

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd November, 1926.

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

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Davy and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Special Lease (Esperance Pine Plantation).

2. Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 28th October.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [4.36]: I have no desire to delay the second reading of the Bill. I have looked through the original Act and I find that the Bill merely seeks to make doubly sure that the Perth City Council shall have the authority and power we thought we had provided when we passed the original Act. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.37]: I shall not delay the second reading of the Bill, but desire to draw attention to one matter, merely from the standpoint of interest. I would like to confess that the necessity for this amendment has proved the truth of words uttered to me by an eminent legal practitioner when he said that nothing could humble a man's opinion of himself so much as the drafting of an Act of Parliament. The House thought, and certainly I thought, too, that when we passed the

Act last year we covered every contingency that was likely to arise. No sooner had the measure been placed upon the statute-book and a commencement was made to give practical effect to the legislation, than it was discovered that a certain aspect had been overlooked. Hence the necessity for the amending legislation in order to give effect to the true intention of Parliament.

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—WIRE AND WIRE NETTING.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That after the interpretation of "Minister" the words "'Mortgage' includes a statutory charge," be inserted.

Mr. ANGELO: Why has the Minister omitted references to the freehold of a settler?

The Minister for Lands: I have another amendment that will cover that point.

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

Clause 3—Authorisation of expenditure:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I presume the expenditure refers to money that the Commonwealth Government propose to advance to the State and that the money will have to be handled by the Lands Department. If it were State money, the Agricultural Bank would do the whole of the work. I understand that the Federal Government insisted upon the Lands Department attending to the business, and therefore this means setting up additional work that is a variation from the selling of land, which is the chief task of the Lands Department. In the circumstances I presume it could not be carried out otherwise. This will enable farmers to secure netting supplies a little cheaper than would

otherwise be possible. It will probably represent a saving of about one per cent. for the farmers. The necessity for sinking fund and other charges will bring the cost to the settler a little higher than we would like. However, the present arrangement is much better than the earlier scheme, when the Federal Government first advanced money for similar purposes. Under the then existing arrangements a fewer number of settlers were able to secure wire netting free of interest. Now all will get a slight advantage under the Federal grant. The expenditure of this money will benefit the Federal Treasury as well as the State Treasury because of the increased number of sheep that will be kept. It will save us the necessity for finding £606,945, which is something. I wonder if the Federal Government are likely to give effect to the recommendation of the Disabilities Commission. I know that the matter does not come under this Bill, but we ought to discuss it before the session closes. I hope we shall be able to induce them to give effect to the Commission's recommendation and grant us straight out the £450,000 until we are given control of our Customs.

The Premier: The Federal Government declined to accept the Commission's recommendation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But we should discuss the matter.

The Minister for Lands: What is the use of our dealing with a matter that the Federal Government have refused to accept?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is right that we should discuss it. The Government should bring the matter forward, so that members may discuss it. We should ask that the recommendations of the Commission, which in a measure assessed our disabilities, be given effect to. We can acknowledge some assistance under this measure, and I hope the expenditure of this large sum of money will result in much good to the State. We should be pleased at finding the Federal Government so friendly to the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Federal Government have done nothing as yet. The money so far provided for wire netting has been found by the State and there is nothing in the clause dealing with the Commonwealth. If the other States accept the Commonwealth proposals and they are endorsed by the Commonwealth Parliament, we hope to be able to avail ourselves

of the grant for wire netting. A draft agreement has been signed by the Premier of this State, but the latest information is that three other States so far have refused to come into line. The Federal Government desired that they be given further time to consider the matter. Consequently we have made provision to utilise the Federal money if it should become available.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You would not have the Bill here but for that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: On the other hand, we would have been compelled to introduce such a measure. I spent £90,000 without authority in order to provide wire netting. The farmers were crying out for it, and a large area of land would not have been cropped if the farmers had not been able to obtain netting. We considered that it would be in the best interests of the State to purchase netting and the Treasurer agreed to an order being given for 2,000 miles. Still, we are hoping to reach an agreement with the Commonwealth for this amount, and we hope the Commonwealth agreement will be made retrospective to cover our purchase so that the farmers will get the advantage. If the agreement is made retrospective, it will not make any difference to the State.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: You will get it at a cheaper rate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will be 7 per cent. instead of £3 1s. 2d. per cent. The Agricultural Bank trustees could not supply netting under their Act at the rate at which we are supplying it. Consequently, when the Federal Government supplied a certain quantity of netting free of interest, we had to provide officers to deal with it and so no extra staff will be involved now. We hope the draft agreement will be approved by the other States and by the Commonwealth Parliament, and that the grant will be provided. Otherwise there is power for the State to provide the money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose I ought to have apologised for having mentioned the matter.

The Minister for Lands: It is as well to make it clear that the Commonwealth have not done everything.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If this money were not to come from the Commonwealth, it is unthinkable that the amount would be fixed in the Bill at £606,945.

The Minister for Lands: We are hoping to get it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is why the Bill is before us.

Mr. Thomson: The Federal Government have shown their bona fides by making the offer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We want the money and, because of that, we are dealing with this measure. I applaud the Federal Government for what they have done. I think it would have been better had they stuck to their job and left us to do our job, but since it has become the custom for the Commonwealth to do these things, we should avail ourselves of the opportunity.

The Minister for Lands: I do not mind the custom so long as we gain by it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister reminds me of the man who was discussing betting, and who said it was all right when he won.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing about betting in this Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, but it is a bit of a gamble, and I thought the Minister would appreciate the illustration. All I desire is that we should acknowledge that the money is coming from the Commonwealth. We, on the other hand, do quite a lot for the Commonwealth. The wire netting, I suppose, is made in Australia, which is a decided advantage to the Commonwealth. If the truth were known, that is probably the reason why the grant was offered—to make work for Australian factories. I hope the Australian netting will not cost more than the imported.

The Minister for Lands: I hope the next lot will be made in Western Australia.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I doubt whether it will be made here. The wire will probably be brought here and simple machines will then convert it into netting, but very few people are likely to find employment. I am glad that we are going to help farmers to this extent by reason of the Commonwealth assistance.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The first grant by the Commonwealth Government was free of interest, and it is a pity they did not continue to provide netting on the same condition. As it is, we have a privileged class who got in early and secured netting under the widely-advertised Commonwealth scheme free of interest. Some of them obtained it for 15 years and some for 30 years,

and all they have to do is to repay the principal during the period. South Australia did not enter the scheme, and the Minister for Lands was successful in obtaining from the Commonwealth a large proportion of the amount free of interest that was set aside for South Australia. To that extent South Australia lost and we gained. Then there was delay in renewing supplies, and the State Government did the right thing by purchasing 2,000 miles of netting for the time being. We are now really ratifying the Government's action, but if the Commonwealth renew their advances under the new scheme, the settlers will be charged 7 per cent. per annum, which will cover the principal and interest. If the Commonwealth agreement with the States is not ratified, the settlers will have to pay £8 1s. 2d. per cent. to cover principal and interest.

The Minister for Lands: That is at the present cost of money.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Yes. In either case, it will be a good thing for the State. Even now I hope the Commonwealth will revert to the original scheme, because it is wrong to supply a large number of settlers under one set of conditions and, when the elections are over, to impose conditions more severe by charging interest as well as principal.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I should like to know whether this is a gambling measure or not. Are we to understand that the Minister for Lands has anticipated this measure to the extent of purchasing £90,000 worth of netting and in expectation of a Federal grant being received in due course? In the event of the Commonwealth Parliament not endorsing the Federal Government's proposal, are we to understand that the State has made arrangements by which the £606,945 will be available to settlers, or will the State merely distribute the £90,000 worth of netting and do nothing more? The Leader of the Opposition would have us believe that the Bill has been introduced, not with a desire to supply the urgent needs of the settlers, but to take advantage of a Federal proposal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Is it introduced in the interests of the settler, or is it a gambling proposition, introduced in the hope that the Federal Government will endorse the action of Cabinet, and ultimately supply Western Australia with £669,000, of which £90,000 has already been spent in

anticipation of approval? I do not want the farmers to be misled. It is a dangerous time at which to begin drawing a red herring across the trail. We are too near the elections to allow anything to be said here that will cause a misunderstanding in the minds of the electors.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Immediately the Bill passes I shall approach the Treasurer for permission to order a further supply of wire netting. If the Commonwealth Parliament approve of the agreement that has been sent to us, we shall by means of this Bill be able to make the necessary arrangements without waiting a further 12 months for ratification.

Mr. Thomson: The Federal Government submitted the agreement to the State Government for signature?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Last year we spent the money without authority because of the urgency of the matter. Now, at the first opportunity we ask Parliament for the necessary authority to do this. We thought it advisable to include the Commonwealth arrangement so that we may be fixed up when the Commonwealth Parliament pass the Act authorising the money to be spent. New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania have not fallen into line in this matter. We thought it better, instead of wasting 12 months, to get the authority now to come in under the scheme, and obtain the money at a low rate of interest. In the meantime we will go ahead with further supplies of netting.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not regard this as a gamble. The Federal Government have made an offer to the State, and that offer has been accepted. There can be no doubt that they did this with a desire to assist our farmers. The expenditure of £90,000 by the Minister for Lands on wire netting was wise. I see no attempt to mislead the farmers. The Bill merely enables the Federal scheme to be ratified in advance. I commend the Minister for bringing down the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Payment of costs:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 the following words be added:—"and other land improved by the use of such fencing wire and wire netting."

This refers to land held under freehold as well as under mortgage.

Mr. ANGELO: Has the Minister had the assurance of the Crown Law Department that this will cover freehold? The interpretation of "settler" does not include freeholds. It is very necessary that these should be included as well as leaseholds.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment has been drafted by the Crown Law Department to overcome the difficulty.

Mr. Thomson: Has the Minister provided for cases where a wire netting fence may come between the properties of two different owners?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This applies to the settler who requires wire netting. The Bill does not say how or where netting is to be erected, but the matter referred to by the hon. member is generally looked into most carefully by the department.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3, after the word "holding," in line 1, there be inserted the words "or other land as aforesaid."

The Crown Law Department drafted this amendment.

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

Clause 6—Commonwealth loans:

Mr. LINDSAY: Will the Minister explain the system of repayment? Will the settler be enabled to repay the capital cost of the netting before the expiration of the period of the loan?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The settler will be able to repay the advance at any time he chooses, but in doing so consideration must be had to the Commonwealth sinking fund of 2 per cent. The State is responsible for the money, and any person who is repaying the capital before the due time will be called upon to repay such amount as will safeguard the State from loss.

Mr. LINDSAY: If the settler is prepared to pay off the capital within 10 years, surely he will not be penalised in any way as the result of such repayment?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commonwealth are not giving the money; they are merely lending it at a low rate of interest. If a person pays back the capital in 12½ years, he will ordinarily have paid only 12½ years of sinking fund at 2 per cent. If the repayment stopped at that he would not have paid back the full liability. The farmer will only pay what he is justly entitled to pay.

Mr. THOMSON: The point raised by the member for Toodyay is well worth considering. Suppose wire netting costs £46 10s. per mile and the settler's circumstances now compel him to take advantage of the extended terms, and then suppose that at the end of five years he finds himself in a position to discharge the whole of his remaining liability; surely then he should pay only the capital cost as represented by sinking fund less the amount paid during the five years. If that is not so, I have misunderstood the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A man buying £100 worth of wire netting would in the course of 25 years pay £50 in the form of sinking fund, and the interest on the sinking fund would make up the difference. If he continues his payments for only 12½ years, he cannot expect to be allowed a full half off, because interest has not accumulated during the remainder of the term on the half which has been paid. This is one of the difficulties our officers had to contend with when negotiating the agreement. They have never yet been able to arrive at a perfectly satisfactory arrangement with the Commonwealth in this respect. The State does not receive the sinking fund, which must be paid to the Commonwealth. If the State retained the sinking fund, our officers could immediately ascertain, by reference to their books, what the amount of sinking fund paid, plus accrued interest, totalled. The Commonwealth is to invest the sinking fund, and we do not know at what rate it will be invested.

Mr. THOMSON: I am glad to know that the settler, if in a position to discharge his liability, is to be permitted to do so.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1926-27.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 28th October; Mr. Angelo in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. M. F. Troy, Minister).

Vote—Mines, £78,059:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.23]: I would like to be able to speak as optimistically of the mining industry as the Minister for Lands recently spoke regarding the progress of the agricultural industry and the activities of his department, but unhappily the mining industry to-day is not by any means as prosperous as are the sister industry of agriculture and other primary industries of Western Australia. It would be a mistake, however, to say that mining is not still one of the most important industries of the State, or to deny that there are great possibilities for the industry. In fact, without a mining industry any nation would be poor, because the progress of all other industries depends upon production from the mines. No other industry could be carried on in this or any other country unless there were mined from the bowels of the earth the minerals and metal which assist in production, and without which production under present conditions is not possible. Indeed, I will go further and say that civilisation is not possible without a mining industry. It is remarkable that all the most advanced peoples of the world live in countries possessing great mineral deposits or else have been able to exploit the mineral deposits of other lands. Agriculture depends on mining for its implements and its manures. Lime, superphosphate, gypsum and other fertilisers tend to increase production. Electricity, which plays an important part in modern commercial and industrial life, depends on two products of the mines for its chief sources—copper and lead. Iron and steel are used for the manufacture of implements and in providing the means of transport. I need not stress these facts further than to say that without a mining industry the future of Western Australia could not be as important as it will be when all the industries of this land are utilised. Happily, Western Australia abounds in minerals, and, therefore, since the progress of other industries depends largely

upon mining, this country's future ought to be assured, and in years to come it should carry a great population, particularly when all its minerals are manufactured into those things which make for the happiness and progress of a civilised community. We have been most concerned about gold mining, because that is the industry which up to date has been of most importance so far as Western Australian metals and minerals are concerned, and because it is the industry which started this State on the prosperous era we are now enjoying. The total production of Western Australia in the form of minerals amounts in value, up to the 30th September last, to no less a sum than £166,220,000. Of that amount, gold represents £155,500,000. The production of gold for the year 1925 amounted to £1,874,320. The production to the 30th September of this year amount to £1,370,250. There has, unhappily, been a falling-off of about half a million sterling for the first nine months of 1926. It is too much to hope that the last quarter will entirely repair that falling-off, but still I hope that when the present year's total is reached it will not be far short of the value won from our gold mines during 1925. For the year ended on the 31st December last, the number of men employed in gold mining, including alluvial diggers—of whom there were 139—totalled 5,009, as against 5,296 for the year 1924. Despite the falling-away of the industry I do not consider the position to be irreparable, because the day will come when there will be a greater number of men employed in gold mining and in the base metal industry, and so mining would again take its place as perhaps Western Australia's most important industry. This country continues to be the premier gold producer of Australasia, including New Zealand and Papua, our contribution to the total production of gold being no less than 65 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: Yet attempts are being made to shift the Mint over to Melbourne.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think I ought to labour here the conditions which operate to the disadvantage of our mining industry. I will refer to only one, the Federal tariff, which undoubtedly has been a distinct disadvantage, for the duty imposed upon mining machinery, strange to say, is the highest duty imposed on any machinery imported into Australia. It varies from 40 to 45 per cent., whereas agricultural machinery is penalised only to the extent of 27 per cent.

