence in Great Britain and, incidentally, in the future of gold. The production of gold in the British Empire is about 20,000,000 ozs. per annum. Of this amount, something in the vicinity of 13,000,000 ozs. is contributed by South Africa, proving conclusively that if that proposal is ever adopted, it will not take very long to liquidate the debt.

America today holds 70 per cent. of the visible supplies of gold in the world. I believe that up till very recently it had been prepared to continue buying gold wherever offered at approximately 35 dollars an ounce, yet, strange to say, gold is not in circulation, as currency, in that country. It is not in use there in any way. It is deposited in inland depositories of which Fort Knox in Kentucky holds something like 14,000,000,000 dollars' worth. That gold is quite a loss to the people of that country. Not only is it a loss, but it is a potential menace because of the fact that credit could be dangerously pyramided on such a base. Other proposals have been brought forward as to how gold could be utilised, but the financiers of America who have studied the question appear to have come to the conclusion that the only

way gold will be of value to the world and to the United States of America in particular is that, when this dreadful conflict is ended and the nations of the world decide to live and trade in peace, even if only for a little while, it will enable America to play one of the most important parts in the economic reconstruction of the world by way of financing the stricken countries. Such financing would be carried out in the way of loans of gold. By doing that exchange rates will be stabilised, and, of course, without that stabilisation international trade would be impossible.

I, personally, have every faith in the future of gold. During the last war we were robbed, as everybody knows. Our gold was commandeered and we were paid, I should say from memory, £3 18s. an ounce. We were robbed of well over £3,000,000. We were told that gold would not be of much value, but we had to produce it, and today those countries which produce gold are increasing their output, even though this war still goes on. But we are even now told that gold is unnecessary. Had it not been for the gold industry there would have been very little of Western Australia here today. It opened up this State. If members go through the back country today they will find what were once thriving little townships now deserted. When people talk of gold they cannot compare other States with Western Australia. Victoria, for instance, produces a small percentage of Australia's gold, but the industry is our life-blood. The future of this State is wrapped up in gold because when this present conflict ceases—and God grant that time may come sooner than we expect!—we will have to find a place for these gallant fellows who will be returning to this State.

We must not wait for two or three years, but start now to prepare for that time. There is no other industry in Western Australia, if kept in order, which can absorb 15,000 or 20,000 men. There is no other industry in the Commonwealth which could do that. I have not much faith in the new order. I well remember what happened on the goldfields after the last war. Men returned and the general principle was—preference to returned soldiers. Nobody questioned that, but they did question an occurrence such as this, that a man with five or six children who, perhaps was not the strongest man in the world, was thrown out to let a returned soldier in, and the soldier,

after having been so many years away, said, "I have done my bit and will not work too hard on the mine where I will die anyhow if I stop much longer." The man with the five children would have been put out for three or four months but the soldier who took his place would not have done the work. But gold had to be produced and that could only be done if the men worked. The result was that the managers said, "If this war is going to continue in Australia we will have to alter things." As a result the soldier had to get out and look for something easier.

It would indeed be tragic if the industry were allowed to go out of existence. That mines once allowed to collapse rarely return to working order is well known. Those mines that were in the developmental stage will possibly be quite all right, for the water will not do much harm to them; but let members consider the position of the big mines. The Minister suggested that possibly within the next month or two some of them will cease to operate. Consider the effect on centres like Gwalia and Leonora! Many of the outer townships depend on the mines in the locality. It is almost certain that if many of those mines close down, they will never again re-open. I fear for the future. If we allow the goldmining industry to go out of existence, that will add to our troubles when the war is over.

Mr. Patrick: You have schools, hospitals, water supplies and many other services that will be affected, too.

Mr. LEAHY: Then there is the position of the railways—to say nothing of the farmers. Incidentally, what would the farmers do if the gold mines closed down? I recognise that the farmers are necessary in the life of the community, and I also appreciate that not one section of producers alone runs the universe. At the same time, I believe that the greatest burden in this State has been carried by the people on the goldfields. Yesterday I was pleased to hear from the Minister for Labour that a pensions scheme was to be established in connection with the coalmining industry. I would be much more pleased if I were to hear that some such scheme were to be applied to the men in the goldmining industry. From an industrial point of view, the two sections of mining can hardly be compared. In goldmining, very few reach the age of 60 years without being sufferers from diseases peculiar to the industry. I hope the Govern-

ment will give serious consideration to providing a superannuation scheme for goldminers. Personally I am in favour of superannuation for all workers. I do not think it would be very difficult to work out a plan if we all applied ourselves to the problem. I honestly believe it could be handled efficiently.

Finally, I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the position of the turned-down miners. Anyone who has been closely associated with goldmining knows the effect of industrial diseases upon the workers, and realises what it all means. Some of the poor old chaps have not been able to sleep lying down for nine months at a time. They have to sit up in order to sleep. Provision should be made for such men at least annually to receive a free pass over the railways that would enable them to go to the nearest seaport. That would not mean very much to the State, but the benefit to the men must be obvious. Even if it did not mean much improvement in their health, it would give them a change of environment which would be pleasurable to them. I hope the Government will give consideration to that point, because the old men have not very much to enjoy at present. It must be remembered that a tremendous battle had to be put up to secure even holiday fortnightly pay for the miners. It was suggested that they did not work hard enough! If ever there is a man on God's earth to whom the people should take their hats off, because of disabilities suffered, it is the goldminer!

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands): I have purposely waited until goldfields members who wished to take part in the debate had availed themselves of the opportunity to speak, as is their right, before any other member sought to address the Chair. Apart from that, they are those that are in present touch with the industry, and know exactly its state and what could best be done in the interests of the industry. I listened to the speeches delivered by the member for Murchison, the member for Pilbara, and particularly by the member for Hannans, who, in very homely and sincere terms, expressed his views. With all of those views I find myself in agreement. The story of the present condition of the industry is, of course, very distressing, and necessarily so. It is not depressing because the industry, by its own want of capacity or

material, has come upon bad days. It is entirely due to outside causes, to the taking away from the industry of those who are absolutely necessary in order to work it. If there was available today the labour that the industry once possessed, I have no doubt at all that instead of the depressing tale we have heard, we would have been told of a year of record in which the industry attained its highest peak in this State, at any rate as far as the value of its output is concerned.

The shrinkage of manpower available is excused, or is attempted to be excused, by the requirements of the war. I have always held the view that, although it all meant so much to the industry—I refer to the taking away of its manpower—those of us who have a large and constant interest in it would nevertheless agree to the manpower being taken away and the industry being closed down, should it be necessary, in order to win the war. But what is troubling us and, I am sure, is troubling those who represent the mining industry in this Chamber, is that that necessity has not been established. Men have been taken from the industry and apparently are not being used at all, or only to a very limited extent, for the purpose of prosecuting the war. Moreover, we are aware, unfortunately, of the fact that the harsh rule that is applied to the goldmining industry is not applied to other industries that have far less claim than has goldmining to consideration at the hands of the Commonwealth Government. I am not referring now to the State Government. It is said that a definite promise was given that a minimum number of 4,500 men would be available for the industry, but I am afraid that is not so. In fact, I know it is not so.

Mr. Leahy: That was to be the number at the end of three months.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Unfortunately, those three months have gone by, and today there is no guarantee whatever that one man out of those 4,500 men will be left in the industry.

The Minister for Mines: We have 500 in hand; that is, 500 above the 4,500.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We are always apt to indulge in wishful thinking, but often our hopes are not well-founded. It is useful to recall the reasons given for taking the men out of the goldmining industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber.

Hon. N. KEENAN: One reason given for the taking of men from the industry was that it was necessary to satisfy the manpower requirements of the war, but unfortunately there is another reason. Apparently, many of those in high places regard gold as a useless commodity.

The Minister for Mines: I think that is the real trouble.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Whether that is so or not, such an opinion has no possible basis. Still, the impression exists that there is no use for something which cannot be sold. Of course, the intrinsic value of gold as a metal would scarcely ever justify its production in any part of the world. If gold were considered merely as material for use in making watches, rings, bangles and other jewellery, its price would fall to a very small fraction of the price it commands today. It is quite correct that many mines would be able to carry on in this State if the 4,500 men were left untouched, but I remind members that the 4,500 is inclusive of those working on the Wiluna mine, and they are in a category entirely different from the ordinary goldmining category because they have been detained in that mine, not to produce gold but to produce something that can be used in and is required for the war. But there is a number of other mines of greater or less importance that have been affected, and many have been so affected as to be obliged to close down. The matter I want the Minister to deal with is, "What immediate steps are being taken to secure those mines against complete loss through the destruction of the workings by nature?" One mine which, in a very short period of time, unless it is maintained, will not be opened again is the Edna May Consolidated. There is a tremendous flow of water in that country and, unless sufficient money is made available to maintain the pumping, every bit of the mine that has been developed and is now lying useless will be lost and the mine will be hopelessly gone.

Other mines could be mentioned. If the Sons of Gwalia mine does not receive a considerable sum of money to maintain the underground workings, it, too, will be lost. So far as it is possible to forecast in regard to any mine, the Sons of Gwalia has a very bright future before it, if only steps can be taken to assure that future. If the lower

levels could be developed to reach the ore that has been located by bores and could be opened up with chutes, the mine would have a good future and the district would enjoy quite a large degree of prosperity. But if the mine is left unworked or not sufficiently worked, and the timber in the underground workings allowed to become affected, as it does in the most extraordinary manner, beyond the belief of most people, the mine will be lost. The important point is that we should have a definite understanding with the Commonwealth Government that the moneys intended to be made available actually are available and that the scheme for distributing them should be drawn up and put into operation immediately, not in the future, because in a very short interval of time loss will occur that it will be impossible to redeem.

The Minister reminded the Committee of the colossal sum collected by the Commonwealth Government since the imposition of the goldmining profits tax. I assume that his reason for asking us to remember that fact was to justify the demand for a return of part, or even a small fraction, of the amount. Over £2,000,000 has been taken out of the industry in circumstances which no other industry was called upon to face, and it is not unreasonable to ask that one-third, or one-quarter, should now be made available to save the industry from complete destruction. I strongly urge that steps should be taken to place this proposition before the Commonwealth Government. We should not be content to ventilate the matter here and have it recorded in "Hansard" and then forgotten. It should be put forward as a definite scheme, something we are entitled to ask for and something we are determined to press until a satisfactory conclusion has been arrived at.

I do not wish to refer to a matter which was covered very well indeed by the member for Mt. Magnet—the necessity for providing plant for the prospectors who are dealing with base metals, or preferably the suggestion that the Government should purchase the ore from them on an assay value, allow whatever is a reasonable amount for the treatment, and pay them the difference. That was a very common practice at one time on the goldfields. I do not know whether it is now. The ore was purchased on assay value.

Mr. Marshall: And tributers' ore was purchased.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It even went as far as tributers' ore at one time. There was no difficulty. Of course it was well known what would be the cost of recovering the gold from that class of ore, but the cost of recovering base metals is not yet known.

Mr. Marshall: But the technical officers can give you a good idea.

Hon. N. KEENAN: As the member for Murchison very properly pointed out, if there is a risk in the matter it is a risk we may well take. Scheelite has been mentioned. Who can tell what is the cost of recovering scheelite, if the ore contains scheelite, from ore delivered at the treatment plant? I have never seen any particular process for recovering scheelite, and I do not know what such a process would involve. It may involve even the creation of a new type of treatment. At one time on the goldfields it was a very difficult matter to recover gold that occurred in telluride; the treatment was discovered only by a process of experimentation. At last telluride was found to be almost as cheap an ore to treat as the free milling ore, although of course never quite so cheap. With improvement in plant, the cost of treating telluride became very moderate. What has been urged by the member for Murchison and the member for Mt. Magnet, and in fact by every goldfields member, is that our State Government should risk something in order to keep those prospecting shows alive during the war, and that the risk should be the risk of purchasing possibly at an assay value and deducting from that value the expected cost of treatment. Even under those circumstances it might be that the Government would make a loss because of the arithmetic not being right, but on the other hand it is equally possible that the Government might make a profit. Even if it made a loss, the loss would be very little indeed.

Now I want to say a word on the future of gold, which determines all the possibilities of the industry. They are bound up with and inseparable from the future price of gold. A reassuring factor is that notwithstanding both Canada and South Africa have maintained their output of gold and in fact increased it, there is no known refusal on the part of the United States to purchase the gold. Every ounce of gold produced in South Africa and every ounce

produced in Canada—which of course greatly exceeds our output—is placed on the market in the United States and purchased there. The member for Murchison is under the impression that when that gold is buried in Fort Knox—or whatever other part of the United States it is buried in—it ceases entirely to have any value, and that when any buyer from overseas goes to America for the purpose of trading and gets credit, it is all paper. Of course that is not so.

