

majority vote of the Committee that defeated the amendment.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 15th January, 1909.

	PAGE
Questions: Mortuary caretaker, Boulder	1439
American Fleet Reception, Mr. North	1440
Railway Advertising	1440
Machinery Department, Officer's Dismissal,	
Examination of Hon. T. F. O. Brimage	1440
Water Pipes, York-Beverley Extension	1441
State Batteries Inspector	1441
Papers: Savings Bank Loan to Mr. F. Stone	1441
Timber Tramline, Laverton-Lancefield	1441
Papers presented	1441
Annual Estimates, Votes and Items discussed	1441

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

QUESTION—MORTUARY CARE-TAKER, BOULDER.

Mr. GILL asked the Premier: 1, Did the district officer give his reasons for recommending Constable Fortescue in preference to Constable Gallagher for the position of caretaker of the Boulder mortuary? 2, Did the district officer make the recommendation on the grounds of seniority? 3, Was seniority the grounds for the appointment, if so, why was a departure made in the subsequent appointment of Constable Gallagher? 4, Constable Gallagher having been stationed at Boulder for seven years, with fixed hours of duty, why has he been exempt from day and night duty the same as other constables have to perform? 5, Do Constables Spalding and Hunt, the rejected applicants, reside closer to the mortuary than Constable Gallagher? 6, What is the length of service of the three persons. Constables Spalding, Hunt,

and Gallagher? 7, What, if anything, disqualifies Constable Spalding for the position of caretaker of the Boulder mortuary? 8, Has Constable Gallagher any special qualification for the position, if so, what is it? 9, Is not Constable Spalding responsible for the removal to the morgue of all persons killed on the mines; also for the care and disposition of the property of same, and generally for procuring all necessary information in connection with such accidents? If so, is he not on these grounds, together with seniority of service, more eligible than Constable Gallagher for the position of caretaker of the mortuary?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Constable Gallagher was first recommended for the position by the district officer, but on inquiry by the Commissioner of Police as to whether any senior constable would be willing to take the appointment, Constables Fortescue and Chilcott's names were submitted by the district officer and the former selected. 2, Yes; see 1. 3, Seniority and suitability, but not necessarily seniority. There were special reasons for the appointment of Constable Gallagher, viz., previous applications and recommendations for the position, and having temporarily performed the duties of caretaker satisfactorily on two previous occasions. Moreover, the morgue is attached to the Boulder station, not Fimiston, and the position has previously been held by a Boulder constable. 4, As senior reserve constable he necessarily performs day duty only, and would be exempt from night duty whilst in that position. 5, Constable Spalding is living nearer to the mortuary than Constable Gallagher; Constable Hunt is living on the block adjoining P.C. Gallagher's residence. 6, Constable Spalding joined 15th September, 1896 (12 years). Constable Hunt joined 3rd November, 1899 (9 years). Constable Gallagher joined 1st November, 1900 (8 years). 7, Constable Spalding being in charge of Fimiston station (the morgue is attached to Boulder station) the work debars him from carrying out the duties of caretaker of the morgue. 8, No special qualifications are needed. 9, (1) Yes; (2) No.

QUESTION—AMERICAN FLEET RECEPTION, MR. NORTH.

Mr. TROY asked the Premier : 1, Was Mr. F. D. North a member of the American Fleet Reception Committee. 2, By whose request was he appointed on the committee ? 3, What special qualifications did he possess which necessitated his appointment ? 4, Being a public servant whose services could have been demanded if required, where was the necessity for his being made a member of the reception committee ? 5, Did Mr. North travel free to Albany and back to Perth, by virtue of the possession of a railway pass ? 6, Were vouchers submitted showing the manner in which Mr. North's expenditure was incurred ? 7, Is the Premier aware that during Mr. North's stay in Albany he was the guest of Dr. Everard ? 8, If vouchers were submitted showing the nature of the expenditure incurred by Mr. North, was one included from Dr. Everard for this accommodation ? 9, Did the other members of the reception committee put in a claim for their expenses ? 10, If so, what amount were they paid ? 11, Did Mr. North perform any special work for the committee which necessitated payment ? 12, If not, why was his claim paid ?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The Executive Committee. 3, His previous experience as a member of the Royal Reception Committee on the occasion of the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York—both in Melbourne and Perth—and on other committees of a similar character. 4, Answered by No. 3. 5, Yes. 6, Vouchers were submitted for the amount of travelling allowances in accordance with the Public Service Regulations. 7, No. 8, No. 9, No. 10, Answered by No. 9. 11, No. The usual allowance conceded to officers when travelling on official business was paid to him. 12, Answered by No. 6.

QUESTION—RAILWAY ADVERTISING.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Railways : 1. Was the cost of advertising in connection with the Government Rail-

ways included in the return presented to Parliament on January 5th, 1909 ? 2. If not, what was the approximate cost of Railway advertising for the twelve months ended December, 1908 ?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, No. 2, £800.

QUESTIONS (2)—MACHINERY DEPARTMENT.

Officer's Dismissal.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Premier : Is it a fact that an officer of the Machinery Department who was discharged on the recommendation of the Chief Inspector for incompetence has since been appointed to a Government position and is at present employed as engineer in charge of the Kalgoorlie abattoirs ?

The PREMIER replied : I would point out that the abattoirs are not yet handed over to the Agricultural Department. I do not know whether the hon. member is aware of that. The formal answer to the question is: Yes. He was recommended by the Public Works Department, by the manager of the Government Refrigerating Works, and we had no knowledge that he had been discharged from another department. During the time he has been with the department, from the end of May, 1908, he has given both Mr. Beasley and Mr. Cairns every satisfaction.

Examination of Hon. T. F. O. Brimage.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Minister for Mines : Why has he not insisted on Mr. T. F. Brimage presenting himself for examination and obtaining the certificate required by the law after the first permit was granted, and in accordance with the conditions under which it was granted ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied : The granting of a permit is not necessarily conditional upon the subsequent obtaining of a certificate. I considered that the intention of the Act was complied with when I granted a further permit.

QUESTION—WATER PIPES, YORK-BEVERLEY EXTENSION.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works : 1, What amount was the lowest tender submitted for pipes by private manufacturers required for the York-Beverley water scheme extension ? 2, What was the amount paid to the Government Workshops for the pipes used ? 3, Were the pipes supplied similar to quality and requirements as per specifications private tenderers were supplied with ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1 (a), For 10,000 lengths of 6in. pipes:—Public Works Department, £10,750; Hoskins & Co., £12,458. (b), For 74,000 feet of 8in. pipes, class A:—Monteath Bros., £17,267. (c), For 12,500 feet of 8in. pipes, class B:—Public Works Department, £1,962 for 9ft. lengths cast on a bank; Monteath Bros., £2,344 for 12ft. lengths cast vertically. 2, £10,750 for 6in. pipes referred to in question 1. Regarding Class C pipes, the difference of £382 between the Public Works Department and next lowest tender is reduced to £282 when allowance is made for enhanced cost of loading and jointing the shorter lengths made by the Public Works Department. Moreover, while the Public Works Department could only cast on a bank, Monteath Bros. could furnish the better pipe resulting from a vertical cast. To have accepted the Public Works Department contract for 8in. pipes, so as to complete both 8in. and 6in. in contract time, would have involved an increase in plant and the stoppage of the casting of smaller diameter pipes which were urgently required. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERIES INSPECTOR.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Mines : Has an appointment been made to the position of Inspector of State Batteries or any similar position ? If so, when was the appointment made, and who was appointed ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, An appointment has been made of an Inspector of State Batteries.

2, Mr. A. M. Howe was appointed on the 12th April, 1906. The Minister added: In connection with this answer I do not know whether the hon. member referred to the position of inspector or superintendent.

Mr. Holman : Has any appointment been made recently ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : To the head position ?

Mr. Holman : No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : This is the only appointment.

PAPERS—SAVINGS BANK LOAN TO MR. P. STONE.

On motion by Mr. Holman ordered : That all papers in connection with the loan of £1,500 to Mr. P. Stone by the Savings Bank, and all papers and records in connection with proposed sale to or purchase by the Government of 10 acres or less for recreation reserve or other purpose at Walkaway be laid upon the Table.

PAPERS—TIMBER TRAMLINE, LAVERTON-LANCEFIELD.

On motion by Mr. Taylor ordered : That all papers in connection with the granting of a permit to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Firewood Co. to lay a tramway line from the railway station at Laverton to the Lancefield Gold Mines be laid upon the Table of the House.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier : Lands Office Decentralisation Scheme, Correspondence.

By the Minister for Mines : Papers relating to the prosecution of Mr. Brimage by the Inspector of Mines at Malcolm.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 14th January, Mr. Daglish in the Chair.

Department of Mines (Hon. H. Gregory, Minister).

Vote—Mines Generally, £45,727 :

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) : In dealing with the

Estimates in connection with the Mines Department, all will agree that the one object in view is the successful development of the gold mining industry, although we may differ to some extent as to the methods to be employed. There may be many members on the other side of the House who think that perhaps more efficient methods could be adopted for the purpose of developing the industry; but I feel satisfied that everyone is united in the desire to try and do all possible to build up this industry which has meant so much to Western Australia. We all recognise the great change in the conditions that came over Western Australia through the discovery of gold in this country, and that through the large sums of money expended in the development of our mining industry we have assisted in building up other industries in this State. Many people, both farmers and pastoralists, have made fortunes from the discovery of gold, and there is not the slightest doubt that the great market the fields have provided for the people will continue for many years equally as good as it has been in the past. It therefore behoves every politician, every farmer, every pastoralist and manufacturer, and every person having vested interests in this State, to watch as carefully as they can the progress of the industry, and see that generous assistance is given towards its development. It is also our duty to do all we can to prevent booms or the promotion of "wild cats," and see that the workers are protected, and to try and engender a mutually friendly spirit between the mine owners and employees, as it is for the good of both and also of the State to have them working in harmony with the one desire of developing the mining industry of the State. I have no intention to-day of going into ancient history, but it is as well to draw attention to the advance that the industry has made since the time of Bayley's discovery at Coolgardie. We continually made new discoveries; capital came into the country and the industry made marvellous progress, until, I think it was about 1903, we reached the zenith of

our prosperity. We produced gold amounting to 2,064,000 ounces in that year and since then there has been a slight reduction each year in the production. The number of men employed, however, has not decreased. There is no doubt that mining to-day is carried out more efficiently and more in the nature of genuine mining work is being done than in former days. Our mines were worked then more for speculative purposes than is the case to-day. There has been more efficient machinery introduced and a big reduction has been made in the working costs, and while we find that to-day the value of the production is not so great as it was in 1903, yet our working conditions are ever so much better, while owing to the introduction of efficient machinery, the mines, which in those days could not be worked at a profit, are now showing profitable results. I am justified in saying that those boom days have gone, and that the big mines in the State are now being worked, not by the same speculative methods that were adopted in the past, and the people are looking upon them as investments. During the past few years those who have been interested in mining have become somewhat pessimistic, believing that no new big mines were being opened up, but a large amount of prospecting has taken place, and generous efforts have been made by the Government to try and assist those prospectors. At the same time it was felt that the ore reserves in the big mines were becoming depleted, and it was on that account that many persons became pessimistic in regard to the future of mining. The public were then not aware of the great hidden wealth of the Kalgoorlie field, and we must congratulate ourselves on the wonderful results that have lately accrued owing to the splendid developments which have taken place in the many deep levels of the big Kalgoorlie mines. Feeling the great necessity of opening up new mines, generous assistance—I think I can use the word generous—was given by the Government for the purpose of trying to induce people to prospect, and having prospected shows, to try and develop

them. Camels were lent as well as horses and carts to people who elected to go out prospecting. The Mines Water Supply Department were instructed to go into the back country even before the prospector got there to put down bore holes in areas that were thought to be auriferous. Recently a gentleman who came down from the Pilbara field praised the department for the work they had done in putting down a number of bore wells in the Pilbara field to supply water to the prospectors, and to enable prospecting work to be done in places which would otherwise have been quite inaccessible. In many other districts large sums of money had been expended upon water supplies to promote the mining industry. We have in addition the battery system with the attendant rebates which are granted for developmental work. In connection with the battery system, hon. members know that under the old system we had what is known as the sliding scale, wherein we charged 10s. to 14s. a ton, according to the value of the ore which was treated. In December last year owing to the many requests which were made to me I abolished the sliding scale and instituted the system of charging 10s. per ton regardless of what the value of the ore was. The reduction has averaged no less than 3s. per ton; that was the average value of the reduction made in January of last year, and in addition to that we altered the system whereby instead of paying customers for the value of the result we also arranged to pay for the sands and slimes. This system has given us a good deal of financial trouble; the battery department have no capital and it has been necessary for them to get advances to enable them to carry on. Efforts were being made by the department to get a couple of plants started which would be able to treat slimes much more economically than was done by the filter presses. Goldfields members know that we have two filter presses, one at Mulline and the other at Norseman, but I feel sure that the new plants when erected will do the work much more

effectively, and we will be able to get a much better percentage of extraction, and get that extraction at considerably less expense than by means of the filter presses. I believe some criticism has been made in reference to one of these slimes plants having been erected in the Menzies district. I assure hon. members there was no political motive behind that action, it made little difference to the people there whether the slimes plant was erected in that district or out of it. I wanted the plant erected where we had the largest deposit of slimes of big values, and there and at Leonora we have the biggest quantities. Of course we have had no trial of those plants yet, but from what I have seen of their working and the recommendations given to me by Messrs. Bewick Moreing and other people who have had them at work I feel satisfied that those plants will aid considerably in assisting small leaseholders where we have Government batteries. I might refer to those charges about which reference was made by the member for Mount Magnet the other night and which are known as the sliding scale. I have had a good deal of trouble in connection with them; I wanted to try and make our scale of charges equal for all persons who made use of the Government plants. We could not put a Government battery on every person's lease; a battery might be erected perhaps half a mile from one man's lease and perhaps five or six miles from another man's lease, and I was desirous of seeing whether some scheme could not be framed, which would more equalise our charges to the prospectors no matter whether they were one or five or six miles away from the battery. In the new scheme I have not gone into that phase of the question, but I have delayed the settlement of the new prices because I thought I might be able to get the assistance of other goldfields members. On a matter like this, by well ventilating it, we might be able to do something which will enable the department to give the prospector the best value. Of course it is extremely difficult for us to protect our revenue if we impose charges on a slid-

ing scale, or what we might term a double sliding scale, a scale on the values and also according to the distance the ores might be carried from the lease to the battery. In a scheme of that sort it would be almost impossible for us to frame any set of prices which would enable us to judge whether at the end of the financial year we would be able to pay our way. I have endeavoured to see that the system should pay the expenses in connection with its administration. If we adopt a scheme, such as that I have mentioned, I am afraid it would be difficult for me to frame any estimate as to what our revenue would be. The new regulations I have framed will come into force, I hope, on the 1st February: the prices will start on the basis of 8s. per ton, and will then proceed at the rate of 6d. per ton according to the value of the ore. We will make rebates with a view of getting large tonnages; rebates of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on 100 tons, 5 per cent. on 150 tons, and 10 per cent. on 300 ton parcels. In the case of exceptionally large parcels provision will be made for the imposition of a higher charge, and the person who is crushing may appeal to the Superintendent of Batteries with regard to the matter. In the case of persons who are raising only a small parcel of stone, to get out which it may have taken them many months; if it can be shown that the prospectors have been working such a proposition and that the small quantity of stone, although of high value, has not recompensed them for the work they have put in, then the superintendent will have power to make a concession by permitting the stone to be put through at a minimum of not less than 10s. There are many who object to this battery system; they point out that the system, such as we have in Western Australia offers inducement to people to exploit shallow ground, take away the rich values and then abandon the area, when the workings fall in, with the result that they are altogether abandoned and probably never reopened. There is no doubt there is some little truth in a contention of that sort; on the other hand the public batteries are

of great value, not only to the mining industry and the prospectors but also to the State. Our batteries have crushed over 600,000 tons of stone of the value of over one ounce to the ton, or a total value, including values won by cyanide, of £2,634,252. The whole of that money has been retained within the State. We know that the State battery system served to build up the Meekatharra district and the Black Range district and has rendered excellent service in Mul- line, Burtville, and many other places. At Menzies, Coolgardie, Leonora, and Norseman there are admirable customs plants. The fact that we have been able to close up all opposition in other places shows how economically we are working. I do not think that in any of our mining centres, except perhaps Coolgardie, batteries are now working in opposition to the State battery system. In Menzies a company crushed for the public until last year, when we made our latest reduction. In fact, companies who have had their own mills on their leases have seen fit to cart their stone a mile and a half to the State mill rather than to crush it at their own battery. All this I contend goes to show that the conditions under which we treat the stone are fairly liberal to our customers; and there is no doubt about the great value of the work being done. It has in particular been an inestimable boon to the small people, and year after year we have kept these people together and their developmental work has gone on. The development in the Meekatharra and Black Range districts may be said to be wholly and solely due to the battery system. Without it these districts could not possibly have been opened up as they have been. In connection with the battery system some question has been raised in regard to the appointment of Mr. Dunstan as Superintendent of Batteries, and my policy has been questioned on the point that I myself had Mr. Dunstan appointed instead of allowing him to be appointed under the Public Service Act. We all know how extremely difficult it is to get rid of a permanent officer, and I preferred to have Mr. Dunstan ap-

pointed under Section 36 of the Public Service Act. It has been said that in this instance I have, to some extent, flouted the Public Service Commissioner. That idea has been abroad, and I want to assure hon. members that I have done nothing of the sort. This appointment has been made under Section 36 of the Public Service Act, and has been made by the Public Service Commissioner himself on my recommendation.