Mr. Thomson: More than that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some, but the greater proportion of agricultural machinery carries a duty of 27 per cent. I repeat, it is a remarkable thing that the machinery utilised in mining has been singled out for exceptionally bad treatment by the Federal Parliament. In my opinion, this is largely due to the fact that gold mining has no representation worth speaking of in the Commonwealth legislature. I am not disregarding the influence of Mr. A. E. Green, who represents Kalgoorlie in the House of Representatives; but apart from that gentleman it is doubtful whether there is a true representative of gold mining in the Federal Parliament today. Naturally, the want of representation operates to the disadvantage of the industry. Next to gold, the principal mineral product of Western Australia is coal, which has been produced to the value of £4,824,000. Of copper the State has produced £1,805,000, of tin £1,543,000, of lead £1,577,000, of silver £6,118,000 and of asbestos £41,000. The pyritic ores, ironstone, tantalite, limestone and arsenical ores, are the next most important mineral products. Other minerals found in the State include mica, zinc, sheelite and a number of varieties. The development of our base metals, of which there are large quantities, depends on the population and on the home market. A great deal of interest is being taken in our base metals just now. The State also possesses valuable deposits of clays suitable for pottery ware, and glass sands of the highest quality. Also there are vast deposits of gypsum, from which plaster of Paris is made, and I am glad to say this industry is growing.

Mr. Thomson: The plaster of Paris produced here is equal to any in the world.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And, happily, we have immense deposits for the manufacture of the material. Our gold-mining industry is probably in its worst condition in the Kalgoorlie district, which up to date has been the centre of the industry in Western Australia. There will have to be a marked alteration in existing conditions there before the position can be repaired. In the past, on the Golden Mile a short-sighted policy has been pursued, resulting in the payment of dividends at the expense of development. The time has arrived when de-

velopment must be carried on. Also considerable alteration will have to be made in the treatment process before the Kalgoorlie mines can be re-established. The Government are now contemplating the best means, with the co-operation of the mine owners, to bring about an improved condition in Kalgoorlie. A little time ago a committee was appointed to go into the question of supplying cheaper power to the mines on the Golden Mile. That committee consisted of Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Howe, the Superintendent of State Batteries, and Mr. Taylor, representing the Electricity Department. Their report has been published, so members are already aware of its nature. The Premier has intimated that if the mining companies are prepared to do their part the Government, by the expenditure of a large sum of money, will provide facilities for the reconstruction of the power plants on the mines. Another matter to which the Government are giving consideration is the new oil flotation process. It is in successful operation at Broken Hill, but under conditions vastly different from those in Kalgoorlie; for in Broken Hill it is associated with base metal treatment. In Kalgoorlie the officers of the School of Mines have been carrying on experiments with this process for a number of years. It has proved very successful in the laboratory, but it has not yet been applied on a large scale, except in a minor degree at the Oroya Links mine, where it has been successful. The Government contemplate the advisability of assisting in the erection of an oil flotation plant on a large scale, so that it may be run in conjunction with an existing plant under the present treatment conditions, conditionally on the costs against each system being properly checked. If this be done, then as the result of a 12-months' trial we ought to be able to determine whether the oil flotation process is cheaper than the present process, and whether it can be generally applied throughout the industry. Earlier this year I sent one of the experimentalists who have been working on this process to Broken Hill, where he was able to secure a fund of valuable information. One of the companies on the Golden Mile has applied for assistance in the erection of an oil flotation plant. The company agrees to pay all technical costs, to run the plant in conjunction

with its existing plant, to keep a check on the whole of the costs and the results and if the process prove successful, to take over the plant from the Government at the cost of its establishment. When in the Eastern States I saw the secretary of the Commonwealth Bureau of Science and Industry, and I put it up to him that the Commonwealth Government might well interest themselves in this proposition. Later on I tried to see Mr. Julius, but unfortunately we missed one another in Sydney. When Mr. Julius came over to attend the Science Congress we discussed the matter. He met the experimentalists in Kalgoorlie, and I believe he is sufficiently interested in the process to do something in the matter if the occasion arises. The occasion may arise when the Technical Committee, now inquiring into the mining industry of Western Australia, report to the Commonwealth Government. There has been provided on the Treasurer's Estimates, £169,524 to assist the mining industry. That sum has been set apart from the Commonwealth grant. I have had appointed a committee consisting of the Under Secretary for Mines, the State Mining Engineer, the Superintendent of State Batteries, and the Government Mineralogist to consider how best that money may be applied. However, since then the Technical Committee appointed under the Migration and Development Commission have arrived in Perth and had a discussion with me. Consequently I have determined to hold over the decisions of the State committee until such time as the Commonwealth committee report to the Commonwealth Government. I was surprised to learn from the Technical Committee that they are not here to inquire into the mining industry of Western Australia generally, but merely to investigate the conditions on the Golden Mile. They hope to report within a month, for six weeks is the total period they have been given. I believe they have arrived at certain conclusions and agreed upon certain recommendations. Therefore, it would be useless for the State Government to begin spending money on schemes that might not fit in with any scheme of reorganisation contemplated and recommended by the Technical Committee. So I have decided that the matter shall stand over until that committee reports. I have agreed that in any scheme of reconstruction there must be co-ordination between the activities of the State and the activities of the Commonwealth Government. Also, it is

of no use the State Government and the Commonwealth Government expending money in the reconstruction of the industry unless the directors of the mining companies do their share as well. Some time ago £25,000 was advanced to the Horseshoe Company at Kalgoorlie. That advance was made at the request of the management, who proposed to carry out a three-year plan of development. Yet within three or four months the management was on the doorstep again, asking for an additional £25,000. That second advance was made on the recommendation of the State Mining Engineer, who entertains a high opinion of the Horseshoe property. But it was made conditionally on the company raising £150,000, refunding to the Government the amount received from the Government, and expending the balance of £100,000 in such developmental work as was considered necessary by the State Mining Engineer in order to make of the mine a more permanent proposition. Although the company gave their word to raise that money, it was never raised. The Government are powerless to do anything unless the mine owners do their share also. I regret that in past years the mining companies did not put aside at least one million pounds for development work so as to secure their reserves and make provision for a rainy day. Possibly it was not the fault of the managements that it was not done, for after all the managers are only the servants of the directors in the Old Country. The present position of the gold mining industry stands to the discredit of those responsible for the omission to provide for development work. The present Government have spent considerable money in assisting the mining industry. From 1916 to 1922, under the Mines Development Act there was expended £121,250. During the regime of the present Government the following amounts have been expended:—In 1922-23, £62,457. For 1923-24 the amount was £78,748.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amount spent in 1922-23 was spent by us.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so. That was spent by the previous Government. In 1924-25 we expended £83,000, and in 1925-26 we have spent £80,843.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You mean the whole of 1925-26 and right up to date.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That means 15 months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In three years the present Government have spent in assistance to mining £305,839.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then you have given us the wrong figures in detail.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Either the detail given is wrong, or the total is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This, of course, includes the guaranteed overdrafts made by the Government to assist mining.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the total?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The total is £305,000. That is the assistance given by the present Government to the mining industry in Western Australia, since the Government came into office. That, however, is not all the assistance it has given. A considerable amount has been spent in the repairing of State batteries, and that expenditure represents more than double the amount spent by our predecessors during the six years that they were in office.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: With any result?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course there has been a result. For instance, the £50,000 spent in rendering assistance to the Golden Horseshoe has had results; it enabled the production of a great quantity of gold and kept 450 men employed.

Hon. G. Taylor: For 12 months.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Had it not been for that assistance a considerable amount of gold that was won would have been lost to the State production this year.

Mr. Lutey: And the expenditure was the means of disclosing really a new mine.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We expended in the repairs to State batteries during the year £1,806. The total expenditure on the development of mining since the passing of the Mines Development Act in 1902 to the 13th October last was £684,713. The present Government have spent half that total. These figures do not include the assistance given to State batteries, they refer to mining development and the provision of water supplies.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are still giving assistance for water?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. Since January, 1924, the last half of the financial year in which the present Government took office, there has been spent in

advances to equip mines with machinery, a total of £53,663. The subsidies granted on stone crushed for the public amounted to £4,900. In providing means of transport and the equipment of prospectors, the sum expended was £15,245, and on rebates on water supplies at Southern Cross and eastwards the amount spent was £105,415. There we have a grand total of £174,313. During the present year regulations dealing with the purchase of tailings have been amended by a reduction of the charge by 2s. 6d. per ton. The reduction will be of great assistance to the prospectors. The charges for crushing at Marble Bar and Bamboo Creek, which were 12s. per ton, have been reduced to 10s. 6d. per ton, which is the rate that obtains at other batteries. I cannot see why a man who is following the occupation of mining in the northern part of the State, and who has to put up with all manner of disadvantages, should have to pay higher rates than prospectors in other parts of Western Australia. A number of batteries have been completely reconditioned and are now as good as new. All the other plants are in good working order. Cartage subsidies have been agreed upon at 1s. per ton per mile after five miles and up to 30 miles. This will mean a benefit to prospectors to the extent of £3,600. The Government have also instituted a system of diamond drilling. Three drills are now operating, one at the Golden Mile, one on the Murchison, and a Calyx drill is boring for coal not far from Geraldton near where the Gregory Bros. discovered coal some years ago. The Government Geologist is of opinion that coal will yet be found there.

Mr. Sampson: Have you had any success at Yalgoo?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No definite success. Neither has there been any definite success at Kalgoorlie, although a big lode has been cut on several occasions. It is proposed to continue boring operations while the present Government remain in office. The State batteries are of very great advantage to the prospectors, and in my opinion they form a solid basis to the mining industry. Without the assistance of State batteries and the help given in connection with carting, as well as other subsidies, mining in many cases would have to be relegated to the background. No new mines will be found unless we continue to grant prospectors facilities for crushing.

The State batteries have been responsible for gold production to the extent of six millions sterling. The whole of that sum has been expended in Western Australia. Coal mining continues in the Collie district although there has not been an increased output during the year. The tendency of current transport is towards power alcohol and crude oil, which must have an effect upon coal consumption. Still, it is a good thing for the State that we possess the large deposits of coal existing at Collie and other places which in the future will be of great value to the State and a substantial asset in its development. The lead ore deposits on the Northampton field are still being actively worked, and two new leases—the Tarcoola Blocks and the Two Boys—may be expected to increase their output in the near future. For a number of years this industry has been reasonably prosperous. The price of lead is good, and reports indicate that good prices will operate for some time to come. The well known Surprise Mine, I regret to say, has happened upon a barren zone and only a small quantity of lead is now being mined. The barren zone is a feature of the Northampton district and it is possible that the department will in the near future undertake diamond drilling for the purpose of determining whether the lead ore makes again at a greater depth.

Mr. Stubbs: Is the State going to lose much over that mine?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, the money has been advanced on the personal security of the owners of the mines, and therefore the State should not be called upon to lose one cent. Some diamond drilling ought to be done there to determine whether the deposits of lead ore continue below the barren zone. If we discover that the lode exists at a lower depth, it will be a very good thing for the field and for the State. The department has given considerable help to the lead mining industry, and the field would have made more progress but for the difficulty experienced in taking up the leases which are on private property. Many of the areas in the Northampton district were given to the owners on the Imperial grant system, the conditions being that the mineral rights were conserved to the holders of the areas. Had it not been for the Imperial grant, lead mining in Northampton would have made much greater progress than it has actually done. In respect of copper I regret that the market is

still very dull and that the present prospects do not indicate anything in the nature of a revival. A considerable quantity of tin has been produced in Western Australia and it is a pity that the output is not greater seeing that the price of tin is high and is likely to remain high for some years to come. At Greenbushes a local company was formed recently for the purpose of again exploiting that field. A shaft is now being sunk on one of the old leases which, in times past, was highly payable. The department are rendering assistance to the extent of paying £2 for every £1 expended by the company. It is hoped that a lode will be opened up which will again bring the Greenbushes field into prominence.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Will the department continue to pay that £2?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have given our word, but the further application the hon. member has in mind is now under consideration. A number of dredging concessions have been granted at the Pilbara field. These concessions, however, do not interfere with existing rights of the men now operating there. The concessions have been given to work the deeper ground. The people who have the concessions are hopeful of raising a sum of money to exploit the leases; I hope they will be successful. It will be a good thing for the State if our tin production increases, because there is a great demand for that product overseas. Asbestos is being mined in the Pilbara field with the assistance of the department. I may state in passing that the asbestos produced there is of the highest known standard in the world. My one regret is that our deposits are not greater, because there is a big demand for this mineral, and it brings a very high price. Regarding mica, a large number of leases have been taken up at Yintharrie in the Gaseoyne district for the purpose of mining and cutting mica. Some fifty men are employed, and there is a prospect of the industry developing into a big asset. The mica is of good quality and finds a ready and payable market. The manganese deposits in the Peak Hill district are on the eve of a big development. The company owning the deposit is now building a railway from Meekatharra to Horseshoe for the purpose of exploiting the concession. It is to be hoped that no difficulty will be experienced in finding a market for this product, of which there are millions of tons

available. I hope on the completion of the railway active operations will be begun, that the deposits will be worked on a large scale, and that the effect will be to bring increased wealth to Western Australia. Hon. members have heard of the iron deposits at Yampi Sound. I do not know that they are, as I have heard it said, the greatest in Australia, but there exist at that Sound enormous deposits. Some years ago a concession was given to Mr. George Miles, M.L.C., who endeavoured to interest an English company in these deposits. Unhappily, he has not been too successful up to date. Of course that concession no longer exists, and recently Hoskins & Company, ironfounders, of Sydney, New South Wales, a firm well known not only in that State but throughout the whole of Australia, sent a representative to Western Australia, with the result that the company have taken up the lease. I understand that Hoskins & Company have acquired the whole of the Queensland Government's interests at Cockatoo Island. I have not that information from the Queensland Government, but from the representative of the company.

Mr. Thomson: Is the company going in for smelting in this State?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not the idea at the outset. They propose to work the lease and, as evidence of their bona fides, Mr. Westcott, the representative of the firm, told me that the company were prepared to deposit £10,000 with the Government. It will take some time before the company can make the necessary arrangements to work the deposits and to get the ships that will be required. I believe that, in securing the interest of this firm in the Western Australian deposits, we will have the advantage of a good company operating here with distinct and beneficial results to the State. There is some talk of a market being found for the iron outside Australia. I am led to believe that the iron deposits in Australia are not very extensive, and that, in the interests of the Commonwealth, it is desirable that our output shall not be allowed to go outside Australia, but shall be used within the borders of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Thomson: Are we getting a return on a royalty basis?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, we will, but the agreement has not been fixed up yet.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A royalty was fixed in the old lease.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but nothing was done under that lease.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is so, but I think some small amount was fixed as royalty.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I believe so, but I understand the Queensland Government have sold their lease to Mr. Hoskins. The activities I have mentioned disclosed the fact that, though the mining industry has been in a depressed condition ever since the war, the cloud has a silver lining. It may be that the base metal industry may advance to such a degree that it may repair to some extent the depression in the gold mining industry. It will be noticed that the greatest falling off of gold production occurred in the Kalgoolie areas. Hon. members know the position there, and there is no necessity for me to enlarge upon that point. The closing down of the Golden Horseshoe mine has had a considerable effect upon our gold production. I hope that the mine will be reopened in the near future, and that the Golden Horseshoe may once more take its place as one of the largest gold-producing mines in the State. The Golden Horseshoe has been a most remarkable mine, and the State Mining Engineer considers it is still a remarkable mine. It consists of a lease covering 27 acres, from which has been produced 4,880,000 tons of ore, that was milled for a value of nearly 3,000,000 ounces, showing a return of £12,516,000. The State Mining Engineer considers that, provided the mine is worked properly in the future, there is still great wealth to be won from the 27 acres I refer to. I give those figures as an indication of the possibility of mining within a small area, and also in the hope and expectation that hon. members, realising such possibilities will extend their support and sympathy whenever the mining industry is discussed in this Chamber. The prospects on the Murchison goldfields have been brighter during the past year than for some years previously. It is pleasing to relate that the returns from Boogardie, Meekatharra, Cue, and many other centres in the Murchison have been better than for many years past.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is brighter now than for many years past.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and that also applies to Wiluna. A consider-

able sum of money was raised in London for the purpose of developing the lodes and determining the values in anticipation of the expenditure of a large sum of money in the purchase of machinery, and in developmental operations. I am glad that the development at Wiluna is taking place in a proper way, because first the value of the lode is being determined, the character of the lode, its length and dimensions, prior to any large plant being erected. I am hopeful that the development that is now taking place will result in a large sum of money being expended on the field, and that great wealth will be won from the Wiluna areas. Should that be so, we can anticipate that the gold mining industry will come into its own again.