What happens is this: When one purchases gold dollars in the United States for the purpose of trading, what one does get is the goods one intends to buy. It is true that the credit has to pass through the international currency of gold in order that the amount of currency that has to be paid may be arrived at, but that is merely the yardstick. Gold as a yardstick will continue to exist because it is the only means for conducting international trade. If we want to buy something in America, we have to try to get credit in America for that purpose. That credit may be the result of goods we produce in Australia and sell in America, or of the credit produced by the international yardstick of gold. We get so much of our currency translated into American currency through the medium of the gold exchange. And that can never be altered unless some other international medium is substituted for the conduct of trade. We say the future of gold must be, from that aspect, maintained; and there is the further point of view that in the new world we are all looking forward to—I am afraid that our hopes will never be realised—in that new world, if it ever is to exist at all as a prosperous group of nations, America will have to strip her colossal gold stores that she holds today. America will have to agree to give credit to many nations, certainly, and to all the United Nations of the future which we are all awaiting with hope of success.

So far as Australia is concerned in the matter of its goldmining industry, the future of that industry is relatively secure; but there may be little or no industry here to come back to unless we get a measure of treatment from the military authorities and the Commonwealth Government which will be a very great change from what we have experienced in the past. I am afraid I have to agree with the member for Hannans that there is but little hope for the future unless victory comes

soon. If this war is going to last for three or four years more, if every man who can hold a gun is to be driven out of the mines and put on construction of roads and aerodromes of a colossal character, our situation will become tragic. In a paper which is an official paper I saw the other day that £1,600,000 had been spent in Queensland on the construction of aerodromes, and that one single aerodrome covered 12 square miles where formerly there was bush. All that was necessary for the conduct of this awful war. There was manpower in the mining industry that was easy to get at, and for that reason was drawn upon. There was other manpower that was not easy to get at. And so the additional manpower required was drawn from the mining fields.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I was about to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that, while the mining industry is being driven out of existence by the demands made upon it for manpower for the Army, actually the Public Service has been increased by the creation of new committees and boards innumerable.

Mr. Patrick: That is the Commonwealth Public Service.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That service has been increased by 34,000 males and about 20,000 females. Large numbers of the males are men of the same age as those who have been dragged out of the mines. I saw an estimate that about 70 per cent. of them were under 45 years of age, while men above that age had been dragged out of the mines. This industry, which is the bulwark of our prosperity, is being murdered, while these boards, commissions, councils and coadjutors—they have all kinds of fancy names and have fancy objects—are being manned liberally by men of an age capable of working our mines.

I would like to say a word about pensions. This matter was mentioned by the member for Hannans. I hold a very strong personal view against this sectional form of treatment, that is, against men being selected for favourable consideration. If there is to be a selection, then undoubtedly the men engaged in the mining industry have a right to consideration before those engaged in any other industry in this State, and certainly before the men engaged in

the coalmining industry. It was well known, even in my day, that if a goldminer wished to leave the industry and get a "cushy" job, he went down to Collie, where he was able to earn wages in excess of those which he received on the goldfields, even in those days, and under conditions far more favourable to health. Therefore, if there is to be a selection made of one section of the community, let us show that favour to those engaged in an industry that is conducted under far more severe conditions than is the coalmining industry.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You will agree that coalmining is the life-blood of the State.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It could not exist were it not for the goldmining industry. Trains were run from Southern Cross to Kalgoorlie before Collie coal was mined. The engines were fired with bush timber, but nevertheless they carried their loads.

Several members interjected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not think my intervention in the debate has produced good results. In conclusion, I join with the goldfields members in expressing the hope that the goldmining industry will be saved and will be available to afford employment to our soldiers who return from the war.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie): The Minister's introduction of his Estimates has undoubtedly resulted in an interesting discussion by members representing goldfields constituencies. His address was heartening and has given members a much better idea of the activities of his department. I personally am well aware of the excellent work that is being done by the department and its extremely zealous officers. In any remarks I may make I want it to be clearly understood that I am not detracting in any way from the value of the work done by those officials. I regret that the goldmining industry is still in an insecure position. Reference was made to the 4,500 men that the Commonwealth Government agreed should be retained in the industry to carry it on. It was understood, however, that those men would be fit men, not the combings of our prospectors, many of whom are aged men. It was also understood that those men were not to be military rejects, who naturally are not in the same category as are the competent men the industry has lost. Prospectors are being drawn upon considerably by the various mines today, and that

policy seems to have been condoned and accepted by the department as the only method by which the mines can obtain the 4,500 men to carry on the industry.

It is deplorable that the prospectors—who, goodness knows, are few enough in number—should have their ranks reduced in this way. In some districts there were a few months ago 120 or 140 prospectors, but to-day those numbers have been reduced to probably 20 or 30. The others have gone into the industry to make up the quota of 4,500. That, however, is not a sufficient quota, nor is it composed of totally fit workers. If the restrictions that were placed on the industry over a period of years regarding the employment of men dusted or diseased in any way had not been lifted and provisional tickets granted to certain men, the industry definitely could not be carried on today. If it was right for the goldmining industry in the past to refuse work to men because of the fact that they were suffering from certain complaints common to men in that industry, it is not consistent to allow them to return to the industry now. Many of the 4,500 men who have been permitted to remain in the industry are not fit and many of those who are fit have passed the age at which it is recognised men are at their best in the goldmining industry.

Those 4,500 men were allowed to the industry for goldmining purposes, but we find that Wiluna and many other mines have recently undertaken the development of base metals, and many of the 4,500 are engaged in mines where base metals are now being worked. That further detracts from the position in which the goldmining industry found itself when this slight assistance by way of 4,500 men was granted to it. That 4,500, out of an original quota of about 15,000, is not a sufficient number to keep the mines producing at a profit. It is not even sufficient to maintain them in reasonable shape and keep them open. The Minister made a remark that the industry would be capable of absorbing from 20,000 to 30,000 men if hostilities were to cease at short notice. But that number could be absorbed into the industry only if it is maintained in an up-to-date manner. If we have any further inroads into its manpower, or if the industry is not allowed the total quota granted to it to maintain it at its present standard, I am afraid that, as other members have mentioned, the industry is doomed

to go further back and eventually to become obscure in this State. As it is there has been no provision for a developmental policy, and deterioration must therefore take place.

Members will realise that there are many parts of most mines that will eventually—indeed very quickly—become unworkable unless a certain amount of activity is carried on at all times. Any further combing of the industry by taking away men who have been otherwise engaged—for instance in prospecting and in other avenues of the goldmining industry—would be wrong. During the last three or four months the industry has drawn quite considerably on the floating manpower population and also on the farming community. Quite a number of men have left the farming industry, to its detriment. A very solid effort should be made to prevent any further men leaving the goldmining industry and to secure the release of more men from the services. The manpower situation has become totally unbalanced. It is well-known that a nation's standing population dictates to a very great extent, the standing army that country can maintain.

In Australia we have 7,000,000 people of whom possibly only 5,000,000 are adults. On the Prime Minister's own figure of the number of civilians required to keep an army in the field we are entitled to a standing army of 500,000. I am not prepared to make any statement as to the number in our existing Fighting Forces, but that number must include those who are engaged in the women's organisations and munitions works. To all intents and purposes those men and women form part of our standing army. The inclusion of many oversea soldiers, sailors and airmen that have entered Australia over the past 12 months, throws the manpower situation into an even further unbalanced condition. Until the Commonwealth Government realises that this lack of balance cannot be allowed to continue, so long will we have the trouble we are experiencing at present in the goldmining industry and in every other industry, not only in this State but throughout the Commonwealth, and eventually the situation will be recognised as being highly detrimental to the best interests of Australia. When I last addressed this Chamber I quoted a number of figures of production in other goldmining countries to show that we have adopted

a very unsound principle. Only as recently as the middle of last month there was published an account of Canada's output which indicated that, instead of a decrease, that Dominion was registering an increase in production. The member for Nedlands pointed out that the gold position was still sound in other countries and that America was still acquiring gold. That is so. "The West Australian" last month stated—

At the close of 1941 there were 144 gold mills operating in Canada with an additional 60 plants idle, according to figures published in the "Canadian Mines Hand Book." In spite of a decline in Ontario's output last year, at least partly caused by the strike at eight of the Kirkland Lake mines, the total value of gold recovered in six out of the nine provinces that are producers was slightly higher than in any previous year. War demands for metals resulted in a marked increase in the production of all base metals and new objectives have been set for 1942. Metal prices are still low, however, and several companies owning potential producers cannot see their way clear yet to resume operations.

The net number of gold producers was lower by two than a year ago. During 1941, 14 new producers started ore treatment, while 16 ceased operations. Ten other companies increased their mill capacity. At the 31st December, five new gold mills were under construction, and were being considered.

The paper goes on to state that goldmining production in Canada had increased by 2 per cent. on the previous year's output. This is ample evidence to prove that the policy adopted in this country, although it has a lot to commend it, is not one that will aid the future of this State. I strongly urge the Minister to keep pushing hard for total recognition of the industry in Western Australia. The member for Mt. Magnet spoke excellently, I thought, on the possibilities of the furtherance of our base metal industries. While he gave the Government and the Mines Department every consideration for the work carried out by them in this direction, he also gave a clear outline of the possibilities that exist for increasing our production of base metals. The time is opportune for every endeavour to be made. I emphasise the phrase "every endeavour," because the past policy must cease. Instead of the Government waiting for reports of the existence of these base metals to come to hand from various centres, it should be active and go out after them. We have, over a period of years, acquired reports of the various mineralogical deposits, and the different strata of country that contain many

of these base metals which we desire so much today. Yet the Government makes no endeavour to profit by the knowledge contained in these reports, and go out after the metals so badly needed for strategic purposes.

The department should institute a more vigorous method to find out whether these metals are available in sufficient quantities, not necessarily on a payable basis, but to assist our war effort and Western Australia in particular, because the need for these metals is so dire. I was interested recently to read in "The West Australian," a paragraph reputed to have come from the member for Mt. Magnet, in which he stated that he had just seen operating a mineral detector known as Mineralite. This detector is said, not only to locate the various base metals by the use of ultra-violet ray, but to discern clearly the metal it discovers by giving out different colours according to the different metals.

The Minister for Mines: We have it at the office, and can demonstrate it to you if you like.

Mr. KELLY: I hope the Minister will make it work overtime, and not keep it in his office. I would like to see it in my district, or in any other where these metals are known to exist.

The Minister for Mines: The member for Mt. Magnet had it last.

Mr. KELLY: He should not have returned it, but have retained it and used it. It is doing no good by being kept in the Minister's office. We should know all about that Mineralite machine, and it should be kept operating. I would like the Minister, when he replies, to make some reference to the recently published information regarding the American committees arriving in Australia for the purpose of going into the possibilities of the base metals that exist here. From reading that article, it looked to me as though the concentration of effort, as usual, would be on an Eastern States basis. No reference was made to Western Australia. I ask the Minister to take particular care to see that this State gets its fair share if any advantage is to be derived from these committees. He should see that they come to Western Australia, and that a complete programme dealing with base metals is prepared and placed before them. This State will then, at least, be in step

with the progress of the Eastern States, and with our possibilities and potentialities we may prosper to a greater degree than the States on the other side of the continent are capable of doing.

The only other reference I desire to make deals with coal. The Minister in his speech said that the coalmining position was quite all right, and that coal production in Western Australia had increased. That is so, but it has increased only recently, and the present increase will be hard to maintain if all that we hear about the mines at Collie is correct. It is only a little while since one of the mines—the Yellowdine Gold Mine—in my district found it impossible to carry on operations because both forms of fuel—wood and coal—had been denied it. So great was the shortage that the mine closed down for a couple of days from the Friday to the Monday.

The Minister for Mines: It suddenly switched over from wood to coal.

[Mr. Marshall took the Chair.]

Mr. KELLY: No, not suddenly. Prior to that time it had been using up to 100 tons of coal a month because of the difficulty in getting wood cut. At the time the acute shortage of coal occurred, the mine was not in a position to get the wood, that had already been cut, from the bush. The cutting position was not at that time stringent but the earthing position was acute. Application was, therefore, made for the deliveries of coal to the Yellowdine Mine to be speeded up. The position of the State at that time was very precarious from the point of view of coal production. The supply to the railways was restricted and the service was hampered in its operations. A departmental official at Southern Cross told me that at that time there was not one lb. of coal in the railway yard, but that when a train arrived the position would be relieved. Owing to the shortage of coal in the yard, a goods train was hung up there. When the expected train duly arrived, only one truck of coal was put off at the Southern Cross yard. That instance serves to emphasise the acute shortage that obtained five or six weeks ago. The Minister has assured the Committee that at present there is plenty of coal available, and we realise that that is the position. The Yellowdine mine has a surplus now, but the complaint is that the coal burns away

too fast and cannot be kept for any lengthy period. If there is a surplus, the deterioration in the coal is rapid. I have yet to learn that the increased production apparent at the moment can be maintained; I hope it will be.

The Minister for Mines: There is never any surplus coal because it will not keep.

Mr. KELLY: I am glad that the Minister admits that point.

The Minister for Mines: Everyone knows that is the position.