Mr. Troy: There were many applicants.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There were a great number of applicants. The Public Service Commissioner did not go through all of them perhaps. He agreed to treat the appointment as a temporary one, and he felt it would be wise to accept my recommendation. The Public Service Commissioner himself drew up the agreement between Mr. Dunstan and the Government; an agreement covering a period of three years. In this agreement it is specifically set forth that it shall be terminable on three months' notice. I look upon the position of Superintendent of Batteries as a peculiar one. The system requires at its head, not only a business man but an up-to-date metallurgist. We want in charge of the department a man who will pay great attention to the requirements of the State and of his customers. If we make a permanent appointment the officer is there for all time. I thought it would be wise in the interests of the public battery system, in the interests of the department, in my own interests and in the interests of customers that this appointment should be made subject to this agreement. Hon. members can see the agreement at any time they wish. It is for a term of three years, but it can be cancelled by the giving of three months' notice; Mr. Dunstan can leave by giving three months' notice to us, and we can get rid of him by giving him three months' notice. I thought it would be far wiser in connection with a system of this kind to have the appointment somewhat of the nature of that of Professor Lowrie's but for a lesser term of years. And having had 18 months' experience of Mr. Dunstan in charge of the

department I felt quite justified in recommending his appointment. The temporary appointment has been fixed up with the concurrence of Mr. Dunstan, the concurrence of the Public Service Commissioner and with the concurrence of myself. I therefore trust that hon. members will not think there has been any effort on my part to reflect on the Public Service Commissioner in this matter. The Public Service Commissioner is quite content with the proposition put before him; he has framed the agreement, and it is at the present time in his office. I am exceedingly hopeful in respect to this appointment, because during the past year our costs have gone down considerably; we have made many innovations, and I hope we will be able to make many more. Where we get big quantities of stone brought to us we can always crush it at lower prices than those at which we can treat smaller parcels. At a mill where there is continuous crushing the costs are necessarily lower. At other mills we have to make up many delays in a single month. It will be seen, therefore that the cost cannot be brought down in the same ratio as where we have continuous crushings and no delays. There is the question of the 2-head mill at Linden. Although that mill was not working properly at first, yet, owing to the change of management, I find it is now competent to turn out 50 tons a week. I think we can make reductions in the cost of these mills. I am not quite sure that it would not be wise to have 3-head mills instead of 2-head. We want something that can be worked more cheaply and more economically. However, in connection with this particular plant, I am very pleased to say that under the new management, during the last 10 weeks we have been able to turn out 50 tons a week. The report that not sufficient gold is saved in this mill has been quite disproved. I might also draw attention, in connection with the battery system, to a system we have had of granting rebates for developmental work beyond the 100 feet level. That has been found to be a very big inducement to prospectors to develop their holdings to a greater depth. And

in addition to that, where we find people trying to open up and develop a mine at some distance from our plants or any other battery, we have followed the practice of giving bonuses in connection with the cartage. In many instances we have given very liberal concessions simply by paying a portion of the cartage for a short period. We give these bonuses with the view of enabling these people to bring their stone to a public crushing plant in order that they might determine what the values are. We have done a great deal in connection with the water supply system at Norseman, which, it might be said, owes its very existence to the Water Supply Department. So too at Davyhurst. Leonora and Meekatharra also depend on the Mines Water Supply Department. All over the country are to be found evidences of the good work of this department. We have given assistance in many instances for the purchase of machinery, and many mines, hitherto helpless, are now in course of working, owing to this assistance. I want particularly to emphasise the assistance given at Malcolm to open up the North Star mine. Here was an old mine abandoned for years. During a visit of mine when I strongly urged the formation of local companies the people asked me whether if they were to subscribe a certain amount, I would give them assistance. It is only a small community and only a poor community, but they managed to raise £750, and the Government lent them £1,000. It was not long afterwards that they raised another £1,000, and the Government lent them £500, making a total of £1,000 in all. The mine is looking well, and they are paying £700 a fortnight in wages. They have a 10-head mill, a plant and all the appurtenances of a big mine, with very good possibilities for the future. This, of course, is due more to the enterprise of these people than to the assistance given by the Government. Still, it must be remembered that without that assistance they could scarcely have got a start. I think there is every possibility of the mine becoming a paying concern, when the State will get its money back. In

any case the whole thing means new life in the Malcolm district. In regard to the question raised as to whether the Government are justified in continuing its present policy, or even adopting a more generous policy of assistance to the mining industry, I think we can ask ourselves has the result justified the expenditure incurred by the Crown in connection with the mining industry? To such a question I might well answer "Yes." The appearance of the mining industry to-day not only justifies the expenditure of the past; no not only justifies the continuation of the liberal policy of assistance, but it justifies us in looking forward to magnificent developments and, I hope, an increase of the great market which the goldfields provide for the rest of Western Australia. Mining generally in Western Australia to-day is better than—I will not say better than in 1902, but certainly better than in any other period since then; and it is questionable whether the industry is not stronger and in a more hopeful condition than at any time since the discovery of gold in the State. There are various collateral industries. The first I will touch upon is the Collie coalfields. Good progress has been made down there during the past year. Up to last year we might fairly say that our collieries were entirely dependent upon the Government for their very existence. Very great difficulty was experienced in connection with the handling of this coal. The Railway Department, which was the biggest consumer, held for many years that the difficulties were too great for them, and that they should not use Collie coal to the extent they were doing. However, it has now been shown that the use of Collie coal was fully justified on the railways. Even a more pleasing feature is the steady expansion of the bunkering trade. There is every probability that in the near future this trade will assume very large dimensions, and certainly it is a thing to be wished. For ten months of last year the output was greater than the output of the previous year. I am not going to delay the House by quoting any reports, but no doubt we have received

very encouraging reports from shipping people in connection with the bunkering trade. More than that, we have the pleasing discovery that there is a greater area of coal bearing country at Collic than was believed to be the case from previous geological reports.

Hon. F. H. Piessé : Have there been subsequent tests ?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : The member for the district may be able to give more information about this, but it appears that the coal is as good, if not better than, the coal already being worked on the other side of the belt. Then we are boring for coal on the Murchison field. A private company assisted by the Government are carrying on the work of boring at Eradu, some distance from Geraldton. The bore has been put down to a depth of 360 feet, but the company have had a lot of difficulties to encounter, and I intend to recommend that in the event of their failing in the work, the Government should carry on these boring operations, because it means everything to the mines that are working on the Murchison Goldfields if an ample fuel supply can be obtained for them. If it is possible to obtain a good coal in that portion of the country, every effort will be put forward by the Government to assist its development, because we recognise how essential it is, seeing that the Murchison field has very little firewood. A discovery of coal at Eradu would mean a great deal indeed to the Murchison.

Mr. Angwin : How did the Kimberley borings get on ?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : We have received no more than that little piece. We may get more, but I am not so anxious about that as I am about finding coal on the Murchison. The past year did not see those developments in tin, copper and lead we anticipated prior to last year when the price for these base metals were good. The big fall in prices has retarded development to a great extent. There has even been a decline at Greenbushes in tin mining, but at the same time there is not the slightest doubt the industry in that mining centre is entering upon an entirely new phase. There

are now six sluicing plants working there employing about 80 men. If an ample water supply were available they would employ as many as 150 men. I have not been at Greenbushes for some time, but I am satisfied that if a big effort were made to get down and develop the country at a depth, it would have a successful result. So far the greater portion of the work has been done, one might say, close to the surface, and it is regrettable in an old mining district like Greenbushes that we cannot point to the fact that the lodes known to exist there have been worked and proved beyond a depth of more than 300 feet. At Wodgina, which the State Mining Engineer says reminded him of Mount Bischoff, there are some wonderful lodes of tin on the Mount Cassiterite mine. At any rate there are working on two lodes, and they are erecting a larger tin dressing plant. When this is completed, I hope arrangements will be made so that they may be able to test lode matter for other lessees in the district, so as to give others the possibility of ascertaining the value of the lodes in their leases. The railway, although it would not go very close to Wodgina, must do much to make the cost of materials cheaper to these people. At Roebourne and Whim Creek, the fall in the price of copper has prevented any development work, and I believe there is no copper mining going on at all. It is hard to conceive why this is so, because at the Lily Blanche mine, there is a lode 4 feet to 5 feet wide, carrying 20 per cent. of copper, yet they find it impossible to carry on work. However, with the completion of the tramway and the slight increase which has taken place in the value of copper, to £60 per ton, I do not think it will be long before we find active work going on. There have been extensive developments at Phillips River on the Cattlin and Elverdton mines, large sums of money having been spent in development work. Also on the Flag mine there has been a considerable amount of development work, and I believe that £14,000 worth of ore has been got from it. However, the two big mines are the Cattlin and the Elverdton, and on these the greatest progress has been

made, and large sums of money have been spent in erecting machinery for the purpose of treating the ore. The management say that by concentrating and smelting they will be able to treat their low-grade ore, and those who have put their money into these concerns express no fear for the future. They believe that with copper at over £60 per ton the mines can be successfully exploited. I feel sure there is a big future before that district. Many have been very pessimistic with regard to it; but from the reports I have received, I feel sure that the expenditure the Government have entered into in connection with the building of the railway from Hopetoun to Ravensthorpe will be found to be fully justified.

Mr. Holman : This year's return does not show it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : No. The return has been very bad, but an enormous amount of development work has been done. I believe that the main shaft at the Cattlin is down 400 feet, and that there is an enormous body of 5 per cent. ore carrying a small percentage of gold. Also on the Elverdton, they have driven on a considerable length of very rich ore at 370 feet. I do not want anyone to think that I am trying to boom these companies. I am only quoting from their reports in connection with the matter, but the manager (Mr. Hochschild) who has come out to take charge of the mines assured me that these mines are now in the possession of people who are investors. I speak of the Hirsch people. They have put some £270,000 into these shows for the purpose of investment. They are going to treat these propositions as investments, and are not putting their money into them for speculative purposes. They express unbounded faith in their propositions, and they are spending large sums of money in the erection of new plants to treat the ore as cheaply as possible. When I find these people spending their own money like this, and when I peruse the reports sent in to me, I feel justified in assuming that it is justifiable expense the Government have incurred for the purpose of making these mines workable, because if it were not possible for these mines to get coke and other necessi-

ties for smelting purposes at a reasonable price, it would be impossible for the low-grade ore bodies to be worked at all. Only by the construction of the railway can these mines be successfully exploited, and I believe that the railway will enable them to be successfully worked and to bring profits not only to those who put their money into the ventures, but also to the State. While travelling to Wiluna recently, I saw some rich deposits, some three or four lodes all carrying copper of a high value. Of course, it would be impossible for these lodes to be worked at present, because there is no railway within a couple of hundred miles of them, but big development is going on at Wiluna, and we can always look upon these lodes as an asset to the country that will at some future time be opened up and developed, and will employ a large number of people. Mr. Corboy, a gentleman who has just come from Pilbara, brought some wonderfully rich specimens of copper ore. One cannot say whether he brought down the mine or not, but he brought specimens which he says came from a new part of the Pilbara field. This naturally leads one to believe that when the railway is constructed to Marble Bar, not only will the gold mines and tin mines of the district be worked, but also these copper deposits will be opened up and probably employ a large number of people. In addition to this, about eighteen months ago there was a discovery made some 34 miles from Marble Bar of a new description of asbestos, a class of asbestos that had never been discovered in Australia previously, though it has been worked in Italy and Canada, the Canadian deposits being mined at present on a very large scale; and since this discovery there has been another discovery of asbestos about seven or eight miles almost due south of Marble Bar. The samples of the latter are not equal to those from the first find, but they are only surface samples, and it is quite possible when some development is done at a little depth, seeing that the class of country is the same as where the other find was made, we will be able to get as good a quality of asbestos as comes from the first find. No doubt the Government have

shown their faith in the mining industry in the large expenditure the Premier has urged the House to incur in connection with railways, harbours, stock routes, and water supplies; but there is no doubt, more especially in view of our recent developments in new districts in this State, that the expenditure has been justified, and will be found to justify itself. Anyone reading the newspapers during the past few months could not help noting the number of rich discoveries that have been made, the rich crushings that have been put through by private people; and I thought it well, for the purpose of advertising the State than for any other purpose, to quote some of these recent crushings. The Rajah, Mount Malcolm, crushed $31\frac{1}{2}$ tons for 115 ozs.; the Victory No. 1, Mount Clifford, 22 tons for 243 ozs.; the Surprise at Burtville, 80 tons for 843 ozs.; the Moutania at Earlstoun, 40 tons for 447 ozs.; the Democrat at Linden, 92 tons for 598 ozs.; the Cave Hill, Broad Arrow, 64 tons for 662 ozs., and another parcel of 46 tons for 812 ozs.; the Valkyrie at Dundas, 20 tons for 159 ozs.; the Viking at Norseman, 170 tons for 566 ozs., and another parcel of 407 tons for 1,095 ozs.; the Multum in Parvo, Meekatharra, a few hundredweight for 426 ozs.; the Revenue, in the same district, 5 tons for 523 ozs.; the Island Revenue, Nannine, 19 tons for 121 ozs.; and the Black Jack, Meekatharra, 9 tons for 580 ozs. This last-named was from a genuine crushing and did not include dollying. Then there was a splendid crushing at Waverley. Gold was discovered in this district almost at the same time as at Kalgoorlie. Work was abandoned, then the mine was opened up again, and again abandoned, and now we find that on a piece of ground where only a small amount of work had been done—in fact only a couple of feet had been sunk—the owner took from 18 tons no less than 1,357 ounces. Those things, I think, are well worth quoting in order to show that good discoveries are made in the various goldfields month after month. I have here a newspaper report of a discovery at the Carbine mine. This mine was granted by the Government a loan

of £800 for developmental work, and it is about the only instance I can quote wherein the Mines Department have given assistance fruitful in its results. The owners obtained the sum of £800, as I have said, in order to sink a shaft. The sum has now been paid back to the department and I was very pleased to see in a newspaper report the other day that gold had recently been discovered there to the value of 30 ounces to the ton. The only information I have is from a newspaper report and it may be that the reporter has indulged in a certain amount of exaggeration; but it is encouraging to hear of the good results which have followed the working of the mine there. I feel certain that all that district, right through Kintore and to the Carbine, is going to take a big place in mining in Western Australia. Having given those particulars as to recent discoveries I will now refer to the old established mines on the Golden Mile and elsewhere, and give some particulars of the recent developments that have occurred there. I desire it to be clearly understood that my quotations are entirely from the reports made by the companies themselves, and are not endorsed in any sense by the department. Members will remember that some little time ago there were some pessimistic utterances made in London by certain directors when dealing with the question of the values of the mines in Kalgoorlie at a depth. A request was made to the Government to spend thousands of pounds for the purpose of trying to prove that good values existed at a depth. A considerable amount of attention was paid by mining people all over the world to these utterances, and I think they did a good deal to reduce the value, for some little time at least, of the mines on the Golden Belt. We have had the various mines inspected and reported upon by the Government Geologist, and the Premier sent a cablegram to the Agent General in London giving a report from that official, wherein he assured the people of London that so far as the Kalgoorlie belt was concerned there was no doubt about the continuation of the lodes to a great

depth, and there was every possibility of their values continuing to an even greater depth. The recent developments which have taken place in that field must be gratifying to those interested in the mines, and also to the people of Western Australia. I am assured by those who should have knowledge in these matters that, within the next few months, the mines on the Kalgoorlie belt are likely to employ 400 more hands than they did last year. That is what we want. We want to get employment for our population. I sincerely hope the expectations of those people will be realised. Let us look for a moment at some of the developmental work on the big mines. As to the Great Boulder the report states—

“The lode at the 2,200 feet level has been driven (for the full width of the drive) a distance of about 1,000 feet, and the average value thereat is 33½dwts. per ton. They are still driving south on this lode. At the next level (2,350 feet) the lode has been driven on for 250 feet and the value is 10½dwts. per ton, but it is expected to improve.”

From this mine dividends amounting to over £2,900,000 have been paid. The number of men employed on the mine is 684, while the amount paid in wages monthly is £11,000. In wages the Great Boulder pay annually £132,000 while their expenditure in the State in stores and wages is supposed to be annually £267,000. Then there is the Golden Horseshoe, about which the report I have received says—

“In cross-cutting east and south-east from the 2,000 feet level of the No. 3 shaft, which is situated on the west side of the property, three lodes have been intersected, namely, 182 feet east of No. 3 shaft, lode one foot wide assaying 10dwts. per ton; 277 feet 5 feet wide assaying 11dwts. per ton; 520 feet, 5 feet wide assaying 12dwts. per ton.”

This mine has paid in dividends £2,760,000; they employ 840 men, and pay in wages monthly £14,500 and

yearly £174,000. As to the Ivanhoe mine the report says—

“The eastern lode in this mine has been cut at the 1,820 feet level (the deepest level from which ore is being worked) where it was proved to be 44 feet wide, of an average assay value of 46s. 3d. per ton. The lode has been driven on for a distance of 108 feet and has retained its values throughout that length.”

As to the Kalgurli mine the report says—

“During the present year the shaft has been extended 200 feet to a total depth of 1,500ft., at which point rich ore has been located.”