Hon. G. Taylor: The prospects look all right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Gladstone and Sand Queen leases at Comet Vale have been taken over by Mr. Frank Moss and a company has been formed to exploit the leases. That work is now in hand. It is hoped that this important group of mines, which were closed down seven or eight years ago, will again be noted amongst the gold producers. There have been a number of good crushings recently at the Boogardie State battery. For instance, the Birthday Gift mine crushed 13 tons for 247 ozs., P.A. 1124 crushed 28½ tons for 68 ozs., and "Broken Bond" mine crushed 23¾ tons for 104 ozs. At the Meekatharra battery, P.A. 1168 crushed 9 tons for 50 ozs. At the Norseman battery 36½ tons from the Viking leases were crushed for 190 ozs. So far as the Wiluna battery is concerned, at Diorite the "Brilliant North" mine treated 100 tons for 256 ozs. over the plates, and at Corboy's Find, Gauzelli and party treated 109 tons for 424 ozs.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is that in the East Murchison district?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. At the Laverton battery, the Nil Desperandum mine treated 101 tons for 232 ozs., and at the Kookynie battery 37 tons, drawn from mines in the district, yielded 95 ozs. At Glenelg Hills, a very promising discovery has been made in one of the oldest goldfields in the State. From the Glenelg Queen lease a crushing averaged 7½ ozs. over the plates. A parcel of 12¼ tons realised 91 ozs. 7 dwts.

Mr Thomson: Let us hope the values will live down.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope so, too. I was rather struck with this particular show. I do not say I have never seen a better show, but I was struck with its consistency. When I picked over some ore and panned it off, it gave the splendid result of about 30zs. to the ton. I would rather see a return on that basis than an extraordinarily rich result, because such a return suggests consistency in values and I hope they will live down. At Westonia there has been a revival in mining activity and a new lode has been discovered on the Edna May Consols lease, where a recent crushing went 1 oz. to the ton. In all probability this will develop into a good mine and I am strengthened in my opinion because I know the holders of that lease. I am sure the property is in good hands. I have already indicated the large sums of money spent by the Government in the assistance of the mining industry. That does not represent all that the Government have done to assist in that direction. In addition to what I have already disclosed, the Government have assumed liability under the Miners' Phthisis Act and that represents a still further concession to the industry. On the establishment of the Commonwealth laboratory at Kalgoorlie, the Miners' Phthisis Act was proclaimed on the 7th September. The original Act was passed by the Mitchell Government. The present Government were not satisfied with its provisions and we introduced amending legislation that now applies to these miners. The legislation now provides, amongst other things, that the benefits conferred by the Act shall be retrospective for three months. As a result of that provision, all the miners who were employed on the 7th June, 1925, were entitled to the benefits conferred upon the men under the amending Act. That Act also provided that the obligation cast upon the Government of finding work for tubercular miners should be continuous while they could work, and that provision should be made for the tubercular miner when he could no longer work. Provision was also made for the maintenance of the miner's family. The examination of the miners on the goldfields has been completed and I can give hon. members the result of the complete examination. The total number of men examined was 4,017, including four at Wooroloo. The examination disclosed that 140 of the men

were suffering from tuberculosis, including four prospectors, one mine manager and part owner of a mine, and four men at the sanatorium who come under the provisions of the Act. The men at the sanatorium were examined by Dr. Mitchell and not by the Commonwealth doctors. There was also one other man who comes under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. The number of men suffering from miners' phthisis is: in the early stages, 459; in advanced stages, 183. Thus there are 642 men suffering from the disease out of a total of 4,017 men examined. These are exclusive of the 140 men suffering from tuberculosis.

Mr. Thomson: Have those 642 men been taken out of the mines?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, they represent the total who have been found suffering from miners' phthisis in the early and advanced stages. All the tubercular men are being provided for under the scale of compensation arranged by the Government and it is operating satisfactorily.

Mr. Heron: Can you say how many men have been found unemployed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have only just received the final report to which I have referred. It is the latest one to hand and, of course, in some of the mines on the Murchison no provision has been made, because the notices have not yet been posted. Employment has been found for 23 men and some are employed at Crawley. They are being paid through the Miners' Compensation Fund. The balance have been temporarily employed. There are a number who cannot be employed at all and, unfortunately, 17 have died.

Hon. G. Taylor: Died since the examination?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, since the examination began. Provision has been made for their wives and families.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was dealing with the results of the examination of the miners. Some criticism has been directed against the Government by the member for Mt. Margaret who quoted at great length an article that appeared in the Kalgoorlie "Sun" of the 31st January last. I shall not quote from the article

because nearly 12 months have elapsed since the article was written, and all the doubts he professes to have in his mind have been cleared up in the meantime. He reviewed the whole history of the agitation on the goldfields from the time the article appeared in the "Sun," and to some of his remarks exception can be taken. The agitation was not remarkable; the agitation did not begin in the "Sun" newspaper; it began in the "Kalgoorlie Miner." The one object of the article was to stampede the miners by conveying to them other than the truth. There is no doubt that the whole thing was political propaganda and that those associated with the propaganda against the Government did not desire to speak the truth regarding the Miners' Phthisis Act. If exception is taken to my remark I shall proceed to prove it. The Miners' Phthisis Act was introduced by Mr. Scaddan when he was Minister for Mines in the Mitchell Government. It was amended by the present Government because it was defective inasmuch as it gave the miners very few advantages. To put it plainly Mr. Scaddan's Act merely provided to give a man a job in place of the job the department had taken from him. It provided that when the miners were examined, those suffering from tuberculosis were debarred from working in the mines again, and the Mines Department having debarred them from working should find another job for them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was the whole responsibility.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They had to pay the men until work was found for them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Until the department found them a job the Government had to pay them the full rate of wages. Immediately a job was found for a man, he had to take it, provided the principal medical officer said the job was suitable for him. If he did not take it, the payment ceased. If he could not do the job the payment ceased. If he lost his job the payment ceased, and no provision was made for the man who could not work, or for his wife or dependants. The Leader of the Opposition knows the position well, because when the amending Bill was introduced by me in this House, he approved of it and gave the measure his cordial support. It is not to be considered for a moment that the Leader of the Opposition

would approve of a Bill that was worse than the Act that preceded it. He would not approve of amending a statute that would take away something already granted to the men. When the measure reached the Upper House, Mr. Dodd congratulated the Government on the amendment. Yet despite the approval of the Leader of the Opposition and despite the congratulations of Mr. Dodd, other members in the Upper House, Mr. Cornell, Mr. Seddon, and Mr. Harris, and later on in the Press Mr. Dodd attacked the Government, alleging that they had taken away from the miners benefits provided under Mr. Scaddan's measure. I have heard of political propaganda in the past, but I do not think there has been anything so unfair as that on the eastern goldfields. The Upper House elections were approaching. Both Mr. Kirwan, who was seeking re-election for the South Province, and Mr. Harris, who was recontesting the North-East Province, were being opposed. The Bill was introduced in December. It was introduced hastily because the Government found that the Act gave very few benefits. The Bill passed the third reading on the 18th December, 1925, and on the 23rd December of the same year there appeared an article in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" headed "Miners' Phthisis." Then it proceeded, "The 'Daily News' writes," etc. The "Daily News" reporter in the gallery had given a review of the Parliamentary proceedings, and the "Kalgoorlie Miner" published his comments together with an addendum conveying an impression that was utterly untrue and mischievous. The report in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" stated—

On Thursday the Bill was re-committed and Mr. Seddon moved an amendment to make it obligatory to continue paying compensation to a miner after he had been declared unfit for employment. The views of Mr. Seddon were supported by Messrs. Harris, Cornell, Ewing, and others, whilst Messrs. Hickey and Moore opposed the motion. As the debate was proceeding, Dr. Saw moved the "gag" in the form that "the motion be now put." The motion excited the indignation of Mr. Seddon, Mr. Cornell, Mr. Harris, Mr. Ewing and others, but the Standing Orders did not allow of their discussing the gagging proposal, and it was carried. The Chief Secretary, Mr. Hickey, and all the Government supporters and a number of city and rural members not interested in miners' phthisis voted for stopping discussion. Mr. Seddon then remarked that as the discussion was not allowed to proceed, he must withdraw his motion. This was agreed to, and the Bill was thus forced through without amendment.

The "Kalgoorlie Miner" published all that as if it was portion of the "Daily News" article, whereas it was not. Portion of it comprised the ordinary comment of the "Daily News" reporter, but the latter portion was a concoction by the "Kalgoorlie Miner" itself. It sought to convey to the people of the goldfields that that was the opinion of an impartial paper on the coast not concerned in a goldfields matter. That is what I call depraved journalism. It is that type of journalism which excites derision and contempt. That was the beginning of the whole of the agitation at Kalgoorlie and it was begun for the one purpose of securing the re-election of Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Harris. The "Kalgoorlie Sun," an opposition paper, later published a leading article. That is the article to which the member for Mt. Margaret referred.

Hon. G. Taylor: I read only a portion of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Miners' Phthisis Act Amendment Bill was agreed to only at the end of December and the article in the "Kalgoorlie Sun" was published in January, just a month later. I doubt if the Bill had then been assented to by the Governor. The Government had not had time to decide what compensation should be paid to the miners because the holidays had intervened, and yet this attack was made on me and on the Government. That also was political propaganda, part of the election game. The member for Mt. Margaret knows it was political propaganda and nothing but political propaganda.

Hon. G. Taylor: I did not see the "Kalgoorlie Miner" article.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member knows all about it.

Hon. G. Taylor: I saw only the "Sun" article.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I did my best to follow up what was nothing else than a lie. Mr. Cornell, Mr. Harris and Mr. Seddon particularly did their best to misrepresent the position and were aided by the "Kalgoorlie Miner," which published for the purpose of political propaganda, column after column of their statements to the effect that the Government had taken away from the miners the right to full wages provided in Mr. Scaddan's measure. Thereupon I went to the Solicitor General and said to him, "You have drafted both Bills; you have put into legal language the desires of the former Government and those of the

present Government. I now wish you to explain the intention of both measures." Despite the denial of the Solicitor General contained in his replies, which were published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner," Mr. Seddon and Mr. Harris in particular still propagated the untrue statements that had been made from time to time. Even Mr. Cornell, at Coolgardie during the elections, reiterated a statement that was utterly untrue. I do not exempt the suave Hon. Mr. Kirwan from his share of the blame. His paper started the agitation by publishing an article alleged to have appeared in a Perth newspaper, whereas it had not appeared in that paper, and also propagated untrue statements made concerning the amending Bill. I have already said that Mr. Scaddan's measure provided jobs for the men from whom the Mines Department had taken their jobs by prohibiting their employment in the mines, and until other jobs were found for them they were to be paid the full rate of wages. That was the end of the Government's obligation. If a man fell sick the day after, the Government had no obligation. There was no obligation beyond finding him his first job.

Mr. Thomson: Surely a man who worked only one day would not be treated like that?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That was the legal position.

Mr. Davy: It depended upon the report of the medical officer, did it not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was for the medical officer to say whether the man was fit for the job. Once a job was found, even if the man became unfit subsequently, the Government had no further obligation. We amended the Act, whereupon the "Kalgoorlie Miner" very shrewdly and cunningly published the speeches made in the Upper House by Messrs. Cornell, Harris, Seddon and Dodd—speeches that merely misrepresented the facts. The "Miner" was very shrewd about it. It stated that Mr. Kirwan was in the Chair, as much as to say that if he had not been in the Chair, he would have taken the same stand as the others took.

Mr. Panton: He would not have been in the Chair during the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The "Kalgoorlie Miner" did not publish the true facts. They published what Mr. Cornell, Mr. Seddon and Mr. Harris said about the Bill, alleging theirs were the facts and nothing else. That did not convey anything

in regard to the real intention of the Bill. I put certain questions to Mr. Sayer, the Solicitor General, in order that the people should know the facts concerning both Bills. I put these questions to Mr. Sayer and he replied as follows:—

1. Question: In order to clear up any misapprehension which may have arisen because of the passage of the amending Miners' Phthisis Act, I should like to have your opinion on the principles embodied in the two measures. It has been stated by Messrs. Dodd, Cornell, Harris, and Seddon that the Miners' Phthisis Amendment Act of 1925 constituted a breach of faith in that it reduced compensation payable to the T.B. miner from full rates of pay to the rates payable under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Is this contention correct? Answer: In my opinion the contention is not correct, for the reasons stated in the answers to the following questions.

2. Question: What did the Miners' Phthisis Act of 1922 provide? Answer: That miners actually employed in mining operations who, as the result of the enforcement of the Act, were excluded from such employment, must have other suitable employment found for them; and until other suitable employment was found they had the right to claim compensation equal to the wages they might have earned at the work from which they were excluded.

3. Question: If, after employment was found for the T.B. miner he lost such employment, was there still an obligation on the part of the Government to find him further employment or pay him compensation? Answer: The obligation of the Government was to find other suitable employment in lieu of that employment from which the miner was excluded, and when found once and offered to such prohibited miner, the Government's duty was performed and its obligation ceased.

4. Question: If the T.B. miner fell ill or was unable to follow any employment, was the Government required to pay any compensation to him or to his dependants? Answer: The section in question provided for the case of miners actually engaged in mining operations and excluded from such employment as the result of the Act being brought into operation. The obligation of the Government was to find suitable employment once. The Act made no provision at all for sufferers unable to work at any employment, or for their dependants.

5. Question: What are the obligations of the Government under the amending Miners' Phthisis Act introduced and passed last session by the present Government? Answer: By the amending Act the duty to find other suitable employment is made a continuing obligation. So long as the prohibited miner is able and willing to undertake other suitable employment, it must be found for him, and unless and until found, compensation is payable at the rate of wages he would have earned had his employment not been prohibited. And further, in the case of a prohibited miner being unable to engage in any employment at all, the right is conferred upon him to claim from the Department of Mines compensation not less than as prescribed by the scale of relief in force at the commence-

ment of the Act under the rules of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, Incorporated.

6. Question: What does the amending Act provide for the T.B. miner who cannot work at all? Answer: As stated in the answer to the last preceding question.