Mr. KELLY: That has a bearing on the point I am about to make. The position at Collie has given rise to great concern. It is well-known that developmental operations have been neglected and that has contributed largely to the shortage in supplies. If reports are correct, the Proprietary mine may at any time be in serious difficulties and it must be remembered that the Railway Department draws its supplies from the Proprietary and the Co-operative mines. The former is probably the largest coal producer in the State. If the creep, concerning which there have been reports during the last three years, is much further emphasised, we may expect trouble. In that event, not only will the position of the railways be adversely affected, but the State's war effort will be seriously jeopardised. Years ago the difficulties of the coal situation were accentuated when the fire occurred on the old WallSEND mine and the Collie River had to be diverted to flood the workings in order to extinguish the outbreak. That occurrence had an adverse effect on coal production for a considerable period. Should anything happen to the Proprietary and Co-operative mines, we know that the situation generally would deteriorate and adversely affect our war effort. That leads me to the point that we have a coalfield at Wilga that has not been exploited as it should be. Various reports have been received about the field for the past 20 odd years, all disclosing that excellent deposits exist there. Although repeated endeavours have been made to secure the exploitation of that field on a sound basis, nothing of value has been accomplished.

The Minister for Mines: No wonder you smile! You know who owns the lease.

Mr. KELLY: The position at Wilga, as the Minister suggests, is that the field is held by de Bernales. I do not know about that, but I shall not argue the point.

The Minister for Mines: You have a fair idea that that is so.

Mr. KELLY: I know that the calorific value of the Wilga coal is not far below that of Collie coal.

The Minister for Mines: A long way below Proprietary coal but not far below Griffin coal.

Mr. KELLY: And the Griffin mine is being worked to advantage at present. An application was made by the Wilga Coal Mining and Carbonization Company to the Commonwealth Government for assistance, and the company also approached the State Government with the request that it should lend support to the application and thus enhance the possibility of its securing funds from the Commonwealth. I want it to be understood clearly that I am not personally interested in the Wilga coalfield or the Wilga Carbonization Company. I am animated only by a desire to advance the interests of the State. Should the field be opened up, the State could reasonably be assured of adequate supplies of coal for many years to come.

The Minister for Justice: There is plenty of coal at Collie.

Mr. KELLY: That being so, will the Minister inform the Committee why the output of Collie coal is annually about 100,000 tons below what is adequate to maintain our industries at full capacity?

The Minister for Mines: The reason is the same as applies to the Wilga field. There is not the machinery nor the manpower available.

Mr. KELLY: That is interesting because the proposition put up by the Wilga Coal Mining and Carbonization Company gave a clear indication of how it would be possible to do with fewer men what has been accomplished at Collie under the customary procedure. The method suggested by the Wilga Company will bear examination by any engineer. It proposed to work on the open-cut principle. The Minister for Mines suggests that manpower would be needed. That is so, but I am led to believe that 30 men employed at Wilga on the open-cut principle could produce 100,000 tons in the same period that 150 men would provide that output at Collie under the existing system. I do not want the Minister to think for one moment that I desire to detract from the value of the industry at Collie.

The Minister for Mines: I think you are romancing a bit, all the same.

Mr. KELLY: I am merely dealing with facts. With the open-cut system at Wilga obsolete methods would be discarded. The Minister is a practical man and knows that the methods adopted at Collie are obsolete, and are very far below what we could expect in a practical country like Western Australia. The contention is that if the Wilga field were opened up with the employment of modern methods of production, the output of coal would be stepped-up considerably and that would enable Western Australia to overcome the shortage of coal stocks—

The Minister for Mines: We had better nationalise the coal industry.

Mr. Seward: Like they did in Victoria, and in consequence lost £2,000,000 a year.

Mr. KELLY: The adoption of modern methods would not only overcome the shortage of production, but would enable us to have reserve supplies of coal as a stand-by. Let me explain how that stand-by can be provided. The development of the Wilga coalfield under modern conditions would result in better working and living conditions for many men employed in the industry. The miners at Collie suffer a severe disadvantage from the point of view of working conditions. When I was in the industry 15 years ago, the men fared badly owing to the conditions that prevailed in the mines. Since then many improvements have been effected, but there is still room for further improvement. If the Wilga field were developed—and this could only be done if the Commonwealth Government, through the State Government, provided the requisite finance—considerable improvements could be effected for the miners. The opening up of the Wilga field would not cause any serious disruption at Collie, but the competition would lead the Collie management to modernise its ideas, give better conditions and adopt more modern methods in handling the coal. This would redound to the advantage of the State and stop the decrease in production and continual rise in costs.

A few minutes ago the Minister for Justice interjected to the effect that there is plenty of coal at Collie, but there will come a time when the Collie field will feel the strain and my contention is that, if the Wilga field were opened up, the strain on Collie

would be minimised and that field would be given a much longer life than would be possible if no alternative field were developed.

The Minister for Justice: Would it not be better to open up the Irwin coalfield?

Mr. KELLY: I do not think so. If a second coalfield is to be opened up, it should be the one at Wilga.

The Minister for Justice: What about the matter of distribution?

Mr. KELLY: I understand that the Wilga field could be connected with the railway system for £35,000 and the increased rail-age on the coal would be very little. The company that put up the proposition to the Government was prepared to repay the money advanced at the rate of 2s. per ton on all coal purchased. Thus the £175,000 would not have been a solid load of debt but would have been repaid gradually from this national asset. If the development of the Wilga coalfield were begun on a small scale, it would be beneficial to the State in every way. It would supplement the production at Collie, ensure that the life of the Collie field was extended to its utmost, and enable Wilga to take the place of Collie in the years to come. The manpower required at Wilga would be small, and operations would be conducted on such a sound basis that there would be no question of impairing the present war effort. The shortage of coal produced at Collie could be made good, and production could be stepped-up to meet requirements even if the demand for coal increased to a degree far greater than our present needs. At any time additional production may be required for putting our war machinery into still higher gear.

Under existing conditions Collie cannot undertake increased production. We have been told that many times. Therefore the development of the Wilga field would supplement the output at Collie. One evident effect of establishing the industry at Wilga would be the obviating of the waste that now occurs. The same remark would apply to Collie, of course, if the necessary machinery were installed there. The quantity of coal that is wasted every year through the fretting and deterioration that sets in the moment the coal reaches the surface has been a matter of concern not only to the mine management but also to the Government. In fact, the loss occurring through this cause has created an acute problem. If the Wilga

field were opened up, arrangements could and would be made for briquetting the coal. The manufacture of briquettes would be of great benefit to the State because, by avoiding this waste, the life of our coalfields would be materially extended. Apart from that, the manufacture of briquettes would permit of supplying an urgent and desired need.

The Minister for Justice: I think there are great possibilities in that direction.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, and South Australia might be glad to have briquetted coal, and an export trade of that sort would be of great assistance to Western Australia.

Mr. North: That idea has been recommended since 1930.

Mr. KELLY: Then it is a crying shame that 12 years should have elapsed during which period nothing material has been accomplished towards briquetting coal and saving the huge amount of waste that now occurs in the industry. From the briquette aspect, many advantages are to be obtained besides the actual saving of the loss in value that has been so prevalent in the past. I understand that by briquetting the calorific value is increased from 30 per cent. to 35. That is not a statement I am able to verify, but I have it on excellent authority. I am also told that there would be no sparks. I take it the knowledge which has been passed on to me in this connection derives from the fact that briquettes have been successfully used in other parts of the world, and that the experiences I have related were gained through the use of briquettes elsewhere. With briquettes there is supposed to be no clinkering. Again, there is no danger of spontaneous combustion in the case of briquettes—a highly important feature. Spontaneous combustion is entirely eliminated; and the use of briquettes requires very small storage capacity, as compared with bulk coal. Reserves of fuel would readily be established in the form of briquettes because of easy packing and easier handling. Dumps could be built up in many parts of Western Australia, and would form an excellent addition to the precautions already taken throughout the State in the conservation of reserves of food, and of many other commodities which there is no occasion for me to detail now. All fuels have received attention in the way of storage, and I think that if briquettes were available the storage of coal in various localities would be greatly enhanced, and

create an almost complete condition of reserves. Thus the storage value is a highly important factor in the case of briquettes, and its utilisation would overcome any doubts as to our future in that connection.

In conclusion I would urge that the Minister give thorough consideration to the opening of a coal field at Wilga. I know there is much opposition to be encountered from many points.

The Minister for Mines: Not much opposition from the Government except as regards financing.

Mr. KELLY: But the Government was not asked to finance a concern which involved any probability of causing loss to the State. There was no possibility of its not proving a payable proposition. Only yesterday we were told that £500,000 of Government advances to various trading concerns had proved a total loss, nothing having been received back from the borrowers. If £175,000 was advanced to open up the Wilga field, irrespective of whether it was advanced to some company or other or advanced to float a company which I believe has 160 shareholders who are Western Australians—if £175,000 could be advanced apart from any personal feeling of Ministers against advancing to a syndicate or company, with benefit to the State, and without risk to the State, I submit it should be done. At all events, the project should be carefully examined and the Government should use every endeavour to overcome whatever obstacles might in the past have prevented it from taking the initial step with regard to the Wilga coalfield. I commend very seriously to the Minister the desirability of his considering most carefully the possibility of Wilga becoming a second Collic in Western Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply): I desire to thank members of the Committee for the manner in which they have received these Estimates. I desire also to thank them for the tribute they have paid to the staff of the Mines Department, a tribute which is fully earned and which I shall have great pleasure in conveying to the staff. There are only one or two matters I wish to touch on. Let me deal with the last first with regard to the advocacy of the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie of the Government's advancing £175,000 to the Wilga syndicate—

Mr. Kelly: Not the State Government, the Commonwealth Government.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member should have made that plain. I would like to know in the first place, why an advance should be made in the case of Wilga more especially? Wilga is not far from Collie. The largest buyer of coal in Western Australia is the Railway Department. That department buys at least 90 per cent of the coal produced in Collie. It has to carry that coal all over Western Australia for the use of the railways, and place it in dumps. Moreover, the coal can only be stacked for a short period. We have coalfields at Eradu and Irwin, and it costs the Railway Department 15s. per ton to convey Collie coal to those places. I see no advantage whatever in spending Government money, whether State or Federal, in opening up Wilga for coal unless that coal is superior in value to Collie coal.

Mr. Kelly: It is not as expensive, and it is wanted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: How does the hon. member know that?

Mr. Kelly: From your own Geological Survey.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Our Geological Survey says nothing of the sort. If anybody knows anything about coal deposits in this country, it is the Mines Department; and that has been the case for many years. The Wilga promoters are doing a tremendous amount of advertising to open up Wilga at somebody else's expense. I think you, Mr. Chairman, will agree with me that the largest shareholders in Wilga are believed to have made a lot of money in Western Australia, and that if they want to open up Wilga they can put some of that money back there. The hon. member has talked a great deal about the position in Collie—obsolete methods and so forth. He ought to know that the Collie coalfields are not managed by the Government of Western Australia. They are conducted by a private company, and it is most difficult to get that company to put into operation what our Mines Department authorities consider should be provided for the purpose of securing an increased percentage of carbon. The position as regards Collie is that prior to the last few months a fair amount of Newcastle coal came to Western Australia, and that a large proportion of that Newcastle coal was used to supplement coal from

Collie. Owing to the shipping position brought about by the war, however, tonnage for Newcastle coal is not now available. Consequently we are not getting sufficient Newcastle coal. Or I may say it takes us all our time to get enough Newcastle coal to generate electricity and gas.

The position became so acute that the Commonwealth Coal Commission established a State Committee in Western Australia and empowered that committee to distribute any coal in Western Australia, whether it was on the surface of the mine or landed here by a boat. The Chief Mining Engineer, Mr. Wilson, is chairman of that committee; and he says that the committee has full power to dispose of every truck of coal in Western Australia. The Midland Railway Company wanted some of our coal, having used Newcastle previously. There we have another large demand for our coal. In the case of the mines mentioned by the hon. member, half a dozen more woodcutters could be employed to supply wood to supplement the coal, but we could not get the workers owing to manpower requirements. Everybody now is suddenly wanting coal, and that is because of the shortage of wood. The shortage of wood is due to the scarcity of woodcutters. That is the cause of the tremendous demand for coal. About 150 of the young men at Collie enlisted in the various services, and the mines were left with men aged 50 years and upwards who previously worked only 11 shifts for many years, but who now are working 12 shifts and consequently are beginning to feel the strain. Nevertheless, we have had a large increase in the output of coal. I cannot see that the Wilga Mine could be opened up with 30 men. In my opinion, the people controlling the Wilga mine should get on with the job and do it themselves. I interjected once, "What about nationalising the coalmining industry?" It might as well be nationalised.

Mr. Patrick: It is practically nationalised now.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As I have said, the Government railways are really the only customers. The railways take 90 per cent. of the Collie coal, and that quantity is governed by what is known as the Davidson award, under which every increase imposed by an outside tribunal is added to the cost of the coal. Today the Collie companies are asking for the instal-

lation of winches, on account of the steepness of the inclines in the mines, as by means of the winches more trucks could be utilised and consequently the output of coal increased. But who will pay for the winches? The companies may say, "You order us to get them." If we did that, then of course the Government would have to pay for the winches, while the shareholders would continue to draw their dividends.

Mr. Kelly: Could not the Government compel the companies to do that work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but the Government would have to pay for it.

