

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 11th August, 1926.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, LAVATORY ACCOMMODATION.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is it a fact that on the 7.50 a.m. passenger train from Northam to Perth, on Monday last, no lavatory accommodation was attached to the coaches? 2, Having regard to the higher fares charged per mile for travellers on the country railways, will he arrange that this defect be remedied in future?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, Lavatory accommodation was provided on the train. 2, Answered by No. 1.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. W. Miles on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. Lovekin on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, leave of absence for twelve consecutive sittings granted to Hon. W. H. Kitson on the ground of urgent private business.

On motion by Hon. G. A. Kempton, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. J. M. Drew on the ground of urgent private business.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [4.40]: As a re-elected member of this Chamber I appreciate the remarks that have fallen from hon. members by way of welcome. I join in expressing sympathy with former members whose luck at the elections was not good. Further, I take this opportunity of welcoming those members who now occupy the places of our former colleagues. Within the ambit of the Address-in-reply many subjects may be discussed. No fewer than 28 items are mentioned in the Governor's Speech, a fact which affords us an opportunity of reviewing past administration and also of touching on legislation which is forecasted. The most important item, undoubtedly, is finance; but that subject has already been reviewed by Mr. Ewing, and I know there are other members competent to deal with it. Therefore I shall not dwell on it. A matter which I did think might be included in the references to future legislation was the amendment of our mining laws. Deputations waited on the Minister for Mines when that gentleman was on the goldfields recently, and it was gathered that such a measure would be forthcoming this session. Neither is any reference made in the Speech to an important Royal Commission which sat during the last session and for some time during the recess—I refer to the Prices Commission. There had been laid on the Table of the House a volume containing some thousand typewritten pages of evidence taken by the Commission and ranging over the price of candles and golden syrup and many other things. It appears that the Commission went back over the same ground six months later. I believe the inquiry cost the State some thousands of pounds.

Hon. J. R. Brown: This Commission was only in keeping with other Royal Commissions. They are all the same.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the Government are of the hon. member's opinion, that Royal Commissions are all the same, which is to say that they are no good, I wonder at their wasting public money in making further appointments of Royal Commissioners.

Hon. J. R. Brown: So do I.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS : The Governor's speech also makes reference to the Federal Government's proposal to relieve this State of the financial responsibility of administering the North-West. I presume we shall hear something further on that head. However, having regard to the small amount of money that our limited population can make available for the development of the North-West, it does seem that the proposal is one that should receive early and earnest consideration. From the national standpoint our empty North undoubtedly is a menace to this State and to Australia, and with the limited finances at Western Australia's disposal there seems no prospect of any rapid development. In support of that view there is a statement made by Mr. Keenan, K.C., who conducted the State's case before the Federal Disabilities Royal Commission. Mr. Keenan said that the resources of Western Australia were incapable of enduring further strain. Subsequently, before the same Royal Commission, an ex-Premier, Mr. Scaddan, said the task of developing the North was so tremendous as to be beyond the strength of this State. Later, Mr. Collier, our present Premier, speaking in the North-West, said that the development of that territory was a subject for special treatment. A form of special treatment which might be meted out to the West in this connection would be the granting of assistance to us by the Federal Government. From what is now appearing in the public Press, it seems that a cry is being raised that the Federal Government are trying to take away a part of Western Australia and control it themselves; but unless this State is able to do more than it has done for the development of the North, the Federal Government might be regarded as fairly justified in bringing their proposal forward. The mining industry, which I have the honour to represent so far as the North-East Province is concerned, is in rather a bad way there, as it is on many other of our goldfields. I am now about to speak on behalf of citizens on the goldfields who are dependent upon the parent industry, the industry that has made Western Australia famous, and who are desirous of continuing to conduct that industry. Further, in other parts of the world there are people interested in our gold mining industry, people who have invested money in Western Australia to a considerable extent. The

only gold mining being carried on to any great extent is in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. It is not that gold is not to be found, but that the cost of extraction is too great. The costs govern the situation, and we have gradually been declining in our gold yield as a result of the greater difficulties confronting us from month to month. Some time back the Government secured the services of Mr. Kingsley Thomas to investigate the position. After making a lengthy examination, Mr. Thomas submitted a report, in the course of which he said—

If 7dwt. ore cannot be made to pay, then the book is closed and the history of gold mining written.