7. Question: Does that mean that the Government may pay more than the amount provided under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund? Answer: Yes. The obligation of the Government is to pay not less than as prescribed by that scale of relief. It would, for example, be in the discretion of the Department of Mines to grant compensation equal to what would be recoverable if the prohibited miner was suffering from an industrial disease giving rise to a claim under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Despite these convincing statements from the Solicitor General, these persons, Messrs. Cornell, Seddon and Harris, still engaged in the propaganda of making untrue statements on the goldfields and in the Press. The tragedy of the whole thing is that these untrue statements caused a great deal of distrust and confusion on the goldfields. They started a feeling of uneasiness amongst the affected men. These statements were wilfully made in order to get an advantage at the elections. The feelings of the unfortunate sufferers were exploited in order that Mr. Harris and Mr. Kirwan might win their elections. It was the most depraved propaganda I have ever come across. One would imagine that these gentlemen would at least have accepted the opinions of the Solicitor General, but they would not do so. I admit the "Kalgoorlie Miner" published details of the Acts in both cases, but with the knowledge, as the member for West Perth knows, that very few men understand the phrasing of an Act of Parliament. The ordinary man does not understand the language and interpretation of an Act of Parliament. In a pretence of fairness the newspaper published what its readers could not understand, but at the same time continued the propaganda of making untrue statements which, as the member for Mt. Margaret said, created such confusion and unrest on the goldfields.

Hon. G. Taylor: The articles did it.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: For that purpose they were published. I sent to the "Kalgoorlie Miner" for publication the statements of the Solicitor General, but Mr. Seddon, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Cornell continued their attacks. I understand that Mr. Seddon is an extraordinarily pious man—so he claims—but he had no hesitation in wiring untrue statements and implying that the Solicitor General's opinion was not correct.

Hon. G. Taylor: When did you send up the Solicitor General's opinion?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite early in the year I wrote to the "Kalgoorlie Miner" and placed the facts before them. I pointed out that the Leader of the Opposition had not only welcomed the Bill but had cordially supported it. I also stated that Mr. Dodd had congratulated the Government for bringing down the Bill, and they would not have done that had the Bill taken something away from the miners that they had obtained under Mr. Scaddan's measure. It is noticeable that Mr. Scaddan did not interfere in the controversy. I suppose he was approached in the matter. Dr. Saw was also approached. It was published that Dr. Saw had applied the gag otherwise amendments would have been moved to the Bill. Dr. Saw took part in the controversy in order to testify to the good intention of his political friends, and if their intention was good it is difficult to comprehend why he gagged them. I sent the Solicitor General's opinion to the "Kalgoorlie Miner" as well as the full text of the Bill on the 9th January, 1926. Despite this the propaganda continued up to the day of the elections.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not think you should reflect on members of another place.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not a reflection. It is merely stating that they were not telling the truth. It is reasonable that Dr. Saw moved to apply the gag because he knew there was nothing in their contentions. I published the Solicitor General's statement in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" on the 6th February. Mr. Seddon again replied. With regard to Mr. Sayer's statement he wrote "The whole criticism turned on the bringing in of a reduced rate for the incapacitated men. That is what Mr. Troy's Bill does, and all his camouflage cannot alter the facts." He said this in face of the denial contained in the Solicitor General's statements.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When was the first offer made?

The Premier: The offer that was made is what we are paying to-day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: On the 8th February the Premier addressed a public meeting in Kalgoorlie.

The Premier: In the presence of Mr. Harris and Mr. Cornell, but both were silent throughout.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Dodd took part in the controversy on the 11th. I was rather surprised to read his remarks in the controversy, but undoubtedly he was out to extricate his friends. His letter is not creditable. Mr. Cornell returned to the attack on the 5th March, after all his explanations and statements. Speaking at Coolgardie just prior to the elections, Mr. Cornell reiterated the charges he had previously made, about the Government having taken away from the miners something they possessed under Mr. Scaddan's Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: When did you commence payments under the 1925 Bill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That does not matter. We are not discussing the payments, but the Bill. The Commonwealth Laboratory had not concluded its work, in fact had only just begun it. The amending Bill was brought in at the end of the session. The Government found as the examinations were being conducted, that Mr. Scaddan's Bill did not meet their requirements. As members know, the Bill was amended. At the end of the year, just prior to the adjournment, the Bill passed its third reading in another place. The agitation started on the fields in December, because of an article that appeared in the "Kalgoorlie Miner." The Government had no opportunity of fixing the rates they desired to pay by way of compensation under the Miners' Phthisis Act. The holidays intervened. A scale of compensation was, however, in course of preparation. At the earliest possible moment the Government announced the scale of compensation. We were unable immediately to fix the scale, because we were looking up the compensation payments in other countries under similar conditions, namely the South African compensation and the Broken Hill compensation in New South Wales. We desired that the Commonwealth Government should not escape their obligations under the Invalid Pensions Act. We wanted an agreement from the Commonwealth that any amount we paid as compensation to a miner and his dependants would not be taken into consideration in calculating his income for the invalid pension. The Commonwealth Government had agreed that with respect to the Mines Accident Relief Fund in New South Wales they would not calculate as income any amount received from the fund. But we were not allowed to make any arrangement with the Common-

wealth. We were asked immediately to fix the scale of compensation before negotiations could be concluded and long before the whole of the miners had been examined. The Government were given very little time in which to do this work. The article in the "Kalgoorlie Sun" was the usual kind of propaganda. It picked out one man, and said that he was in poor and needy circumstances, and the Government did not care.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the statement of the "Sun" that this man was living on a few shillings a week a true statement?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That money did not come from the compensation fund. It came from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. The miners' compensation was fixed up and paid later. The hon. member says there was great agitation on the fields. There was. I am not going to say that some interested people on the fields did not contribute to the agitation.

Hon. G. Taylor: There was a deal of excitement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course. How could it be otherwise when persons of that type wanted to exploit the affliction of a section of the goldfields community? These men were affected by the examination; they were T.B. men. All the propaganda conveyed to them that the present Government had taken from them something they had received recently. There was no attempt on the part of those who started the agitation, to clear the matter up. They desired, not the truth, but an atmosphere for the election. They got it. However, I do not think it will do them much good as individuals. The member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) said I went to Kalgoorlie and told the men there that the Government did not know what they wanted, but that now I knew what they wanted I would take it back to Cabinet. Where did the hon. member get that statement? Where did he see it?

Hon. G. Taylor: I got it out of the "Worker" newspaper.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I doubt it.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have the paper here.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I made no such statement. I addressed the meeting at Boulder and told the men—

Hon. G. Taylor: I will read the statement to you again.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not a statement of mine. The member for Kalgoorlie (Hon. J. Cunningham) was on the platform with me, and he knows. I told the men that the compensation had not been finalised, but that the question would go to Cabinet, and that I could give no information until Cabinet had decided. I do not care what appears in the Press. That is the statement I made in the Boulder Town Hall in the presence of the member for Kalgoorlie. The matter was under consideration.

Hon. W. J. George: You are not the only Minister who has been misrepresented by the Press.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This misrepresentation did not do me the slightest injury.

Hon. W. J. George: No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The misrepresentation did, however, sorely try a lot of afflicted people on the goldfields. The propaganda was for the purpose of exploiting the electors.

Hon. W. J. George: That sort of thing is done.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: As a matter of fact, at the very time when I was in Kalgoorlie I had submitted to Cabinet a basis on which compensation should be paid. Later on, with slight alterations, that compensation was agreed upon. The member for Mt. Margaret further expressed his doubt as to the legality of the payment. He said—

If, however, the Government went out of office, another Government might view the matter in a different light. They might cease to make the payments, and give the men what they considered the correct amount due to them. That was not a proper position for Parliament to allow.

Those are the hon. member's words.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is also a statement Mr. Harris and Mr. Cornell have made.

Hon. G. Taylor: I know nothing about them.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What occurs to me is, what is the hon. member afraid of? Has he no faith in his own party? If the present Government go out of office, his party will come in. I am indeed surprised that Mr. Harris and the hon. member should dread a change of Government, because of the risk that the compensation will not then be paid. I do not agree with them. I say the compensa-

tion will be paid no matter what Government may assume office. The Solicitor General has stated that the payments are quite legal under the Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: I question that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We are making the payments.

Hon. G. Taylor: I want you to do it by statute.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of whom is the hon. member afraid? Why is he afraid that the payments will not be made?

Hon. G. Taylor: It should be in a statute. Then the people would know where they were, and that excitement in January would not have occurred.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member did nothing to abate the excitement, not in the slightest degree. That excitement was engendered for a purpose. Immediately the election was over, the propaganda ceased and we heard no more about it. In my opinion the payments are quite legal. As a matter of fact, the words "not less" were put into the Act for the purpose of giving the Government a basis on which to build up a scale of payment. If the Government had decided that the men must receive a certain rate, that rate would have been fixed in the Act. But the Act said "not less," and thus allowed the Government to pay the amount now paid. Any Government must be allowed time to draw up a scale of payments. The necessary time was not, however, allowed to the present Government. The Commonwealth Government are not paying these men the amount of the invalid pension. The Miners' Phthisis Board insisted that the T.B. men should apply to the Commonwealth Government for the invalid pension. But now the Commonwealth Government are reconsidering and re-hearing all the applications made by T.B. miners getting the invalid pension, and because of the payments we are making are cutting out the invalid pension. In New South Wales, on the other hand, the fact that a person is receiving money from the Miners' Accident Fund there is not taking into consideration by the Commonwealth Government when paying the invalid pension. The same position does not obtain in Western Australia, because the Government here were compelled to initiate the payments without having an opportunity to conclude nego-

tiations with the Commonwealth and to arrange for them to pay the invalid pension. In consequence, the Government of Western Australia are now compelled to make up the invalid pension, thus relieving the Federal Government of a just responsibility. That was not due to this side of the Chamber, but due to propaganda from another quarter. Thus the Commonwealth will escape their just liability under the Invalid Pensions Act in regard to all our T.B. men.

Mr. Thomson: Are you still negotiating with the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commonwealth Government have turned the proposition down. We have had correspondence with that Government in which we have asked them not to assess our payments as income, and they have refused our request.

Mr. Thomson: And they are paying it in New South Wales?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Any payment received by a miner under the Miners' Accident Fund of New South Wales is not regarded as income by the Commonwealth Government when assessing his income for the payment of invalid pension. Probably that would have applied here equally if the State Government had had an opportunity to obtain the Commonwealth Government's consent prior to initiating the payments.

Mr. Thomson: Do the New South Wales miners get the same compensation as ours?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: A little less. Our compensation is the highest in Australia.

The Premier: The highest in the world.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think it is the highest in the world. Hon. members will be interested to know what our compensation is. In the case of a T.B. miner unable to work it is half wages, and £1 a week for his wife, and 8s. 6d. a week for each child under 16. Further, if he has a mother or a father dependent upon him he is allowed £1 a week for the mother or father. If he has a sister or a brother under the age of 16 years and can prove that they are dependants, he is allowed 8s. 6d. each for them as if they were his children. That is the position when he can work no longer. If he should die, the compensation to the wife is raised from £1 per week to £2 per week, and the same rate is paid to his dependants as was paid when he was on half wages.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You certainly should provide for that by Act of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I ask hon. members opposite, and particularly those who have condemned the Government so severely over the amending measure, what they were doing all the years when they were in office, and what they were doing when Mr. Scaddan passed his amending Act, which gave no compensation beyond a job to the man whose job was taken from him.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It gave him wages until he got a job. Immediately he got the job, there was not further compensation. If he could not work any more he was thrown on the scrap heap. There was not a penny of compensation provided for him or his family. If the Leader of the Opposition wants more information as to why Mr. Scaddan did not do more, I will show him the file containing a report of a deputation from Kalgoorlie to Mr. Scaddan. If members opposite desired justice done, why did they not do it when Mr. Scaddan had his Bill before the Chamber? Why did they not raise their voices then on behalf of the men? During all the years they were in office they did nothing; but now an amending Bill is brought forward—supported, I admit, very cordially by the Leader of the Opposition—members in another place resort to the most unfair misrepresentation. In this respect I have not a word to say about any member of this Chamber. I have never heard any member of this Chamber either indulging in propaganda or supporting it. I am now referring to members of another place, who undoubtedly stirred up this propaganda on the goldfields and knew they were not telling the truth.

The Premier: As regards the rate of compensation, the maximum in all cases is the basic wage in the district.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have appointed a Miners' Phthisis Board, who review all cases; and if it happens that a man has a large family under the age of 16 years—instances are known of a man having eight children under that age—and if, in consequence, the payment is insufficient, the board have power to award more. I give these facts to the Committee because I agree with the member for Mt. Margaret that there was very strong feeling on the goldfields,

all due to despicable propaganda in defiance of the truth. That propaganda would not have arisen but for the fact that a Legislative Council election was in progress. It began by the "Kalgoorlie Miner" publishing an alleged report taken from the "Daily News." It was not a report at all, but portion of a "Daily News" article, plus the "Miner's" addition to it. That portion of it never appeared in the "Daily News" at all.

Hon. W. J. George: Journalistic forgery.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was a most unscrupulous type of journalism, the standard of our distinguished friend who presides over another Chamber. However, I think the people of Kalgoorlie have discovered the truth, and I do not think they will be deceived again. I am surprised at some of the criticism of the actions of the Government. The other day I read a statement in the "Mining World," a copy of which was sent to the Premier by the Agent General. This is the sort of criticism published:—

The Government, with its new legislation on tuberculosis and silicosis (miners' complaint, or dust on the lungs), and its consequent insurance scheme at seven guineas per cent. premium, will put the kybosh on gold mining in Western Australia. Every man who has been diagnosed by the doctors of the Commonwealth laboratory to have T.B. has been compulsorily retired, and every man who has been diagnosed as having S.C. has been circularised to the effect that he had better retire, before it is too late! Practically, every underground and shift boss on the Golden Mile has received the circular, and should they all elect to resign, the mines would be left without competent heads. Such men might live for years as underground bosses, but they are all short-winded and totally unfit to wield a pick, navvying or farming. It is a case of "put a beggar on horseback, and he will ride to the devil." The Labour Government of New South Wales, as well as of Western Australia, has passed the legislation that all employers of labour must insure their employees against all accidents and vocational diseases with the Government insurance branch at fancy premium rates, and the upshot will be general ruin of industries of all sorts.

That is the criticism of a person resident in Kalgoorlie. Of course it does a great deal of harm to Western Australia, inasmuch as it alarms the investing public. The insurance rates charged are not fancy premiums at all. However, that matter has been discussed already, and so members know the facts. There has been on the fields and in the Press propaganda regarding the payment of compensation under the amended Workers'

Compensation Act. The Government have taken the men out of the mines, but this Kalgoorlie writer says in effect, "Do not take the men out of the mines; let them stay there and rot."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is a London writer, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, he is a Kalgoorlie writer.