Mr. Kelly: What about developmental work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A regulation was recently laid on the Table of the House dealing with developmental work at the Collie mines, but nobody bothered about it. Every six months the Mines Department now goes into that matter. But the department finds itself up against difficulties. For instance, there is too much water in the Proprietary Mine and the company says that it should be pumped out. We were given the dimensions of the pump, but we cannot obtain it from the Eastern States on account of lack of shipping. In any event, as soon as the pump is made, someone else will get it. The company says, "You order us to put that pump in." If, as Minister I did so order the company, the Government would have to pay for the pump. We might as well nationalise the coalmining industry. I may repeat here what I have said to Cabinet on more than one occasion, namely, that the Mines Department is gradually being pushed into the position of manager of the coalmines, while someone else is drawing the dividends. That is happening; there is no question about it. I have nothing against the Wilga Mine, but I would like the owners to do a little for themselves.

I wish to deal with some questions that were raised by the member for Mt. Magnet, who waxed wrath about a proposal to put scheelite through a State battery. He has evidently forgotten, although he ought to have remembered, that during the 1914-18 war scheelite produced at Comet Vale was put through the State battery at Coolgardie. At present, the management of the show at Comet Vale is putting 50 tons of scheelite through the battery. The management is putting in a Wilfley table to try it out. If it assays 90 per cent. and only 60 or 70

per cent. is obtained, we will have to find some other means, but we hope with the aid of the Wilfley table and the Coolgardie battery to get a reasonable yield of scheelite, as we did during the last war. A great deal was said—with some justification probably—about the Government busying itself with strategic minerals. I think both the member for Murchison and the member for Mt. Magnet said that the Mines Department possessed a very capable staff, but someone was wanted to push it along. Unfortunately, they do not seem to have an idea of what the Mines Department is doing in regard to base minerals. It is as well for the Committee to understand that these base minerals are of no value at all in Western Australia. It is necessary for us to obtain a market for them, and that is why they have been lying idle for years past. The only markets offering today are the Commonwealth Government, and America through the Commonwealth Government.

We cannot simply mine these minerals and say, "These are going to America." As a matter of fact, we advanced £1,700 for the purpose of obtaining blue asbestos from the Hamersley Ranges. That has been lying at the wharf for weeks awaiting shipment to America. If we wished to obtain other minerals for export to America, we would have to provide the necessary finance, and even then we would get no further. In the first place, a market has to be assured. With that object in view, the Commonwealth Government appointed Mr. Newman of Queensland as Director General or Controller of Base Metals—I am not sure of his correct title. He came to Western Australia and discussed the matter with the Mines Department. The department supplied him with a map of Western Australia showing the location of all the known varieties of minerals. We know them well in the Mines Department and have done so for years. Mr. Newman appointed the Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Telfer, his Deputy Controller. Mr. Telfer has authority to advance up to £1,000 on any show without reference to Mr. Newman; but any advance above that sum must be referred to Mr. Newman. It is from that source that we obtained £15,000, and that is how we are assisting others on a lesser scale.

It was said by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie that he hoped the committees

from America would visit this State, and that if they did, the Government should try to ascertain what they intended to do. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie will be pleased to know that at least a member of at least one committee will reach this State next week for the purpose of discussing this matter with the Mines Department. The member for Murchison will be pleased to know that Mr. Prior is a member of the committee. Mr. Prior was in this State for many years and therefore I think it an excellent idea that he should be sent here, because at least he will know something of the State and what we are capable of producing. A question was raised by the member for Mt. Magnet, and I think by the member for Murchison also, about miners who would be coming to Perth for a fortnight's holiday at Christmas. They suggested that we might find some means of arranging to have these men examined under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. Mr. Stitfold, who is in charge of one section of the manpower organisation, and Mr. Lavater, who is in charge of another section, discussed this matter thoroughly with me this morning. They both assured me that leave at Christmas would not exceed four days and that consequently these men would not be able to spend a fortnight in Perth. I asked Mr. Stitfold and Mr. Lavater where these men were located, and received the reply that they were in various parts of Western Australia. When we discussed the matter with them and the Under Secretary, the question of ascertaining the names and occupations of the men was considered, and we shall try to find some method of having them examined should the necessity arise. But they are not likely to be down here for a fortnight as the mines will be closed for only four days.

The member for Murchison raised the question of reservations. I can assure him that I am just as much opposed to reservations as he is, and I always have been. It should be of interest to him and to the Committee to know that immediately there was a demand for strategic minerals for war purposes, I sent out instructions to all wardens asking that before they granted leases—let alone reservations—they should send to the Minister for approval. We have made up our minds, and have informed the wardens to that effect, that we do not intend to agree to leases being granted if

they are going to be sat on for subsequent sale to somebody else. We want to find out who is prepared to work the leases. There is another side to the question. While the Government is not prepared to grant big reservations, it is also expected that prospectors, if they do find minerals, shall not sit down and do nothing about it, asking for a sale at £20,000, £30,000 or £50,000. One place has been mentioned. I know for a fact that there has scarcely been a pick put into the ground, but a big company has an option over it. It is a company that I have not been very keen about for some years. That company has an option for £27,000. But prospectors have no more right to play ducks and drakes with leases than other people have to ask for reservations. It might be said that the prospector has found the deposit and is entitled to get what he can out of it. I am prepared to agree, provided that the mining of a very important metal is not hung up.

I can assure the hon. member that the Mines Department proposes to prevent reservations being granted, and it is also going to endeavour to prevent anybody sitting on a lease and waiting for somebody to buy it. I emphasise again that minerals are of value only insofar as a market can be found for them. It is like coal, which Western Australia purchases because it wants it for the railways. There is a wrong impression in relation to the manpower position on the mines. I want to point out to the member for Nedlands that when the delegation went to Canberra, it was faced with two propositions. It was told that manpower must be obtained, and secondly that the amount of material essential for the mining community could not be brought from America and other places, because there was no shipping. The Prime Minister stated very definitely in figures the amount of tonnage required for cyanide and other commodities needed to carry on the mining industry for 12 months. He pointed out that the shipping was not available. In view of that, America decided that the only thing to do was to stop buying gold because the materials were not available to produce it. The mining representatives—Messrs. Cameron and Thorn—were with us on that occasion. They gave a definite assurance that every mining company in Western Australia had two years' supply of commodities. They had been building up that supply.

On the assurance that those commodities were on hand, the 4,500 men to which we were entitled were agreed to. I had the figures this morning from Mr. Stitfold and Mr. Lavater, and we went into the position thoroughly. We find that we have about 5,100 men in the industry today, so we are not down to the 4,500. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie is not quite correct in saying that the old prospectors are all being absorbed. They are going where they can do better—in the mines, rather than just prospecting round about. Included in the number of men said to be sufficient to keep the mines going, there are 2,000 prospectors and small mine-owners. It does not matter where the men come from; provided we have 4,500, the agreement is fulfilled. I agree with the hon. member that they may not all be quite as competent as we would like, owing to age and various other disabilities, but the fact is that, having that number, we have our quota.

Mr. Patrick: That includes prospectors?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The difficulty is that there is no co-operation by the mining companies. We had representatives sent over by the Chamber of Mines, including the mines on the Murchison—Messrs. Thorn and Cameron—and they worked this principle out before we left. They were satisfied that if they could get 4,500 men, the mines could be kept going, though they would have to stop a lot of developmental work and operate on their reserves. But there is no co-operation today. It is obvious to any member knowing anything about the goldfields that a man is not going to stop at Big Bell, or any outback mine, if he can get a good job at a place like Kalgoorlie. Consequently, men drifted from the smaller shows into Kalgoorlie, and were then taken out of Kalgoorlie. To that extent we have lost quite a number of men outback. They are very low-grade shows, and because of that they must have large crushings every month to make them pay. With the withdrawal of men, they are unable to do that. The member for Nedlands said that three months had gone by since the delegation went to Canberra. It was agreed that there should be a review in about three months, but there was a definite agreement that nothing should be done with regard to the 4,500 men before a further conference had been held.

This morning when we found that we still had 500 men in hand, Mr. Stitfold and Mr. Lavater both agreed to write to their respective heads, and I am writing to the Prime Minister pointing out that there are only another 500 to play with, and asking for a further conference to see what is to be done about it. We are not waiting for the time to arrive to drop out. While that 500 is being further worked on, we hope the conference will be held. I agree with the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie that the men at present in Wiluna should not be counted as being engaged in the goldmining industry. It is true that Wiluna is producing gold, but antimony and arsenic are also being mined. As one of my principal arguments this morning, I claimed that there were 450 men at Wiluna. We argue that gold is a secondary consideration there and that, therefore, these men should be excluded in the same way as those who are working on the Blue Spec mine in the north and those who will go into the tantalite mine. They will certainly not be included in the goldmining industry. We are doing everything possible to assist. Not a day passes but we are in communication with someone in the East dealing with these minerals, but our chief difficulty is the distance that we are from Canberra, and in not having somebody on the spot. We have the material in Western Australia at the moment and I am satisfied that the Commonwealth Government realises our position, and that eventually we will get a fair and proper deal.

It is no good people getting wildly excited about strategic minerals and saying they are bringing a high price. They are, but only at the place where they will be used. We have to get them to that spot, and that is our difficulty. The Commonwealth Government is not prepared to buy anything unless it can get a guarantee of a boat to transport it. I do not think any member will suggest that the State Government should advance a lot of money simply to stack minerals on a wharf, with little hope of its being transhipped. I thank members for the way in which they have treated the Estimates. I can give them an honest assurance that the Mines Department, depleted as it is, is doing and will do everything possible for the benefit of Western Australia.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Medical, £11.108:

Point of Procedure.

Hon. N. Keenan: Will the Minister explain the various amounts added, apparently on account of the basic wage?

The Chairman: What Vote is the hon. member dealing with?

Hon. N. Keenan: With Item 1 on page 74.

The Chairman: I am sorry, but that Vote has been carried.

Hon. N. Keenan: With all due deference, we do not want express speed; we have a few more days at our disposal.

The Chairman: The Vote has been carried; we passed it and are now on to the Medical Vote.

Mr. Patrick: What about the divisions?

The Chairman: Will the hon. member kindly resume his seat? The Vote has been carried and I have called on the Minister for Health.

*Committee Resumed.***THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH [3.38]:**

The Medical Department is, peculiarly enough, in much the same position as the Mines Department. It is suffering because of the war. Every mine that closes down brings about, practically, the extinction of a town. When the Triton mine went out of existence, it meant that Reidy's practically closed down and the hospital went out with it. The same thing applies to every mining town. The Gladiator mine at Laverton was the last to go in that area. The equipment and everything else are just lying there and we are worried as to what to do. Also, owing to the fact that numbers, particularly of the younger women, are going into the Forces, we are experiencing no end of difficulty in maintaining adequate domestic staffs in the various hospitals. I am pleased to say that Major Hummerston and her organisation have now taken the matter in hand, and we are hopeful that, through that organisation, we will be able to start a roster system for hospital domestics. We want the same thing to apply to the medical men and nurses. The doctors are now under instructions from the Director of the Co-ordination Committee, and must go wherever they are sent, and remain there. We hope within the next week or two to have the nurses in the same position so that we will be able to staff these hospitals on a reasonable basis.

Mr. Hughes: It looks like industrial conscription.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are all industrially conscripted these days. It is industrial conscription all right. The Medical Union is conscripted and I suppose more of us will follow. The Hospital Fund, of course, is responsible for the maintenance of all hospitals. For the financial year ended the 30th June last the Hospital Fund produced £292,700. The cost of collection and administration was £5,133, so that the net amount available for expenditure on hospitals was £287,567. In addition to this, a small amount of £1,750 was received from the Department of Native Affairs for the hospital treatment of the natives throughout the State—particularly for indigent natives. We also received a grant from the Treasury of £6,000. At the close of the year we had a credit balance of £12,497 on maintenance account. In view of the abnormal expenditure anticipated this year, however, I do not think that this time next year we will be able to show that balance.

Under the uniform taxation scheme a lump-sum payment has now been made available by the Commonwealth Government amounting to the average net collections of the previous two years. Under this arrangement the Hospital Fund receives, through the Treasury, £276,050 during the current year. There again, whilst we have received that amount for this year, there is no guarantee that the same amount will be paid by the Commonwealth Government next year or the year after. The Hospital Fund may find itself in the position of having a reduced amount because of the uniform taxation scheme. At the close of the year there was a balance of £4,953 on capital account. This was the unexpended portion of £60,000 made available some years ago by the Treasury and on which we were paying interest and sinking fund commitments out of the Hospital Fund. That amount was made available for the purpose of building. Quite a lot of building has been carried out in the country in the way of maternity wards, repairs and renovations. Of the £60,000 borrowed we have £4,953 left. One of the important features in regard to the management of hospitals is the remarkably steady increase in the amounts collected from patients. If we take the last three years we find the following amounts have actually been ob-

tained from patients in the departmental hospitals, of which there are about 30, situated at Fremantle, Perth, Bunbury and other towns:—

	£
1939-40	54,808
1940-41	65,335
1941-42	74,456

Mr. Hughes: Can you give the reasons?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are two main reasons.