The Great Boulder Perseverance reports—

“At a depth of 1,750 feet a rich ore body has been encountered. For the first 30 feet driven this body disclosed values ranging from one to five ounces; but for the remaining distance of 12 feet driven the values are lower. This body of ore gives indications to go strongly under foot. The south end of the property is opening up satisfactorily down to the 900 feet level.”

The Great Boulder Main Reef reports—

“In sinking the main shaft the latter valued ore from about 1,930 feet to 1,960 feet, average value eight to nine dwts.; but patches of ore containing diorite and coarse free gold were encountered. This ore is going away in the western wall of the shaft with strong indications of its continuance downwards. This is a body of ore which it was not expected to get, and is independent altogether of the main lode.”

A most interesting discovery was made recently at the Chaffers mine, and it is referred to in the following report—

“A new encouraging development has taken place in this mine at the south end of the field. A strong lode running up to nearly 20 feet in width has been worked by the tributaries to an average depth of 60 feet from the surface. They have driven on the lode for a distance of about 400 feet and

its continuance for a further 150 feet has practically been proved. The ore sent to the mill by the tributaries (some 5,000 tons) has returned bullion worth £20,000. The company have started a new main shaft which will be sunk to a depth of 200 feet."

This lode was discovered in sinking a telephone pole recently, and this shows how wonderfully rich is the ore in that locality, and that there is every likelihood of other valuable discoveries still being made. I impress on members this, that every one of the big mines has been proved wonderfully rich at a great depth, and it has been shown clearly that the life of the mines will continue for very many years to come. I am sure that not only will there be further development in these mines, but the results of the work being done will induce people to invest money in exploiting mines in many of the districts besides Kalgoorlie. The Sons of Gwalia mine employs 408 men and pays annually in wages close on £100,000, the working expenses per month totalling £10,000. Then there is the Great Fingal at Day Dawn. I believe at that mine they have over-run their reserves, and there is not the amount of work going on there to-day that there was a few years ago. The mine is not as promising now as it was then; but I think there is certainly a future before it. If we take 10 of the chief mines it will be found from the figures that they employ 5,140 men, and if we take the average wages at £3 10s. a week—which members will admit is an exceedingly low average—it will be seen that a sum of £935,000 is spent annually in wages in these 10 mines. I will be well within the mark in saying that in 10 of our mines no less a sum than a million pounds is annually expended in wages. There is the Lancefield mine. Fresh capital was found for the erection of machinery, and a large number of hands have been employed. If the ore there can be successfully treated it will mean the employment of 300 to 400 men and we know that the employment of that number of miners represents at least three times the number of people as living on the industry. It has been found from figures taken from Kalgoor-

lie, Broken Hill and other large mining centres, that the proper basis to take is that the employment of one miner means that at least three other people are kept in the district dependent upon that employment. A new mine which gives promise is the St. George mine at Mt. Magnet. It has been taken over by a big company and fine machinery has been placed upon it. I believe it is a promising proposition.

Mr. Collier: It has killed a good many men.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There have been a number of accidents, and the mine has been exceedingly unfortunate. I have had the matter well looked into, for one does not like to blame the management unless one finds they are really to blame. The hon. member knows one often finds the recurrence of certain accidents, for they seem to run in cycles. The mine has been very unfortunate. Then there is the Morning Star mine, which has closed down but is now being reopened. Several mines in the Meekatharra field have been supplied with machinery whereas formerly they were dependent upon the State battery. They are now being opened up as thorough gold mines. The Gwalia Consolidated at Wiluna gives exceedingly great promise. I visited the mine recently, and it is marvellous to see the enormous lodes there. It is a case at that mine of quarrying rather than mining, for the lodes run in some places to over 100 feet in width. I know nothing of the values but there is no doubt that if payable values exist there to a depth it will mean the employment of an enormous number of people. At present the mine employs 214 men, and pays £3,000 a month in wages. Then we have the Northern mines, Ltd., at Lawlers. I think that place is marvellous and it is remarkable how cheaply the ore is worked there, especially when one remembers that it has to be carted eight miles from the mine which provides the greatest amount of ore to the mill. Their working cost is between 13s. and 14s. per ton. I am pleased to know that the prospects of one of their mines have been looking much more encouraging during the past few months.

according to the report of the State Mining Engineer, than has been the case for some time. There is also the Norseman field where great progress has been made. More especially since the announcement of the construction of the railway was made there has been splendid advancement. The Mararoa mine has been opening up well, as has also the Cumberland. Many other shows give every sign of great improvement in development, and I have not the slightest doubt that the field has a big future before it. It is very creditable indeed to find the way in which some of these people have stuck to their mines year after year without getting threepence in return. The Vivien mine at Lawlers for instance has been worked for five years, and very large sums of money have been expended on it without any return having been obtained. At Menzies, the Menzies Consolidated has been working for 11 or 12 years. Large sums of money have been expended in connection with that mine and the shareholders have never received one penny back. They have kept the place going and given employment to a couple of hundred men, and are now spending money in sinking the main shaft to a depth of 7,000 feet.

Hon. F. H. Piessé: What indications have they?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The indications I believe are very promising, although I myself would sooner be interested in some of the mines in Kalgoorlie. With regard to the new districts, take Meekatharra. In 1904 there was won from that field £24,900 worth of gold; in 1906 the total was £65,000; and for the 10 months of 1908 the amount was £73,000. This shows the development that has taken place there. At Black Range there has been splendid development. That is a district which I am sure with the construction of the railway will become very important. It is a country which swallows up an enormous amount of timber, and the railway is necessary if we want to see that place continue to progress. Wiluna—to show how that district has gone ahead—in 1903, produced 12,000 ounces of gold; in 1907, 21,000 ounces; and for the eleven months

of 1908, 18,566 ounces. A good deal of progress has also been made recently at Lawlers. The Lancefield mine, to which I have already referred, will do much for the building up of the Laverton district. At Menzies, although no big mines are being opened up, yet there has been continuous development and the future is exceedingly promising. Norseman has also a big future before it. The districts of Linden, Youanney, Desdemona, and Waverley also give great promise for the future. At Coolgardie I regret to say that I do not know of any developments, but they are sticking to the old mines there with pertinacity and courage, and I hope the time will not be far distant when the old camp will take a leading place in the mining output of Western Australia. As far as Kalgoorlie is concerned, we need not have any doubt about its future. There is no area in the world of the same dimensions which is equal to the Golden Mile, and no one has any cause to feel pessimistic, as far as that part of the State is concerned. In fact, as far as the mining industry generally is concerned, it is more promising to-day than it has been at any time since 1903, and expressing my own opinion, I would say it is more promising than at any time since the discovery of gold in the State. We recognise what the gold-mining industry has done; and I say again, no matter what members may think with regard to the administration of the department, every person who has the best interests of the State at heart should look carefully into the development of the industry, and see how best we can stimulate it, and try to give assistance not only to one portion of the country, but to all parts where there are auriferous and metalliferous deposits. I think the amount of money that has been expended in the past has been justified, and I hope in the past has been justified, and I hope in the future there will be a continuation of that policy. There are many administrative matters that I have not touched upon in making this address, but later on, when dealing with the different branches of the department, I shall be only too pleased to offer the fullest information to members in connection with

the working of those branches. All I say to hon. members is that we should endeavour to try and see which is the best method to adopt for exploiting the industry in the best interests of the people. My opinion is that the first duty is to the State, the second to the people employed in the industry, and the third to those who come here to assist in its development and who desire to expend money in exploitation. It is the duty of the State to try and encourage, all we possibly can, our own people. But we have a big country, a country of immense possibilities and of great distances, and we cannot develop all these deposits ourselves, because in so many instances where the ore are of a low-grade value, large sums of money have to be expended in development and machinery, so that the ore may be raised and treated in the most economical way; and without capital it is impossible for us to do anything. When we induce capital to come here we should endeavour to see that it is properly protected. While I hold that it is our first duty to look after our own people, yet we must endeavour to encourage others to come here and let them feel when they have come here that we will deal with them fairly and honestly. Many low-grade shows could be worked profitably, and if that were done it would mean the employment of many more thousands of our people, and this would help to make the country more prosperous as well as benefitting those interested in the industry.

Mr. TROY: Members had been pleased to listen to the Minister during his lengthy review of the mining industry and also to have his assurance that he believed that the industry was still the premier industry in the State, and that it would be more prosperous in years to come than it had been during any time in the past. While we recognised the Minister's assurance with regard to its prosperity we could not help feeling a sense of disappointment in the fact that the Minister gave the Committee very little to go upon with regard to the administration to which we had to look forward in the future to bring about that prosperity.

If we looked into the vote it would be found that there was no increased expenditure provided for the development of the industry, but rather it was found there was a decreased vote, and if there was a decrease it could not possibly provide for the development that everyone wished to see, and in fact we could not expect the same development which had taken place in previous years. In contrasting the two great departments, the Lands and Mines, members would see that the Lands Department expenditure showed a big increase while that of the Mines showed a decrease, the amount in the latter case being £11,000. He felt disappointed when he noticed this decrease, because it had been taken not from the cost of administration, but from the votes which had been previously provided for the development of the industry. Reviewing the votes which had been agreed to during the last few years, he noticed the steady decline regarding those for development. This year, in regard to mining development alone, we had lost £3,000 which had been provided last year, and he regretted to say that that amount was lost to the industry, and as a result we could not expect that progressiveness which otherwise members might have looked forward to. He agreed with a good deal that the Minister had stated with regard to the value and importance of the industry, and he recognised that in many parts of the State—and he had visited every field throughout the State with the exception of Pilbara—there was a turn for the better. In the newer fields the outlook was especially promising, and we could expect, particularly from the Murchison field, a very large increase in gold production. He did not want to be understood to be speaking of the Murchison because he represented a portion of it, but any member who had gone to the trouble of inquiring into the gold production would recognise that in three centres—Black Range, Meekatharra, and Lake Way—there had been increased outputs, while the outlook was very promising indeed. While we might expect this increase, it would not compensate for the decrease in other fields. He was struck

on the occasion of a recent visit to the North Coolgardie field by the painful depression existing there, and he could only hope that the place would show an improvement.

The Minister for Mines: It will do so.

Mr. TROY: It was to be hoped so. His remarks would be more particularly confined to the public battery system, because it was a matter in which the welfare of his own electorate was wrapped up, and it was a system that he had given most careful consideration to. The Minister assured the Committee that the public batteries had been responsible for the production of £2,634,000 of gold. Members all agreed with the Minister that that amount was all the more acceptable because of the fact that the money was expended in Western Australia, whereas with regard to the larger companies the greater portion of the dividends was sent away. There had been certain promises made in regard to the battery system, as far as the rearrangement was concerned, a rearrangement which would provide more reasonable terms for the prospectors who were the customers of these mills, and he was led to believe that after the appointment of the new Superintendent of Batteries we could expect that reasonable reduction which had been promised by the Minister some time before. Unfortunately it had not yet come into operation. He agreed that some time must elapse before the gentleman controlling the department was able to get in touch with his work, but at the same time, Mr. Dunstan, the Superintendent, had occupied the office for the past 12 months, a period which ought to be quite sufficient to give him all the opportunities he required to get into contact with the whole of the department. While he (Mr. Troy) admitted that the Minister had acted very fairly with regard to some localities in the Mt. Magnet electorate, while he admitted that the Minister had gone outside the reports of his own officers and given that consideration to one locality which was its due, he at the same time would find it necessary to criticise some of the promises made by the Minister in regard to the administration of the public battery sys-

tem. The Minister would probably give him credit for the fact that during the past six months he had not in any way attacked the Minister nor drawn public attention to the circumstance that he had not kept those promises. Still, many months had now elapsed since the Minister's visit to the district, and it was only fair that his attention should be drawn to his unfulfilled promises. In regard to public batteries the crushing charges prior to last year had ranged from 10s. to 14s. per ton on a sliding scale, with certain allowances for "time crushing." Shortly afterwards an alteration had been made reducing the charges to 10s. Whilst that had been a great boon to the people in some localities, in other portions of the State it had been found to be of little or no advantage. In consequence of this the Minister had made inquiries during his recent tour of the goldfields and had spoken of a certain further alteration which would meet the wishes of the greater portion of the prospectors. The matter had been brought under the Minister's notice at Leonnville and at Boogardie. On the 10th July of last year a deputation had waited upon the Minister at Leonnville requesting that the battery charges should be reduced to provide for the following charges:—For 100 tons 9s. 6d. per ton, 150 tons 9s. per ton, 200 tons 8s. 6d. per ton, 250 tons 8s. per ton, and for 300 tons 7s. 6d. per ton. After hearing the request the Minister had said that on his return to Perth he would revert to a sliding scale commencing at 8s. per ton for 8dwt. ore, with rebates on big parcels up to 300 tons. A similar request had been made to the Minister at Boogardie, where in response he made the same promise. On this occasion the Minister had made the promise even more definitely, and had emphasised the fact that the new scale would be gazetted immediately on his return to Perth. A good deal of feeling had been given rise to by the Minister's neglect to fulfil these promises. It was sincerely to be hoped that the reduction would, as stated, come into operation from the 1st February, and that it would be one that would

meet with the general acceptance of all the prospectors in Western Australia. Without such reduction such localities as Lennonville and Boogardie could not hope to progress; because the ore bodies there, while they were large were of very low values. The people had their homes in the district and they were struggling as hard and under disadvantages as great as any experienced in the agricultural areas.

The Minister for Mines: The new scale will be 8s. per ton for 7 dwt. ore and under, and 8s. 6d. per ton for 8 dwt. ore and under.

Mr. TROY: Such a scale would assuredly find ready acceptance by the greater proportion of the prospectors. There were other promises which the Minister had made and failed to keep. At Lennonville a deputation had asked him that payment should be made for slimes already treated by the department, and that the amounts, less the charge for treatment, should be refunded. When last he (Mr. Troy) had heard from the prospectors that promise had not been kept.

The Premier: Is there not some trouble as to whom the slimes really belong?

Mr. TROY: It could hardly be said that this trouble had arisen in connection with these slimes. Some of the earlier prospectors with slimes at the battery had left the district, but no claim had been made in respect to their particular slimes. For the rest, the owners of the slimes were still in the district.

The Minister for Mines: They will be treated just the same as prospectors in other districts.

Mr. TROY: There had also been conveyed to the Minister a request for the payment of accumulated slimes lying at the Boogardie battery. There was no room for dispute in regard to the ownership of these slimes, because the majority of the Boogardie prospectors had been resident in that locality for the last 12 years.

The Minister for Mines: Since what date have their slimes been accumulating?

Mr. TROY: The slimes had been accumulating since the inception of the battery. The Minister had not given a definite promise in regard to payment for these slimes, having declared that he did not know what Mr. Dunstan proposed to do. But the Minister had intimated that a slimes plant would shortly be erected at Boogardie, thus leading the prospectors to hope that the value of their slimes would be restored to them.

The Minister for Mines: Under our new system we must have a plant, without which we cannot continue.

Mr. TROY: In respect to these accumulated slimes there was oftentimes to be found in them more gold than had been returned over the plates. In consequence of this the owners were not able to continue their developmental work unless these slimes were paid for. If the Minister would instal the plant it would give those prospectors sufficient money in hand to carry on the development of their mines. Another promise the Minister had made was of vital importance to the prospectors. A deputation had asked the Minister to make it optional whether the battery charges were paid out of the cyanide returns or out of the crushings over the plates. In reply the Minister had said that the manager would be instructed that in cases where he was satisfied that there was ample gold left in the sands to pay for the crushing he was at liberty to hand over all the gold won in the crushing. Recently the owners of some stone had appealed to the manager of the battery to take the battery charges out of the sands and to pay them the full amount of the gold won in the crushing. But the manager asserted that he had no instructions to do this, and consequently was unable to comply with the request. This, too, notwithstanding the promise made by the Minister at Boogardie that such instructions would be issued to the manager.

The Minister for Mines: It is merely a departmental matter; it depends upon Mr. Dunstan.

Mr. TROY: It was difficult to believe that it depended on Mr. Dunstan when

the Minister had given his word to a body of men. He (Mr. Troy) could not hold Mr. Dunstan responsible for it; nor would his constituents. At Black Range the Minister, during the course of his remarks, had said that the Mines Department in its regulations had provided for the payment of subsidies or bonuses for deep sinking. The Minister would remember that at Sandstone a deputation had pointed out that before they could command these bonuses or subsidies they would have to develop their mine in a manner never attempted except by big mining companies, and that such development would never pay them. The Minister had said that he recognised that the prospector was handicapped by the present regulations in regard to the size of shafts and drives; and that a regulation would be drafted to meet the wishes of the prospectors.

The Minister for Mines: I said it would be amended; it has been in existence for years.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. TROY: Unfortunately, though promises were given to accede to requests made to the Minister, those promises had not so far been kept. A promise was given at Sandstone in regard to an alteration to the regulation dealing with assistance for the development of mining, a deputation having pointed out the need for a reduction in the size of shafts and drives. A prospector was entitled to a certain subsidy if his shafts and drives below 100 feet were developed in accordance with regulations, but the prospectors of Black Range had pointed out that this conferred no benefit on them, because if they developed their properties according to the regulation, their mining development would have to be similar to that done by big mining companies. The Minister expressed himself as sympathetic to the request of the deputation for the alteration to the regulation, and replied that he recognised the prospectors were handicapped by the existing conditions in respect to the size of shafts and drives, and told them a regulation was already

drafted to meet the wishes of prospectors, and that Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, had suggested a bonus on a sliding scale of 2s. per foot to 150 feet, and 2s. 6d. and 3s. and so on for greater depths. The Minister said the matter was then under consideration, and he would let the prospectors know immediately on his return to Perth. That was six months ago, but to-day while the Minister referred to the advances given to prospectors and to the help prospectors were given by the regulations, no mention was made of keeping the promise given at Black Range. It was to be hoped the Minister would redeem his promise and that if prospectors were to have faith in the mining administration he must do so; because the prospectors must have faith in the administration if we were to expect continuous and progressive mining development in the State.