The Minister for Lands: He is one of the few people I should like to see deported.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He is certainly the Kalgoorlie correspondent of this English publication. In addition to granting assistance to mining, the Government have borne the whole of the compensation to tubercular men taken out of the mines. The propaganda now is that the Government must pay all the insurance under workers' compensation as well. It is urged that the insurance should be paid from Consolidated Revenue. Amongst those foremost in condemning the Government are Mr. Lloyd Pascoe and Mr. Edgar Harris, M.L.C.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not Mr. Williams, I hope.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. Nearly all those supporting this propaganda are the same persons who indulged in bitter criticism regarding the Miners' Phthisis Act. They now urge that compensation shall be paid out of Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No premiums to be paid by the employer?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. This statement appeared in the "West Australian" as the statement of one of those persons—

This languishing industry should not be called upon to bear this burden of liability which has been accruing since mining started. Miners' phthisis patients should be dismissed from the mines and compensated from the Consolidated Revenue like the tuberculosis cases, then the insurance could be started on a sound basis with a clean sheet. This point had been made by Mr. Montgomery, State Mining Engineer, in notes appended to the Cornell report. A languishing industry could not afford the additional burden of the premiums under this Act. The whole State had benefited by the industry, and the whole State should pay the necessary recompense to incapacitated miners from the Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Stewart also suggested that compensation in these cases should come from Consolidated Revenue, as in respect to tuberculosis under the Miner's Phthisis Act. Mr. Edgar Harris, M.L.C., also supports the

opposition to the Government method of insurance. As evidence of the manner in which this propaganda is carried on, I found that Councillor Charles Elliott, secretary of the Leaseholders and Prospectors' Association, stated this as published in the "West Australian"—

Prospectors and tributers are landed with an extra 8s. 10d. weekly for every man employed. They cannot carry on, unless their prospect is unusually good. Miners, realising that unemployment and distress must follow, condemn the Act to a man, and owners are talking of a general shut down.

Allegedly he goes on to say:—

As to the Miners' Phthisis Act, a mate of mine was taken out with tuberculosis, and while drawing compensation he agreed to go prospecting, as it was open air work. He spent time and money, and was told on returning to Kalgoorlie that the Phthisis Board had stopped his allowance for good. Another man, bookmaking in the streets, draws full allowance: and dozens are hanging around the public house corners. Is that good for the men or for the country? The whole working of these clauses is rotten, and detrimental to the industry and to the men's own interests. Compensation should have been allowed years ago, but now the industry cannot stand the strain. Parliament must find another way of compensating the afflicted men.

I wrote to Mr. Elliott putting to him certain questions. He replied to me and I then wrote to the "West Australian" setting out his reply. But I have not yet seen that article published. This is the article that I sent to the paper, which in the first instance published Mr. Elliott's alleged statement—

Some little time ago criticism was levelled on the goldfields against the operation and administration of the Workers' Compensation and Miners' Phthisis Acts. Statements were made by Messrs. Edgar Harris, M.L.C., Lloyd Pascoe, and a few others whose criticism can be dismissed as merely political propaganda. Their want of genuineness is evidenced by the fact that they never made any attempt during all the years past to bring in the ameliorative measures introduced by the present Government, but were always found supporting and voting with the party opposed to such measures. Amongst the later critics is Councillor Chas. Elliott, secretary of the Kalgoorlie Leaseholders and Prospectors' Association. Mr. Elliott stated—"Regarding the operations of the Miners' Phthisis Act, a mate of his was taken out of the mine with tuberculosis, and whilst drawing compensation he agreed to go prospecting, as it was open air work. He spent time and money, and was told on returning to Kalgoorlie that the Phthisis Board had stopped his allowance for good. Another man bookmaking in the street draws full allowance, and dozens are hanging around public house corners. He said the whole working of the clause was rotten, and a detriment to the industry

and to the men's interests." Mr. Elliott was written to, and his attention drawn to the published statement, and asked—(1) Who was the mate to whom he referred? (2) How much time and money was spent by him on prospecting when the allowance was stopped for good? (3) Who informed him the Miners' Phthisis Board had stopped the allowance for good? (4) The name of the person who was book-making whilst drawing full allowance? (5) The names of—say—one dozen of those beneficiaries under the Miners' Phthisis Act who were hanging around public house corners? Mr. Elliott has replied that the mate referred to was Mr. J. Richards, who had applied and been accepted as a member of a prospecting party under the advisory board's control. Being in receipt of the prospecting allowance for the district, he thought it unjust that his miner's phthisis allowance at the rate of £5 per week should be stopped. Mr. Elliott states he did not say the allowance had been stopped for good, and as for the rest of the report in connection with the bookmakers, etc., he disclaimed all responsibility. I immediately arranged that the Miners' Phthisis Board should sit at Kalgoorlie and deal with Mr. Richard's case, and the board—inter alia—has reported as follows:—"Mr. Elliott was also present at the interview and was confronted with the statement appearing in the 'West Australian' of the 12th inst., and replied, 'That is a distortion, and the man who wrote it is a rotten liar. I did not say his compensation had been stopped for good, or that a man was book-making in the streets, and others hanging around hotel corners. Others were present when the reporter was there, and someone else must have said it.'"

Mr. D'Arcy, a member of the Phthisis Board, said he thought Mr. Elliott should correct the statement made in the Press, to which Mr. Elliott replied that he had written an explanation to the "West Australian" and the Minister. Not having seen any reference to Mr. Elliott's letter in the "West Australian," in order to do justice to him I submit the explanation tendered.

I have never seen that published in the "West Australian." This report went to the people who, he knew, would spread the propaganda he wanted, but when it was suggested to him that he should say who supplied the information to the reporter he said the man who wrote it was a rotten liar. It is now urged that in addition to all the assistance rendered to the industry the Government must pay compensation for industrial diseases out of Consolidated Revenue. In 1912 an attempt was made by a former Labour Government to provide compensation for afflicted miners under the Workers' Compensation Act. The Bill passed this House, but was defeated in another place by one vote. The mining industry was then in a flourishing condition. Now it is said it is not fair to ask the industry to pay these rates, because the industry is languishing. But the industry has

escaped all these intervening years, and since 1912 has paid dividends to the value of £5,507,000. As I say, an attempt was made in this House to put up provision for the conditions existing to-day, but was defeated in another place.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why was it not put up, again in the following year?

The Premier: We started then with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. We had to do something.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a sad thing that no provision was made for these men when so much money was paid by the mines in dividends. Provision was not made by the mines to create reserves. Now these people are opposing the action of the Government and declaring that the State must pay the compensation because they cannot afford to do so. Since 1912 the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines alone, paid dividends amounting to £4,430,000, and to-day despite the undoubted opportunity possessed by the mine managers at Kalgoorlie, the Chamber of Mines stands indicted not only for evading their responsibility towards the men employed in the industry, but also for neglecting to provide for the future in regard to the working of the properties under their control.

The Premier: At that time they sent a circular to every member, and it was their influence that brought about the defeat of the Bill in the Council.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I now wish to say we realise the present position of the industry, that it is not as promising as we would like to have it. I am satisfied that something very drastic will have to be done, particularly at the Kalgoorlie field. The Government have intimated that they will not shirk their responsibility, but any attempt to alleviate the position will be futile unless the mining companies are in agreement, and are prepared to spend the necessary money to prosecute development work and to re-establish their plants. In addition to the development of ore reserves, the cost of treatment will have to be reduced, and as I have already intimated to the House, the oil flotation process holds out the best possibilities in that regard. The Government have already spent a considerable sum of money in endeavouring to re-suscitate the industry. One cannot help but feel that if the position is grasped by the directors of the mining companies, and the management of the mines, the mining in-

dustry has many years of life ahead of it. Before I conclude I desire to inform the House that for some time the question of the reorganisation of the Mines Department has been under consideration. I might have made changes soon after I assumed the control of the department, but my desire was first of all to find my feet and to learn exactly what the changes would mean. There have been several retirements recently, and these will permit of the reconstruction of the whole of the department. The reconstruction is now in progress. The State Mining Engineer (Mr. Montgomery), who has given great service to the State, and also the Government Geologist (Mr. Gibb Maitland), who has given equal service, have reached the retiring age. Mr. Greenard, the Inspector of Mines at Kalgoorlie, has also retired, and the position of Chief Inspector of Machinery will be abolished. The inspection of machinery branch of the department will in future be controlled by the State Mining Engineer. The Government have decided to call for applications for the position of State Mining Engineer, and the salary offered will be £1,500 a year. The salary paid at the present time is £852, whilst the Government Geologist also receives a similar amount. The Chief Inspector of Machinery has been paid £708, and Mr. Greenard £504. These salaries total nearly £3,000. Advertisements are to be inserted in the South African and British newspapers, as well as the Australian papers, inviting applications for the position of State Mining Engineer at the salary I mentioned.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will one man do all the work?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He will administer the department, and we hope to be able to get a man of outstanding ability, who will be able to give good service to the State. Mr. Howe, in addition to the duties as superintendent of State batteries, has taken over the work of inspection of machinery, and when the new appointment is made the branches of the department will be properly allocated. The Government have advanced large sums of money to assist the mining companies, and as Minister I am not satisfied with the manner in which that money has been spent. It is no use giving doles merely to enable companies to carry on for a month or so without any definite programme, and so it is my desire to see at the head of the technical staff—I am not speaking disparagingly of the work that has

already been done by the officers who have retired—a man who will set a definite programme. This should be the work of an officer who knows exactly what ought to be done. When Mr. Kingsley Thomas was here I consulted him with regard to securing the services of such a man, and he told me that we very badly needed a man of that type. He assured me that he would do his best to recommend someone of the type required, provided there was sufficient inducement in the shape of a reasonable salary. I hope that the salary we are offering will result in our securing the services of a man possessing the highest qualifications. When we have this officer, any money that may be advanced by the Government will be advanced in accordance with a definite programme of development. We shall have someone in charge of the expenditure who will see that the development is carried out. At the present time we pay the piper, and the people to whom we lend the money largely call the tune. In future if we give any assistance in connection with the reconstruction of the industry, we shall try to see that the money is expended on a definite basis, and in connection with a scheme of development. If it is necessary to re-establish and to equip a plant, that also must be a definite part of the programme, and we must see that not one penny goes from the State unless the people who get it are prepared to agree to our conditions. In that way we should get better results than we have had in the past. I hope that the appointment by the Federal Government of a technical committee will prove beneficial to the industry. I trust that that committee will be able to report in a way that will induce the Commonwealth Government to assist in the reconstruction of the mines in Kalgoorlie and the goldfields of Western Australia. As a result of a conversation I had with that committee, I think they are seized with the necessity for adopting drastic measures. Perhaps "drastic" is not the word to use; I should say that they will be fully informed regarding the necessity for recommending means by which the industry will be resuscitated.

Hon. G. Taylor: Can you give us any idea as to the course that will be followed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; I regret that the committee have not had time to give attention to the whole of the mining industry in Western Australia. Their inquiries have been confined to Kalgoorlie. They are not here to talk about the gold

bonus; they have devoted all their time to an investigation of the Golden Mile, and I hope the result will be that the Commonwealth Government will assist the industry which is embarrassed by the Federal tariff. I hope that when the Commonwealth consult the State, a scheme of reconstruction will be submitted and that a definite programme will result, a programme that will have the effect of reviving the mining industry in Western Australia. I have pleasure in submitting the Estimates of the Mines Department.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [8.41]: Before proceeding with my few remarks about the Mining Estimates I would like to clear up a misunderstanding. The Minister has made a discovery about which I know nothing. When I spoke on the Budget, I was careful not to quote from any Press article other than one from the "Sun" newspaper which was printed on the 24th January last. Then I quoted from the "Worker" newspaper to make sure that certain statements were correct. I find that the Minister denies these statements that I quoted from the "Worker." When I said I had quoted them from that newspaper he said that he doubted it. I have the "Worker" newspaper here and the position is beyond all doubt just as I stated it. Feeling was running high on the goldfields. A meeting had been called at Boulder at which, the "Worker" said, the Minister for Mines delivered an address. That newspaper also said that there were present Mr. Munsie, Honorary Minister for Health; Mr. Cunningham, Honorary Minister for Water Supply; Mr. Lambert, M.L.A.; Mr. Walker, M.L.A., and Mr. J. R. Brown, M.L.C., and the Minister for Mines was reported as having made the statement which I quoted. Three columns of it were published, and when I spoke previously I quoted certain passages to show that the Government did not really know what they were going to do under the Act that had been passed. I quoted the Minister's own words as reported in the Government's official organ.

The Minister for Mines: The Government had not had time to decide at that date.

HON. G. TAYLOR: That is not what the Minister said. The Minister said—

It was necessary to know what they wanted before they would be dealt with.

This was at the meeting where the Government were attacked, where feeling ran high,

where the Minister called someone a liar and the chairman, Mr. C. B. Williams, told the Minister that under Parliamentary rules he would have to withdraw, and compelled him to withdraw. Is not that so?

The Minister for Mines: No.

HON. G. TAYLOR: No? That was told me by people who were there.

The Premier: That happened at a later meeting.

HON. G. TAYLOR: Undoubtedly feeling ran high at that meeting. However, I made no statements; I quoted from the Press what the Minister had been reported as saying. The report also contains the following:—

It was necessary to know what they wanted before they could be dealt with, and he had before Cabinet a recommendation to immediately give the T.B. men notice and take them out of the mines.

Is not that perfectly correct?

The Minister for Mines: There is nothing at all wrong about that.

HON. G. TAYLOR: There is a lot more of it. The Minister is reported as saying—

The men need not be afraid they were going to be put on the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. The Government would fix the scale of relief at an adequate rate.

The Premier: Which they did.

HON. G. TAYLOR: The report goes on—

In answer to a further question Mr. Troy said that the men desiring to get out of the mining industry might go on the land who were not affected by T.B., but had to take an equal chance with others by applying to the Land Board.

The Minister for Mines: That was in reply to a question.

HON. G. TAYLOR: The report continues—

The certificate would mean that the person concerned did not have T.B. Compensation payable under the Act would be paid by the Mines Department direct, and not through the Mine Workers' Relief Fund.

The Minister for Mines: Correct.

HON. G. TAYLOR: The Minister further said—

When the amount payable to those who could no longer follow any occupation was decided upon, a regulation fixing it at the amount would be laid on the Table of the House, and no subsequent Government could alter it except by similar procedure or by amendment. If the Government wanted to alter the Bill, they would alter it by an amending Bill. He thanked the members for the welcome extended to him, and expressed his pleasure at the opportunity of being present.

Then Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Lambert, and others addressed the meeting. To show what was the feeling of the meeting, I quote the report again—

It was then moved. "That this union request the Government to fix the basis of payment for those men taken out of the mines through having contracted T.B., and who cannot follow any occupation, at the ruling rate of wages, and on the death of such men payment for dependants at—widow £2 10s. per week, mother or father £2 10s. per week, dependant brother or sister £2 10s. per week, and 10s. per week for each child." The motion, being put, was carried without a dissentient.

The Minister for Mines: But that is not the scale adopted.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is very near the scale.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In some outlying districts up towards Wiluna the scale is now fixed at something over £5.

The Minister for Mines: Nothing has been paid in Wiluna at all yet.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But something has been paid at Leonora, and that would be over £5.

The Premier: No; the basic wage for the district.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That would be about the basic wage up there.

The Premier: The basic wage is the maximum.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Government cannot pay less than the basic wage.

The Premier: Yes, if there are no children.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Of course. But the Government make the amount up to the basic wage if there are children. They cannot go any further, though.

The Premier: No further.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is a report of the Premier's speech published in the "Worker" of the 12th February. I do not know what the date of the meeting was. I have read the report before. I may say that I am not associated with any of the troubles at Kalgoorlie. I never was near Kalgoorlie until May. I am now trying to justify statements concerning which the Minister for Mines has accused me. I said I had quoted the statements from the "Worker."

The Minister for Mines: I said that I did not make one statement which you said I made.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But the Minister cannot blame me for that. It was in the

"Worker." If the men on the fields had known what the Government were going to pay them, there would have been no excitement, and the Minister for Mines would not have been sent up to the fields and would not have come back and reported.