Our average grade ore is slightly better than that, and during past years to meet the increased costs we have been working a grade considerably higher. Even now probably we have the richest goldfields in the world, for if we look at the gold yield of the world we find that 70 per cent. of it comes from 6½ dwt. ore—I refer chiefly to South Africa, where things are done on a fairly large scale. The question arises whether the Government can galvanise enthusiasm into the industry by further helping it over the increased difficulties facing it. There are big tonnages of ore available, and if further assistance were rendered we might carry on. Our slogan must be to get back to 8dwt. ore, which was the average of that treated some time before the war. I am prepared to give credit to the Collier Government for what they have done to assist the industry, although I think it has not been sufficient to overcome our difficulties. First of all the Government helped by the abolition of fines for lease rents in arrears. That applied chiefly to small companies and prospectors. Then there was the removal of liens on abandoned leases, which had prevented other men from getting into the prospecting ground. Also the Government have assisted in respect of mining taxation. That has helped, of course, but the total amount secured from these various concessions has not been very great. I am reminded that we decided by legislation to relieve mining by exempting from income taxation calls paid to mining companies. To illustrate how easily it may happen that those intended to benefit from such legislation do not get the expected relief, let me relate an instance of a syndicate prepared to put up £5,000 to develop a lease. Instead

of the usual procedure of demanding 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and making the calls in dribs and drabs, they were prepared to spend that sum of money, believing they had something of value. Consequently, for £1 shares they decided upon 10s. on application and 10s. on allotment, and in turn they submitted a claim for deduction. However, they were informed that the deduction was for calls on shares in a company. The company had not been formed, and it appeared in the end that had they arranged for 1d. on application and 1d. on allotment, they could have deducted 19s. 10d. on every pound they put up, whereas by going about it in the way they did they deprived themselves of the benefit of the Act. The Government have also assisted the industry by a rebate on crushing at State batteries where 250 tons is treated, by a subsidy on carting, by a deduction in the charges for treatment of tailings and by a little diamond drilling. This, by the way, is expensive work, but with the drills at their disposal they have been testing in various places. Also, the Government have assisted through railway freights. However, our chief trouble is the cost per ton treated. It is more than we can carry, yet the concession in railway freights runs out at roughly 3d. per ton. When the Premier was making his policy speech at Boulder on the 17th January, 1924, he spoke encouraging words. Since then his party have assumed office and are now judged on their deeds. Further, he said the Government could afford to be generous to a declining industry. Notwithstanding that the Government have been two years in office, they have failed to stem the decline; indeed, it is now much steeper than it was previously.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Have they not assisted the Golden Horseshoe mine?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Golden Horseshoe has been assisted to the extent of £50,000.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Did any other Government do that?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: No, for this was the first of the big companies to get into difficulties. I have already said the assistance rendered by the Government has been rendered chiefly to small companies. Now we have one of the biggest producers on the Golden Mile closed down. The Premier, in reply to a deputation, said it was of no use handing money to a company if it was only

to prolong the life of the mine by a few months. That is exactly what has happened in respect of the Horseshoe.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Two years ago that mine was paying dividends.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It will be more than two years before it pays another. I should like to quote a few figures showing the decline in the industry during 1923, 1924, and 1925. For the last two years, of course, the Collier Government have been doing what they could to assist the industry. In the three years the number of our gold producing mines has declined by 57, while the number of men employed has been reduced by 477, and the ore treated by 18,529 tons. During that period of three years the production has been reduced by 54,420 fine ounces. In other words the gold revenue has declined by £268,708. Meanwhile the grade of the ore has gradually decreased by an average of 7s. 6d. per ton. Prior to the war we were crushing ore up to 10 dwts. Then, to assist the Empire with the yield, the companies dipped into some of their better grade ore. Subsequently costs went up and the companies had to take a higher than average grade to make ends meet, with the result that they cannot now mine their holdings profitably without first expending huge sums of money in reorganising their plants.

Hon. J. Ewing: The Horseshoe is a good mine.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, it is.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It requires nothing but reconstruction.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: You cannot reconstruct such a mine without putting up £200,000 for a new plant.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Horseshoe will never be a mine until they sink a new shaft.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: During the war period, the higher grade of ore was taken out of the mine without attention being given to development work. After getting down to a certain point in such a mine, development work cannot be neglected. The average annual value of gold production from 1916 to 1925 was £2,881,196, whilst in 1925 it was £1,874,320, showing a decrease of a shade over a million pounds. The actual decline for last year alone was £185,978. Those figures illustrate the rapid declension of the industry, notwithstanding the assistance rendered. We have reached the point when, should the industry further decline, the position will be reflected in the various