The Minister for Mines: I think that regulation is amended.

Mr. TROY: A little while ago, having occasion to write in regard to an application made from Sandstone, he ascertained that the regulation had not then been altered. By giving assistance to prospectors to develop their properties at a greater depth the values of many of what might be called the older mining localities would be increased, and as a result of State assistance the prospectors would be able to hold on to their properties and develop them. We gave the mining companies considerable sums of money to enable them to prosecute deep sinking, and we should do the same in regard to prospectors. Their wishes would be met by bringing into operation the suggestion of Mr. Montgomery that the Minister told the people of Black Range would be so advantageous to them. The Minister was right in talking of the wonderful aid State batteries had been to mining development in Western Australia. The Murchison and Norseman goldfields would not have been the factors in gold production they were had it not been for these batteries. The only mining centres that would have been producing gold to any extent to-day would

have been the Eastern fields, and possibly a few big mines in outback portions of the State, had it not been for the existence of the State batteries. Black Range, an important and growing field, was opened by the operations of a State battery, in the first place only a 5-head mill, but, fortunately, a plant with a 10-head capacity. The result was that within the short period of five years nearly one hundred head of stamps had been erected to treat the ore in the district, and the output had increased from a few hundred ounces per month to 7,000 and 8,000 ounces per month. In four years the State battery had crushed 28,000 tons of ore, producing gold to the value of £124,000. During its short life the field had produced over half a million pounds worth of gold, but it would not have produced it had it not been for the establishment in the first place of the State battery helping the prospector to open up his show to such a state of development as to encourage the mining investor to go into the field. The result was that we had now three or four large mining companies carrying on operations, and the district was enormously advanced by the operations of the mining industry. The construction of the railway—an absolute necessity—was to be taken in hand shortly, and would mean a larger increase in gold production. It would give the mine owners and the prospectors of the district advantages they did not possess to-day; and instead of the gold output being 7,000 ounces per month, it would be fully 15,000 or 16,000 ounces. There were members who were pessimistic in regard to that railway. At one time the Premier was fearful himself about it, but those who had the opportunity of visiting Black Range during the year recognised there was no fear regarding the future of the railway or regarding the future of the district. All that was wanted was cheap fuel and cheap mining timber. A large quantity of timber would be used, and as the result of getting cheap fuel and mining timber there would be mines working producing gold and employing men that were not working to-day. The wisest step taken in

regard to mining development on the Murchison was the passage of that railway Bill; and the Meekatharra railway would also serve a similar purpose. The Minister must be given credit for having, in opposition to the reports of his own officers acceded to the request of the prospectors of Youanme and put a 5-head battery there. The report of the geologist sent by the department was not satisfactory, but the Minister had visited the spot and, as any sensible man with a knowledge of gold mining would do, gave the prospectors—a large number of whom were there—the promise of a battery, and the battery was being erected. It was possible for geologists to be wrong; they had been wrong previously, and would be wrong again; and it would be foolish for any Minister to refuse assistance to a large body of prospectors who showed their faith in the district by taking up leases and, while eking out an existence, endeavoured against every disadvantage to develop their properties. But while credit was due to the Minister in this respect, one must express disappointment at the way in which prospectors at Lennouville were being treated. This was at one time one of the most up-to-date mining localities in the State. No other centre on the Murchison outside Cue produced so much gold from above 200 feet. Of late, however, a depression had occurred at Lennouville, the depression that had been the lot of other fields, and would be the lot of still more during the coming years; but it was not a lasting depression. We had the example of other fields, at one time abandoned, but now re-opened by the prospectors returning to them. This was the case at Lennouville. Within the last 12 months there had been an improvement. Many prospectors were coming back to the locality, and there were some very remarkable crushings, but the public battery had been allowed to get into such a state of disrepair that it was to-day lying useless, and the department had not shown that degree of urgency and haste that should have been displayed in putting the plant in readiness for treating the prospectors' ore.

The Minister for Mines: One of the standards was destroyed by the fire.

Mr. TROY: The complaint against the department was that it took such a long time to repair or replace any article destroyed, months elapsing before a battery could get going again.

The Minister for Mines: We had also to wait for the fire adjuster.

Mr. TROY: But for nearly two months previously the battery had been idle. It could have been put in order before the fire.

The Minister for Mines: I am glad it was not.

Mr. TROY: But then there might not have been a fire, there might have been someone looking after the plant, it would have been working. Unfortunately, the battery was allowed to lie idle, and people may have camped there. However, a fire occurred and the battery was, to some extent, destroyed, and it was to be hoped some effort would be made by the department to have it put in order again. He had received numbers of letters from persons who had a large quantity of stone raised and awaiting crushing, and the Minister should recognise that no body of workers could hold a property long unless they had some means by which they could crush their stone. This was the case at Lennonville, and he would urge the Minister to get to work on the battery as soon as possible. An engineer was sent up there, but he had now gone to Boogardie. So far as he could learn, the engineer had received no instructions and the result was that there was a good deal of feeling and anxiety regarding the future of the battery. There was a big possibility of a bright time for the district, and that possibility could be realised by the department putting the battery in order, and giving the prospectors the facilities they must have in order to live there. He had already pointed out the necessity for administration in connection with the Boogardie district. There was a great necessity for a battery at Messenger's Patch. The Minister had promised that a battery should be erected there, but surely it did not require six or seven months to elapse from

the time a promise was given before any action was taken in regard to its fulfilment.

The Minister for Mines: We have been very short of funds.

Mr. TROY: At one time there were at Messenger's Patch a large number of prospectors. He had been throughout the locality, and knew the whole country as far as Field's Find, and he was sure there was not a larger auriferous patch of country than that in the Yalgoo district. It had never been prospected, for it was passed over in previous years by prospectors who were going further on to where extraordinarily rich finds were being made. At the time of his visit he saw more gold in the various shows at Messenger's Patch than he had seen in the early days of Black Range. There was a possibility of a very promising field being opened up there, if only a public battery were erected.

The Minister for Mines: If you let me get away soon, I will go straight up there, and have a look at it.

Mr. TROY: The Minister received reports as to the district.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Howe goes away on Monday to make a final report, so that a decision can be definitely come to.

Mr. TROY: In the first place the Minister required a report from the inspector of mines. A favourable report was given, but besides that the Minister required a further report and Inspector Howe visited the district. The inspector saw the spot, and also made certain recommendations. Was it necessary for that officer to go up again? It must be remembered that prospectors were not able to hold on to their shows to develop them if there was no possibility of getting their stone crushed. If prospectors had to wait months and months for a battery, they became discouraged, and would go to other fields. If a battery were not erected there before long this would happen to that field, and then the reports would be to the effect that as the population was dwindling away there was no necessity for a public battery.

The Minister for Mines: We arranged for a water supply in the meantime.

Mr. TROY: The prospectors had been anxious to sink for water themselves so as to secure a battery. Recently he had seen some old Murchison prospectors in Perth, and they had told him the field was one of the best in the Murchison. It was evident that if only a battery were erected there, many of those prospectors would go to the district. While the Minister endeavoured to justify delays it must not be forgotten that there was much maladministration in connection with other branches of work in the department. There had not been so much delay in other directions as in cases where the interests of prospectors were concerned. For instance, in connection with this particular work, a great deal of time had been wasted on the question whether a two or five-head battery should be erected. While there had been a delay of six or seven months in this case, not long ago, with very little inquiry, and without any loss of time, the Minister gave a vote amounting to over £300 to Messrs. Wilson and Moxon for the purpose of purchasing a battery.

The Minister for Mines: My object was to give them a pumping plant; that was what the vote was for.

Mr. TROY: This case was a clear proof of maladministration by departmental officials. The prospectors at Messenger's Patch had been compelled to wait for months before getting even a decision as to their request for a battery, while Messrs. Wilson and Moxon had their request complied with at once. The Minister did not in their case ask that the inspector of mines at the Murchison should report on the locality, but he obtained a report from Mr. Greenard who was then in Perth on his holidays. Mr. Greenard had not been in the locality for seven years.

The Minister for Mines: He inspected the mine when it was being opened up.

Mr. TROY: Mr. Greenard was a man whom he knew well, and he was not quarrelling with the fact that he was asked to report. He would trust Mr. Greenard in any matter in which he might be asked to give an opinion, for he was a competent and good officer, and had the confidence

of the people. He (Mr. Troy) was merely pointing out that no time was lost in complying with the desires of these individuals. Mr. Greenard in his report reported that the field had been a good one, and could well be developed.

The Minister for Mines: He said it was a good mine.

Mr. TROY: Yes, and the Minister made an advance of £300 to enable Wilson and Moxon to purchase a boiler and winding engine and pump in order that they might pump out the mine and develop it. Mr. Greenard suggested that at Goongarrie there was a plant at a copper mine which would suit the purpose admirably. The Minister agreed to the expenditure, but on the understanding that these people were to receive in wages £2 per week by virtue of the work they did in mining development.

The Minister for Mines: I took a bond of £100.

Mr. TROY: All the facts were in the papers, and in addition, he had received them from another source. He had no animus against Mr. Wilson—he was not now referring to the Treasurer, for against him he had no personal animus, as it was only about him as Treasurer he was concerned—but he took exception to the way in which the whole question of facilities for the district was administered by the department. If that was an example of the way the department was being administered, very little credit attached to it. When the Solicitor General was asked to draw up an agreement, and give the Government a lien over the property, he pointed out that it was an illegal action. In writing to the Under Secretary for Mines he said—

“Am I right in assuming that £200 is to be advanced for payment of the purchase price of machinery and £100 towards the erection of a battery?”

This was the first time the battery was mentioned. Mr. Greenard did not recommend more than there should be a pumping plant, a winding engine, and a boiler. The two men mentioned had no stone raised, and did not want a battery then. The Minister did not advance the money for the purchase of a battery, for no reasonable man would have done so. It

would have been a ridiculous proposition to give a battery to people who were only working a prospecting area, and who did not consider the ground worth taking up as a lease.

The Minister for Mines: The money was given to them to unwater the mine.

Mr. TROY: The Solicitor General said further in his letter—

“Also that as security for this advance you propose to take a mortgage of the prospecting area and any mining tenement into which it may be converted a bill of sale of the machinery and accept the guarantee of Mr. Quigley. If so I must point out that the advance, unless modified to be at the rate of one pound for one pound of the applicant's own moneys, does not come within the scope of the Mining Development Act.”

It was pointed out in the Mining Development Act how money could be advanced, and it was clear that it was only to be advanced when the circumstances were very different from those of the application in question. Section 15 of the Act said—

“(a) A description of the mine upon which it is intended by the applicant to prospect for gold or minerals, and the means by which prospecting is to be carried on; (b) a statement showing the period of time over which the advance is to extend, and the instalments in which the advance is required; (c) a statement showing what security the applicant will give to secure the repayment of the advance, and showing how and when the applicant intends to repay the advance; and (d) any other and further information as the Minister may require, or as may be prescribed.”

These provisions were never complied with. Section 16 stated—

“Such description, statements, and information shall be verified by statutory declaration.”

While in Section 17 appeared the following:—

“No instalment shall be paid to any miner until the Minister is satisfied that—(a) For every pound to be advanced such miner has, out of his own resources, after making such applica-

tion, actually and properly expended in mining operations on the mine held by him a sum of one pound in work, labour, material: and that (b) such miner has also previously actually and properly expended, in mining operations on the said mine, all previous instalments advanced by the Minister.”

These were the only means by which an advance could be made. None of the conditions to which he had referred were complied with, and yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the utmost haste was shown and no precaution was taken in regard to the advance. The sum of £300 was advanced, and with that they purchased the battery on the Havelock lease at Tuckanarra, and these people had not taken out one pound of stone from the lease, nor even a quart of water. The battery was a second hand one and was carted to the station at Tuckanarra by Mr. Boundy, who, up to some time ago, had not received one cent. It was taken at Government expense to Yalgoo, and a boiler was sent up from Perth, and for the term of three weeks there was lying at Yalgoo a five-head battery and all the equipment with the exception of the boiler, which had been carted out to the Mystery lease at Melville. The machinery was retained at Yalgoo because the applicants could not pay the railway freight; they did not have a cent. They got the money under extremely generous conditions: they got it illegally, because the Act did not allow the money to be advanced on such terms. The Minister for Mines had advanced apart from the £300, an additional £30 in order to pay the Railway Department for the carriage of the machinery.

The Minister for Mines: It was not advanced to those people; the railway department was paid for the freight.

Mr. TROY: And what had the Minister to show for it to-day?

The Minister for Mines: We sold the battery for £350.

Mr. TROY: That was all right. These people made a further application for £200, but one could not blame them for doing so because they had been so successful on the first occasion. Fortunately, however, they did not get this money. While so much haste was shown with re-

gard to these people, he could not help referring to the policy of procrastination with regard to dealing with the prospectors at Messenger's Patch. Mr. Wilson was a constituent of his, and the transaction was over property which was in his (Mr. Troy's) electorate. The Minister might say that he was endeavouring to open up that electorate; but proper precaution did not seem to have been taken. The Minister knew the person he was dealing with because there was an expression of caution in his own handwriting on the file, and the Minister also knew the financial position of the applicants. One of those applicants told him (Mr. Troy) how the money had been received; but it was not his desire to take the man's word. In such a case he preferred to talk upon only what was contained in the papers dealing with the subject. The papers showed clearly that the Mines Department could not claim to have any administrative capacity. If that was the manner in which every matter was transacted in the Mines Department there was very little administrative ability among the heads of that department. The papers showed that no care was exercised. These people seemed to have been able to get the money just as they wanted it, and the department were at their wits' end to know how they were going to make up the loss. If such a thing could obtain once, it could obtain in connection with other applications also, and he hoped the Minister would see that the persons responsible were cautioned in order to provide against such illegal transactions happening in the future.

Mr. Collier: The Minister must be responsible, not the officers.

Mr. TROY: The Minister claimed he was away from his office at the time. It had to be understood that the officials showed that they possessed very slipshod methods in dealing with important matters in the department. He merely mentioned this to show that while members heard much about the honest administration of the department, such an action would not bear out the assertion often made in that connection. He had asked the Minister not to go on with the work of erecting a two-head battery. If we

had these two-head mills with a crushing capacity of 500 tons a week it would take months before the accumulation of stone was overtaken; and all the time miners and others who were attracted to the spot by the battery, would be opening up their properties and the accumulation would continue. The result would be that there would not be that development which it was desired to see in the district. While the Minister said that every endeavour must be made to bring about a reduction in the cost of treatment, he (Mr. Troy) would point out that as it was essential in connection with the larger corporations, so also was it essential in connection with the State batteries that we should cut down costs to a minimum in order to give the prospectors the advantage. The Minister would never cut down the cost if he went on buying scrap-heap batteries and erecting them as State batteries. Such a system would never do any good. The only way by which costs could be cut down was by installing up-to-date plants which would provide for the latest treatment. The plant the Minister had erected at Black Range was one of the kind he desired to see erected. In all localities we must erect these plants and secure the best possible treatment in order to bring about efficient and economical working, by which means we would be able to reduce the charges. If we did not do this we would never be able to cut down the cost, and the Minister would not be able to assist the prospectors in localities where the mines were of a low-grade character. There was another way by which the prospector could be assisted, and that was in regard to providing water supplies. He had little fault to find with the department in this connection, because great work had been done in regard to providing water supplies to prospectors. That was one of the best means by which the country could be developed. Years ago in the House, when he first entered it, he pointed out it would be a wise policy to put down a bore to locate water in the Lake Barlee country. The Minister, later on recognised that, and to-day that had been done to some extent and good results had followed, because a goldfield was be-

ing opened up which would never have been opened up but for the discovery of water. If we could spend a good deal of money in this connection and spend it wisely and well there would be other fields opened up. Prospectors would be able to camp where the bores were put down and form depôts to prospect likely-looking country. He was aware that the department had spent money in equipping prospectors, and he regretted that although this money was expended with the best possible intentions, it was found the result was not what they would have wished it to be. He regretted that not many fields had been opened up; but if we opened up one good field, that would compensate the State for the expenditure incurred in regard to equipping prospectors. The system should not be abolished, but we might encourage bona fide prospectors and equip them whenever they were willing to go out to open up new localities. In regard to other ways by which prospectors could be assisted, we often charged the prospector a number of small fees. These could well be abolished because they could not be of much advantage to the revenue. Their abolition would mean a great deal to the prospector, who would be able to spend a few pounds thus saved in developing his property. For instance, why was it necessary to advertise in the paper that a man was going to take up a certain lease? He had to pay 15s. for that advertisement, when a notice at the Mining Registrar's office should suffice. If a prospector applied for exemption he was charged exemption fees, and in every little way we extracted from him money which he could use to advantage in other directions.

The Minister for Mines: We give a prospecting area.

Mr. TROY: That was true, and these areas had given an impetus to mining development. That would not have been done were it not for the granting of these prospecting areas.

The Minister for Mines: We think it most essential to give the fullest publicity to these applications for leases.