The Premier: There was no urgency about the matter, because the Act could not be proclaimed for months.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There must have been some cause for the making of these statements. I do not know that they were made; all I say is that they are reported in the "Worker," and that the "Worker" is not likely to misrepresent the Labour Government.

The Premier: What point are you making?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This point—

The Premier: What do your statements relate to?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That meeting which forced the Government to give the men what the Government are giving them.

The Premier: The meeting did not force us. No such thing. What have you got at the back of your head?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier is reported as saying—

In the course of amending an Act it was decided that the amount paid to men no longer able to work should not be less than the amount paid under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. That was put in as a basis. The Government knew that it did not compel them to pay that amount. Never in their minds for one moment was there any such intention.

The Minister for Mines: That is quite correct.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier's speech continues—

If they had put a higher amount in the Bill it was quite possible that it would not have passed the Legislative Council.

The Premier: What is wrong with that? It is an excellent statement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You did not try.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The report goes on—

Notwithstanding what men say to-day, that that Chamber would pass a higher payment, they lie in their teeth in saying so. Had they not all knowledge of the Legislative Council? Had they put a higher rate in the Bill, the chances were it would have been thrown out. What they did was a reasonable and a tactful way of doing it.

Was not that making an excuse to those turbulent workers who were so dissatisfied? There must have been some anxiety and

some disaffection to cause the whole of the goldfields members to go up to the goldfields.

The Minister for Mines: The object was to follow up lying statements.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know whether they were lying statements.

The Premier: Has not the Minister explained what caused it all? Lying statements in the Press.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The "Worker" does not lie.

The Premier: There is no such statement in the "Worker."

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The "Worker" shows the position the Government were in.

The Premier: You are an old hypocrite.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier need not go on with that. The "Worker" would not lie. The "Worker" was behind the men and behind the Government.

The Premier: The "Worker" is all right, and I am not saying anything about it; but you are now saying something that is not a fact.

The Minister for Mines: You are trying to convey something.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am trying to convey reasons. With his own mouth the Minister told the people that he did not know what to do till he came there and asked them. He also said that he was going back to Perth and would see Cabinet and tell them exactly what the people wanted. I have not made those statements. I have quoted them from the "Worker." Can the Minister contradict them or deny them? Nobody can tell me that two members of another place, or two ex-members seeking re-election, could cause so much anxiety among the working classes on the goldfields as to their own Government without justification.

The Minister for Mines: Their statements were published in the "Kalgoorlie Miner."

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Those people have been reading the "Kalgoorlie Miner" for years, and that paper would not influence them. But seeing the article in the "Kalgoorlie Sun" about a man getting 8s. a week to keep himself and his wife would infuriate the workers.

The Minister for Mines: Your crowd would not have got that man anything.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not care what the other crowd would do. I am only telling the Minister what his crowd did. What

does the Act say about the payment of compensation? The Minister says the Government are not paying compensation out of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. I contend that the Government should pay this money by statute. Let the Government bring down a Bill and place the matter beyond doubt. There is a doubt as to whether the Government are now legally paying that money, whether they have a right to expend it. Why have they not put up a Bill? Parliament has been sitting three months.

The Premier: The men are getting paid all right. The crowd you are associated with would not take it on.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The men had to call public meetings and keel-haul the Government from end to end.

The Premier: That is not true, and you know it.

The Minister for Mines: You are afraid now that your crowd are going to take the compensation away from the men.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No; but any Minister might take a different view and say, "The Act lays down that I am not to pay less than 25s. a week."

The Premier: No Minister would do that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Government say they can pay as much as they like—£100 a week if they like.

The Minister for Mines. So we can.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is rather a peculiar thing. I do not believe Parliament thought the Government could do that, and I do not believe the Government are doing it. However, that is not the only thing the Government would do illegally.

The Minister for Mines: You are sore because of what we are doing.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No; because of the way you are doing it. I do not believe in any Government acting without authority. What is the use of this Parliament flattering itself that it holds the purse strings of the people if Ministers can pay money in this way without the authorisation of this Chamber? I say, put the arrangement on the statute-book and pay the money openly and straightforwardly. Then the men would know what they were going to get. I say, do not do it by subterfuge.

The Minister for Mines: And your incoming Government would take the money away from the men!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I had nothing to do with the matter at Kalgoorlie at all.

The Premier: You were not man enough.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: When I read that report in the "Worker," I thought it was authentic.

The Minister for Mines: There is nothing wrong with the "Worker."

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There is nothing wrong with anything as far as the men are concerned. They put up a pretty good stunt and got what they wanted.

Mr. Panton: They have had to do that all their lives.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Scaddan Act was more reasonable in that it contained a provision that these men were to be paid the ruling rate of wages in the district in which they had worked. The Minister carried out that provision by way of regulation, but now the Government have cancelled that.

The Minister for Mines: It was never in the Scaddan Act. Under that Act the Government could give a man a job and—

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is a different point. The Scaddan Act worked an injustice in that respect. According to my interpretation of the Act, it meant that once the Government found a position for a man the obligation upon the Government ceased. However, the present Minister introduced a Bill to overcome that difficulty.

Mr. Davy: Yes, by altering the word "until" to "unless."

The Minister for Mines: And our legal adviser says that served the purpose, for it continued the obligation cast upon the Government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is to be hoped that it will overcome the difficulty.

The Minister for Mines: It does do so, and the men get the full rate of wages.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the Government cannot find work for the man, they pay him wages.

The Minister for Mines: That is the position.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Under the Scaddan Act once the Government found a man a job, that was the end of it. Of course, no Government would cease to carry out their obligations if a man was unable to work.

Mr. Panton: The doctor would decide that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, I see no objection to that.

The Minister for Mines: No provision for the dependants of a man who could not work was made in the Scaddan Act.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, there was. Full payment was provided.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have taken this opportunity to put the Minister right regarding what I said on the platform. Each year it becomes more depressing than ever to discuss the Mines Estimates. In past years we produced as much as one million ounces of gold in this State. During the last few years the returns have been as follows:—1923, 504,512 ozs.; 1924, 485,035 ozs.; 1925, 441,252 ozs.; for the first six months of this year, 213,000 ozs. Unless we pull up during the next six months, the gold production will be less than that of any previous year. The difficulty is to find some way of resuscitating our gold production. I am doubtful whether the technical committee appointed by the Minister will avail much, any more than the appointment of Mr. Kingsley Thomas as a Royal Commissioner had much result. At the time it was considered a wise move to secure the services of a man such as Mr. Kingsley Thomas. After a few years we find that, so far as I am aware, the State has not benefited at all. Of course some mines have closed down since his report.

The Premier: The question is one resting with the mining companies. We cannot force the companies to take action.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is useless providing money for expenditure in these various directions if we are to get nothing out of it.

The Premier: All we can do is to point out what may be done.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is merely a waste of money to point the way out to people who will not act. I would be with the Premier if he were to introduce legislation to compel the companies to do what is necessary.

The Premier: But we cannot compel them.

The Minister for Mines: What do you suggest we should do?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The dividends paid by the Golden Horseshoe mine from the 27 acres comprising their lease would be sufficient to pay for all the obligations under the Miners' Phthisis Act, good wages and so on, and then leave a large sum for dividends to be distributed among the shareholders. We know that last year £35,000 was paid by the mine in dividends and yet no developmental work was done at all. Usually £25,000 or £35,000 was spent in developmental work, but that ceased and the dividends were paid. Then the company went to the Government for £50,000 to enable operations to be continued. The

Government gave that money, but the life of the mine was prolonged only so long as the money lasted. I do not know if the step taken on that occasion was wise. Of course no one dreamt that when the money became exhausted the mine would close down. It was thought that the expenditure of the money would place the mine in such a position that years would be added to its life. Unfortunately that did not happen. As to what may be expected from technical committees and Royal Commissions, we know that over a period of 27 years two or three Royal Commissions inquired into matters relating to Collie coal, and yet we are not much further advanced.

Mr. Thomson: Oh, yes; they are not opening any more mines now.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Perhaps they have become conservative and have got a pretty good grip upon the industry. I do not know whether any greater effect will be seen in the gold mining industry. It is patent to most of us that mining will continue to languish until the industry is almost out of existence. A sum of £160,000 is available for the mining industry out of the Commonwealth grant. In the past we have been assisting prospectors by sending parties out to look for gold. The result of this work has been that we have not succeeded in any of our ventures, in comparison with the money expended.

The Minister for Mines: Oh yes, we have got more back than was advanced.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the Minister would give consideration to some of the mines that have been closed down, he could provide £10,000 or £20,000 in properly testing a known line of reefs. I do not draw attention to this particular mine because it happens to be in my constituency, but the fact is well known that the Beria line of lode contains ore sufficient for two years' working. Owing to the plant being unsuitable and the issuing of the big Burnside award that increased the wages of the men 3s. or 4s. a day, operations were suspended.

Mr. Sleeman: You would not call that a big award.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It was in those days. The men should have got that 20 years before.

Mr. Heron: Those in charge had made provision for closing down 2½ months before the award was issued.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not think so, but I will not contradict the hon. member.

I was there, but I did not hear anything about that. The fact remains that the mine closed down. It would take a lot to unwater the mine, but still if a boring plant were provided to test the mine I believe much good would result.

The Minister for Mines: Did you ever make that suggestion to Mr. Scaddan when he was Minister for Mines?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I discussed it with him.

The Minister for Mines: Where will I find evidence of it on the files?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not know. I spoke to him about it on many occasions, but I did not speak during the debates on the Mines Estimates. I was in the Chair at that time.

The Minister for Mines: But you did speak to him about it?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, lots of times. The Government should test that line of reef down to a depth of 200 or 300 feet in an endeavour to locate the payable ore at depth. In view of the fact that two years' ore is in sight, I believe it would be a payable proposition, particularly if the oil flotation process that is spoken of so enthusiastically on the goldfields, proves successful. The work would be carried out much more cheaply than under old conditions. The machinery on the mine has all disappeared and the place itself is deserted. I do not think much good will come of sending prospectors out as formerly, for all the known places have been scratched about in the ordinary way by prospectors in the past. On the other hand, where a reef is living, although the ore may be refractory, is the place where prospecting should be carried out. I believe the old Cosmopolitan mine would be worth giving a trial.

The Premier: Give us a few more of the old ones.

Mr. Marshall: The Cosmopolitan and the Altona leases have remarkably fine chances of good developments. I know, because I have worked on them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Valuable crushings have been taken from those mines since the hon. member was working there. It is hopeless for prospectors to go into such mines. The Government could bore with the object of locating the reefs and charge up the cost to any company taking over the mine. That would be a safe and sound proposition.

The Minister for Mines: When did you wake up to this proposition?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is only when we are in distress that we look around for new avenues for work.

The Minister for Mines: Why did you not suggest this to Mr. Scaddan?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We are not going to advance merely by the appointment of technical committees and of Royal Commissioners such as Mr. Kingsley Thomas, spending money, only to find, as the Premier says, that the companies will not act on the advice.

The Minister for Mines: Why did not your Government take action?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not saying anything about my Government. I am dealing with the mining industry as it is to-day and it behoves every hon. member to do what he can towards reviving it, and not palm it off with committees to do this and that. Drips and drabs of money will not do it. The Minister ought to know that.

The Minister for Mines: I know you have not an idea in your head.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I should like to put my knowledge of mining against that of the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: Why did not your Government do all this?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Well, for five or six years I sat behind a previous Labour Government, which did not do too much. The present Premier was Minister for Mines at that time. However, it is not what is past, but what we are to do in the future. If only the Minister for Mines would act on some of the advice he gets from men of knowledge, and not continue to waste money, it would be an improvement.

The Minister for Mines: Tell me some of the advice I get.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I find from the Estimates that the Minister proposes to bring in some overseas expert as State Mining Engineer at £1,500 per annum to do the work of men now drawing £3,500 per annum; men, some of them, with 25 years' experience of the Western Australian gold-fields. I suppose we shall get some overseas man wholly unaccustomed to Western Australian mining, as Mr. Kingsley Thomas was, and he will have to learn the subject, practically from the beginning. There are also on the Estimates items totalling £3,000 odd for lecturers.

What are they to do? I suppose they will give value, but our gold yield is declining all the time. Having regard to the money we are spending to keep up that yield, our methods must be pretty bad.

Mr. Panton: There is too much dirt mixed up with the gold.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I admit that some of our valuable lodes are very erratic and so cannot be economically worked. The Minister referred to Collie coal. Here is an alarming paragraph that appeared in the "West Australian" yesterday—

Collie Coal. Government Supplies. Conference on Wednesday. Collie, October 30. During the past few days there has been apparent a feeling of unrest amongst the officials and members of the Collie Miners' Union, due to the delay in the finalisation of the allocation of the Government coal contracts. The previous contracts expired at the end of September, after running for a period of three years; and competitive tenders were called by the Government for future supplies returnable early in October. In certain quarters strong exception was taken to this method, and it is significant that no tenders were received. Since that time the officials of the Miners' Union have been awaiting notification of a conference to finalise the allocation for the ensuing period; and in the interim members have become somewhat restless. There was indeed a likelihood of a complete cessation of work on the mines if some definite move were not made, and it has been learned from an authoritative source that something in the nature of an ultimatum was issued to that effect. The possibility of industrial trouble has, however, been averted, by the authorities having given an undertaking to finalise the allocation of the orders by the usual procedure of holding a conference of the parties concerned in Perth on Wednesday next. It is stated that finality will be definitely reached on that day. The parties to the conference will be the Commissioner of Railways and representatives of the Miners and Railway Unions and the State Executive of the A.L.P.

The Minister for Mines: What has that to do with the Mining Estimates?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister referred at some length to our coal mines. This is a report about the coal field.

The Premier: No, about a railway contract. It would be more in order on the Railway Estimates.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I should like to know whether there is any truth in the statement that the authorities gave a definite assurance of a conference.

The Minister for Mines: On a point of order. The hon. member is plainly wasting time. What has this to do with the Mining Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will not pursue this any further, for it is bordering on the irrelevant.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister, when speaking, had latitude to deal at great length with members of another place. If there was any possibility of vilifying those members, it was well accomplished by the Minister. That, at any rate, had nothing to do with the Estimates. The Minister was simply trying to defend the attitude of the Government against men who were not here to defend themselves.

The Minister for Mines: They had attacked the administration of my department, and I defended it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: When a member on this side makes any comment, the Minister rises to a point of order. I was only asking whether there is any truth in that newspaper report. It is appalling to think that the Government cannot transact their business without calling in railway employees, or the Trades and Labour Council, or the A.L.P.

Mr. Panton: The same thing occurred when Mr. Scaddan was Premier.

The Premier: But of course that was bad government.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, and I hope the Premier will not follow the bad lead set up by his predecessor. I do not know whether Mr. Scaddan called in the A.L.P. and the miners' union to help him.

Mr. Panton: He did, and I was chairman of the conference.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Very well, but certainly it was a bad lead for the Premier to follow.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.25]: The Minister gave a resume of the whole administration of his department. I regret that he rather spoilt a good speech by introducing political propaganda. He attacked members of another place, who could not be here to reply to his statements. He accused them of making political capital out of the sufferings of the afflicted miners. I object to any section of political thought making capital out of the sufferings of unfortunate men. When Mr. Scaddan introduced his Bill it was regarded as the most advanced legislation of its kind in the world. I did not then realise that so many were suffering from occupational diseases. But large numbers of men who by ill health were forced out of the mines some years ago

are not deriving any benefit whatever from the existing legislation. Only last week I spoke to one of those men in my own district. He is not able to follow his avocation, yet he is not receiving any financial assistance at all.