departments of State. On the 3rd May, 1926, there waited on the Premier at Boulder a deputation introduced by you, Sir. The Premier said the Government, subject to the approval of Parliament, would give to the goldmining industry a substantial portion of the special grant to be received from the Commonwealth. One of the deputationists, I think it was the mayor of Boulder, said it would be only wise if the Government immediately announced that they were going to give the whole of that grant to the industry. Whatever may be thought of that, I am sure members will agree that the industry is entitled to a substantial portion of that special grant. When I asked in the House a question regarding the allocation of that money, apparently the Government had not received it, and so it had not been allocated. The Chief Secretary, in answer to my question, said that as the Prime Minister had never offered, nor the State Government accepted, the sum of £450,000, it was premature to consider the disposal of that which, up to then, was merely a Federal pre-election announcement. It may have been an electioneering dodge to inform us that we were to get some of the money. On the 3rd May, five days before the Legislative Council elections, the Premier, at the Boulder Town Hall, made a similar statement, and we are wondering whether that was merely a State pre-election announcement. There is a reference in the Speech to the fact that serious consideration has been given to the best means of reviving the gold-mining industry. We did expect that something definite would be said about the intentions of the Government as regards affording assistance to other than those that are engaged in mining in a small way. Mining in a big way is concentrated almost entirely at Kalgoorlie and Boulder. There are, however, one or two other centres where there are big mines, but to those the scheme referred to—that of providing cheap power—cannot be made to apply. If assistance in that direction is to be rendered to mining, it can only be given to the principal gold producers in and around Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. Ewing: Cannot power be extended cheaply?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I think it would be too far to carry current from Collie to any part of the goldfields; the loss in transmission would be too great. The proposal of the Government is to extend the plant

that is already in existence in Kalgoorlie. Mr. Seddon, one of my colleagues, has asked for the presentation of the report on the subject of providing power from Boulder, but so far it has not been made available. A point I wish to stress is that it will be useless to provide cheaper power for the mines around Kalgoorlie unless we can see more years of life ahead of the mines. If the mines are to operate for only two or three more years, the Government will not be warranted in spending a large sum of money to provide additional and cheap power, because we know that depreciation in connection with electrical plants is considerable. As a layman, I would say that unless the Government could see 10 or 15 years of service for the new plant, they would not be justified in extending the operations. Members will recollect the occasion when Mr. Kingsley Thomas was entertained at luncheon prior to his departure. Mr. Thomas had submitted his report, and he was not privileged to refer to it in the observations that he made at that luncheon. He, however, said that he had a vivid recollection of an incident that happened 30 years before at Brakpan in South Africa, where the late Paul Kruger, then President of the South African Republic, at a luncheon tendered him, was expected to make some weighty pronouncement about the intentions of the Government respecting the opening of a power plant at the Witwatersrand mines. In a jocular way Mr. Thomas told us that, during the luncheon, a band was playing outside, and though the guests waited for the pronouncement from the President of the Republic, he concluded his speech without any allusion to the power plant, and the band outside struck up the air "And all he said was Ting-a-ling-a-ling." This story could well be told of the Premier of Western Australia. If the Government were to put into action what the Premier led us to hope would happen when he spoke at the Boulder gathering, we would have no cause for complaint. A suggestion has been made that gold mining should be subsidised by means of a bonus. It will be remembered that last session both Houses of the Legislature carried a resolution to that effect. We also had a Commission in Western Australia inquiring into our disabilities as a result of Federation. We have been told by the Honorary Minister that Western Australia was under a lasting debt of gratitude to the mining industry for what it had done for the State.

The Honorary Minister: Yes. I said that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am glad to hear the Honorary Minister say so. We were told also that because of the existing financial stringency, the State Government could not afford to give a bonus. I suggested that it might be possible for the Government to pay the bonus out of the Federal grant, as Mr. Bruce at that time told us he was confident that the grant would be made for a number of years. The position now is that the grant has been made for one year. I believe that, had the conference respecting the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States proved successful, the Commonwealth would have made a substantial grant to Western Australia covering a period of years, a grant that would have enabled the State Government to assist the mining industry. We did not ask that the State should give us the bonus; the request was made by the Federal Government, and, although the Commission took evidence in Western Australia, not one member of the Government came forward to tender evidence on the subject of the bonus. I asked a question as to whether it was correct that Mr. Munsie, a member of the Cabinet, had said that, so far as he was concerned, not one penny of the £450,000 grant from the Commonwealth would go to the mining industry. I desired to know whether that statement correctly interpreted the views of the Government. The reply I got was that the views of the Government would be defined if, and when, the amount mentioned was received.