Mr. TROY: The Minister would recognise that miners were pretty well alive

to what was going on. If a miner desired to get a certain lease he would very soon make all necessary inquiries with regard to it. He hoped that in the future whenever a promise was made during a Ministerial visit, that promise would be carried out. He regretted to say that the Mines Department was somewhat notorious for the non-fulfilment of promises. It would be better if in the future there were given less cause of complaint in this regard. While there was little in the Estimates to encourage, he hoped that during the coming year there would be such a development in mining as would give the gold production a decided impetus. He felt sure that if the Government were to put on the Loan Estimates £50,000 for the erection of public batteries and for assistance to legitimate mining development, there would be as a result a big increase in the gold production of Western Australia. There was probably no member of the Committee who would cavil at the Government for spending a fair amount of money on mining development. For his part he was quite willing to vote any reasonable money for the development of the agricultural industry, and he held that in regard to mining development there was a very grave necessity for encouragement. Every effort should be made to prevent this steady dwindling of the gold production. He had hoped that ere this the Government would have done something to put a stop to it by the adoption of such a policy as would bring about a more prosperous era in mining. If an additional 20,000 men were employed on the goldfields, the market they would provide for the farmers of the State would relieve the latter from outside competition. There was within the State a fine body of the men who, every year, took their lives in their hands and went out prospecting in an endeavour to open up new fields. Due encouragement of these men might at any time result in the discovery of another Black Range or Meekatharra, which would to a very large degree remove the depression hanging over the State at the present time.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: The Minister stood for congratulations upon the statement he had presented to the Committee

that evening. It showed very careful thought and a complete grasp of the department over which he presided. His statement should assure hon. members of the future of the mining industry. Hon. members knew of the great influences brought to bear upon the country's welfare by the gold-mining industry, and of the assistance it had rendered to its kindred industry, agriculture. The figures given by the Minister showed that hon. members had much to congratulate themselves upon in regard to the future prospect of mining. Although nothing was being heard of phenomenal discoveries such as had marked the years 1896 and 1897, yet there was something much more encouraging; that was the steady development going on. He himself had heard from those who ought to know that there were many indications of steady development which must mean a great deal for the State. The member for Mt. Magnet had expressed a wish to see another 20,000 men employed on the goldfields.

The Minister for Mines: We have room for 100,000.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: No doubt the time would come when these additional men would be found upon the goldfields. Although remarks had been made in regard to the cutting down of expenditure, the fact was not to be lost sight of that a considerable sum of money had been expended in connection with the development of our goldfields. For his part he would not ask that there should be any reduction provided the finances of the country were sufficient to continue the carrying on of the necessary work. Just the same he wished to draw attention to the fact that up to the end of June last £1,119,866 had been spent on goldfields developments, while the amount spent on the development of agriculture was £818,400. At first glance it might be thought that agriculture had received an enormous amount of money, almost as much as the goldfields. But it was to be remembered that of this sum, £300,000 had been provided for the purchase of lands on the Great Southern Railway, while another £294,740 had gone in the construction of the rabbit-proof fence. Thus by deducting these

figures from the total it would be found that £223,660 was the amount actually expended in connection with the development of agriculture. He had no wish to set the one industry against the other. Whenever he had had an opportunity of speaking in regard to these two industries, he had always given first place to that of mining which had done so much for the State. Great benefit had been derived from it, and it was their duty to do all that was possible for the industry. With the member for Mount Magnet he was exceedingly sorry that there should have been any necessity for a reduction in expenditure on the development of the industry. He felt that if they could afford to do more it should be done. He was with the member for Mount Magnet in his praises of that important factor which had helped so much to build up the smaller mines, namely the public battery system. The system had been introduced in the days of that Administration which had taken so great a part in the development of the country. It had been continued and further improved by successive Governments, and especially by the present Government and the present Minister for Mines, who had given such a glowing report of its prospects that night. It was sincerely to be hoped that this system would be still further improved and introduced in different parts of the country where hitherto its advantages had not been available. Although there was strong cause for economising in all possible directions, yet there was not cause for anything in the nature of real anxiety. A depression certainly existed in some directions and it had affected the country generally, if only in a modified degree. After all, the resources of the country were considerable, and it was to be hoped that only a very short time would elapse before the Government would again be in a position to resort to the policy of judiciously spending money in the expansion of the great gold mining industry. In the meantime it would be wise to keep down expenses wherever possible. There appeared to be a large expenditure in certain directions; but it was to be remembered that

there was a very large area to be traversed. Leaving out Kimberley which at one time had been so prominent as a mining centre, there were the separate centres of Pilbara, Murchison, North Eastern Goldfields, Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Norseman, Southern Cross, Greenbushes, and Collie. The distance between these places meant a very much heavier cost of administration than was the case in the Eastern States. The tremendous areas to be covered made it all the more difficult to administer the department. None would deny that wherever possible the expenditure should be reduced. He for one was satisfied that, given time, the Minister would bring about all necessary reductions. There had been a period of disquietude during the past five or six months in which few men could have done as well as had the Minister. Consequently although mistakes might have been made there was some excuse for them. Happily the time was not far distant when things would settle down into their normal condition once more. It was to be hoped we would see the development that had been mentioned by the Minister and the member for Mount Magnet, the hopefulness shown by the Minister being confirmed by the latter. He had visited many portions of the goldfields and his most recent trip was to Meekatharra. It was a splendid district where phenomenal developments were taking place with the most economical administration and expenditure, evidence of what could be done by men determined to carry on the work of development. All this was done by the working miners who showed how economically development could be carried out and how systematically, the result being most encouraging and proving that the State should spend more money to encourage them, for instance, in our voting the necessary funds for building a railway to the locality. That projected railway must ultimately go further North and do much to develop that great country lying beyond Meekatharra. Another railway construction that gave much promise for the future was the building of the line to Sandstone. It was said that those concerned

in agriculture were not as sympathetic with the gold mining industry as they should be, but this accusation could hardly be made with earnestness, because those engaged in agriculture knew how much their industry depended on the development of the goldfields. It made one shudder from time to time to read in the newspapers of so many accidents occurring in our mines, and he was with those who knew more of mining in their endeavours to prevent these accidents occurring; but we had in the Minister a sympathetic administrator who was desirous of doing all possible to afford protection to the miners in their dangerous tasks, and to those engaged in analogous industries in which a large number of people were engaged and in which many were injured, though not so many as in the mining industry. If there was anything he (Hon. F. H. Piessé) found he could do to improve the condition of the miners he would be only too ready to help.

Mr. Scaddan : It would be interesting to find some of those occasions when you voted with us.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : One was not always so sure as to the wisdom of hon. members' proposals. Hon. members had not always gone the right way about obtaining the support of other members necessary for adopting provisions for the protection of these men.

Mr. Scaddan : Then we will bring the dead bodies and lay them on the Table.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : We did not want anything so callous as that. There was no one more sympathetic than himself, but when one was desirous of giving assistance we often found interjections of this character that did more harm to the cause hon. members had at heart than anything else, and really set one side of the Committee against the other. But he had already expressed the view that in party Government, which seemed to be the rule and to be necessary for carrying on administration, the real crux of the question was often lost sight of. No one was better pleased than he at the success that had followed in the wake of the development of the Collie coalfields. Without being egotistical, he felt that he had

given Collie a great start. It was in 1898 that the Railway Department, under his administration, had first tried to make use of the coal. He had travelled with the drivers on their engines to see how the coal was acting. It was found that shale was being sent from the West Collie mine. It was not coal and had to be thrown away by the drivers. They said they could not use it. However, now we found that there was coal in the district, and it was being used widely on the railways. In this regard the railways were doing great good to the country. The information given by the Minister to-night that there were other deposits of coal in the neighbourhood of Collie of equal importance to and perhaps of better quality than the developed seams, showed that we had wealth there that must ultimately be turned to great account. We must all work together with one object and try to do our best to develop the primary industries and turn them to account. In asking this he did not wish the other important industries of the State to be lost sight of any more than the mining industry. He gave place to no one in his desire to help forward all industries of the State, and he was merely mentioning these things because it was so frequently stated that members representing agricultural constituencies did not take the same interest in mining affairs as they did in the other industries of the country with which they were so closely associated.

Mr. Heitmann : It is true.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : In company with the hon. member he had travelled to see the Murehison, and he had travelled over more of the other goldfields of the State than the hon. member had. His association with the goldfields had been from 1893, and he felt that we could not do too much, short of being extravagant, in assisting the industry.

Mr. Heitmann : You vote just as you are told on every mining question.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE : These remarks would not have been uttered had it not been for the comparisons made by the member for Mount Magnet. He did not begrudge the expenditure of the £200,000 if it were wisely expended in developing an industry that did so much for the State.

Another thing; more of our mining machinery should be made in the State. Some was made here, but there was room for much more to be made. If we could get our factories established we should not need to import anything but special parts. Everyday machinery such as was used in public batteries and works of that kind could be made here. This would give employment to our own people and would keep the money in our country, and so do much to foster other industries. He merely rose to express his opinion in regard to these comparisons and also to congratulate the Minister on making a statement that would be read throughout the country with great interest. It proved that the Minister had taken a great interest in his work. Of course the Minister's long association with the mining industry enabled him to give his statement fully and explicitly. The country recognised and appreciated the Minister's work. It should be an encouragement to those interested in the State and those likely to associate themselves with it that our prospects were so satisfactory.

Mr. HOLMAN : The mining industry had always been regarded by him from a non-party point of view, it being immaterial to him what party was in power or what Minister was in control of the department so long as the industry was being pushed ahead. He had worked the whole of his time to make it a success, and it was not his fault if the Minister held different views. They might both be working in the same direction, though the administration might not in his opinion be suitable to the majority of those connected with the industry. Like the member for Katanning (*Hon. F. H. Piesse*), his connection with gold mining in Western Australia dated back to 1893, and he had always taken an active part in it. The position of the industry was not so satisfactory as the Minister would lead us to believe, the return last year being the lowest for seven years past. It showed perhaps that the mines were getting to poorer zones, on which account we should do all we possibly could to open up new fields. The brightest feature to-day was that many small companies and parties of prospectors were working their proper-

ties. They were doing more for the development of the country than the whole of the big mining companies who were turning out so much of the gold. Unfortunately for these smaller people the assistance rendered by the State was not given in the right direction. There was too great a tendency to give it to the big companies and to allow the poor struggling men to do the best they possibly could for themselves. Frequent applications were made for assistance for some parts of the State without any consideration being given to the requests. Exception must be taken to the fact that communications sent to the Mines Department were sometimes totally neglected, or replies only sent after a considerable time. He found that to be the case in many important matters affecting the welfare of hundreds of men, and on this account he had great cause for complaint against the administration. His might be an exceptional case; if so, he hoped the Minister, whatever his feelings might be towards himself, would not allow them to cause any man working in the State to suffer.

The Minister for Mines: You can rest assured of that.

Mr. HOLMAN: Matters affecting hundreds of men had not received the attention they deserved. He would like the Minister, when he talked of assisting prospectors, to be more practical and give the assistance and talk less about it.

The Treasurer: Why do you not set a good example?

Mr. HOLMAN: It was pleasing to see the Minister smile. Some of the recent discoveries were of great importance. One of the most promising districts was that of Meekatharra. The whole of the credit for the opening up of that district was due to the installation of State batteries. Had it not been for the starting of State batteries Meekatharra would probably still be a small struggling place; but instead of that we found 60 head of stamps working there, and the place was going ahead by leaps and bounds; and instead of the population being 30 or 40, as it was seven years ago when he first visited the district, there were now over 1,000 men in the locality.

The district was 36 miles long and had a good breadth, and it was one of the most prosperous and most promising districts in the State. Wiluna had trebled its population in four years. Black Range also was going ahead, and several other centres on the Murchison were very promising. Some fields that promised a little time ago to bring about prosperity in Western Australia were not the success one would have liked. The Minister in dealing with the Ravensthorpe Railway had twitted him with speaking without knowledge of what he was saying and with condemning the place because he had a set against certain individuals interested in that part of the State. All he had said when speaking on the railway Bill had been borne out by facts. The Government had spent nearly £100,000 in that district on the railway and smelting works, and yet the total gold yield from that centre for October was only 33 ounces, and the copper yield of the value of about £2,000. This was much to be regretted, and he would much rather have seen the place booming and giving employment to the 10,000 men the Minister promised would be there within a short time of the starting of the railway. The remarks of the Minister that evening were hardly in accord with his views. The Minister, speaking in connection with the industry generally, said that in the first place we must consider the State, and the people engaged in the industry, and then those who were investing their money. His opinion was that the very first consideration should be given to the lives of those engaged in the industry. He would rather see all the mines closed down for ever than the sacrifice of life which had occurred during the past few years. He had been engaged in mining for some 20 years, and to take his own case he would rather see every mine closed down than lose his health or his life at the industry. What applied to him equally applied to all those now engaged in the industry. The brains of the men of the State should be given to ensure the fullest protection to those engaged in mining. After that we should consider what advantage the industry would be to the State, and then—and he was with the

Minister in this respect—the interests of those who invested their money should be considered. Those people who gave their money to the development of the mines and the opening up of properties should receive all the protection we could possibly give them so long as they treated the people engaged in the industry with all fairness and justice. He had always spoken against the speculators who exploited our mining industry. The Minister, in referring to the Phillips River district, had said that the legitimate investors in that district were now being given a chance. This showed that the battle the Labour party put up on the question some time ago was quite justified. The people who originally got hold of the property there were those trying to exploit the industry and using the Ministers to obtain a promise of a railway. As soon as they got it the promise was used in the old country in all probability to bleed the legitimate investors of a considerable sum of money. At the time the line was promised the total value of gold and copper taken from the Phillips River district amounted to only £169,000. When Mr. Kaufmann was promised the railway he put the property on the London market. The market value of the shares then was £1,250,000. The money which the investors put into the Phillips River district was now gone, the investment was not good, and the people had, in reality, been “done” out of their money, perhaps for the benefit of a few investors who were only too willing to exploit not only the investor but also the State in order that they should get what they could out of them and give nothing in return. No one was more anxious than he to give the people now in that field every possible assistance, and to help them to develop that part of the State, and make both the mines and the railway a success. It was to be hoped that the remarks of the Minister, who said many discoveries had been made there recently, would turn out to be correct, and that in future many more men would be employed than were now engaged in the mining industry at that place. Unfortunately the people down there were not working properly even

now. They advertised recently in various parts of the State for men to go to Phillips River, and on one day when they advertised for 30 men at Kalgoorlie they dismissed about 30 men already engaged. For some reason or other they were trying to get a large number of men down there. He was sorry to see such tactics adopted, for if there was no work for the men to do efforts should not be made to induce them to go there. Reports he had received from men who had just come from the field were not very promising. When on a previous occasion he had referred to the fact that the copper market was unstable and that we could not look forward to the continuation of the high prices, the Minister had strongly criticised him for his words. When dealing with the Phillips River Railway Bill he quoted the copper market prices for over 100 years, and showed by these that the high prices did not last for any length of time, and that the market fluctuated very considerably. He had said we could never look for stability in the market or the maintenance of very high prices. Sometimes the price was as high as £100, but within a week or two it dropped to £50 or £60. That had always been the case, and there was no reason why there should not be a recurrence of the fluctuations in the prices in the future. A railway which was perfectly justified was that to Norseman, and he felt sure that part of the State would assist greatly in increasing the gold output. It was to be hoped the district would turn out a success, and give something in return for the construction of the line. Of the other goldfields railways constructed that to Meekatharra would pay from the time the rails were laid and the work should be pushed on with as quickly as possible. There were other railways which must be taken into consideration; one was to Wiluna, the developments at which place were equal to the brightest in the country at the present time. The distance of Wiluna from the seaboard was considerable, and a railway there was quite justified. In all his mining experience he had never seen such large ore bodies

as there were there. In one place there was so huge an ore body that one blast broke over 300 tons of ore. That was something in the nature of a record. Now, as to the State battery system. As he had mentioned some time ago, the erection of State batteries had made a great many centres. Meekatharra had been absolutely made, while since a battery was erected at Nannine the gold output had been practically doubled. At the present time there were over 200 men at Yaloginda, but they could not get a battery, although one was practically promised nearly two years ago. The miners were struggling on, but they had to pay from 12s. to 14s. a ton for carting stone to the nearest battery. That meant an extra four or five dwts. on to the value of their stone, and this was a very serious consideration. The same policy should be carried out there as in other parts of the State, and that was the provision of crushing facilities. If these were given the place would go ahead as fast as Meekatharra, and the population in the very near future would be from 700 to 800. There was reason for complaining of the Minister's attitude during the past six months in regard to that district. Some time ago he went to Wiluna and made a great many promises which had not been carried out. The importance of the place should be taken into consideration, and the Minister should fulfil the promises he made.

The Minister for Mines: I have recommended that a registrar and clerk of courts should be appointed.

Mr. HOLMAN: Quarters were required, and there were many other matters needing attention which he had recently brought before the Minister, and concerning which promises were made six months ago. Some of them should have been carried out long before this in order to benefit the people who were trying to make the place, which was the furthest away in the East Murchison goldfield, fit to live in. During the past three years the population there had trebled. What kept Wiluna back and what was keeping the mining industry of the State back was that so many large areas were locked up under exemp-

tion and by concentration of labour. There were now holdings all over Western Australia big enough for pastoral lauds. If the mining companies holding those areas worked on at the rate they were now doing we could rest assured that there was no possibility of the mining industry being worked out for the next 250,000 years; such was the way in which the owners were working their properties. To his own knowledge there were leases held which had not been worked legitimately by the companies for six or seven years.