The Minister for Mines: Who is to blame for that?

Mr. THOMSON: I am not blaming anyone, but I say that although in 1911 the Government were not successful with certain legislation, I do not remember that they endeavoured to get the very provision for which the Minister is now claiming so much credit. We have other Acts of Parliament just as stringent upon those who, unfortunately, are suffering from tuberculosis, yet no recompense is made to them. The Shops and Factories Act contains a provision that persons suffering from tuberculosis shall not be employed by bakers' or butchers' shops, or in any place where foodstuffs are handled. When Ministers take so much credit for having safeguarded the interests of one section, it seems to me they have been remiss in other particulars. So do not let us make political capital out of the sufferings of unfortunate people. Dealing with the Workers' Compensation Act as it applies to the industry, I have been informed that it has meant an average cost of 10s. per employee per week.

The Minister for Mines: What, £26 a year!

The Premier: The cost is £4 10s. per cent.

Mr. THOMSON: What is the average wage of the miner, about £6 per week?

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. Panton: I wish it was.

Mr. Marshall: You have a great idea of the wages paid.

Mr. THOMSON: I am merely repeating a statement made to me by a man engaged in mining. He estimated that it would cost his mine approximately 10s. per man per week.

The Premier: He must have deliberately misled you, because it could not be so much.

Mr. THOMSON: The manager of the Sons of Gwalia Mine stated that the increased cost there would be approximately £5,000 per year. The Minister pointed out that the tariff duties imposed by the Federal Government are pressing heavily on the gold-mining industry. I agree with him. The compensation to afflicted miners under the Miners' Phthisis Act should be a charge on

the revenue of the State. A statement to that effect was read by the Minister to-night.

The Minister for Mines: But it was not my statement.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister read a statement to that effect, and I agree with it. The State as a whole has benefited from the industry. There is no gainsaying that it was gold-mining that brought Western Australia to the fore, and placed her on the high road to prosperity. I shall not attempt to condone the neglect of the big mining companies for not having made provision for the men in the days of prosperity. They were out to get the best possible return for their shareholders.

The Minister for Mines: Provision should have been made in those days.

Mr. THOMSON: The previous Labour Government had an equal opportunity. The Minister has shown that the industry is languishing. It has to bear high imposts under the Federal tariff which have contributed to the increased costs of production. Consequently gold mining is not in the position of other industries. It is not in the happy position of the coal industry which has only one customer. If we may judge from the statement referred to, the people engaged in the coal industry are in a position to say to the Government, "That is what you are going to pay for your coal."

Mr. Sleeman: How do you arrive at the conclusion that there is only one customer?

Mr. THOMSON: The gold-mining industry is not in that fortunate position. The miners who have contracted disease are entitled to compensation, which should be paid from Consolidated Revenue. It should not be a tax upon an industry that is already overburdened. I entirely approve of portion of the Federal grant to the amount of £165,924 being reserved to assist the mining industry. I am pleased that the committee appointed by the Federal Government to investigate the industry are visiting Kalgoorlie, and I hope that as a result of their inquiries they may be able to recommend a scheme to benefit the industry materially. I am very much afraid that they are faced with an almost insurmountable difficulty, because the parlous condition of the mining industry is largely due to the result of the Federal tariff and other Federal imposts. Mining at best is a declining asset, because the more a mine is worked the more it is depleted. I was impressed by the statement of the Minister that it will depend

upon the companies engaged in the industry whether the Government will be able to grant the assistance they desire to give. The proposal to erect a central power station in order to reduce costs is a step in the right direction, but as was indicated by the Premier by way of interjection, it will rest with the companies whether that assistance is granted. I am sure every member of the Government is sincere in the desire to see the industry resuscitated, and if anything can be done to assist the industry—this should be a matter above party—it will be done. I have never heard any objection raised in the House to any proposal to assist mining. I agree with the Minister that we should make full use of the scientific bureau of research brought into existence by the Federal Government. I hope the bureau will be able to bring forward a scheme that will result in mining costs being reduced. I should like to know from the Minister whether any section of the Mines Department lays itself out to discover improved methods with a view to reducing working costs.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, the School of Mines is doing so day after day. The oil flotation process was the result of work done there.

[*Mr. Panton took the Chair.*]

Mr. THOMSON: Recently I had the pleasure of travelling in the train with a visitor from India who suggested that a considerable saving could be effected if the stone was not crushed so finely and was roasted. I believe that suggestion has been brought under the notice of the Minister. Members might smile at it.

Mr. Marshall: A good practical miner!

Mr. THOMSON: Many a suggestion that has evoked laughter at the outset has ultimately been adopted, and people have then marvelled at its simplicity.

Mr. Heron: That man did not know much about it.

Mr. THOMSON: I am merely asking what the Mines Department have been doing.

Mr. Marshall: If you told that to a metallurgist, he would burst out laughing.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not pose as an expert on mining. Unless we have ore of high grade, gold mining is not a paying proposition. The member for Mt. Margaret enumerated quite a number of mines that

still contain a considerable quantity of ore. I was in a district recently where I met a number of old miners who maintained that the mines of the district contained plenty of good ore, but that the cost of recovering it was too high.

The Premier: I never knew a mining man who did not maintain that.

Mr. THOMSON: I shall not deal with the whole ramifications of the industry, but I wish to refer briefly to the Collie coal industry. I do not propose to discuss the merits of an agreement that may or may not be entered into by the Government for the supply of Collie coal for the railways. If I did so, I should probably be ruled out of order, but I do wish to raise my voice in opposition to any agreement that will preclude the development of coal fields in other districts. I could read the statements made by the Premier and the Minister for Railways when a certain agreement was being made some time ago.

The Premier: And you can be sure that nothing will be done contrary to that policy, either.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased to hear that, because it seems as if something very like what happened recently may occur again. I strongly object to a three-years' contract that will prevent the development of other coal mines. A railway is to be constructed from Boyup Brook to Cranbrook. The Government have expended about £8,000 on the work of boring to prove the coalfields at Wilga. There is a statement in to-night's paper. I hold no brief for the companies and am not financially interested in any of them. I would, however, like to see some other coalfield developed nearer to Albany than those that have been opened up. I am glad to have the Premier's assurance that an agreement will not be entered into similar to that which was made a few years ago. I am particularly interested in the Albany harbour, because it is our port of shipment. It is to our interest as producers to see that the port nearest to our district is utilised to its fullest extent. Naturally, we want coal supplies taken there. The bulk of the coal that is bunkered in Albany comes from Newcastle. I want to see local coal bunkered there if possible at a price that will induce the shipping companies to take it. From Collie to Bowelling is 33 miles, from Bowelling to Wagin is 63 miles, and from Wagin to Albany 138 miles, a

total of 234 miles. From Boyup Brook to Katanning is 84 miles and from Katanning to Albany 116 miles, a total of 200 miles. If a railway were constructed from Boyup Brook via Cranbrook to Albany the distance would be 165 miles, a considerable saving in haulage. If we take the shortest route from Collie to Albany, coal will cost 17s. 10d. per ton. If the Wilga coalfield were developed, as I maintain it should be, coal could be railed at a saving of 2s. 9d. per ton. This would mean that we would supply not only a considerable proportion of the railway system with Wilga coal at a cheaper rate than that at which it can be supplied at Collie, but it would mean the opening up and development of another coalfield. I note that a conference will be held between the Commissioner of Railways, the representatives of the miners at Collie and the railway union, and the State executive of the A.L.P. I do not know why the miners, the railway union and the State executive of the A.L.P. should have to confer on a matter relating to coal supplies for the railways. This is rather an amazing position.

The Premier: The same kind of policy was established eight or ten years ago.

Mr. THOMSON: I presume the conference will deal with the quality of coal, and how much shall be taken from each of the mines.

The Premier: The loco men were then refusing to handle some of the coal from the mines and the miners were refusing to work it, but somehow the parties were brought together.

Mr. THOMSON: I believe the railways use about 80 per cent. of our coal. It is rather depressing to read in the mining report that this industry is not going ahead. If we could encourage the establishment of coal mining at Wilga and in the Geraldton district, a considerable saving would be effected on the cost of fuel to the railways, and in the cost of administration. It would also have an important bearing on the development of the bunkering trade with overseas ships. The people of Geraldton think there is a great future before their port. If we could provide coal suitable for bunkering in that district, it would be greatly to the interests of the State. Naturally any local field would secure some of the railway business. I am sure members are anxious to see every branch of our mining industry go ahead and become prosperous. Anything

in the financial way that is done to assist these industries must be for the good of the State.

[*Mr. Lutey took the Chair.*]

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [9.50]: I do not take the same pessimistic view of the mining industry that other members have taken. I believe some big find will yet occur in the State owing to the amount of prospecting that is being done. The prospectors are doing good work. Promising fields have been opened up by these people through the assistance that has been rendered by the Mines Department on the recommendation of the prospecting board. The Mt. Burnie field is very promising. The prospectors there receive carting subsidies from the Government. The Glenelg field was opened up by prospectors who were first assisted on the recommendation of the board. The first party went out some few years ago. The opening up of the field is due to the assistance that has been rendered by the Government.

Mr. Lindsay: Those people had no assistance from the Government.

Mr. CHESSON: The first people to go out there comprised a party despatched by the prospecting board.

Mr. Lindsay: Did they find anything?

Mr. CHESSON: They were the first to locate gold. One of the first parties to go out to that district is still there. The reports that came in following upon the discoveries that were made led to other parties going out. The board recommended assistance to the extent of £819. Altogether 14 different parties were assisted in this way. The first people to go out were Hollow and Heaton. Gold was first found in Western Australia by prospectors who came from the other States. According to the report of the department, a great deal of assistance has been granted by way of subsidies. When prospectors go out a long way from a battery they must be helped in order to get their ore to the battery. To this end the department is relieving the prospectors of a cost of 1s. a mile up to 30 miles, and over that distance the amount is 25s. This means that the men pay only for the first five miles. A good deal has been said about the oil flotation process that has been tried in the Kalgoorlie district. The report of Messrs. S. A. Winter and D. H. Moore of the Kalgoorlie School

of Mines should be read by every member. This shows that before any big plant is put up in a mine to work under this process, the first thing to be done is to ascertain the kind of plant required. In the past the companies did not find out beforehand whether the ore was refractory or not. They erected the plant first, and very often found it was not the type required. Had they first ascertained by means of a pilot plant the nature of the ore to be dealt with, they would have been saved much expense. The adoption of the system of oil flotation means a great reduction in the concentrates. In the sulphide ore there is a fair amount of sulphur which assists in the roasting process, and leaves less concentrates to treat. The member for Katanning referred to some remarks made by a gentleman from India with regard to treating ore that had not been crushed to such a small extent as is usual. Everyone with experience of mining knows that in the infancy of mining there must be coarse screens, and that a good portion of the gold must be left in the residue. When the cyaniding process came in, the need for grinding fine in order to get bigger results was discovered. In sands there would naturally be coarse gold which would get away, and which could not be recovered by cyaniding. The same remarks apply to roasting. There would not be anything like the amount of concentrates by roasting. An experienced miner does not take it too seriously when coarse screenings are mentioned. Now I wish to mention one or two matters relating to my part of the State. The Cue district looks promising. Around Lake Austin there are some promising shows. Walker brothers are getting some fine stone. Recently they recovered 250 ounces from one patch. The Moyagee proposition has opened up well, and the same remark applies to shows at Tuckabianna, where a lot of decent stone is being got for the battery. The Mararoa Company have been granted a fair amount of Government assistance. They received £2,056, and have paid back £1,114 15s. At present they are paying 10 per cent. interest on the amount of subsidy. Last month they sent in another parcel, which would mean an additional £200 or £250. They are getting about £1,200 worth of gold per month, and before long they should have repaid the full amount of the subsidy. When they took over the mine from the vendors for £5,000, an amount of £800 was owing by the vendors

to the Government. The present company have paid off that amount, and have done a good deal of prospecting and have located water. They have sunk a shaft about 140ft., and about two miles away have put up a fairly big pumping plant and two storage tanks to hold about 52,000 gallons of water. They have also a battery, and the main shaft is 12ft. by 12ft. and well timbered. There are over 500ft. of drives connected by winzes down to 180ft. The mine has been assayed at about every 2ft., and has given an approximate value of 50s. This is one of the best developed mines in the oxide zone. It has gone only a few feet into the sulphide. Taking into consideration the amount of work that has been done, I am greatly surprised that there has not been a better response to the calls made by the company. The Government are prepared to go to the company's assistance and erect an up-to-date treatment plant, as it is realised that the present method of working cannot be profitable to the shareholders. A treatment plant is absolutely necessary in order that everything may be done automatically. The Government should subsidise the company pound for pound. It seems to me that in many instances shareholders prefer a marketing proposition that can be boomed to a proposition that has proved its worth. The Government are now assisting the mining industry by boring with diamond drills. For the life of me I cannot see what possible chance there is of testing the whole of the Murchison by means of one diamond drill. The men on the drill will be as old as Methuselah before they get to the other end of that huge auriferous belt. To put one drill on the Murchison is simply playing with the business. I do not share the views of the member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) as to old mining propositions. When the surface has been worked out and the mine gets deeper, the people who abandon it do not as a rule leave much behind them. In order to unwater such a mine, one has to put up an expensive plant, including a big winding engine or pump. I would rather see money spent in trying to open up new fields. After all, a diamond drill makes a small hole only and tests but a limited area, so that it is easy to miss values. I would prefer to see the diamond drilling done on shows that are being worked at present, even though they are controlled by companies. I would make the reservation that

the mines must have long shoots of gold. If that were done, it would demonstrate whether the gold continued in the sulphide zones. That is how the permanence of a mine is ascertained. While returns may be all right in the oxide zones, the life of a mine depends upon the occurrences in the sulphide zones. If a company is operating genuinely, it should not be taboo when it comes to a question of diamond drilling to prove values at depth. If that were resorted to, the contributing public would be able to size up the prospects of a mine and they would be encouraged to invest. At present company promoters take an option, and the prospector who makes the find does not get any cash. Thus there is no inducement for prospectors to go ahead, because they get very little advantage and cannot float the mine.

Mr. Griffiths: They could not float a cork!

Mr. CHESSON: No. The prospector realises that he has to give away the biggest share of the find, and has to reap his reward in paid-up shares that will be tied up for six or 12 months. The prospectors get their shares on the market and make something out of the concern, after which the proposition is handed back to the prospectors. At that stage the prospector cannot make any thing out of it at all. I realise that the Government have given a great deal of assistance to the mining industry and I am glad that the Commonwealth grant of £160,000 is to be devoted to further assisting the industry. The establishment of one town in the goldfields will give the State a return three-fold in many directions. On the other hand, if a mine closes down, there is always much difficulty in settling the men in agricultural pursuits or in some other occupation. Most miners, after many years on the fields, are not in a position to shift for themselves, and the Government cannot be expected to assist more than they are doing at present. I am glad that the Government have taken steps to provide for the men suffering from tuberculosis. Whenever the question has been discussed members on each side of the House have advocated taking those men out of the mines. It is a matter of indifference to me whether the money paid to diseased miners, their wives and dependants, is provided under an Act of Parliament or under regulations. The point is that the money is being paid to them. It is realised that in the past, when the mines were paying big dividends, no

provision was made to safeguard the interests of the miners who would suffer from occupational diseases. Now it is left for the State to assume the responsibility. When the Royal Commission, presided over by Dr. Cumpston, took evidence, I was asked what provision should be made. In the course of my evidence I advocated a royalty on gold. If a shilling an ounce had been collected and placed in a fund, ample provision would have been made for the men stricken down in the industry. If a miner is taken from a shallow mine to a deep mine, the transfer can have one end only. That has been proved by the history of deep mining in Victoria and elsewhere. As no provision was made in years past, we now have to meet the obligation ourselves. Other matters I desire to refer to I shall deal with on the items.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [10.18]: I offer my congratulations to the Government for having at long last given some measure of relief to the unfortunate men who have been stricken down in the mining industry. I am glad to know, irrespective of whether the lawyers say it is legal or illegal, that the job has been done. While members may disagree as to the method adopted, they are all agreed upon the vital point that something had to be done for the men.