Mr. Hughes: One is the prosperity due to the war.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and the other is the re-organisation of our methods of collection. At one time, if the authorities at a small country hospital found difficulty in collecting fees from a patient, they made one or two attempts and then after three or four months sent the account to the department in Perth to see what could be done about it. That method has been altered. If the patient is not in a position to pay his bill straight away, it is sent direct to the department and the matter is attended to here. The reason mentioned by the member for East Perth also explains partially the improvement. Nevertheless, it is gratifying to be able to report that there has been such a large increase in the amount of the payments received by the department. Then again I think another factor has been the awakening of a hospital conscience throughout the country. That was made more apparent when we extended the scheme that was developed at the Perth Hospital and made it applicable to all hospitals throughout the State. By that means between £8,000 and £10,000 a year is secured mostly in small weekly amounts. I also think that the people generally have learnt to appreciate the necessity for hospitals in their particular localities, and realise the excellent treatment they receive in those institutions. Another influencing factor is the trouble experienced in securing nurses to look after patients in private homes.

During the year there was some difficulty with our hospitals from the standpoint of war precautions requirements. The Fremantle Hospital, for instance, is in what is known as a target area. Some months ago when everyone, particularly the military authorities, got very excited and thought the metropolitan area would be bombed at an early date, it was decided instead of await-

ing eventualities to proceed with the evacuation of patients straight away. Practically all the public beds at the Fremantle Hospital were accommodated in portion of the reception home at Heathcote, while vacant premises at Claremont, known as "Lucknow," were also taken over. Owing to the general improvement in the situation, those patients have been transferred back to the hospital, but the accommodation that was made available at the time has been held in preparation for a quick move having to be made at short notice in the future. As for the Perth Hospital, it was considered unwise to have so many beds in one block of the hospital, which was rather old and exceedingly vulnerable to fire. Moreover, the block is not far from the East Perth power-house, the railway station and other centres that most likely will be targets for enemy bombers. We made two dispersal movements in connection with the patients. First under an arrangement with the Repatriation Commission we took all the tubercular cases from the Edward Millen Home and accommodated them at Wooroloo, the former institution being made available as an adjunct to the Perth Hospital.

In addition, we reconditioned an old ward at the Infectious Diseases Hospital at Subiaco, and by that means made provision for 75 and 50 beds at the respective institutions. That will relieve the position at the Perth Hospital. In both these instances the movements involved additional expenditure. So much of it as represented capital expenditure was provided out of Civil Defence funds, but the extra cost of maintenance due to the dispersal activities will fall on the hospitals directly concerned. The war situation caused quite an upheaval in the Services in the North. The hospital at Wyndham has been closed and Dr. Oldmeadow has been transferred to Broome. The Broome Hospital has been closed from the standpoint of the department's activities, but arrangements have been made by which the hospital will be continued in operation by the military authorities who will deal with civilian patients as well as military cases. As members will appreciate, there are not very many people in Broome at present. Should Dr. Oldmeadow's services be required at any isolated place in the North the military authorities have promised to render all assistance possible in providing aerial transport for him. The aerial medical base, which was

normally at Port Hedland, has been moved to Marble Bar, and the doctor concerned will now serve from that centre the requirements at Port Hedland, Roebourne and Nullagine.

The effect of manpower needs upon the mining industry has also been felt in some goldfields centres, and owing to the closing of the mine at Youanmi the hospital there was shut. The Women's Home at Fremantle was evacuated as it was located in a target area, and premises known as "Woodbridge" were secured at East Guildford, to which the inmates have been transferred. The necessary improvements to the buildings are nearing completion, and when these are dealt with the home should prove very comfortable for the old women. I think they will appreciate their new home much more than the old premises at Fremantle where they were behind stone walls. At Guildford the home is on the bank of the river and I think it will be developed into an attractive place.

Mr. J. Hegney: Do you propose to leave the old women there?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is a very nice situation.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I certainly think the inmates will be pleased with their new home. At Sunset everything has gone along smoothly and the Public Works Department has sewered the premises at a cost of over £4,000, which will make conditions much more satisfactory. At the Wooroloo Sanatorium the number of patients has shown a remarkable increase. The department was worried at one stage because it was thought that the increase disclosed an advance in the incidence of tuberculosis. On investigations being made it was discovered, however, that many persons were going to Wooroloo for treatment because they considered what they received there would be better than was procurable anywhere else. Since we have appointed Dr. Linley Henzell, who is Western Australian born, many innovations have been instituted regarding the treatment of patients, who now include soldiers from the Edward Millen Home. The Repatriation Department is particularly satisfied with the way the men are being treated. We have also undertaken to treat patients from the Armed Forces, and, with the addition of the influx of patients to which I referred earlier, the average number of beds occupied, which

formerly ranged from 145 to 150, is now 242. A new x-ray plant is being installed, which will be of great advantage to the institution.

Various other improvements have been made and Dr. Henzell has started a farm colony. He is of the opinion that to allow tubercular patients to lie about or sit down is wrong, and he considers they are better occupied with something that will hold their interest. The patients are accordingly showing great interest in the farm colony, and it is hoped that good results will accrue. The department was considerably worried about the leprosarium at Derby, because it is situated only 15 miles from the township, which has been subject to disturbance because of the minor raids in the North. The number of patients remains high and at present is over 200. The Federal authorities have approached us with a view to taking 50 additional cases from Darwin, and that has entailed the provision of further accommodation. Specifications were drawn up and the work is well under way, hutments being erected for the new patients. At this stage I desire to pay a tribute to the nursing order operating at Derby in looking after the patients there. The nurses belong to a Roman Catholic order and are doing a wonderful job. As Minister for Health, my worries would be greatly added to were it not for their selfless work.

Mr. W. Hegney: They belong to St. John of God.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are all trained nurses and are making this their life's work. It is remarkable what they are doing at the leprosarium, and I pay a very sincere tribute to them. They are a wonderful asset and help to the department. The inspection staff has been depleted by men who have been taken for the Army, but on the other side the volume of meat inspection has increased considerably due to the Army's consumption of meat. This staff in these days should be kept well up to the standard strength because of the increased demands in various directions due to war conditions. The subsidies to the Infant Health Centres are being maintained and the work performed by the association, if anything, is greater, due to the increased birthrate. Members will be pleased to learn that last year 977 more births were recorded than previously.

Medical and dental services are being maintained.

Now I come to the vexed question of venereal disease. I shall deal with it only briefly because I have no intention of following it in detail now or at any other time. This portion of our work has been very much emphasised in recent months. The number of cases notified has markedly increased, and for social reasons as well as for the effect upon the Fighting Forces, certain special measures have had to be taken to cope with the problem. For a time, owing to the absence of any other suitable accommodation, some cases were dealt with in the prison for females at Fremantle, but after a short while a special ward was opened at the Perth Hospital and this is now functioning satisfactorily. Some objection has been taken to the use of the women's section of the gaol at Fremantle for venereal patients. If I remember rightly, only three are detained there. Two of them it was impossible to hold anywhere except where they are now. What else am I to do with such people as these? Two of them, one a girl of 17 and the other a girl of 18, broke out of the Perth Hospital ward on two occasions. When they were brought before the Children's Court they defied the magistrate. The simply told him that it was easy to break out. The magistrate said he had no option but to send them to Fremantle gaol and they replied, "We will get out of there." They have not done so. It is difficult to know what to do with two lasses of that description. In the ward they occupied at Fremantle is a window overlooking the detention camp for unruly Army boys, and these girls were found standing at the window without a stitch of clothing on, much to the enjoyment of the boys. I regret to have to mention these matters, but we are continually being told that we should do this thing and that. What are we going to do with a pair of lasses of that description?

Mr. Hughes: There is plenty of cell accommodation in the women's section of the gaol away from the detention barracks.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Unfortunately, the window in the ward they occupied overlooked the detention barracks, although there was a stone wall between. That was an oversight, but it was soon rectified. If I could get the Edward Millen Home for venereal patients there would have

to be a lock-up in which such persons could be confined. I want members to appreciate that the problem is not as simple as it might appear to be. These are not girls whom the medical fraternity will certify and order to Claremont, though that is where I think they ought to be. Of course, we cannot send them there. I assure members that we have suffered a good many headaches over this matter, but are doing our best.

The mental hospitals are meeting with special difficulties, the foremost of which perhaps is the shortage of medical and nursing staff. The department deals with all Army cases that are thrust upon them by the military authorities. In addition, the Army is still in possession of the new treatment block established at the Claremont Hospital for the Insane. The unfair part of it is that as fast as we get a block ready for patients, the military authorities walk in. I am hopeful that these things will be rectified in the near future. I ask members to be a little tolerant and try to appreciate some of the difficulties under which we are labouring.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I have listened with great interest to the remarks of the Minister and can appreciate the difficulties about which he spoke. The position must be appalling. Still, there may be other places where two such girls could have been put and no doubt they have been put elsewhere now. I believe that a good dose of castor-oil would do those girls much good—and men, too.

The Minister for Lands: To keep their minds on something else.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I believe that Mussolini, in the early days of his regime, cured drunkenness by administering castor-oil. He did not put drunks in gaol; he just gave them a bottle of castor-oil. I believe that excellent work is being done at Wooroloo. Patients there need some relaxation, and I am glad to hear the Minister say that a small farm has been started for them. When friends wish to visit inmates, the difficulty is to get accommodation on trains or buses. I ask the Minister to confer with the Minister for Railways to ascertain whether something cannot be done to facilitate friends travelling to Wooroloo on Sunday or on visiting days.

There is very little accommodation in Western Australia for elderly or young in-

curables. Latterly I have been trying to get people into the Home of Peace, but they cannot possibly be admitted, not because of any deficiency in the nursing staff but because of lack of domestic staff. This shortage I attribute to the broadcasting of appeals to young people to offer their services in the war effort. They are told over the air that their fathers or brothers and sweethearts are serving and are asked, "Why not you?" The girls on the domestic staff of such an institution are doing very essential work, but they leave it and enter the Services. I consider the Home of Peace one of the best institutions of its kind in Australia but, owing to the dearth of domestic staff, it cannot accept more patients. That I consider a terrible thing. I am sure the Minister will do what he can to remedy it. I believe the W.A.N.S. and the E.S.C. people are doing what they can to render assistance. At the Perth Hospital, I understand, incurables have been told to leave because there is no provision for them to remain. There is no other place in which to put these people. Incurable patients are still patients, and need skilled nursing.

Now as to our schools! In Western Australia I consider we are very badly off as regards doctors and nurses in the Education Department. It is absolutely impossible for us, with 60,000 or 70,000 children attending our schools, to expect that $1\frac{1}{2}$ nurses and $1\frac{1}{2}$ doctors, on the average, can attend to that number of children. The parents of many children in our schools should be informed that their children are in need of certain medical attention, as is done practically throughout the world. We must not wait to do this until there is a new order; we must do it now. I have received information that in England 75 per cent. of the children in schools receive mid-day meals; in some schools, as high as 90 per cent. Moreover, nearly all the children receive free milk. That is something absolutely necessary in this country, so that at least we may be able to put our children on a healthy basis. Many of them are not on such a basis. I wish to refer to the position that has obtained at Pingelly. It is an awful thing that children should have to mix with other children who are ill, as stated. Regarding the question of V.D. and the case I mentioned this morning, in justice to the Minister for Health I want to say that when a deputation waited on him recently and asked

whether a position such as has arisen could arise, the members of the deputation were assured that it could not arise. The Minister did not think that such a position as he described this morning could occur here. I tried to speak this morning because I thought the Minister might be able to introduce into the Bill now before another place something which would prevent any recurrence of the situation. When once a thing has occurred, it might occur again.

The Minister for Health: It might, in a thousand years!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The Minister was really a little misinformed. When a Minister speaks about his department, one should always endeavour to ensure that whatever is stated on behalf of the department is right, and not biased in its favour. When one is of strong character—and I know the Minister is—and when a Government is strong, they are never afraid of admitting a weakness. It is a weakness of democracy that we try to shelter a bureaucracy. That is what has happened here. I interviewed this woman.

Mr. Cross: I guess she was unable to tell you what the neighbours said about her.

Mr. Hughes: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman! If the member for Canning wants to make a statement like that about this woman, I would invite him to make it outside, and then—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for East Perth cannot carry on along those lines.

Mr. Hughes: Is the member for Canning entitled to say of that woman that she did not tell what the neighbours know? Is he entitled to take advantage of Parliamentary privilege in that way?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite in order. I do not know whether he has taken advantage of Parliamentary privilege or not. The member for Subiaco may proceed.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If we believed all the neighbours say of us, we might all be in gaol. After seeing this case in the "Sunday Times" I thought it my duty to interview the woman herself, and ascertain whether I thought she was the type of woman who would lend herself to that of which she was accused.

Mr. Fox: How did you find out who she was?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I will inform the hon. member in confidence. However, the point is that the woman was a farmer's wife, or had for many years been a farmer's wife. They had lived on the farm, which did not pay. They came to Perth and the man got a position on the railways. He then enlisted, and he has been two years oversea. She has six children under 12, and the youngest is about 17 months. She lives with her mother and her sister, and at no time ever have all the children been away from her. At various times the mother, who goes to stay with another sister, living in Fremantle, has taken three or four of the children away with her to give this woman a rest. This woman ten weeks ago decided, because her sister had determined to go into a munitions factory, to go with her sister; and she has been there for 10 weeks.