Hon. J. Cornell: Was that a reply or an evasion?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has it been received?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Premier told us that it had been paid in monthly instalments and that the final payment was made in June last. Therefore, the Government have the money and I remind them of their promise that an announcement would be made after the money had been paid to the State. We did think that some proposal would be put forward, and that if the Federal Government did not see fit to grant the gold bonus, the State Government might go on a fifty-fifty basis with the Federal Government. That would enable the State Government to police the gold being produced throughout the State, and in that way perhaps gain the desired end. If such a course were followed, it would be an incentive to some people to again prospect old lodes, and to others to look for new ones. Now we are told that the newly appointed Migration Commission will have this matter brought

under their notice. If the inclination and the will are there, a solution will be found, but I do hope that the charge laid by Mr. Kingsley Thomas against some of the mine managers of inertness, inactivity and inability will not be proved to be founded on fact in respect of the Government. A new process for the treatment of ores, known as the flotation process, has been engaging the attention of those connected with the industry for quite a long while, and it may prove a step forward which will materially assist metallurgy. Satisfactory results have been obtained by Messrs. Winter and Moore, who have been experimenting at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines for a number of months. In submitting a report to the Government the other day, they indicated that the process can be applied economically to the treatment of gold ores, and they declare it to be a commercial proposition and a big factor in the reduction of costs. For the information of members who, perhaps, are not acquainted with the process, let me point out that at the present time, in the treatment of ore, we crush from the pithead the whole of the stone that is raised, and through the process of roasting and cyaniding, the whole of the ore is treated. Under the flotation process the ore is first crushed and 15 per cent. floated off as concentrates. The other 85 per cent. is immediately discarded without roasting or cyaniding. The 15 per cent. that carries the concentrates is again put through the same process, and I believe it is eliminated to about one-eighth of the original tonnage. Should this method prove successful and be adopted generally by the different mines, it will be a great factor in the reduction of costs. It will mean reducing the washing, agitation, cyaniding and filtering in proportion to the tonnage treated. It will mean something like 12½ tons for the whole of the parcel treated, and the elimination of the remainder of the various processes now availed of. This can be done on the Golden Mile with ore containing from 6 to 8 per cent. of minerals. If flotation can reduce costs by a considerable amount, it will mean a great thing for the industry, enabling lower grade ores to be treated. According to the figures supplied in the reports to the Minister, it has been shown that the ore can be treated for about 8s. 2d. per ton, whereas it is costing more than twice that amount at present, the cost varying on the several mines. In no one experiment has more than 1¼ dwts., equal in value to about 5s., been left in the tail-

ings, and the chemists say they will reduce that amount still further. Recently I came across a reference to flotation in the "Engineering and Mining Journal Press" of New York, under date 27th March last. The article referred to a discussion that had taken place on this question before the members of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. As it has a bearing on the point at issue, I will quote the following paragraph:—

Flotation has revolutionised and is revolutionising methods of ore treatment both in the mill and smelter. Perhaps it is the most important single process in the economical recovery of metals; but the method of "trial and error" remains as the only reliable way to determine just how to use it.

Dr. Edwards, one of the London directors of the Perseverance Mine at Kalgoorlie, paid a visit to Western Australia recently. After he had investigated the treatment processes now being followed on the Golden Mile where dry crushing is utilised, he submitted a proposal to the State Government. It has been stated that he informed the Government that if they would erect a pilot plant, at a cost of from £20,000 to £25,000, alongside the dry crushing plant, the plants would be worked exclusively on ore from the mines adjacent to the existing plant, and if the pilot plant proved successful, the company would take it over from the Government in due course. How accurate that statement is, I cannot say, but I would like the Minister, when replying, to give the House some indication of what Dr. Edwards' proposal was. If what I have indicated was the proposal submitted, I would like to know why it was rejected. It appears to me that if what I have indicated is correct, an excellent offer was made to the Government. The erection of the plant would not have involved the expenditure of a huge sum of money. I understand the Government submitted a proposal to the companies that there should be erected a co-operative plant for the treatment of the whole of the ore from the various mines. The statement has been made that many of the mining companies could not see their way clear to work on a co-operative basis. The point I wish to make is that I consider the Government would do something substantial for the gold mining industry if they were to erect a pilot plant, taking as a basis the experiments made by the authorities at the School of Mines, and thus prove whether the flotation

process can be made successful or otherwise. If that question were determined definitely, substantial help might be afforded the mines. If we can greatly reduce the cost of gold production, it will be of material benefit to the State. I will not proceed further under that heading, but will refer to an important matter than has engaged our attention on the goldfields since Parliament last met. I refer to the operations of the Miners' Phthisis Act Amendment Act that was passed last session. This is a burning question on the goldfields, affecting a majority of the men working in the gold mining industry. In the course of the Premier's policy speech, it was set out that Labour proposed to extend the scope of the Miners' Phthisis Act so as to render miners concerned still greater aid. The expression of the Government's intentions impressed thousands of miners. As hon. members will remember, we were discussing the amendment of the Miners' Phthisis Act, which provided that the amount available to the men would be in accordance with the scale of sustenance payments set out in the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Some of the men argued that under the amended legislation, they were being deprived of what the Act originally intended they should receive. That was, that they should get the standard rate of pay that they were earning at the time such men were asked to leave the mines. When the miners realised what this meant, they assembled in large numbers and held several meetings. Some of the speakers had hard things to say concerning the powers that be, for having sought to deprive them of what they considered were their rights. Ministers and goldfields members were reminded of promises that had been made to them. It so happened that the A.L.P. selection ballots were about to take place. Nominations had been called for and it was an opportune time for the whole of the men affected to meet Ministers of the Crown. It was their trump card. They used threats and said that if they did not get a fair deal from the Government under the miners' phthisis regulations, not one of the Parliamentarians would have his nomination endorsed at the selection ballot. As the result the Government framed the scale of payments that have been made available for the men. These were fixed at half wages for the miners, £1 a week for the wives, and 8s. 6d. a week for each child under 16.