Mr. Griffiths: The principle was all right.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, and the Government are deserving of congratulation for taking courage and attending to the matter without worrying about the legality or illegality of their action.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course they had the Act for some time.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. In my electorate we are fortunate because the mines so far have not involved work at great depths, and we are practically free from tuberculosis or miners' phthisis.

Mr. Davy: It gets wet as soon as you go down there.

Mr. CORBOY: In most parts of the field that is true. The member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) remarked that we had achieved nothing by the importation of Mr. Kingsley Thomas to report on the mining industry. Perhaps no practical results were achieved, but that is not the fault of the Government, who were most generous in their offers to those in the mining industry, particularly at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, to do something to put the industry on a better

footing. We have proof that mining can be carried on much more economically than it is in most of our fields. In my electorate, on a little mine 29 miles from the railway, where every stick of fracture, every parcel of mining stores and requirements has to be carted 29 miles by motor lorry in addition to the railway carriage, the costs of treatment have never been higher than 14s. per ton. That is rendered possible by the fact that when the company started operating three years ago they put in an up-to-date plant that enables them to treat their ore on the most economical basis. In consequence they are showing a good profit on ore averaging less than 8 dwts. per ton. Whilst that mine is not nearly so big as are the principal mines at Boulder, it will be admitted that it affords a most valuable object lesson. Incidentally, that company has always been generous to its employees, the wages paid being considerably higher than the wages on the Golden Mile. If the mining companies would but show a willingness to help themselves, much good might yet come of Mr. Kingsley Thomas's report. Certainly we should have had practical results from his visit had some of his recommendations been given effect to by the companies, and full advantage taken of the offers of assistance by the Government. The Minister, when introducing his Estimates, said he regretted he could not speak so optimistically as the Minister for Lands had done when introducing the Estimates of the Lands Department. Just the same, in the northern portion of the Yilgarn district gold mining is in a better position to-day than it has been at any time since the outbreak of the war. Not only are old mines, for long shut down, producing, but mines that have been producing continuously are still carrying on with good prospects, and new discoveries are being made. The production of gold throughout the district is increasing. So in at least one district gold mining is healthier than it was a few years ago. There are in the district a number of well-known producers. The Radio is still crushing 4 oz. and 5 oz. stone, and looks likely to go on doing so. It has been doing that for the past six years, and on its latest developments it is likely to continue doing so for the next six years. The old Bullfinch, as members know, was closed down five years ago. The mine was taken over by the Government and the property made available to prospectors. Several

parties are working leases out there now, and some of them are getting good crushings, up to 30zs. per ton. The developments at the new find, Glenelg Hills, are very promising. A trial crushing from Hollow's Find returned nearly 9 ozs. to the ton. The parcel consisted of 25 tons of stone, broken over a fairly wide area. The bulk of it was from two places 250ft. apart at opposite ends of the formation. The whole crushing returned nearly 9 ozs. to the ton, the gold being worth £4 per oz. That is a very fine result indeed. There is every chance of getting at least three good mines in that field, mines that will give excellent results and employ a large number of men. One trouble at Hollow's Find is the lack of communication. Requests have been made to the Minister for the breaking of two roads or tracks, one to Polson's Battery to enable them to get their ore crushed much more cheaply than is possible at present. To-day the ore has to be carted to Narembreen, thence to Merredin and thence to Coolgardie, a total distance of 60 miles. Alternatively, it can be taken by rail to Burracoppin and thence to Coolgardie, a distance of 53 miles. The required track can be put through for £200. So far the work has not been begun. I do not even know whether it has been approved, for the last the Minister told me was that, owing to some little difficulty with another department, the matter has not yet been concluded. I hope the Minister will find it possible to have that track cut through to Polson's Battery. Of course, if the field continues to develop as it promises to do, there will soon be a private battery on the field itself.

Mr. Griffiths: I also want a track put through up there.

Mr. CORBOY: One of the only two existing tracks into the locality leads to the place the hon. member wants to reach; but it involves a haulage of approximately 60 miles. Carting to the battery in the Yilgarn field would involve a distance of only 33 miles, or one-half of the distance necessary to cart to the battery in the Avon electorate. It would be wrong to require those men to cart 60 miles when it is possible for them to reach a battery by carting 30 miles. The same thing applies to carting through Narembreen; they have 40 miles to cart to reach the railway and then there is railage from Narembreen to Coolgardie. If trial crushings are taken out the Minister will be called upon to spend in subsidy on rail-

age to Coolgardie as much as it would cost to cut the track through to Polson's. The other route was the direct track to Southern Cross. The people who have been on the field for years do the whole of their business at Southern Cross and they desire to have access to that town. The business people with whom they have been dealing have put up in hard cash one-half of the cost of clearing the track and have offered that money to the Government if the Government will find the balance—about £75. I hope that matter will also be finalised, because I think the trial crushing that has already gone through justifies the opinion that the field holds sufficient promise for giving it all possible facilities. The work done to open up that country will be beneficial to people who desire to look at the land for agricultural purposes. Any agricultural member who has visited the field must have been struck by the magnificent salmon gum and gumlet forest in which it stands. The country certainly offers great possibilities from an agricultural point of view, so that any roads or other facilities provided will be valuable in the years to come, apart altogether from mining. One other matter I wish to refer to is the bugbear of the Ravensthorpe smelters. Negotiations have been proceeding during the last fortnight between the parties interested, the Minister and myself, with a view to arriving at a solution of this very knotty trouble. I do not wish to discuss the merits of the case, but I do wish to appeal to the Minister and to the Government to finalise this matter one way or the other as early as possible. Whether the Government adhere to the decision of the High Court or decide to depart from it, I want them to come to a decision early so that there will be time prior to Christmas to pay out the money to the people who have waited for it so long. Within the last fortnight I have visited Ravensthorpe and I give the Minister my word that many people there, waiting for money due to them under this case, are in great difficulty. The Government should come to an early decision, and irrespective of whether the claimants in the case accept the money or not, they should pay the other people to whom the money is due. McNeil, Bernales and Dunstan are not the only people involved in this case. There are many people in great financial difficulty and they are entitled to some consideration now. It is wrong to permit the case to be held up any longer.

MR. LAMBERT (Coolgardie) [10.36]: I was interested in the lucid explanation that the Minister gave of the activities of the Mines Department and the operations of mining generally during the past year. Although a glowing picture cannot be painted of the gold-mining industry, it is pleasing to know that many officers of the Mines Department are just as enthusiastic and helpful as ever in assisting the men engaged in the industry. I do not wish to speak at any length to-night because I have dealt with this industry so often during the last decade. The member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) seemed to discount the value of the services rendered by the gentlemen who from time to time have advised the Government on the gold-mining industry. It is true that, from the appointment of Commissioner Kingsley Thomas, we have so far received no direct gain. Any Commissioner, however, could merely indicate broadly the general lines on which the Government should proceed when expending public funds. If he did that to the satisfaction of the Government, it would be all he was called upon to do. I do not think it was ever contemplated that the mere calling in of an expert would in a general way give any fillip to gold mining. The Government were justified in obtaining an expert to advise them on broad lines whether it was wise to continue to assist the industry or to conserve the public funds. Large sums of money have been spent by all Governments in a genuine endeavour to assist the industry, but it is not right to continue such expenditure if it can be shown that we are proceeding on wrong lines. To that extent the Government were justified in seeking expert opinion as to how the money could be profitably employed. We can hope for something from the visit of the committee appointed by the Commonwealth Government. The members of the committee are men of high mining and engineering attainments, who know the difficulties of mining, understand the risks, appreciate the present position of the industry and its economic relation to other industries, and should be seized with the factors that are depressing the industry, among which is the heavy indirect taxation consequent on the policy of protection. That applies to all primary production in Australia. It is the deliberate intention of Australia to sacrifice primary production at the altar of other bolstered-up in-

dustries in Australia. We, who represent the primary industries of Australia, must accept the inevitable and allow them to languish and die. Whether a saner view will be taken and a different policy adopted, only time will reveal. I agree with the member for Mt. Margaret inasmuch as I think we have much to gain by retracing our footsteps, and pondering on the question whether all the gold along the better known lines of reefs in Western Australia has been won. I am not satisfied that it has. It is quite conceivable that in the better known auriferous belts, that have only been exploited to comparatively shallow depths, much wealth remains to be taken out. Whether that is sufficiently attractive to induce men to invest their money under present economic conditions I cannot say. If some of these problems were tackled, and prospecting were carried out at depth, we might be able to make more out of the gold mining industry. That is not saying anything about the good work that has been carried out by those prospectors who have been assisted by the Mines Department. Those men are scouring portions of the State. Although there have not been any spectacular finds as the result of their work, there are many men out who are getting a little gold and doing a lot of useful prospecting. The latest find at Glenelg Hills is directly attributable to Government assistance. The member for Mt. Margaret questioned an item on the Estimates of £3,000 for lecturers. In connection with the mining industry, it is much easier to lecture than it is to do anything to assist it. As the member for Yilgarn says, the Minister for Mines has not the same cheerful tale to tell as the Minister for Lands. It is comparatively easy for the Lands Department to hand out slabs of territory in thousand-acre blocks, and to find the money for their development. It is the policy of the country to sacrifice every industry to the wheat producer. We know the favoured rates he gets on his super and wheat.

Mr. Lindsay: The wheat makes the railways pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is easier for the Minister for Lands to do this, and to supply the farmers with water, electricity and every conceivable Governmental service, than it is to open up the mining industry. A man pays £1 an acre every year in the mining industry but never receives the freehold.

Mr. Sampson: The mining industry receives a lot of assistance.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am referring to the comparative futility of trying to assist mining, as compared with the results obtainable in the case of our lands. It is to be hoped that the Federal Government, knowing the economic disadvantages of mining in Western Australia, will serve some useful purpose by devoting a portion of the 61 million pounds they have budgeted for to assisting the industry.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is 40 millions.

Mr. LAMBERT: They have budgeted for 61 millions. If it is only 40 millions, and the policy that is apparently dictated by the people of Australia presses adversely upon primary production, some attention is due to the development of the mineral wealth of this State. The gold mining industry is affected more than any other, but many of our minerals have not received the attention they deserve. We have all the minerals that go to build up the key industries of a nation. I was glad to hear the Minister's remarks concerning Messrs. Hoskins & Coy., who are laying down a big steel plant at Kembla at the cost of two million pounds, and who are interesting themselves in our iron deposits in the North-West. There are iron deposits other than these in the State.

Mr. Griffiths: But those are close to the seaboard.

Mr. LAMBERT: There are geographical disadvantages which do not appertain to other valuable iron deposits that we have. In the Yilgarn district and near Geraldton there are several iron deposits of value. We have chrome ore, manganese, molybdenite, gypsum, clays, magnesite, felspar, scheelite, and almost every metallic and non-metallic mineral that goes to make a country great and build up big industries within it, and that have contributed more to the upbuilding of Great Britain than the handing out of slabs of territory about which people plume themselves so much. I treat with all due respect those who see great growth and great prosperity in the giving away of the people's freehold, but the great fact to be hammered home to the men responsible for the development of Western Australia is that we can develop just as easily, and on sound economic lines, some of the industries essential to Western Australia and the Commonwealth, and essential particularly to workless Australian

boys and girls whose future is overshadowed by our desire to bring in countless hordes from other parts of the world. It is well enough to have a policy of promiscuous immigration, because there is sufficient mineral wealth in this country, if only that wealth is exploited, to give employment to all the boys and girls who are now walking about the streets of Perth.

Mr. Sampson: The number of apprentices is too limited.

Mr. LAMBERT: The fact is that most of our manufacturing and trade and commerce goes back to the minerals which we are not utilising to-day. Thousands of pounds have been spent by the Mines Department on testing them, they have been reported on by chemical authorities, and bulletins have been churned out on the subject of their utilisation; but what has actually been accomplished? The Leader of the Opposition smiles and says it is easier to develop the lands of Western Australia. The early Romans were developing lands.

The Premier: It goes back a long way further than that.

Mr. LAMBERT: The Maoris were growing cereals before ever a white man came to New Zealand. There is no need to pay a colossal tribute to the man who promiscuously hands out land, though I like to see the broad acres of Western Australia being developed. Side by side with the policy of land development there should be a policy of opening up our latent mineral wealth. It would be sound policy for the Government to say Hoskins and Co., "We will give you the most favourable terms to come here and work our iron deposits."

Mr. Lindsay: What about trying a new Government?

The Premier: A horrible suggestion.

Mr. LAMBERT: I think it bad enough to be speaking at this late hour without taking up so volcanic a suggestion. Members generally agree that if the people of Western Australia cannot realise the great latent wealth in their minerals, efforts should be made to bring about that realisation elsewhere. We all take pride in our immigration policy, but I take more pride in finding employment for one bright Australian boy than in welcoming ten migrants.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You were not born here yourself.

Mr. LAMBERT: I was born as near to Western Australia as I possibly could be. Our first duty is to be honest to our-

selves and to the people we represent. Unless we point the way towards opening up new avenues of industry, especially through our latent mineral resources, we are not doing our duty by this country and by its boys and girls, whom existing conditions force to join the great army of unskilled labour.

Progress reported,

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 3rd November, 1926.

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

QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS EXAMINATIONS.

East Coolgardie Goldfield.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: Has Dr. Mitchell examined every man on the East Coolgardie goldfields who has been precluded under the Miners' Phthisis Act for tubercular reasons from further mining work, with a view to ascertaining whether he is unable to do any work?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to the Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.

2, Weights and Measures Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—JETTIES.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.40]: Whatever may be the result of the discussion on the second reading of the Bill, I feel sure the debate will reveal the fact that every member of the House is anxious to see that miners, who have unfortunately become infected with one or other form of miners' diseases will be rightly and fully compensated. I am desirous of assuring that something shall be done in that direction. I have always recognised that there is an obligation devolving upon the State to see, whatever the liability may be, that such men are treated in an adequate fashion. The whole question resolves itself into one regarding the method by which the necessary compensation shall be provided. One member may suggest one method, and another put forward a varying method. The Government have adopted a certain method that does not commend itself to me. Other suggestions have been made which, I am sure, will receive full consideration on the part of hon. members. Previous speakers have set out at length the steps that led to the present situation. No one can consider those facts without coming to the conclusion that a very important principle is at stake. In reviewing the facts we find that the Government, without legislative authority and in violation of the recognised practice regarding expenditure of money from Consolidated Revenue, embarked upon a business involving heavy risks. The Government now seek endorsement of their illegal act. If we as a House approve of the Bill, we shall establish a very dangerous precedent. If we were to adopt the course proposed by the Government, it would mean that all that