The Minister for Health: The Government should not employ a woman in those circumstances.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I asked her why she took the job when she had six children under 12. She replied, "Well, you know, if you have ever been without money and there are means by which you can get a little money, you are tempted to take it."

Mr. J. H. Smith: But she must have had quite a big allowance, with six children!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The man, I repeat, has been oversea for two years. If he should hear this story, it will not be at all nice. This woman has never in her life had anything to drink, and has never smoked in her life. What has appeared in the Press is extremely detrimental to the woman. She is absolutely a non-drinker and a non-smoker; no powder on her face; just an ordinary type of hard-working woman! I asked, "What about the two soldiers?" She said, "What soldiers?" I said, "Oh yes, there are two soldiers who visit you?" She said, "Yes. One is a friend of the family. The other one is a friend of my sister. Is it wrong to have soldier friends?" I said, "No, it is not." If it were wrong, we might accuse any woman of venereal disease because some soldier visited her. These two men who visited this woman were friends of her sister and of the family. I asked her, "How did you know you did not have venereal disease?" She replied, "Firstly, I did not know what venereal disease was; but I had just had a blood test at the factory as a donor of blood. I thought perhaps it might

have something to do with that." She was an absolutely ignorant woman, and did not know anything about venereal disease. However, she got a letter from the department. The letter, as members know, would not be a pleasant one to receive. The Commissioner of Public Health said there were reasonable grounds for suspecting that the woman was suffering from V.D., and, quoting from the authority given under the National Security (Venereal Diseases) Regulations, ordered her to present herself at the Perth Hospital for examination on a specified date.

The Minister for Health: The woman had been interviewed by an inspector before that.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: When the sister came home she said, "The best thing you can do is to go to an outside doctor and find out whether there is anything wrong with you." She went to Dr. Meagher. I wish members to know the name of the doctor, so that they will know exactly where the woman went. She had been his patient, as she had been suffering from a bad leg. She asked him what to do. He replied, "The best thing you can do is to go to the hospital, as indicated, and leave it at that." She again consulted her mother and sister, who advised her to go to another doctor. She did so, and he said to her—of course, she was merely a poor patient—"There is no need for me to examine you; the best thing for you to do is to go to the hospital and find out. You will be told." Before she went, what happened was this: Someone called on her and said she had lived in South Perth. She replied, "I have never lived in South Perth." "Oh no!" said the officer, whoever he was, "You have lived in South Perth all right." She answered, "I have not. We came from the country, went to William-street, and then came here." However, the officer tried to make it appear that she was not telling the truth in that respect. She then went to the hospital, where I understand she stayed for two days. She was examined and, as was stated in the paper, unfortunately met an acquaintance.

The Minister for Health: A relative.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: This relative found out she had been in the V.D. ward, and that was not very pleasant. The point I wish to make is this: The woman went home and has received no notification from the department stating that she was free from venereal disease, neither has she re-

ceived any apology for the mistake. I challenge the department to answer this question: Is there another woman of the same name with six children living at the same address?

The Minister for Health: We only found out that she had six children when we went there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Is there another woman working at the munitions factory who has six children and lives at that address? Another point is that of the five people who made accusations against her, only one gave the address.

The Minister for Health: The private address.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes.

The Minister for Health: I said that.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The Minister did, I quite agree. That woman is still terribly disturbed because she has not received an apology from the department. She has not, as I said, received a notification to say whether she had V.D. or not. She was simply ordered to attend at the hospital, went there, was examined and then discharged. I think it a disgrace that any department could act in such a manner towards any woman in this State. That is the reason I wanted to say what I tried to say this morning, my object being that the Minister should place some provision in the Health Act Amendment Bill that would prevent a recurrence of such a happening. That is all I wish to say on this subject.

This morning the Minister answered some questions that I asked him. I can assure him that I know the answers were not of his compilation, as they are extremely technical. However, they are not really answers to my questions. The Minister will doubtless recall than on the 27th August last he supplied me with a list of venereal diseases. I apologise for bringing up this subject, but I am sure that until we cease treating these diseases with a hush-hush policy, nothing will be done to stamp them out in this State. We have to regard these diseases not as criminal diseases but simply as diseases. When the Minister rose to reply, I thought I would get an answer which could appear in "Hansard."

The Minister for Health: Get them in now by reading them out.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I crave your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. In case I mis-

quote any of the words, I shall give "Hansard" a copy of the answer. These are all the diseases or after-effects directly or indirectly traceable to venereal diseases, according to the department:—

SYPHILIS—

Primary syphilis
Secondary syphilis
Tertiary syphilis
Congenital syphilis
Skin rashes (various types)
Aderitis (gland inflammations)
Ulcerations of the throat
Gummata (tumours which may occur in any organ or tissue)
Araemia
Deafness

Eye Conditions :

Iritis
Choroiditis
Retinitis
Optic neuritis
Keratitis

GONORRHOEA—

Urethritis
Abscess
Prostatitis
Epididymitis
Orchitis
Arthritis
Endocarditis
Septicaemia
Pyæmia
Cervicitis
Endometritis
Salpingitis
Peritonitis
Ovaritis
Iritis
Conjunctivitis
Aderitis
Sterility

Jaundice
Diseases of the heart and blood vessels
Locomotor ataxia
General paralysis of the insane
Hemiplegia
Encephalitis
Cerebral hæmorrhage
Aneurism
Hepatitis
Nephritis
Orchitis
Aderitis
Charcol's joint
Abortion

The question I asked the Minister, however, was whether he would enumerate the diseases directly traceable to V.D. A great many of the diseases that he mentions may be traceable indirectly to V.D., but I want to know which of the diseases are directly traceable to it. However, the Minister did not state them.

Mr. Triat: Ask the Minister privately, and he might tell you.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I will ask the question at some time or other, because I am determined to get an answer. I also asked the Minister, "Are medical practitioners obliged to report all cases directly traceable to V.D.?" He replied, "Yes." That was without giving the names or addresses. I also asked—

(3) Are chemists allowed to sell drugs for the alleged cure of V.D. and are they obliged to report such sales with names and addresses of the purchasers?

The answer was "No." Then what are they obliged to supply? Why should quacks be permitted to say that they can cure this and that disease when they cannot? Some advertise that they can cure these diseases in five days, but we know that is impossible. There is no truth whatever in the assertion that these diseases are curable in the time stated by the quacks. We are here to protect the public and to prevent these people

from selling drugs which they claim can effect a cure in five days. The next question was—

(4) If no reports are obtained from medical practitioners, by what means can the department compute the percentage of those suffering directly or indirectly from V.D.?

That brings me back to the point I raised earlier in the session, that Dr. MacKenzie had said that approximately 60 per cent. are suffering or have at some time directly or indirectly suffered from V.D. I say definitely that no medical officer, unless he includes in his calculations all those diseases directly or indirectly caused by V.D., can give a proper statement of the percentage of people suffering directly or indirectly from that disease. Something should be done to re-organise the Medical Department in this State, to ensure that school children are properly attended to, and that people who are suffering from incurable diseases should have provided for them hospitals or homes. We should have doctors who treat people free of cost. There should be a doctor in every suburb to give free treatment.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why not nationalise the whole service?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No, because there are people who do not believe in men working under a nationalised system. But I do think that the majority of the people of this State are not in a financial position to pay the amount they have to pay the medical profession, and I would like to see a doctor in every suburb paid by the State to give free advice.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I am sorry to hear that 60 per cent. of us are suffering from some form of a very unpleasant disease; it makes me feel less inclined to offer the suggestion I am about to put forward. This is a new suggestion for this Chamber. It has not had the approval of the member for West Perth or of the National Party. I must make that clear or I shall be hauled on the mat the next time the party meets. Our local governing authorities at present have power to organise water supplies, sewerage services and so forth. I am afraid this is rather a dull subject after the spicy speech we have just heard, but I am trying to get back to normality. As attention has been given for so long to matters of water supply and sewerage, it strikes me that the time might not be far distant when we should decide to give

power to local authorities to organise services designed to ensure better nutrition. I have here a book entitled "Start Planning Britain Now," which contains amongst other things the following:—

That green or agricultural belt is important for another reason. A first principle of all our social planning must be nutrition. Everyone must be guaranteed the food which is necessary to maintain them in health. We must have some form of nutrition service which will be as rationally conceived as our sanitary service and as commonplace as our water supply. Indeed it will be "laid on." It will be the duty of the community to see that every individual has a basic ration of the essential health—or protective—foods on, perhaps, the same principle as the water-rate. If he does not want to be well-fed he need not exercise his option any more than he need turn the tap and take a bath. But to each the food will be available. We have the beginnings already in free or cheap milk for school children and for mothers and the lower-income groups. The next step is to extend it to dairy produce, eggs, fruit and green vegetables, and if we have the proper supply of these our appetites and our private purse can take care of the rest. War restrictions may modify the items (egg shortage, for instance) but rationing is bound to produce the universal basic health-diet, maybe free, but certainly under rigidly controlled prices within the reach of all because otherwise the spiral of free-play prices would deprive such a large section of the health indispensable to the successful prosecution of the war that it would be tantamount to a Nazi victory.

Beyond the war in the social economy of our planned Britain the nutrition service must be embodied. And the agricultural belt of town planning is part of that picture. For the protective foods are mainly fresh foods, the foods our forefathers used to go out of the back door to collect and use immediately. Therefore the towns must have their own back door—market gardens, poultry farms, orchards, and, if possible dairies.

The idea behind this proposal appeals to me. All previous ideas—such as Major Douglas's national dividend, Sir Wm. Beveridge's social planning for Great Britain, family endowment, and so on—are all means of providing some form of income for the lower-income groups, to enable them to obtain things they cannot obtain otherwise. As was pointed out by the member for Subiaco on another occasion, the difficulty in paying out money to families for essentials is that, instead of being used for the benefit of children, it might be devoted to S.P. betting and other diversions. So I think it would be an excellent idea if power were given to local authorities to establish green belts near their cities or towns on which fruit and

vegetables might be grown, and supplied to the people needing them. Some of the money at present used to provide family allowances might be employed on this project to meet the rates required to be struck. In this way the objection to providing assistance for people by means of money grants, namely, that the women would put it on their backs, or that it would be used for some other purpose and the children neglected, would be removed.

The adoption of this plan would mean providing something quite as essential as water and sewerage. The idea would not be to interfere with the services at present rendered by markets and shops, but to supply the minimum basic articles such as certain vegetables and milk and fruit to those requiring them. The money for this purpose could be raised by rating the people in the district of the local governing authority and diverting some of that which is at present disbursed in family allowances. I submit this matter for the serious consideration of the Minister, hoping that the Government of the day will think it worth while granting this power to local authorities to adopt the scheme if they think fit. I would say it could not be done everywhere, but I cannot see why a local authority should not have the power. I have looked through the various Acts but that power is not there today, although different sections together come very near to giving it. Local authorities are granted permission to provide markets and control local reserves and do other things, which might in the aggregate be construed to empower them to do what I am now asking. It would, however, be better if the authority were agreed to by the Minister or this Chamber so that it could be given specifically to the local authorities concerned.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan): I regret that I was not present when the Minister introduced this Vote.

The Minister for Health: You are not as sorry as I am.

MR. SAMPSON: I appreciate the sympathetic view expressed. I desire to say a few words on the evident and increasing difficulty faced by the Minister and his department in obtaining nurses and assistance generally. For a long time I have felt the need for and expressed my belief in the importance of more intensive and greater training for nurses. Fortunately we have

not suffered from invasion, but in such an event the shortage of nurses would be most severely felt. I know that the Manpower Office is doing good work in regard to training young women. I hope that the services of a good percentage of these trainees are being utilised for hospital purposes. The same thing may be said in regard to domestic help. The shortage which exists must amount almost to a nightmare to the Minister and the others responsible, because on many occasions advertisements setting out the need by hospitals for nurses and other assistants have appeared in "The West Australian." I am hopeful that that difficulty may be overcome. It is a very real one and of first-rate importance.

The consideration given by the department to infant welfare centres is a matter for congratulation, and I hope it will be continued and that the number of centres will increase. The work done in this connection is beyond appraisal because the child cared for becomes a healthy adult. The Commonwealth is better off because of the fact that nowadays greater consideration, care and attention are paid to infant life. Those concerned with this work—and numbers of citizens, especially women, are doing splendid work in an honorary capacity—deserve the best thanks of the community. To Hon. Harry Gray, the Honorary Minister, we are indebted. He has never hesitated to do all within his power to develop the infant welfare spirit. He has helped in a practical way to make possible the care of infant health in the different districts of this State.