The Minister for Mines: Which are they?

Mr. HOLMAN: The Star of the East, for instance. That property was being worked a little by tributers, but in the last six or seven years there had been practically no legitimate mining done there. There were many other similar cases. The Peak Hill Company held over 300 acres under leasehold; of that quantity about 260 acres had never had a pick driven in it. If that land were made available for workmen many leases would be taken up and worked properly. Then there was concentration of labour and amalgamation. Where companies held 300 or 400 acres the work was concentrated, and consequently the property was not worked as it should be. What had made the field of Bendigo in the past was that in a great many of the mines there was a distance of only 200 feet along the line of lode allowed. Every bit of ground was worked to the best possible advantage. Western Australia would have been much further ahead if it had adopted the same system. He was sorry that we saw fit to increase the acreage which could be held by one man; it should have remained at two men for six acres, as it was some years ago, instead of two men to twelve acres as it was at the present time. In dealing with the question of the Star of the East, the Minister would know that some time ago an application for forfeiture was made for that lease. Warden Troy recommended that a fine of £50 in lieu of forfeiture should be imposed. That recommendation was sent to the Minister

in May or June of 1908, and the reply from the Minister was not sent up for some six months afterwards.

The Minister for Mines: I think it was about two and a-half months; I was away at the time.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was about five months. In that case the mine was allowed to hold all the acreage, because while it was in dispute nothing could be done.

The Minister for Mines: I find from the papers the exemption they have had since 1901 has totalled three years and nine months.

Mr. HOLMAN: During the whole of that time they have not been working the lease. On several occasions application was made for forfeiture, and on every occasion they had tributing parties at work. Even to-day the leases were held by tributors. During the last six or seven years, probably not more than £100 had been spent in wages on that mine. That was the kind of thing that was killing the industry.

The Minister for Mines: It is claimed that they have spent £70,000 there. The last recommendation from the warden was that exemption should be granted, and that it should be the last chance.

Mr. HOLMAN: The warden had never spoken so strongly against any property as he had done against the Star of the East. We had the same thing at Day Dawn and at Wiluna. The Minister would know that when they held big properties of 300 or 400 acres under exemption, year after year, it was he who stopped those exemptions in 1903 or 1904, and from that time on the districts had gone on making progress. A good many other mining leases would be in the same position to-day if the same attitude had been adopted towards them in the past. He brought the matter forward to show that if strong action was taken, the mining industry must go ahead. At Meekatharra and Black Range and other places were properties were owned by the working miners, exemption was seldom asked for. It was in these cases that the department should give every possible encouragement. There were times, however, when it was necessary that

exemptions should be given, but we should draw the line somewhere, and compel the holders to work their leases or throw them up! A matter that he took strong exception to was that too many officers of the State Batteries Department were allowed to take an active part in political affairs. Many of them had gone out of their way to take certain action and to do things which they had no right to do. He (Mr. Holman) took very strong exception to that. He desired to refer to the purchase of an old cyanide plant at Wiluna. A grave mistake was made in purchasing that obsolete plant, which was first worked at Tuckanarra, and afterwards carried to Wiluna. The battery manager then recommended that it should not be purchased, but on the recommendation of Mr. Dunstan, £100 was given for it.

The Minister for Mines: I can explain that later on, and I think I will be able to satisfy the hon. member. We have a special scheme there.

Mr. HOLMAN: That was what he thought.

The Minister for Mines: It would not have paid to put a new cyanide plant there.

Mr. HOLMAN: But these vats were absolutely useless, they were eaten through and could be used for nothing else but colanders.

The Minister for Mines: The purchase was strongly recommended.

Mr. HOLMAN: He would not be a wise man who recommended the purchase of such a plant, but in all probability there was something in what the Minister said. He (Mr. Holman) saw the plant at Tuckanarra years ago, and when it was taken out to Wiluna, it was practically useless. It was much better in such cases to pay a good price for a good article. While travelling in the out-back districts he had noticed that there were many people who took a keen interest in affairs which did not exactly touch their own pockets, but which were matters purely concerning the welfare of the mining industry, and they were always alive to incidents such as the purchase of that cyanide plant. If members could be assured that the outlay of £100 would be

repaid, of course there was nothing wrong in effecting the purchase.

The Minister for Mines: It just suited our purpose.

Mr. HOLMAN: The plant was purchased immediately after the Minister's visit.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, no! about two months ago.

Mr. HOLMAN: It was to be hoped the interests of the prospectors would be closely studied and that more attention would be given to them rather than to those parasites who lived upon the men who did the work. He would like to see exemptions done away with to a greater extent than at present, also concentration, and the compelling of those companies which had properties, and did not work them, to man their leases independently of tributors. We had an example of this at the Star of Aberdare lease and others as well. He would like to see the Minister go out of his way to give more assistance to prospectors to enable them to open up and develop their own shows. At Meekatharra there were only two companies working. There were prospectors there who had worked in that place and some of them had not had enough to buy food, but at the present time they were very well off, and were holding the best properties there. One of the prospectors whom he knew had spent £100 a week in prospecting and opening up other properties. That was the kind of man who deserved assistance. Almost every man who had made money in Meekatharra was spending it there in development work. They were the men to assist instead of a big company like Kaufman's which had received assistance to the extent of nearly £100,000. It would be better in the interests of the people if we gave £30,000 or £40,000 to 1,000 men who had been battling on their own for the last six or seven years. In listening to the return of the rich yields read by the Minister, it was pleasing to note that some of these plums were still held out to those who were prospecting. He could not help saying that those particular parts of the State to which the Minister had referred, had only been scratched, and as soon as some in-

ducement and prospects were held out to men to do more legitimate work than had been done in the past, the better it would be for the State. He would like to see more rewards given for the discoveries of goldfields. There was an item on the Estimates for the discovery of the Phillips River goldfield and it seemed to be looking for someone to come along.

The Minister for Mines: We paid recently a man named Dunn £200 in connection with the discovery of Phillips River.

Mr. HOLMAN: One would like to know the reason why in connection with a field like that, the output of which had been very limited, such a reward was offered. Phillips River had turned out £32,000 worth of gold, and £150,000 worth of copper, and the Government gave £300 reward for that. In Meekatharra, close on half a million pounds worth of gold had been produced, and an application was made by one of the early discoverers for a reward, and it was refused. This man, Porter, who was one of three, had spent hundreds of pounds in prospecting there, and if he had received the reward it was his intention to spend the whole of the money in further prospecting the district. Every possible encouragement should be given to these men while they were willing to develop the country. He maintained that if a reward could be given for the discovery of other places, a fitting reward should have been provided for the discoverers of a goldfield like Meekatharra. In all probability the reason why a reward was not given in this instance was because the old Garden Gully mine had been worked there some years previously. Still without these men Meekatharra could not have been the centre it was to-day. He hoped the railway to Meekatharra would be pushed on without delay. The State Mining Engineer had satisfied himself that this railway would pay from its very inception. The question of mining accidents was a serious one. It was impossible to go too far in the direction of giving necessary protection to the men engaged in that dangerous calling. He would like to see the regulations carried out even more strictly, and the inspectors exercising an even more

careful scrutiny into the condition of the mines. Unfortunately whenever the question of mining regulations came before the House too many members were prepared to place full credence on the words of the Minister. There were too many members of the calibre of the member for Katanning who, declaring that the miners had his sympathy, took all sorts of care that they never got his vote. The position of the mining industry, though not so good as the Minister would lead members to believe, was not one to feel any despair about. Despite the fact that the yield was decreasing, a large number of local parties and prospectors were opening up and developing properties for themselves. With the exception of two, all the properties at Meekatharra were held by local working men. Had there been behind the Meekatharra Goldfield the influence that was behind the Phillips River field some two years ago, the railway would have been out there to-day. But as these people at Meekatharra had not the influence exercised by Kaufman they had to wait. Too often did the Minister display a tendency to give assistance to large companies. For instance, £1,000 had been promised to Mr. Trude on condition that he would be prepared to crush for the prospectors. But the conditions of the agreement drawn up by the Minister would not have given the necessary facilities at all, because immediately the amount had been paid off Mr. Trude need not have crushed any more for the public.

The Minister for Mines: The agreement was subsequently altered. At all events he did not get any money.

Mr. HOLMAN: Mr. Trude had not got any money, but he had received a promise of £1,000 and on the score of this he had gone to Sydney and publicly floated the property. As soon as the company was floated Mr. Trude had said he did not want the money. And so the men had still to continue paying heavy freights on the cartage of their stone some 10 or 12 miles into Meekatharra. The Minister had given some reduction as an off-set against this, but it was by no means commensurate with the loss of time incurred. Another condition

in the agreement with Mr. Trude had provided that tailings must be removed within three days of the crushing, failing which they would become the property of Mr. Trude.

The Minister for Mines: You would have to do that with any private battery.

Mr. HOLMAN: The terms of that agreement had not been fair and reasonable at all. He hoped that these prospectors around Meekatharra would get better consideration in the future. The Minister would admit that it had been on his (Mr. Holman's) suggestion that "time crushing" was first introduced in Western Australia. The introduction of "time crushing" had assisted to make Meekatharra what it was to-day. He hoped that during the coming year, instead of a gradual decrease in the gold production an increase would be experienced, and that those who were working on the mining fields would find themselves in a more prosperous condition than they were in to-day.

Mr. SCADDAN: Unlike other members who had spoken, he had no intention of confining himself to a consideration of the statistics in connection with the mining industry. It had become a practice with the Minister for Mines, the Premier, and every other Minister when addressing audiences in agricultural districts to point to the flourishing condition of the mining industry, and refer to the gold won and the dividends paid. He (Mr. Scaddan) had never yet found in any of these speeches a reference to what it was costing the country in the lives of the men employed in winning that gold. But before going more deeply into this question, he wished to contradict a statement made by the member for Katanning to the effect that the present Minister for Mines was giving entire satisfaction to everybody in the community. In order to show that that was not altogether correct, he would read the following letter, dated 16th December, 1908, and addressed to himself from the secretary of the Goldfields Federated Miners' Union of Western Australia:—

"I am instructed to convey to you the best thanks of the miners for moving in the direction of the production of the files *re* the Mines Regulation Act. We

consider that the publication of the Minister's letter in reference to the liability of employers under that Act has shown him in his true colours as an enemy of the workers."

That, he thought, was conclusive evidence of the fact that the Minister for Mines was not giving entire satisfaction to the whole of the community. There were over 17,000 men employed in the mining industry in Western Australia. That fact was never prominently brought forward; nor was the other fact that during the last seven years the State had lost by fatal accidents 288 men following the employment of mining. What was mostly harped upon was that 12½ millions sterling had been paid in dividends. He wanted to know which should be of the most concern to the Committee: whether to reduce that number of fatal accidents or to see that the dividends paid were on the increase? From the statements made by the Minister when touching on mining matters, he (the Minister) was considerably more concerned about the dividends than about the protection of the men winning the gold. For his (Mr. Scaddan's) part, while he remained in the House he was going to look after the interests of the men employed in the mines, the health and the welfare of whom was of the first importance. He was not going to permit the Committee to overlook that fact. In this respect he desired to take the member for Katanning to task. That member always endeavoured to show that he was in sympathy with the men in the mines. He had frequently said that if it could be shown to him that everything was not as it ought to be, he would lend the representatives of the miners his support. But when those representatives endeavoured to show that things were not as they ought to be, the member for Katanning was not in his place. On every occasion when amendments of the Mines Regulation Act had been attempted with a view to protecting the miners, the member for Katanning in the course of his remarks had apologised for the action of the Minister; but when voting he had invariably voted against the amendments. He (Mr. Scad-

dan) had previously discussed in the House the question of a message sent by the Minister for Mines through the offices of the Premier and the Agent General to the Mine Owners' Association in London. On that occasion he had admitted that he might have been incorrect in saying that a cable was sent. He understood, since seeing the file, that what he complained of as having been cabled was not cabled, but was sent by message through the Premier's Office to the Agent General to satisfy the mine owners in London; and as the Minister on a previous occasion had refused to read that portion of the *precis*, he (Mr. Scaddan) would do so.

The Minister for Mines: It was published six months ago in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*.

Mr. SCADDAN: Yes, but with a lot of padding round it so that it would not be read. The *precis* said—

"In the past there was some doubt as to whether actions for damages in case of accident could be brought against owners by employees under the Mines Regulation Act. The new Act clearly sets out that no such recourse can be taken. On the whole, the Act is one which should commend itself to the mining community generally."

One could not say too much if it had only stopped there, but a further perusal of the file showed that the Minister was in possession of the fact that this provision was contained in the Act and that no one else knew it. In his (Mr. Scaddan's) opinion there was collusion on the part of somebody, and he thought that somebody was the Minister, acting in collusion, from the information one could gain from the file, with the Parliamentary Draftsman in placing a clause in the Bill introduced by Mr. Hastie without Mr. Hastie's knowledge. Having perused the file carefully he found the draft arranged by Mr. Hastie, where Mr. Hastie had corrected it, and where the State Mining Engineer had corrected it, and where clauses were inserted by the then Minister, Mr. Johnson, at the request of Mr. Hastie, but he found no reference to this particular

clause that crept into the Bill after it left Mr. Hastie's hands, and he wanted to know how it came about that the clause was in the Bill, and how it came about that the only person in the State apparently anxious concerning the clause was, so far as the file showed, the present Minister for Mines, also how it came about that the present Minister wrote two minutes to the Crown Law Department in connection with the matter. It was said in the precis by the Minister that the right to sue for damages for injuries received through a breach of the Mines Regulation Act did not apply under the 1905 Act; but apparently the Minister had not read the file for there was on the file a minute written by him to the secretary of the Crown Law Department as follows:—

"Is the statement correct that a Judge of the Full Court has held that a suit for damages can be maintained under the Mines Regulation Act for accidents to employees? If so, I desire it to be made absolutely clear in the Bill at present before Parliament that suits for accidents can only lie under the Workers' Compensation Act, the Employers' Liability Act and Common Law."

This was passed on to Mr. Sayer, the Parliamentary Draftsman and Crown Solicitor, who said in reply—

"Yes; [they could sue for damages] but I have already provided for this: see Subsection 2 of Section 63."

How came it that Mr. Sayer had provided for it without anything appearing on the file of the draft Bill of Mr. Hastie, or a minute from Mr. Hastie, or from anyone else, unless someone was acting with the Crown Solicitor? This statement he (Mr. Scaddan) made with a full sense of his responsibility. He wanted the question settled once and for all, because it was of considerable moment to the men working in the mines, and if the Minister was guilty he was not fit to hold the position of a respectable Minister, and was unfaithful to his trust. The Minister had in his care 17,000 men employed in the mines, and should be faithful to them, and if he had attempted to make such a drastic

alteration as that in a Bill placed on the statute-book for the protection of these men it was his duty, as Minister, to make the information known.

The Minister for Mines: Did you not see a letter on the file signed by Mr. Dodd, the secretary of the miners' union, asking for the same matter to be effected?

Mr. SCADDAN would read the letter, and also the Minister's statement where he had, as on most other occasions, evaded the matter altogether and sent it on to the Crown Law Department and to the present Attorney General in a different form, with the result that the point contained in Mr. Dodd's letter was overlooked. Mr. Dodd's letter was rather long. It was—

"In response to your request for information *re* the effect of the elimination of the provisions for suing for damages under the Mines Regulation Act in case of injuries received whilst at work, I beg to submit to you the judgment delivered by Mr. Justice Burnside in the case of *Ricca versus the London and Exploration Co.* You will observe that the Judge has ruled that a breach of the Mines Regulation Act, whereby a person is injured, does not mean that there is cause for action against the company."

This was Mr. Justice Burnside's opinion, and not the opinion referred to by the Minister at a later stage—

"The judgment in reality means that the Act provides for the infliction of a penalty only against the manager for any breach of the Act. There are many very serious accidents on the mines which are not covered by Common Law, and I am afraid are also not covered by the Employers' Liability Act. The case to which I am directing your attention seems to be one of these. Had there been any chance of proceeding under either of the Acts which I have mentioned there is no doubt Ricca's solicitors would have availed themselves of the opportunity. That they did not do so seems to be conclusive evidence that there were no such chances. It may be argued that the Workers' Compensation Act provides for a sufficient remedy, but I would point out that the only amount recover-

able by an injured person under such Act is half wages up to £300. In the case of a permanently injured person you will realise how inadequate such a provision is. The real crux of the matter is, however, whether or not a breach of the Mines Regulation Act which causes injuries to an employee constitutes a claim under the Employers' Liability Act or at Common Law. The judgment of Justice Burnside's is one argument that it does not, and the decision of the Full Court in the case of Dodge versus the Bellevue Company is another."

That was the judgment the Minister referred to later—

"To place the matter clearly before you I will quote a suppositious case. We will suppose a man is injured by falling from a ladder which has not been constructed in accordance with the Mines Regulation Act by having, say, no staging between two levels where there should have been one. We will suppose the ladder was in perfect order in all other respects, excepting for the non-compliance of the mining regulation *re* the staging."