So far as I can ascertain, however, there is no provision for the continuity of those payments. It is believed that they are made at the will of the Treasurer and because of this, the miners are much concerned as to their position in the future. These men have been ordered to leave the mines and have actually done so, and were to receive from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund amounts ranging up to 25s. a week according to circumstances. Immediately preceding the Legislative Council elections, however, they received the higher amounts they considered they were entitled to. Despite that, the men wish to know what security they have for the future. Some of the miners who have received these amounts have had deducted from their payments sums equivalent to pensions they are drawing from the Commonwealth Government. Any person who receives from the State Government a sum of money, has no restriction placed upon him, such as those imposed upon a person who is in receipt of a Commonwealth pension. He is restricted to what property he possesses and what he may earn. I understand from a statement made by the Minister for Mines that it was discovered recently that an ex-soldier had been turned down. He was in receipt of a pension and that amount had been deducted from the payments made by the State Government. On his attention having been drawn to the matter, the Minister saw to it that the soldier received the money he was entitled to and his decision was made retrospective. There are some, however, who, before the payments were made, had to take steps to secure a pension from the Commonwealth Government and those men have had the amount deducted as I have indicated. It will be seen, therefore, that the State Government are not paying half wages to all the miners, but to some of them only. The Act provides for men with a clean bill of health being allowed to work in the mines since the proclamation of the third schedule of the Act, which relates to compensation. All that is required of the individual is that he shall go to a doctor and obtain from him a certificate setting out that he is not suffering from tuberculosis. If he is able to present such a certificate he is able to get work on the mines.

Hon. J. Cornell: If ever there was a farce perpetrated, it is that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: And it will become more apparent later on. A man has to undergo an X-ray examination and has to pass through the hands of three doctors before he can be excluded from a mine, but to secure employment in a mine, all that is necessary is for a man to go to a doctor and procure a certificate setting out that he is not suffering from tuberculosis. With such a cursory examination we may find that men from other parts of the world who have been badly dusted although they may not have tuberculosis, will be able to enter the mines and work, and once they enter the mines they will be entitled to compensation if they break down.

Hon. J. Cornell: Some experts consider that there cannot be a proper diagnosis without laboratory tests.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is so. Something more should be required respecting the men going into the mines, if we are to keep the mines clean once they have been cleaned up. The Act has not been proclaimed in respect of many of the goldfield areas, but has been proclaimed generally in connection with the Golden Mile. No man suffering from tuberculosis can work in any of those mines. From the latest information available, by means of questions asked in this Chamber, it would appear that of the 3,355 men who have been examined at the Kalgoorlie laboratory, not one has entered a protest against the examination. I desire to pay a tribute to the men in that respect, for at the outset it was feared that some of them might object to the laboratory examination. Of the men examined 106 were found to be suffering from tuberculosis, which is equivalent to 3.16 per cent. of those examined. Those men have been excluded from work in the mines. Those suffering from symptoms of miners' phthisis totalled 560, equivalent to 16.69 per cent. Therefore of the total number of men examined to date, which includes the men engaged in the big mines, the number affected is 666, or 19.85 per cent. In other words, roughly 20 per cent. of the men are affected with tuberculosis or symptoms, but only 3.16 per cent. of the whole of the men examined are tubercular cases. The remainder of the men showing symptoms of the disease have been notified, in conformity with the Act, that it will be advisable for them to leave the industry. Altogether 560 men have been notified that in their own interests it would be advisable

for them to seek other avenues of employment, and the Government are preparing to assist them to go on the land. I believe that in South Africa there is a system of classifying the men in two stages, according to their condition. There the third stage includes men who break down and have to leave the mines. We have 560 men affected, but we do not know whether they belong to the primary or secondary stage. A man who has never worked in a deep mine or in a very bad place might be slightly affected by dust, and still might be notified that it would be advisable for him to leave the industry.

Hon. J. K. Brown: A man ought to leave the industry before he goes into it!