I understand that conditions at the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont have now improved and that the furniture is better. I hope that what has been done is but a forerunner of what will be achieved. We have a heavy responsibility in regard to those who are mentally sick, and whatever it is possible to do to help them should be done. I was interested some years ago in the preparation of land and the planting of fig trees at that hospital. The belief was expressed by different members that consideration should be given to the provision of more fruit to the inmates. It was difficult and costly to do what was required and because of that I brought forward a proposal to plant trees, and later on was successful in having about 10 acres planted with fig trees. Unfortunately, the trees were

never looked after. It seems to be the belief that inmates of a hospital do not require fruit; or that if they do they do not need much. In place of looking after these fig trees in the fine limestone soil adjacent to the hospital, which is admirable for the purpose, they were neglected. In spite of the neglect some of the trees grew, but many commenced to die and today not many remain. That is a sad reflection on the interest shown in regard to the need of fruit for the inmates.

I also suggested that consideration might be given to the establishment of a dairy farm in some other locality for this particular hospital. The land in its immediate vicinity is not nearly so suitable for dairying as would be land more carefully selected. Many of the inmates would find pleasure and prove helpful in carrying out work connected with the dairy. As a matter of fact, this work is largely done by them now on the home farm. The inmates are just as much concerned as we are with doing work which is of service. Consideration might be given to the aspect of establishing a dairy for this institution in some suitable locality where the inmates could do what is required. A greater quantity of milk and cream would be beneficial and the Government has, south of Fremantle and adjacent to some swamps, some splendid land which would be excellent for the production of grasses and clovers. The Minister and his responsible officers know full well that it is a good proposition and are aware that the desire of the Chief Resident Medical Officer for many years has been that steps should be taken in this direction. I am hopeful that serious consideration will be given to the matter.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Public Health*, £43,660—agreed to.

Vote—*Mental Hospitals and Inebriates*, £135,550:

Item, Salaries and Allowances, etc., £85,550.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: With reference to the Inspector General of Insane and Inebriates, will the Minister explain the jump in the provision from £939 to £1,201?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The present Inspector General was promoted from the position of superintendent which he formerly held, and the higher office carried with it an increased salary together with the basic wage allowance, grade increase and so on.

Hon. N. Keenan: At what salary does the basic wage variation cease to apply?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know. I understand that the Act mentions a maximum of £699 but for some unknown reason—I do not know how it came about—everyone secures the benefit of the basic wage variation if it is £5 or over in any one year.

Hon. N. Keenan: Irrespective of the officer's salary?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes.

The Minister for Works: They got an assurance that if they did not come under the Industrial Arbitration Act they would enjoy any advantages that might accrue, and this is one of them.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—*Chief Secretary*, £21,931:

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [4.48]: The Chief Secretary's Department covers the administrative activities of the head office and sub-departments such as the prisons, registry, and friendly societies and the Observatory. As with other departments, there has been a considerable increase in the volume of work undertaken and difficulty has been experienced on account of shortage of staff. Various other activities of a miscellaneous nature are under the control of the department, particularly those relating to the work of the correspondence despatch section, the control of the War Funds Regulation Act and the Street Collections Regulation Act. Legislation to ensure the exercise of proper supervision over war patriotic funds has been in operation for three years. The Street Collections Regulation Act has for its object the regulation and control of patriotic or charitable street collections within the metropolitan traffic areas. Under this heading much work has been undertaken. The correspondence despatch branch has been in existence for 28 years and, due to various factors, including those associated with the war, its operations have been greatly extended during the year.

Dealing with the Department of the Registrar General, members are aware that he administers the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Acts and the relevant portions of the Adoption of Children, Legitimation and Cremation Acts, and is responsible for the efficient handling and safe custody of the State's permanent records in that particular sphere. That en-

tails the supervision of the work of district registrars and assistant district registrars in the various registry districts, and covers such matters as registrations, corrections of entries, searches and the issue of registry documents. Under the system that was inaugurated last year of verifying the registrations of births and marriages of soldiers and Air Force personnel and their dependants, a considerably increased volume of searching through the records was done by an augmented staff of temporary officers. With the introduction of child endowment and later of widow's pensions, the registry branch has been called upon to notify the Department of Social Services, as the events occur, of the deaths of children under 16 ages, and of endowees and pensioners and the births of children after the first child. In addition, verifications are required of the births of children for whom claims were originally made, and of the deaths of widows and the deaths of husbands. This work has entailed much extra labour on the part of those associated with the department.

Further new work has been undertaken for the Commonwealth Government with regard to identity cards, and to ration books of deceased persons and of brides. This was entailed by the introduction of a check system for the Chief Electoral Officer, the Department of Labour and National Service and the Deputy Director of Rationing. With the entry of Japan into the war steps had to be taken early this year to safeguard the permanent State records of births, deaths and marriages, as well as certain statistical records. Pre-1896 State registers, together with all but very recent district registers of such vulnerable areas as Fremantle, Swan, Canning and Geraldton, were sent to a distant inland centre, and post-1895 registers for the Perth district and the North-West and northern areas were microphotographed, the films and indexes being housed in a strong-room where the other documents were lodged for safe-keeping. That entailed a great deal of extra work for the officers. Then again the duties of the officials associated with the Statistical Department have been greatly increased since the inauguration of the war on account of the necessity for statistical statements being prepared for State and Commonwealth departments and others.

During recent months, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Statistician, special work has been undertaken for both Commonwealth and State authorities in order to meet urgent administrative needs for war purposes, the more important items including monthly returns of stocks and production of foodstuffs which were required for the Australian Food Council; inquiries regarding clothing manufacture and data for rationing purposes required by the Department of Supply and Development; and the survey of the dairying industry, with special reference to manpower requirements, which was undertaken for the Australian Food Council, various Commonwealth departments and the manpower authorities. Furthermore during September last, under the authority of the National Security Regulations, the first of a series of emergency inquiries was instituted in connection with rural production and manpower. The initial returns covered certain mixed farms, primarily those on which vegetables and fruits were grown. The general procedure is designed to collect through one authority the information urgently required by various departments directly concerned with the war effort, thus eliminating multiplicity of returns and the over-lapping of inquiry. Extra work has been carried out by the research section for various departments and others, particularly with reference to national income and taxable capacity, State income-tax and distribution and employment and population trends.

The usual activities have been continued by the Registrar of Friendly Societies and his officers. With regard to the Observatory, the official time service has been maintained as in previous years in the interests of the railways, postal and telegraph authorities, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the Weather Bureau and others requiring that information and, with the addition of war work, these duties have been considerably increased. At the request of the American naval authorities facilities regarding time signals have been very willingly provided for our Allies. Naturally with the outbreak of war the public has not been allowed to visit the Observatory as in former years. With regard to the Prisons Department, as most members know, the prisoners housed in the Fremantle Gaol had to be evacuated to Barton's Mill. Much work was entailed in

the procuring of a site with the necessary facilities so as to meet the requirements of such an institution. The prison is practically established now and the administrative buildings, workshops and so on have been installed. All that took considerable time. That work has practically been completed and conditions for the prisoners have been improved. Some of the prisoners are engaged in the supply of firewood and charcoal, which is bringing in some revenue. This work keeps the prisoners occupied. Most of the firewood and charcoal, of course, has been supplied to public institutions, but as time goes on we hope that extra supplies can be obtained and that some quantities can be made available for the public generally. Behind the scheme at Barton's Mill is an ideal to create a psychological effect in the inmates, aiming at a percentage of ultimate reform. The prisoners at Pardelup are engaged in mixed farming and steady progress is being made with development work. Particular attention is paid to the growing of fruit and wool.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Registry and Friendly Societies, £17,315; Prisons, £36,240; Observatory, £1,489—agreed to.

Vote—Education, £851,200:

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [4.57]: This is a very important section of the Estimates, dealing as it does with one of the largest spending departments. The item has not been materially altered as compared with the previous year. This is only natural because, in times such as the present, additional money is not available for the department, though it is one of the most important of all. The Education Department, in common with most sections of the Government service, has experienced difficulties in respect to staff. In reply to a question last week, I pointed out that over 500 male teachers had enlisted in the services, which has entailed great hardship in the department. Their places have been taken by supply teachers, juniors, etc. The estimated expenditure for the current financial year is £851,200. Of this, a sum of £784,200 will be expended on the payment of salaries for approximately 2,800 employees. The salaries item provides for an increase of £20,146, the bulk of which is due to the rise in the basic wage. The item

for incidentals is £67,000, which represents a reduction of £41 on the actual expenditure for last year. This item covers expenditure on furniture, books and equipment of every kind required by all schools, including technical schools, manual training, household management, etc. It also includes an item for driving allowances, travelling expenses, rent, water supply for schools and firewood. While the total shows a reduction on the vote of last year, the department will be able to make available all essential services and provide for expansion in technical classes.

During recent years the vote has included a substantial amount for the replacement of obsolete desks and equipment in schools, and while the department realises the need for much more to be done in this direction, we feel we would not be justified in providing any larger sum while the financial position remains as it is. The number of schools now open is 721, of which 22 are assisted. Government schools are maintained where there is an average attendance of eight pupils, while those assisted cater for smaller districts where there are only five pupils. The correspondence classes continue to do excellent work. There are approximately 2,500 pupils out of reach of schools and they are catered for by these classes.

An innovation last year was the appointment of a careers research officer. It is hoped that the work in this branch will provide valuable aid to parents in regard to vocational training and guidance and strengthen the contacts between the school and employers. These Estimates do not provide for the building of new schools or for repairs to buildings or playgrounds. Those items come under the Public Works Department. This is purely a spending department which receives little or no revenue. Everything possible is being done to keep our education system up to the high standard of the past.

[Mr. Withers resumed the Chair.]

On motion by the Deputy Premier, further discussion of the vote was postponed.

Vote—Police, £297,213:

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [5.3]: This is another department which is not under my control. The activities and duties of the Police Department,

perhaps more so than other departments, have increased considerably owing to the hostilities in which the nation is engaged. A considerable amount of work arising out of the war has been undertaken on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, principally in connection with aliens and subversive activities. In regard to officers engaged in the Special Bureau, arrangements are being made to transfer them to the Commonwealth Security Service for the duration of the war, and when the transfer has been completed the department will be relieved of the payment of their salaries. There are several places where guards are being maintained by the department. That involves a sum of approximately £14,000 yearly, which this State has to carry. During the past 12 months several police districts have been closed—Youanmi and Peak Hill, for example. The closing of those stations has relieved the police officers who were there, and they have been placed in other outlying stations which have grown considerably. I may mention Geraldton as one place where additional police have had to be stationed. The Police Department requires many more men on its staff to do the work expected of it.

During the year the women police have rendered excellent service. They have paid visits to larger country towns, such as Albany, Geraldton and Bunbury. Arrangements for women constables to be on permanent duty at one or two outlying centres have been completed. No recruits have been enlisted during the year, as the Police Department recognises that the Army has first call on young men. However, to provide staff for extra work cast on the department thirty-nine special constables were enrolled during the year. Apart from the special work done by the department there have been the usual activities. I may mention supervision of the Licensing Act. There are 870 licenses operating in the State—a decrease of 30 as compared with last year. The principal licenses operating are 382 publicans' general, 115 gallon, 62 wayside house, 52 Australian wine, 90 billiard table, and 71 club certificates. All these have to be supervised. There is also the Weights and Measures Act. During the year 16,242 appliances were submitted for verification, and of these 2,172 were rejected; 116 traders' premises were visited, and 2,673 packages examined, 117 being found incorrect.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison): I desire to refer to only two matters. A feeling of unrest—if it is to be called that; to find a word describing the position exactly is difficult—is abroad. The Police Department makes every endeavour to enforce the traffic laws and to catch culprits, get them to the Police Court and prosecute them. That applies to minor charges. The task of the police is a highly difficult one. They have not the staff necessary to police the metropolitan area. Later comes a greater grievance. The police have been successful in connection with fatal accidents caused by glaring breaches of the traffic regulations. At the coronial inquiries the police were able to induce the coroners to commit the accused persons to stand trial for murder or manslaughter. But then the Crown Law Department comes into the picture, and enters *nolle-prosequi's*. Such results are highly discouraging to the police, especially as the accused persons were charged with taking the lives of various persons. In two or three of the cases the breaking of the law was most flagrant. In one instance the fellow was transferred from this State, being a member of the Air Force. I trust there will be no *nolle prosequi* entered in future cases of the kind. I know that the police are severely handicapped, and that they do their work under difficult circumstances.

This Committee needs to remember that human life is valuable, at all events to those who lose it. In the case of a fatal accident not involving one near or dear to us, we are inclined to think that it does not matter very much; but the person killed leaves relations to mourn his loss. If a fatal accident is due to positive carelessness on the part of the person accused and he escapes retribution, that is not justice. The Minister for Police would do well to take these matters up. The Government ought to supply the police with more up-to-date vehicles, and a greater number of them. There are more critical accidents happening now than occurred in the days when the traffic was much greater but moved in more favourable circumstances.

Hon. N. Keenan: There was the black-out.

MR. MARSHALL: I admit that. However, we all know how the black-out regulations were abused. Some vehicles drove in absolute darkness, possibly because it suited the occupants to escape observation. Other

motorists went to the opposite extreme in regard to lighting.

The other matter I wish to mention is the prosecution of persons conducting S.P. shops. I know the police are quite within the law and doing the right thing so far as the law goes in the prosecution of people who keep common gaming-houses. I want the Minister, if he can, to inform the Committee why it is that there is no interference with individuals who break the selfsame law but operate on racecourses, proprietary and otherwise. Why this discrimination? The law does not give any person the right to run a common gaming-house.