This should be noted particularly by the Attorney General, because he would take exception to the Attorney General's legal ruling at a later stage—

"We will also suppose that the fact of such staging not being put in was the fault of someone entrusted by the manager to see such was done. Under the Employers' Liability Act there would, I think, be no claim. It would, however, be a terrible injustice to a broken and battered workman who might be injured for life if he had no other remedy than to take the pittance allowable under the Worker's Compensation Act. This Act, we assume, was intended to alleviate the distress caused by less serious injuries, and from death by accident, where no neglect was to be attributed to the employer. We think that the liability clauses should be inserted in the Bill, or that the Workers' Compensation Act should be amended in such a way as to meet the cases which I have mentioned. You will, I am sure, realise that in the matter of mines the

risks to employees are so great, and the result of the injuries to employees so distressing, that every possible means should be taken to guard against accident, and that when an accident does occur, which is due to any breach of the law, adequate compensation should follow."

The Minister for Mines then wrote the following minute to the Attorney General:—

"Would you kindly look up the point raised by Mr. Dodd and advise me? I might state that in the new Bill for breaches of the Act we make the owner, agent, or manager responsible, so that should it be found that the owner is more culpable than the manager we can initiate a prosecution against the owner or agent instead of against the manager. The Chamber of Mines object to the inclusion of 'owner or agent,' but the State Mining Engineer points out that in many cases the manager is merely a cypher taking his instructions from the owner or agent, and power should be in the Bill to reach such people. I hope, however, the inclusion of 'owner or agent' does not open up a new avenue for litigation."

That minute did not contain any reference to the point made by Mr. Dodd. Under the Mines Regulation Act only the Mines Department could sue for breaches of the Act, and then only to obtain the penalties as outlined in the Act, so that if the owner or agent or anyone else was mentioned in the Act he could only be sued for a breach of the Act, and the injured person could not sue for an injury received. So the Minister evaded the point in this letter by taking up a different line altogether.

The Minister for Mines: I suppose the Attorney General had the letter to read.

Mr. SCADDAN: It only showed the trend of the Minister's mind; the Minister was more concerned about the probability of the employer being sued for damages, than he was about the injured person receiving damages. Mr. Sayer, the Crown Solicitor, wrote—

"The Mines Regulation Act, 1905, subjects the owner, agent, and manager, to penalties for breach of its provisions."

But it has been held by Mr. Justice Burnside that the Act does not confer on an injured workman a remedy in damages against his employer for personal injuries resulting from a breach of the regulations. The writer of the within letter desires such provisions to be made in the Bill now before Parliament. The Bill, as drafted, provides to the contrary. (See Section 63, Subsection 2)."

The Attorney General also wrote the following minute:—

"The Bill as printed does not make any alteration in the law as it stands to-day."

Apparently the Attorney General had not read the letter—

"There is, however, no such grievance as Mr. Dodd portrays in his letter, because if it was a fact that the accident was due to the absence of platforms in the case cited, then such absence would constitute a defect in the ways, works, machinery, or plant connected with or used in the business of the employers within the meaning of Subsection 3 of the Employers' Liability Act, 1894."

That was the minute referred to by the Minister for Mines but had no bearing on this particular point, because this was a ruling by Mr. Justice Burnside that one could not sue under the Mines Regulation Act. Afterwards a Judge of the Full Court held that one could do so, and the Minister hearing of it wrote the minute to Mr. Sayer as previously quoted. With regard to the Attorney General's minute, we had many times been given so many opinions by Attorneys General in regard to the Workers' Compensation Act and Employers' Liability Act and the Common Law, and cases were submitted to the Courts on the opinions given, but it had been found that the opinions were wrong, and men were ruled out of Court and received no compensation after suffering injury. This was a matter of considerable moment, and that was why one spoke so warmly on the matter. This should be the first consideration of anyone holding such a responsible position as Minister for Mines. The welfare of the 17,000 persons engaged in the mining industry, and upon whom were dependent

some 50,000 persons in all, should be the first consideration not only of members but also of the Minister. The file revealed that his complaints that these men had not received the consideration due to them were just. There was abundant evidence in the file of the truth of the statements he had made. It was to be hoped the Minister would take cognisance of the statement that there had been, apparently, collusion in the matter. The question should be settled once and for all. The file did not show how that clause had got into the Bill. The Minister should obtain from Mr. Sayer or someone responsible a statement as to how it came into the measure. If Mr. Hastie were responsible then the House should know why he made the clause, or why he did not instruct the Crown Solicitor to draft it in the ordinary course per minute on the file. The clause was not in the draft or in a minute asking for it. Apparently it crept in without any mention of it being made on the file. We should be acquainted with the true facts of the case.

The Minister for Mines: A good many clauses were inserted which were not specially referred to on the file, but were the result of conversations.

Mr. SCADDAN: The clause in question was of very serious moment to the men on the mines, and we should certainly know how it came to be inserted. There was a provision made by Mr. Sayer in order to protect injured persons. It apparently appeared to him that if a penalty were obtained through the Courts for a breach of the Act, in view of the manager, owner, or agent responsible being penalised, the question would arise whether he could be further penalised under another Act, and so, in order to protect the workmen, he drafted a further clause which never reached the Chamber. The Minister was not so concerned about the men as about the shareholders residing in London. We must recognise that the representatives of the mine-owners in London, who had drawn something like £19,000,000 up to date in dividends, were the Chamber of Mines, and it was peculiar that the telegrams in connection with the passage of the Mines Regulation Bill through this Chamber, as shown on the

file, were only those which passed between Mr. T. Maughan, secretary of the Chamber of Mines, and the Minister, Mr. Gregory. Often members were surprised to see Mr. Maughan in the Speaker's Gallery, but they were always sure that when he was present there was a certainty of a discussion on the Bill taking place. Mr. Maughan always knew when the Bill would be brought down, and he was aware of the fact a fortnight ahead of the date, and even in advance of members.

The Minister for Mines: If he sent a telegram asking us when the Bill would be brought on we replied.

Mr. SCADDAN: Telegrams were sent to him without being asked for. He would read one which would show members the relationship existing between the Minister and the chamber. An amendment was on the Notice Paper providing for box rises. The following were the true facts—and they had never been made known before—of the way in which the Ministry were defeated on that amendment. Some members representing constituencies such as Katanning were so much concerned about the passage of the Land Tax Bill in the Legislative Council that they went there to hear the discussion and remained to ascertain the division. We whipped on this question and kept the discussion going until the division bells rang in the Legislative Council, with the result that owing to the absence of certain members in that Chamber our amendment was carried. The day after that amendment was carried the matter was apparently of so much concern to the Chamber of Mines that the Minister sent the following telegram to them:—"Confidential. Vote last night only decided that question of box rises should be included in the Bill and not in regulations. Amendment will be further amended on recommitment."

[*Mr. Taylor took the Chair.*]

Mr. SCADDAN: That was confidential, and was sent without a request being made for it from the Chamber. The reason it was sent was because on that morning it would appear in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* that the Ministry had been defeated on the amendment, and the Minister wanted to give an explana-

tion apparently to the Chamber, and said he would have the Bill recommitted and further amended then, and that it was not so vital as it might appear in the paper. He regretted that the Minister was not now in the Chamber to listen to what he had to say.

The Premier: I will take note of any unkind remarks you make about him. He has spent a long time in his seat attending to the debate.

Mr. SCADDAN: The time had passed to make kind remarks of anyone holding a responsible position such as the Minister, a man who was guilty of the conduct shown in the file. One was not going to be kind so long as the welfare of 17,000 men and those dependent on them were treated so callously as had been the case on the part of the Minister. Certainly it was a matter for consideration and hope that we should make the non-paying propositions paying ones, but at the same time it was of equal concern that we should reduce the number of fatal accidents in mines. During the last seven years there were fatalities to the number of 288. The Mines Regulation Act had been passed, but owing to its provisions none could move in the matter of seeing that proper protection was afforded in the mines but the Minister, or, under his instructions, the inspectors. The result was that the Act was really a dead letter and was of little value indeed. The inspectors made inspections of the mines in the ordinary course, not to see that the provisions of the Act were complied with altogether, but in many cases to have a chat with the managers; they spent a considerable portion of their time chatting on matters of general interest. If an inspector were really concerned in seeing that the provisions of the Act were complied with he would pay surprise visits to the mines, and never give notice of the fact that he intended to visit a property on a certain day. The Minister had stated in the House that inspectors of mines were not fitted for their positions if they gave notice of their intention to visit mines. It was proved to the Minister's own satisfaction at a conference with the Miners' Association held at Boulder that the inspectors always gave

notice before visiting mines, a number of instances being brought under his notice. He wrote to them about it, and the inspectors explained that notice was necessary because they could not expect the management to make provision for them to proceed below on an immediate inspection unless they gave notice. It was pointed out that if notice were not given the working of the mine would be dislocated. The Minister, in spite of what he had said previously, wrote at the bottom of this report "I concur," with the result that the inspectors now always sent out notice of their intention to visit mines. In referring to this matter he was echoing the complaints raised every day in the mining community by the men engaged at work. The men contended that for their protection it should not be necessary for them to lay complaints against dangerous workings in the mines, but that it was the duty of the inspector to pay surprise visits to the mines and satisfy themselves as to whether the conditions were healthy and safe. Apparently, the inspectors were more concerned about pleasing the Minister, and they knew, as everyone else knew, that that gentleman was more concerned about prosecuting the miners than the management. The report of the department showed that the majority of prosecutions under the Mines Regulation Act had been against the workers and not the managers. In fact, there were many instances where inspectors had brought cases of breaches of the Act under the notice of the Minister, but he had taken no action. In another case, where he had been practically compelled to take action, the inspector had been forced out of the service. The file which was laid on the Table that day showed the attitude of the Minister and the department in that transaction. That action was against a member of another Chamber, and it was nothing but influence that enabled that gentleman to get off as he did. The action cost the country about £17, although a verdict was given against the gentleman in question. There was one subject he desired to deal with before concluding: he would only touch on it briefly, but it should be mentioned in order to show that the Minister was

not administering the Act as he should do, and that he was the cause of breaches of it. Section 31 of the Act was as follows:—

"Any person who (a) without holding a first-class engine-driver's certificate under the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904, or a certificate by the same Act made equivalent thereto, takes or has charge of any winding machinery by which men and materials are raised or lowered in any shaft or under which men are working in any shaft; or (b) without holding a first or second-class engine-driver's certificate, or certificate made equivalent thereto, under the aforesaid Act, takes or has charge of any winding machinery by which materials alone are raised or lowered in any shaft; shall be guilty of an offence against this Act."

This section was a compromise. The Minister was desirous to have the power to exempt prospecting shows from this provision of the Act in places where it was not convenient or practicable to obtain a certificated engine-driver, and therefore the following clause was inserted:—

"The Minister may, by writing under his hand, exempt any person from the operation of paragraph (b) of subsection one of this section, or of section fifty-three of the Inspection of Machinery Act, 1904, if satisfied that in the circumstances it is impracticable to employ a certificated engine-driver, and that all reasonable precautions are taken for safety. Such exemption shall be for a stated period not exceeding six months, but may be renewed from time to time."

A case of exemption had been mentioned in the House frequently of late, and it was in connection with that he had had certain papers laid on the Table, and there was no doubt that in the majority of cases where permits had been granted it was not impracticable to obtain certificated engine-drivers. As a matter of fact there were instances where men had been dismissed from that very mine because this permit to exempt had been granted by the Minister for Mines. Surely it was not impossible to obtain

a certificated engine-driver in Menzies. It was found that on the Lady Sherry mine a permit was granted to A. H. Maclean to take charge of a winding engine. While such a permit was granted the men on the mine would always take the risk of being raised and lowered. A permit was granted on similar conditions to the Hon. T. F. Brimage at the Richmond Gem mine. It was first for six months and then for a further six months and it was to drive a winding engine, but not to raise or lower men. Yet when Inspector Beaumont went to the Richmond Gem he found the Hon. T. F. Brimage raising and lowering men, and he practically defied the inspector. Mr. Brimage continued to do so until he was prosecuted, with the result that he was fined 5s., and because the inspector did not apply for costs the department had to pay the costs in the case. Inspector Beaumont had since been forced out of the department, while Mr. Brimage was still in possession of the permit which had been granted, and probably was still carrying out the practice of raising and lowering men. Where it was practicable to obtain a certificated engine-driver, no permits should be granted. If an engine-driver was not obtained, then a breach of the section was committed, and it was breaking faith with the House which permitted the clause to be inserted in the Bill. There was one matter he desired to bring under the notice of the Minister in order to get some statement from him. During the last session of the previous Parliament he (Mr. Scaddan) drew attention to some statements which were contained in the report of the Chief Inspector of Machinery, which reflected seriously upon the engine-drivers throughout the community. He took exception to that portion of the report, and the Minister said that he was disgusted with it appearing in the report, and would make inquiry, and find out how it got there, who was responsible and then make the result known to the House. That was in July or August last, since when nothing had been heard about it. He desired to know whether the Minister had since concurred in the statement which appeared in the report, or whether he had asked Mr. Mat-

thews to supply reasons for putting it in the report, and whether he could prove the statements therein contained. He (Mr. Scaddan) was assured by those who ought to know, that contrary to the fact that the engine-drivers were guilty of drunkenness as pointed out in this report, it was found that the inspectors of machinery themselves had been guilty of drunkenness and that the Minister's attention had been drawn to it, and nothing had been said. We did not see that in the report. The inspectors of machinery were supposed to see that the men carried out their duties, and how could they enter prosecutions when they themselves had been found to be under the influence of drink? It only showed that the gentleman at the head of the branch was privileged to make statements in the Mines Report against a law-abiding portion of our citizens, the engine-drivers, and he could say that there was no class in the community more given to sobriety than these drivers, because they could not follow their occupation unless they refrained from drinking. They had to be moderate drinkers or teetotallers, because liquor played on their nerves, and they were not capable of taking charge of winding engines if they were not thoroughly well. Yet, this report was permitted, and no statement had been made by the Minister. An officer making such serious charges without being able to prove them should certainly be reprimanded by the Minister. With regard to the mining industry itself, apart from those employed in it, he was not one of those who believed that the industry was practically coming to an end; he believed that the introduction of modern appliances in the mines, together with the fact that the managers to-day were men with more experience of the nature of working which was necessary to reduce cost, had resulted in those working costs being reduced, and reduced also by a general system of rushing on the part of the men employed, as well as because of the fact that ore which previously had to be passed, was now being treated. The gold yield had fallen to some extent, because this class of ore was now being treated. Members would know that the developments at depth on the Kalgoorlie

field had practically assured that field for the next 25 years at least. We knew that they were taking ore out at a great rate, but they were keeping developments well in hand. In view of that fact there was no reason to be in any way alarmed about mining prospects. Moreover, one would find when travelling through the fields, that outside Kalgoorlie there had been no real legitimate mining, excepting in one or two of the smaller centres. They had been practically working rich chutes only, and no attempt had been made to prospect. At Leonora, the Sons of Gwalia mine with one other adjoining, were the only mines in the district, and there had been no attempt to prospect north or south. The same thing applied to every other district. They followed one chute, and the adjoining companies hung on in the hope that the rich chute would go into their country. So it was, that to-day only the richest mines were being worked. Attention had been drawn only recently to a practice at present in vogue in the Mines Department, introduced recently and which was gaining ground, and which would have a detrimental effect on prospecting, and also mining in some of the richer belts. He believed that some of the companies in Kalgoorlie had made application to obtain what were known as "tailing areas." There was a considerable amount of ground covered with tailings and one could not obtain a mining lease unless there was some known lode or reef, and while that area which was in direct line with the present lodes was being covered with sands, there was no possibility of obtaining any knowledge of a lode or reef, with the result that we found that prospecting was being prevented in the southern portion of that belt. He was one of those who believed that the Kalgoorlie belt was not confined within the area or length of one mile. He was of the opinion that it would be found that those lodes would dip and rise a few miles south. If they did not outcrop at the surface they would be found some distance below, but as long as our energies and capital were concentrated on the rich mines nothing would be done at the south or even the north end. No attempt had been made to put

down a bore at the south end. All that we looked for in Kalgoorlie was to get big yields and pay big dividends to induce capital to come from the old country. We should pay attention to the properties adjoining the Golden Mile, and if a bore or two were put down at the south end of the Golden Mile, it would be discovered that the lodes existed there at some depth. The principle of granting tailing areas only prevented general prospecting in that part of the district.

The Minister for Mines: I would like you to explain what you would suggest they should do with their tailings.

Mr. SCADDAN: In that connection in view of the fact that the Goldfields Water Supply were supplying water at 1s. 6d. per thousand gallons, for the purpose of carrying these tailings to Lakeside, there was no reason why they should be stacked at the south end. It was unfair, and for the life of him he could not understand why the tailing areas were granted in view of the fact that someone had made application for a lease and was prepared to work it. He hoped the Minister would prevent any further dumping of residues on the line of lode, the result of which would be detrimental to the progress of mining there. He expressed the hope also that the Minister would awaken to some of the responsibilities of his position. He was there not only to control the State batteries, but to see that the men employed on the mines worked under fair conditions. At the present time that was not so. Our death rate per thousand in Western Australia of men employed on the mines was greater than it was in any other State of the Commonwealth or New Zealand, or in any mining community of the world, yet we boasted of the dividends which we obtained from the mines. He hoped the Minister would pay attention to this matter, and if necessary, provide more inspectors, or better still, comply with a request which had been made by the Miners' Association, and others working in the mines, that they should have the power to appoint check inspectors. At the present time it was impossible for

two inspectors in Kalgoorlie to carry on a system of thorough inspection. They could not go right round. As a matter of fact, it would take a week to thoroughly inspect mines like the Great Boulder and Ivanhoe. Members could easily see the difficulties which were placed before the inspectors. Our accident roll would decrease considerably if we would only permit check inspectors to be appointed, and while the death roll was 288 in seven years, he ventured to say in less than two years the percentage would be reduced by one-half.