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Another man might have worked in deep mines and bad places, and might not be strong constitutionally, and he would probably be badly affected, though he might not have broken down or been in such a condition as to be told that he should leave the mines. If these men were classified in the primary or secondary stage and notified of it, the information would be welcome. Great consternation prevailed when the men received their certificates. Dr. Sayers and Dr. Pitchford, American authorities who visited us on one occasion, spoke of the mental effect on men, suffering from tuberculosis, who had been notified of their condition and thus practically sentenced to death. The anxiety of having to leave their work and of having no other employment to go to preyed on their minds. The Government of this State, however, have been doing what they can to prevent that sort of thing occurring here. Of the 560 men affected, fully 50 per cent. are anxious to know what stage the disease has reached. If the Act were amended to provide for the doctors informing them of their exact condition——

Hon. J. R. Brown: You wish to make thermometers of them.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I would make a thermometer of the hon. member if it would do any good. The examinations conducted at the laboratory disclose the information. The statute provides that if a man is suffering from symptoms, he shall be notified. All of them have been duly notified, but have not been informed of the stage that the disease has reached. One man, a tributor, approached me last week and said, "I want you to find out what position I am

in." I replied, "I cannot find out for you; neither the laboratory nor the Minister is at liberty to disclose it." If the Act were amended to provide for the classification of affected men and for notifying them accordingly, they would know whether they ought to leave the industry immediately.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Is not that being done now?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There should be nothing to prevent its being done at present, but it is not being done.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Surely that could be done by administrative act, without amending the law.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Act is not working as satisfactorily as it might do. A tributor informed me that he was earning £11 a week in a tribute that would last another seven or eight months. He said, "If I am only in the primary stage, I shall see the eight months out."

Hon. J. R. Brown: It might see him out, too.

Hon. J. Cornell: He might not be one iota worse for continuing if he is in a fairly good place.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Quite so; he might be able to carry on. The point is that he and others desire to know just what their condition is. If the Act were amended, these men could obtain the information. Some men, in their anxiety to ascertain their condition, are inquiring what the fees would be to have a private examination in order that they might secure their charts, take them to their own doctors, and obtain their advice.

Hon. J. Cornell: The law says that a man shall be notified. What objection would there be to a man being notified that he was in the first, second or third stage?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There could be no objection, but no provision is made to authorise the supplying of that information.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You are making assertions reflecting on the Government of the day.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am not; I am merely offering a suggestion. My desire is to assist the men. Again, no provision is made for periodical examinations after a man has been examined once. The first man was examined about 12 months ago and was declared to be unaffected with tuberculosis, though he may have been "dusty." If any real good is to come from the examina-

tions, the men must be re-examined periodically so that if they are then found to be tubercular, they can be excluded from the mines. I understand from replies to questions received by Mr. Cornell that the Government are considering the advisableness of having continuous examinations in order that there shall be no risk of tubercular miners affecting men suffering from silicosis. Some years ago a suggestion was made, I believe by Mr. Dodd when he was associated with the mine workers' relief fund, that affected miners might be settled on the land. I am pleased that the Government are making provision for men, who have been notified that it would be advisable for them to leave the mining industry, to settle on some blocks that will be thrown open shortly along the Norseman-Esperance railway. The Labour Party for two years denounced the Mitchell Government for not proclaiming the Miners' Phthisis Act, but after they assumed office it took them two years to make up their minds to proclaim it. They knew that a large number of men would have to be taken out of the mines and it had previously been suggested that such men should be settled on the land, but it was not until the examinations were completed to the extent of 560 miners receiving notice to leave the industry, that the Government did consider it. Then it was discovered that before the men could be put on the land surveys would have to be carried out and roads would have to be constructed. Since the Horseshoe mine closed down men have been employed to clear roads to make provision for the affected miners. I suggest that settlement along the Esperance railway be not confined to men suffering from symptoms of miners' phthisis. Some of the men are tubercular, but are not badly affected and could do light work. Some of them have sons who are prepared to accompany their fathers on the land, rather than that their fathers should receive compensation from the Government and they themselves remain in the mines. An affected miner receives half-pay and if he has a wife and family, further consideration is granted him and he is not allowed to work. If he was allotted a block of land, his sons would be potential farmers.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where are you going to get the land?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Government say they have hundreds of blocks along the Norseman-Esperance railway, and the suggestion is that the men be formed into groups and be granted assistance by the