Mr. J. Hegney: Does the law apply to every person who bets on horse-racing?

Mr. MARSHALL: I suppose so. Betting does not give me a thrill. However, I wish to point out that lopsided administration of the law does not tend towards general satisfaction. If all offenders were treated the same, the position would be quite different. I may compliment the South Australian police on having gone to the racecourses and arrested bettors when South Australia had enacted total prohibition of betting. A policeman was hunting them round the course, taking their names and charging them with betting. They were punished in the same way as any other offender is punished, and that is quite right. The public would be more sympathetic to the closing of the S.P. shops if betting were also stopped on racecourses, or if people betting on racecourses were prosecuted. People say, "Why, I have only to pay to go on a racecourse in order to break the law with impunity; but if I go to a shop where betting takes place I am liable to be arrested and charged." That is neither fair, just nor consistent. I should be glad if the Minister would let us know later why it is that prosecutions for betting on racecourses are, by comparison, so few. As far as I know, only one lot of people was prosecuted for betting on a racecourse, and in that case the prosecutor was a private individual.

Mr. J. Hegney: I have myself seen the police bet on racecourses.

Mr. MARSHALL: I could not say. I do not go to racecourses, because I have no interest in horse-racing. However, I have no objection to those who like their little flutter putting 2s. on a horse if they wish to do so, but I take strong exception to

preferential treatment. A person going to a shop to bet is prosecuted, while a person betting on a racecourse is not. If the Minister can supply the information for which I am asking, I shall be very thankful.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I am sorry I was not in the Chamber when the Minister introduced these Estimates. I do not know whether women police are being paid or not; but when I last made inquiries I was told they were not. As I came into the Chamber, I believe I heard the Minister say that the women police were very satisfactory. They are working exceedingly hard. First they devoted a few weeks or months to training in order to pass a preliminary examination. When they took on the duties, they were not provided with a uniform. Their footwear is dear and they have to surrender coupons for it as well. They are not even provided with tea. All they are provided with, as far as I can learn, is a pass to travel on trams or trains. To me it seems very unfair that the women police should start duty at 4.30 and work on till 9.30 without receiving any payment whatever. I am open to correction on that point, because it is a week or two since I obtained the information. The work of these women would be even more satisfactory if their hours were longer or if they were permitted to start a little later. They are prepared to work longer hours, provided they start later. I still think they should receive some remuneration for their work. I cannot let the subject of S.P. betting pass without saying something about it. I do not quite agree with the member for Murchison when he makes a comparison between betting in S.P. shops and betting on racecourses. The S.P. shops are open all day and are carrying on in defiance of the law. They are open all day and every day.

Mr. Marshall: So are the racecourses.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Not every day.

Mr. J. Hegney: And not in defiance of the law.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: No. There are totalisators on the racecourse and betting on them is legal.

Mr. Thorn: The racecourses pay the Government a tax on each ticket.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I visited some 30 S.P. shops one afternoon. Notwithstanding that the Prime Minister had asked that

the shops be closed, because of the Aust erity Campaign, only one or two of them had closed. If I had had the time, I could have visited 60 shops; it took me from 2 o'clock to 5 o'clock to visit 30.

Mr. Thorn: According to tonight's paper, the Prime Minister has stated that he intends to deal with S.P. betting throughout the Commonwealth.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I am sorry that the Commonwealth has decided to deal with a matter which is primarily and absolutely a State matter. The other day I received a letter with some information enclosed. The letter was handed to me by the person to whom it was sent. It said that if the recipient paid 5s. per week he could get so many "releases" for sure bets.

Mr. Warner: Tips!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes. The writer of the letter stated how many sure tips he had given in the past and how many he would give in the future. At the bottom of the letter was a note to the effect that, notwithstanding the decoding of telegrams, he could assure the recipient that he would receive the information immediately the horse won.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Have you the letter with you?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I gave the letter to another race-goer, as I did not like to send the 5s. myself. He is doing it for me. I did that with the object of finding out how this man transacted his business. Members may know him; his name is Duncan. I am referring to the man who sent the letter. This happened only a few days ago and I understand similar letters are being sent to various people. The recipients are supposed to swear an oath that they will not divulge the names of the winners to be supplied. That is going on in defiance of the law. It seems to me we are not very vigilant in this State, because if I could get hold of a letter like that the Commissioner of Police must know all about it. Some people might invest a considerable sum; in fact, they must do so or this man would not be able to send out these communications.

The Minister for Mines: There is a mug born every minute, otherwise such people could not live.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: We are here to protect the mug and are not doing so. I received a letter a little while ago from a

woman in South Perth, telling me that the proprietor of the S.P. shop to which she usually went to bet had told her she must not come to the shop, because a policeman had called and said he would only permit the shop to remain open if women were not allowed on the premises. Therefore, she was unable to bet, although she had been a regular customer. I wrote to the Commissioner on the matter. He acknowledged receipt of my letter and said he would send someone to inquire into the matter. I received the following letter from the woman today:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd November, also the official Police acknowledgment, for which I thank you. I have received a visit from the chief of the S.P. raiding constables, who denies all knowledge of the order relative to women on betting premises. He still had further investigations to make.

She said that what she had stated in her previous letter was true.

The Minister for the North-West: The S.P. man told her that.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: She said that she could not go to the shop because the policeman had informed the proprietor that women were not allowed on the premises. In Fremantle one can see written up on some of the S.P. shops "No women allowed." I do not believe in discrimination. What is good enough for the man is good enough for the woman.

Mr. Patrick: You say it is not good for either.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: That is so, but if the woman is prohibited the man should be prohibited.

Mr. J. Hegney: Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Quite so, but I object to any shop having written up inside it, "No women allowed here." These men are engaged in an illegal profession, or whatever it might be called, and I contend that it is wrong to allow such a notice to be displayed. The police must have seen it. I could give the names of the shops. I have knowledge of them because I go and look at them to see for myself. Unless this matter is dealt with, I repeat that we shall drive the people of this State into the hands of the Commonwealth. We must see that these anti-moral issues are dealt with.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You would not say that bets are immoral?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: To have S.P. shops is wrong, and it is wrong to see policemen pass such shops with their eyes closed. Although the shops are full they do not enter them. They do not bother them, but go straight on. It is wrong to allow that to continue, and for the Minister to say that S.P. betting shops will remain open until we do away with racing altogether is absurd. I think he said that we can not do away with the S.P. shops unless we do away with racing. That is an absurdity. It might as well be said that we must do away with education because some children play truant, or that people should not own furniture because there are burglars.

Mr. J. Hegney: Or cease taxing people because they do not pay.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, it is the same thing. The Minister's reply was absurd, and I would like him to give a much more logical reason why the Government allows S.P. shops to remain open. There must be some valid answer. To say that it is because the Government receives money by way of fines would be a better answer, but the one given by the Minister seems to me to be absolutely illogical.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson): Had it not been for the closing remarks of the member for Subiaco I would have said nothing.

Mr. Thorn: She can get you on to your feet any time!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry my friend from Toodyay does not get on to his feet more often, because pearls of wisdom always fall from his lips. The member for Subiaco said that S.P. shops should be cut out altogether, but she would allow betting on the racecourse.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I did not say that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, the hon. member did.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: On a point of order Mr. Chairman! I am not going to allow remarks like that to pass. I have already made a friend into a non-friend by allowing a remark to go unchallenged at the moment, and now I shall challenge remarks like that always when they are not correct. I did not say that I would like S.P. shops to be closed while I would allow betting to continue at other places.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I accept the hon. member's statement. It was more perhaps

by suggestion that she conveyed that impression. That was the only reason why I spoke.

The Minister for Mines: Auto-suggestion!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Perhaps it was auto-suggestion. The member for Subiaco does not mind the sheltered classes, the wealthy people with leisure and all good things at their disposal going to the racecourse and having their bets. She said she had received a letter from a friend. It must be a friend or she would not have written to her.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I did not call her a friend; I have never seen her.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member complained in this Chamber that one of her friends was not allowed to go into an S.P. shop. She says that if a man is entitled to go into such a place, a woman should be allowed to go there also. Everybody knows my views on this matter. I think 98 per cent. of the members of this Chamber would say that racecourses and betting and totalisators should not be abolished. What is the difference between betting on the racecourse and betting in an S.P. shop? Whichever way the matter is looked at, the Government gets revenue. My friend from Subiaco would deny to people who are working six days a week, and suffering all sorts of adverse conditions in the country areas, the right to a little relaxation on a Saturday afternoon. She would make criminals of them. She would close down all S.P. shops and give them no avenue for relaxation, and yet she would allow another section of the people who live in a favoured area to go Saturday after Saturday to the racecourse and bet. There is no consistency in that viewpoint.

Let us tackle the problem properly. The member for Swan said to me only the other day, "I regret the attitude I took when licensing came in. We should have had the whole thing legalised." That is the view I take, and that is the view everybody should take. I see from tonight's paper that the Commonwealth Government is going to impose more restrictions. It is going to close the S.P. shops. Why does this subject have to be harped on continually? I am reminded of a letter that appeared in "The Daily News" two or three days ago, in which the writer said that 80 per cent. of the people wanted a drink and a little gamble. He said that if Mr. Rose of the Temperance Society wants a drink of milk let him have

it. Why can he not have it, and why cannot Mrs. Cardell-Oliver stay at home and look after her cat?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I have not got a cat.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know whether the hon. member has a cat or not, but this writer said, "Let her stay at home and play with her cat." I think it is a certain form of—I will not use the word "hypocrisy" again—but I object to one section being deprived of this opportunity and another section living a sheltered life being allowed to go out on Saturday afternoon and bet with impunity on a racecourse. I object to their being allowed to do that while Bill Bowyang from outback is not entitled to do so, and is regarded as a criminal if he does.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—NATIONAL EMERGENCY (STOCKS OF GOODS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.34]: As members are aware, provision has been made for emergency stocks of essential goods in various parts of the State. The Minister explained that these are largely the property of wholesalers with whom arrangements are made to establish the stocks. To enable them to be established, the wholesalers have to get financial accommodation, and this Bill is to enable the State Treasurer to ensure that those who establish stocks shall not sustain any loss by reason of depreciation of those stocks, or on account of the interest they have to pay to any banking institution from which they have obtained financial assistance. In particular, the Bill provides for the ratification by Parliament of an agreement with the Commonwealth Bank under which the State Treasury undertakes that the State funds will make good to the bank any losses it may sustain through accommodation granted to wholesalers in respect of emergency food stocks. This is a case where the Government had, I think, to act in advance of Parliamentary approval. As a rule I object to agreements being made unless subject to ratification by Parliament, except in matters of minor importance. In this instance, the Government was justified in making the agreement in anticipation of Parliamentary approval. The measure is

a necessary one and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [5.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill comprises amendments to the provisions of the Evidence Act. In actual practice it is necessary that these amendments should be passed. At the present time if the prosecution charges a convicted person with previous convictions, it has to produce evidence to prove those convictions where they have occurred in some other State or outlying district of Western Australia. That evidence had to be by way of some one to identify the accused person. This amendment seeks to substitute the presentation of finger prints and an affidavit. It means that if a man with a previous record in the Eastern States was convicted in a Western Australian court, instead of having to produce some person to give evidence, the production of the accused's finger prints together with an affidavit from the finger print expert in the Eastern States would be accepted.

The second amendment allows the presentation of an affidavit of a responsible bank official to take the place of personal evidence. On occasions a person is charged with issuing a cheque on a bank in which he has no account, and convicted. If someone presented a cheque in Western Australia drawn on a bank in New South Wales it has been necessary to bring an official from that bank in order to identify the person, and prove that he had no account in the particular branch on which he drew the cheque. To overcome this state of affairs, it is proposed to amend the Act so that the courts may accept an affidavit from the responsible bank official in the Eastern States. This will save expense and make for the greater convenience of

the court. The third amendment is a slight one and seeks to substitute the word "production" in lieu of the word "proclamation." That is merely a typographical error in the Evidence Act. It has been there since the Act was passed. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Willmott, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 8th December, 1942.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—EGGS.

As to Price.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the fact that the egg producers of this State are not allowed the same price for eggs on the local market as producers of other States, for example, New South Wales, what steps has the responsible Minister taken to place this State's egg producers on a same value basis?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: A policy of requesting the same price for agricultural produce as in the Eastern States may be a dangerous one. The Deputy Price Fixing Commissioner has received the advice of an organisation representing the poultry industry. Steps have been taken by the Department of Agriculture to submit a case to

the Price Fixing Commissioner and also to ensure that poultrymen receive the maximum net returns from the sale of their produce.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Fire Brigades.
- 2, National Emergency (Stocks of Goods).
- 3, Business Names.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [11.13]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

The PRESIDENT: I have been reminded that this Bill calls for an absolute majority. There must be a division on the Bill.

Question put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	0

Majority for 19

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. R. Cornish
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

NOES—NIL.

The PRESIDENT: The question passes in the affirmative by an absolute majority. Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—STATE (WESTERN AUSTRALIAN) ALUNITE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—INCOME AND ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (WAR TIME SUSPENSION).

Report of Committee adopted.