Mr. NANSON: One could have wished that the Minister in his address had given more detailed information as to the administration of his own department. The member for Katanning had said that he was satisfied the Minister for Mines, if given time, would effect economies. But it could not be forgotten that the Minister had been in office now for a considerable number of years and he (Mr. Nanson) could not help thinking that considering the finances of the State at the present juncture it would have been satisfactory if the Minister had been able to reply to some of the criticisms levelled, more particularly by the Public Service Commissioner, at the expense of his department; and have indicated to the Committee the directions in which he proposed to reduce that expenditure. In looking at the Estimates it was found that there was a decrease, and a fairly substantial decrease, in the expenditure for the current financial year as compared with that for the previous year. But when one came to analyse that decrease it was found that it had been brought about, not by reducing the cost of administration, but by cutting down the expenditure on mines development. The total decrease amounted to £11,146. Of this £3,000 was obtained by cutting off sums from the mining development vote; and a further sum of £8,000 was represented in the cutting down of expenditure in connection with State batteries. Therefore, of the decrease of £11,146 on the total expenditure, no less than £11,000 was absorbed by this cutting down of the mines development

vote and of the expenditure in respect to State batteries.

The Minister for Mines: The latter is administrative.

Mr. NANSON: It was gratifying to hear from the Minister that the reduction was a purely administrative one. When the Minister replied to criticisms of members he would perhaps be able to enlighten the Committee as to whether or not the reduction of £8,000 was secured without diminishing in any respect the facilities given by public batteries. In the report of the Public Service Commissioner attention had been drawn to the very large amount expended on the inspection of mines and machinery, as compared with what was spent in similar directions in the States of New South Wales and Victoria. He (Mr. Nanson) was prepared to be told that the conditions in Western Australia were so different from those prevailing in the other States that one had to be prepared to put up with a very much larger expenditure than was necessary on the Eastern side of the Commonwealth. However that was not a statement to be taken unsupported by anything more than mere assertion. He was inclined to think that if the question were examined it would be found that some economies could be effected in our own Mines Department, even if the actual cost could not be brought down to the low rate at which it was kept in the Eastern States. At the outset he wished it to be understood that he would be the last to advocate economy in this direction if it were to mean the increasing of the risk accepted by those employed in the mines. He fully realised that there must be reasonable precaution taken to ensure the safety of men employed in the mines. If, therefore, the Minister for Mines could succeed in showing that it was absolutely necessary for the safety of the miners that this large sum should be spent for inspection, he (Mr. Nanson) would be the last to oppose that expenditure. But if members were to believe what had fallen from the member for Ivanhoe, the condition with regard to the inspection of mines and machinery in this State was not everything that could be desired. And if one went further and looked into such statistical

information of a comparative character as was available between this State and the Eastern States, it would be found that the percentage of accidents in Western Australia was regrettably large as compared with those in New South Wales and Victoria. Yet Victoria managed to get along with 11 inspectors, while New South Wales had 14 inspectors. Western Australia headed the list with 20 inspectors.

Mr. A. A. Wilson : The inspection is not too good in Victoria.

Mr. NANSON : That might be so. He did not profess to speak with authority on that point.

Mr. Scaddan : We have only eight mining inspectors.

Mr. NANSON : With the mining inspectors he was including the machinery inspectors. In New South Wales and Victoria the inspectors held a dual position, covering both mines and machinery. His (Mr. Nanson's) contention was that if it were possible in New South Wales and Victoria to appoint one inspector to deal with this matter of both mining and machinery, it should be equally possible to do so in Western Australia. That was a point on which he would like some information. It might be said that the mining industry in Western Australia was upon such a gigantic scale that it needed a staff of inspectors larger than was employed either in New South Wales or Victoria. But if hon. members took the mining industry in the three States they would find that as a matter of fact in regard to the total number of men employed in the industry, Western Australia held but third place. For every man employed in the mining industry in Western Australia New South Wales employed more than two. The actual figures for the year 1906, which embodied the latest available information, were New South Wales, 42,500, Victoria 26,000, Western Australia, 19,000.

Mr. Scaddan : Those figures include coal mining.

Mr. NANSON : They included every possible class of mining. The point he wished to make was that the inspectors were appointed mainly to secure the safety of the men employed in the mines,

and that in New South Wales 14 inspectors did the work in respect of 42,500 men, while in Victoria 11 attended to the safety of 26,000 men, whereas in Western Australia 20 inspectors were required to safeguard 19,000 men. Another interesting comparison was the cost per miner of this inspection in the three States. In Western Australia in order to secure the safety of the miners—and hon. members had been told that it was not secured to the extent desired—it cost 7s. 3d. per miner, as against 2s. 9d. in Victoria, and 2s. 6d. in New South Wales. This was merely the salaries of inspectors.

The Minister for Mines : That includes inspectors of machinery and inspectors of mines.

Mr. NANSON : A worse case might be made out if one were to take the additional expenses involved in the travelling of the various inspectors. In Western Australia that expense was necessarily very high, and if added to the salary would bring the result up to from 7s. 3d. to perhaps double that amount. To take the number of accidents in the coal mines of the three States, the total number of injured per 1,000 employed was in 1906:—New South Wales, 4.7; Victoria, 6.9; Western Australia, 100.4. As he had already said, he did not pretend to be an authority on these matters. Consequently he had found it difficult to realise that this was a correct return, that there could be so enormous a discrepancy. It seemed incredible that the figures could be accurate. Still they were taken from the *Official Year Book* of the Commonwealth, and if they were not accurate it would be well that some official contradiction of those figures were to be issued by the Mines Department. To take the number killed per 1,000 of persons employed in the coal mining industry in New South Wales, it was 1.4. He had not the figures for the coal mining industry in Western Australia, and so he had been compelled to take those relating to the gold mining industry, which showed the proportion of 2.35 per 1,000. And unfortunately in 1907 that proportion increased to 2.55 per thousand. To return to the number of inspectors, we had to

remember that the inspectors employed in regard to machinery and mines in New South Wales and Victoria had an infinitely larger amount of work to do in regard to machinery in factories than had to be done in Western Australia. Taking the power used in factories in New South Wales there was a horse power of 83,000, and in Victoria, 48,000, while it was only 24,000 in Western Australia. Taking the value of the plant and machinery in factories we found in New South Wales it was £8,250,000, and in Victoria £6,500,000 while in Western Australia it was only £1,800,000. Whether we combined the manufacturing and mining industries, or took the mining industry by itself and the manufacturing industry by itself, each industry was on a larger scale in New South Wales and in Victoria in proportion to the men employed than the similar industries in Western Australia, yet we found that the number of inspectors, and the cost of these inspectors, was much larger in Western Australia than in either New South Wales or Victoria, the cost being £3,600 in Victoria, £5,400 in New South Wales, and £7,000 in Western Australia. His attention had been directed to these matters in the first place by the comments made on the subject by the Public Service Commissioner, and he brought them forward in order that the Minister might have an opportunity, if he were able to do so, of showing that the expenditure in Western Australia was absolutely essential and could not be reduced to something like the level prevailing in those other States. It was a point to which attention should be directed, more particularly at this time when it was necessary for Ministers of every department to compare their costs with the costs of similar departments in the Eastern States, and to devote all their energies to ascertaining whether reductions could not be made without impairing the necessary efficiency of the service.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was to be expected the cost in this State would be greater than in Victoria. Victoria was a little plot of land a man could travel over in one day if he had a rapid motor, whereas it would take a fortnight to get

to some of the mining fields in this State.

Mr. Nanson: That would be an argument for combining machinery and mining if it were practicable.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It probably would be advisable to do so. There was no reason why the inspector of mines should not be the inspector of machinery.

The Minister for Mines: The alteration was made because when the inspector went out to examine a boiler he had to give notice.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There might be some reason in that, but as a matter of fact the mines in the outback parts got sufficient notice of the visits of the inspector of mines. The officer usually visited a mine after an accident when sent for. His principal protest against the Mines Department was in regard to exemptions. In the Pilbara district mines had been locked up for almost as long as he could remember. The Minister said mines were not now being worked for speculative purposes. Mines in the Pilbara district were not being worked at all for speculative purposes or for other purposes, but they were certainly being held; and he protested against the British Exploration Company, in particular, being allowed to lock up first-class lands year after year for the past five or six years. It was never the intention of members of Parliament who passed the Act to allow mines to be locked up under exemption as they were locked up in the Pilbara district. Another matter affecting his electorate was in regard to Asiatics working on garden areas. Some natural-born British subject secured a garden area and sublet it to an Asiatic. That was never intended, and it was not to the advantage of residents of the district. It was certainly an evasion of the intention of the Act, and it was time the Mines Department made some attempt to prevent this continual getting-behind the Act. At the Premiers Conference held at Brisbane our Premier had moved that it was advisable that the Commonwealth should so administer the Aliens Restriction Act as to allow an unlimited supply of Asiatics to work the

pearling boats at Broome. That appeared to be the policy of the Moore Government. Their Acts and their regulations were good, but they endeavoured to so administer them as to totally nullify the intention of Parliament. Regulations were passed with the view of preventing the increase of Asiatics in Australia. That was the intention of the Federal Parliament, but the Premier endeavoured to show how that Act could be overcome, and so to administer it as to have an unlimited number of Asiatics at Broome. The Mining Act was so administered that those who had the favour of the Minister could get exemptions so long as they liked. They could practically annul all labour conditions on mines, and they had done so in the Pilbarra district. He found also that the regulations in regard to Asiatics holding business licences and gardens were so administered as to allow Asiatics to hold practically both those areas, notwithstanding the fact that Parliament passed an Act which was intended to prevent them from holding such. The question of Asiatic gardens, especially in the North-West, in Pilbara and West Pilbara, was one of considerable moment, and he hoped the Minister would prevent their continuance. The Minister, in speaking on the present vote, said the mining prospects of the State were equal to anything in the past, while the member for Katanning some time ago said that the mining prospects now were better than they had ever been.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: I did not say that.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Well, something very close to it. It was well to face a position as it was. Only look at the mining returns and it must be admitted that there had been a continual and regular decline in the output for the last four years. We could safely look for a continuation of that decline in the future. It was useless for us to say that the outlook had never been better, for it had been. We were only striking the circumstances which met every mining country, and was the result of taking out so much from the land without putting anything back. However, the position was nothing to frighten us, but it was just as well to admit the truth. There was no ad-

vantage in pretending that our mines were looking as well now as they did six years ago. The member for Mount Magnet made a similar statement as to Murchison, but, as a matter of fact, although new mining centres were being opened up there the old sources were being depleted, and the Murchison, notwithstanding Meekatharra and Black Range, was producing less now than it did a few years ago owing to the fact that the Day Dawn mines and other big mining propositions were being worked out. The gold yield was decreasing every year, but there was one thing certain, that we undoubtedly had very large rich deposits of the baser metals, and with good administration it was quite possible to make up the decrease in the gold yield by opening up the baser metal deposits. The Minister had said that the copper mines at Whim Creek and other places were not progressing as they should owing to the great fall in the price of copper. Again he was wrong, for the present price of the metal was about the normal one, and the prices that obtained in the early part of 1907 were abnormal. We must consider all copper propositions at the price of about £60 a ton. If Whim Creek, Roebourne, and other places in the North-West were opened up they would pay handsomely with copper at £60 a ton, that was provided proper facilities were given by the Government to the people who worked them. There was one particular proposition at Oakover River which had been owned by Mr. Snell, late of Leonora. When the Minister was in the Pilbara electorate he promised Mr. Snell he would carry 50 tons of ore by means of the rabbit-proof fence camels from the mine to the port of shipment, but that promise was not fulfilled.

The Minister for Works: Yes, it was. Instructions were given to the camel people to take the ore down to the port, but it was owing to Snell's defaulting that it did not go.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: That promise was never fulfilled.

The Minister for Works: That promise was fulfilled.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Government never carted that stone.

The Minister for Works: He did not bring it in.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The promise was never fulfilled. Mr. Snell was told that the camels would cart the ore on their return journey, and he went to the trouble of bringing it along.

The Minister for Works: Mr. Snell told you what was wrong. He was not there at the time arranged.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Mr. Snell asked the manager of the camels to cart it and the manager replied that he had no instructions to do so, and could not do what was asked. Mr. Snell then waited a considerable time and finally was told that the camels would not cart the ore. Mr. Snell then said he would bring his own camels along, and unfortunately, not knowing the country, a number of his camels valued in all at £300, were poisoned. He carted the stone himself after being delayed by the Government waiting for the fulfilment of a promise that was made, and then lost the top market price, and after all these disabilities he secured a return from that ore, which, excepting for the loss he sustained in connection with the camels, paid him for raising and carting it. When there existed such a proposition it was the duty of the Government to give to the holders of the leases some facilities for working it. That lease in question was one of the biggest in the State according to returns which he (Mr. Underwood) saw in Mr. Snell's possession of the results obtained, it was also one of the richest propositions of base metals in this State. When we attempted to do anything at all in the way of the development of mines, that proposition on the Oakover River, should receive assistance, and facilities should be given to convey the ore to the market. If the Government were to do anything at all in that district in comparison to what they had done in others, it would be found that it would be possible to get from that part of the State an immense quantity of base metals. He hoped the Government would recognise that gold was being depleted, and that to meet the circumstances we required to open up our base metal deposits. There were

many in the North-West and in other parts, and it was time that the department turned their attention to these deposits. With regard to public batteries, the Minister spoke most eloquently. He stated very generally that he made the charges at these batteries the same at all places. There was one place however, that had to pay more, and that was 20-mile Sandy. He remembered reading the Minister's policy speech at Menzies delivered about April or May of last year, when he said he intended to bring the batteries under the one charge, and he spoke of the injustice to the man in a favoured situation such as Menzies, or other places where he was having his stone crushed at a lower rate than the man in the back country, and not so fortunately situated. If there was any one who had gone out back, and was deserving of consideration it was the man in the Nullagine district, and when the Minister spoke of bringing all the batteries under the same system, it was only to be expected that this man should not be overlooked. Those who went out there had difficulties to contend against, which were unheard of in the more favoured fields, and he was surprised at the refusal of the Minister to bring the charges on the 20-mile Sandy into line with those in other parts of the State. The Minister had stated that he would obtain the opinion and assistance of members on the Opposition side of the House, as to the best means of developing the industry. If the Minister always spoke like that, there would be a better feeling between the Opposition side and the Minister. He remembered a speech delivered by the Minister and reported in the *North Coolgardie Herald* wherein the Minister said he wanted the men themselves, and not political agitators, to go to him and tell him their wants. Now he stated he wanted the assistance of the Opposition side of the House, the political agitators, it was presumed, for who were they, if they were not the members of the Opposition. It was easy to tell the House that he would like to get on with members and obtain their opinions and assistance, but he could not expect good feeling to prevail between members on

the Opposition side of the House and himself when he went on to the public platform and used entirely different language. He (Mr. Underwood) would not trouble about these matters if the Minister was inclined to refer to him as a political agitator. He could do so, but then he must not complain if he too was afterwards referred to as something else than a gentleman. He assured the Minister that it was these little assertions of his, that caused a great deal of heat and feeling in the House and out of it, and while that continued he would not be likely to have good feeling exhibited towards him and assistance given from the Opposition side. Of course the Opposition members were not afraid; they could reply just as often as the Minister could make these assertions. Another proposition put forward by the Minister was in regard to the treatment of stone by the public batteries, the stone that was particularly rich. He agreed with the proposition that the prospectors who treated particularly rich stone at the public batteries should pay a higher price for that than for lower grade or ordinary stone. He was aware of course it was more expensive to treat a few tons of rich stone, than it was to treat a fairly large quantity of ordinary grade stone. Again the Minister had said that he was going to the trouble of making special regulations in regard to concessions for rich stone from small leaders. If the leader were rich it was worth crushing, and no concession such as might be looked for would be of any avail to the owner of the stone. The Minister in his speech, referring to the appointment of the Superintendent of State Batteries, had spoken of the difficulty of removing a public servant if he were once appointed permanently. He (Mr. Underwood) agreed that such difficulty did exist. There was altogether too much difficulty about getting rid of some of the wasters in the civil service. It appeared to him that once a man got permanently into the civil service, he could not be shifted with a 10-ton crane. But the point was that the Minister recognised this position, and therefore it was his duty to attempt to remedy it. He trusted that the

Minister would do something with regard to the working of the mines in the Pilbara district; that he would see that those mines which had been held for a long time without working would now be either worked or forfeited to somebody else who would work them. He hoped that the Minister would also give consideration to the question of the Asiatics in the North.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 19th January, 1909.

	PAGE
Papers presented	1485
Questions: Aborigines Relief	1485
State Battery, Leunonville	1486
Railways, Industrial Conditions	1486
Annual Estimates, Votes and Items discussed	1487

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: By-laws of the municipalities of Albany and Perth.

By the Treasurer: Perth Public Hospital, report of board of management.

QUESTION—ABORIGINES RELIEF.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Premier: What number of aborigines received rations from the department each month of 1908?

The PREMIER replied: The total number of natives receiving Government relief at 112 relieving stations during the year ended 30th June, 1908, was 1,200. I will have a return prepared with reference to the other particulars.