State. When I speak of groups, I do not suggest that they should receive so much sustenance per day. The idea is that the ordinary scale of assistance granted by the Agricultural Bank would be applied to that district. Another matter to which I wish to refer is the policy of preference to unionists, as applied by the powers-that-be. This policy is operating in Government departments and in other places, and we on the goldfields have recently had experience of a system of giving preference not only to unionists but to men who are members of unions affiliated with the Trades Hall. Against such discrimination, I enter a most emphatic protest.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You need not open your mouth against the Trades Hall.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is preference against preference.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Honorary Minister has informed us that this is not the policy of the Government, but I emphasise the fact that men who have belonged to unions for 25 or 30 years have been the victims of such discrimination. When the Horseshoe mine closed down, a large number of men were thrown out of work and, to provide employment for them, the Government put in hand the clearing of roads as relief work. When the men asked for employment, a demand was made for their A.W.U. ticket. As they failed to produce it, their names were not enrolled as applicants for work.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Quite right too.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not agree. That amounts to conscripting men into the union that is desirous of forming one big union in Western Australia.

Hon. J. R. Brown: There is a big capitalistic organisation. Why should we not have one big union?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The hon. member may have located such an organisation, but I have not.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There is a good understanding amongst them.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: With whom?

Hon. E. H. Gray: With the employers.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have no understanding with any employer or employee. I want to see them get a fair deal, hence my protest to-day. I know of men who applied there for work. They said, "Can I not get work unless I am in the A.W.U.?" They were told that if they went down to the job the union representative would stand them on the bank.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Where did you get that phrase?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It means that if a man went to look for work under these conditions, he would be told to get out in language that was more forcible than polite.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The doctors do something like that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I suggest the hon. member should ask Dr. Saw.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I asked the question in pure innocence.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Nothing would so undermine confidence in the Government if this policy were pursued. I could quote many instances of this kind. Correspondence has been sent to the Premier by some of his constituents who were looking for work. They were members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union. They were told that they could not get a job unless they were in the A.W.U. One man went to the secretary and said, "I want to get out of my union; what will it cost?" The secretary replied that it would cost him 13s. 6d. to leave the union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He would not be driving engines and making roads.

Hon. J. R. Brown: How many times do they affiliate and re-affiliate?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They are not affiliated with the Trades Hall. They were affiliated on one occasion, but, because some of them did not believe in conscription, they were fired out.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: They are not political supporters of the Government.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Unionists are made while you wait at the Labour Bureau.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There was a strike of unemployed at the bureau last week because of the rotten system of demanding these tickets. Applications were invited for 16 men one morning, but all the unemployed decided to go on strike because of the necessity for producing tickets.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You cannot board a railway train without your ticket. That is wrong information.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is not true.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: This is no new procedure. Why were there riots on the Golden Mile? They were brought about because of the attempt to force men from one organisation into another?

Hon. J. R. Brown: What organisation were they forced into?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They were not forced at all. These men were determined

to preserve their right to work and to join any union they liked.

Hon. J. R. Brown: To what union did they belong?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There are 14 unions up there. I did not complete my story about the man who paid 13s. 6d. to get out of his union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He must have been in arrears.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Not at all. A man cannot leave an organisation without giving three months notice. This man paid the money and received his clearance. He was told that he would not be accepted without a clearance. He had been connected with the union for eight years. He produced his clearance, and put down another 25s. to become a member of the A.W.U. for 12 months. It thus cost him £1 18s. 6d. to have his name placed on the list, but he has not received work yet.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is still "on the bank."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: This is unjust and unfair to those men.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you suggest that every man has to pay three months' subscription to his old union before he joins another?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: A man cannot leave his organisation under three months' notice.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You can draw your clearance and join another organisation without doing that.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You could leave the Labour Party without giving three months' notice.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In respect of some unions a man cannot leave without giving notice. He can be a member of the A.W.U. or any other organisation, but the Statute provides that if there is a case pending before the court he cannot leave that union. The A.W.U. is a federated organisation, and is everlastingly before the court. If there is a dispute pending, no man can leave that organisation. Does the hon. member doubt my word?

Hon. J. R. Brown: We know all about that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I could produce to the hon. member cases that were heard in Kalgoorlie before the Arbitration Court, which prove what I have said. For instance, a man had received his clearance, but the point was raised that he was not entitled to get it. He had joined another union be-

cause under the Federal award he could get a higher rate of pay. When he sued for his money it was proved that he had illegally obtained a clearance from the former union.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You say he got it illegally.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The hon. member was in court and must remember the case. The judge ruled that the man was not entitled to get out of the former union, because there was a case pending before the court. The result was that the employer won the case and was awarded costs. I frequently read the "Worker." I like to hear both sides of the case, particularly on important matters such as the referendum.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You cannot get both sides in the "Worker."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I got one side from that source, and the other side from the Melbourne "Argus." I wish to quote from the "Westralian Worker" of July 24th, 1926. When speaking upon the referendum proposals the journal said—

By this means a system of industrial conscription would be inaugurated. Unionists covered by this operation would be deprived of every pretence of liberty.

That is what is going on now.

They would be as utterly enslaved as if the brand of the master was burnt on their skins, and a collar of iron were clamped round their necks.

I can find no language that would be more applicable to the case I have mentioned than these words I have quoted from the "Worker."

Hon. H. Stewart: Is that an editorial?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes.

Hon. H. Stewart: I thought it might have been the words of some Minister.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is nicely put, and exactly expresses the present position.

The Honorary Minister: Probably it is language that you yourself used on some previous occasion.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It accurately expresses the position that arose in the circumstances I have mentioned. If that was not purely industrial conscription, I do not know the meaning of the words.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: It is worse than that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: When a man is conscripted into a union he has to do many things he does not approve of.

Hon. A. Burvill: It is the policy of the Government.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: As no one has been voicing any protest against this practice, I

am putting one forward from the point of view of the goldfields.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You do not cut any ice.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I may not do so from the point of view of the hon. member. A man who is conscripted has to subscribe to things of which he does not approve.

The Honorary Minister: Did your friend give three months' notice to the Drivers' Union?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have here another extract from the "Worker." This particular issue contains photographs of the Honorary Minister, another Cabinet Minister, and some lesser lights. The report from which I intend to quote deals with the fortieth convention of the Australian Workers' Union. It deals with the subject of men being not only conscripted, but being obliged to pay for the privilege.

At the last annual convention the matter of the labour daily 10s. levy was discussed. This levy has been imposed from year to year since 1921-22 on new members joining the union. This year it was struck again. Notice is hereby given that old or new members who have not taken out the levy are requested to do so. Please note that members are not asked to take the levy twice.

That is very generous of them.

Those who have not taken the levy will not be considered financial, and thus are not eligible for nomination for office.

When a man is conscripted into the organisation, he has to pay 10s. towards the newspaper that he may not require. That 10s. is taken from everyone. It is not declared that they must take the "Bulletin," the "Argus," or the "Worker." They have to subscribe to the labour paper, otherwise they will not be eligible to hold office. That sort of thing is unfair and unjust.

Hon. J. R. Brown: A man may be conscripted for service at the front. You did not go to the front.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I made an effort to go.

Hon. J. R. Brown: We know all about that.

The PRESIDENT: I suggest to hon. members that they might allow Mr. Harris to proceed with his speech. They will have ample opportunity of speaking later on.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I had not intended to make these quotations, but to keep them for another occasion, but I have thought it wise to use them now.

Hon. J. Cornell: To put the sting into the tail.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There is more sting in the remainder of the report regarding the convention of the Australian Workers' Union. The report says—

We employed during the year over 100 field organisers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I should like to see them employ 300.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They are only the industrial organisers. The report continues—

Most of them were employed the whole time; the rest temporarily on seasonal occupations. All of these men are active industrial and political propagandists. Taking the whole of Australia, we spent during the year £33,000 on organisers; on newspaper £22,000, and for fees and sustentation to Labour Party Executive £5,000, making a total in round figures of £60,000 spent for the year, and the results obtained are shown in the number of awards secured and policed, the representation obtained in Parliament, and the upkeep of two "Worker" newspapers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And the employers have spent that much in one election.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Whatever a man is called upon to subscribe to his union, a percentage of the amount is used for political purposes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is a good speculation for the workers.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not think half the employers have subscribed 1s. a year for the same purpose as industrial organisations have done.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Where do they get money from?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not get money from anywhere.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I mean the people who oppose Labour candidates. They have money in abundance.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I opposed a Labour candidate, and hope to oppose him again. I am here now because I opposed him. I paid the whole of my election expenses, and found it a fairly expensive matter. No one gave me a shilling. I do not think the hon. member interjecting found himself in that position when he fought his election at the same time as I fought mine.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I had a crowd of workers behind me.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: You conscripted the crowd behind you.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That would be a natural corollary to the workers being en-

scripted industrially. There are many other subjects I should like to deal with, but I have already taken a little longer than I intended.

Hon. J. R. Brown: You have had a good innings.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: As the hon. member suggests, I have had my innings; and I shall be delighted to sit down and give him every attention when he has his innings. I support the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply.

On motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen, debate adjourned.

RESOLUTION — FINANCIAL RELATIONS, COMMONWEALTH AND STATE.

Assembly's Message.

Message received from the Assembly requesting the concurrence of the Council in the following resolution:—"That this House is of the opinion that there should be no departure from the basis upon which the financial relations of the Commonwealth and States have rested, without the fullest consideration at a constitutional session of the Federal Parliament and the approval of the people by referendum; and that no financial scheme should be assented to by the States which does not provide for their receiving from the Commonwealth Government an annual payment of not less than 25s. per head of population."

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.