

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

Ayes	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	17

Majority against .. 10

AYES.		
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kilson	
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore	
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. Fraser	(Teller.)
Hon. E. M. Heenan		

NOES.		
Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. G. W. Miles	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson	
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker	
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Seddon	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. A. Thomson	
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom	
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood	
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Tuckey	(Teller.)
Hon. W. J. Mann		

PAIR.		
AYE.	No.	
Hon. C. B. Williams	Hon. H. V. Plesse	

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

*House adjourned at 1.8 a.m. (Wednesday).*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 28th November, 1939.

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

### QUESTION—HOSPITAL TREATMENT.

#### *Adult Children's Responsibility for Parents.*

Mr. MANN asked the Minister for Health: 1, Under what section of the Hospitals Acts of 1930 and 1931 is the Health Department empowered to take action against adult children to compel them to pay hospital costs of their parents? 2, Is the Health Department compelling committees of country hospitals to take that action? 3, Why should patients in country hospitals who claim to come under Section 11 of the Hospitals Act, 1930, be treated differently from similar patients treated in city or Government hospitals? 4, Does he know of any other law whereby adult children are responsible for the debts of their parents? 5, Is he aware that the Health Department informed the committee of a country hospital that no one is entitled to free hospital treatment?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, There is no Hospitals Act, 1930-1931, but section 33, subsection 3 of the Hospitals Act, 1927, contains the power referred to. 2, No. 3, There is no differentiation whatever in the administration of section 11 of the Hospital Fund Act of 1930, as amended by section 3 of No. 55 of 1931. 4, Yes—the Lunacy Act, 1920. 5, Under the legislation referred to in No. 3 above no one can claim free

treatment. In practice, old age and invalid pensioners, sustenance workers and their families and all pensioners who cannot be expected to pay anything, do receive free treatment.

### QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

#### *"K" Class Wagons Sideboards.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What was the cost of fitting sideboards to 20 "K" class wagons used for transporting lime and sand to the Wiluna Gold Mines? 2, What proportion of the cost was paid by the department, and what proportion did the company pay? 3, Did the additions increase the carrying capacity of the wagons or merely enable them to carry loads to their full capacity? 4, If the former, what was the increase in the carrying capacity? 5, What additional freight is charged to the mines through the increase in the tare of the truck?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, £276. 2, £156 and £120 respectively. 3, It allowed of an increase in paying load from  $8\frac{1}{2}$  tons to  $11\frac{3}{4}$  tons. 4, See answer to No. 3. 5, The freight on the additional tonnage carried in the truck.

### QUESTION—LANDS.

#### *Northern Marginal Areas.*

Mr. PATRICK asked the Minister for Lands: Will he make available the report of the commission on marginal lands in the northern agricultural areas before the session closes?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: This is an ordinary matter of administration. Revaluations resulting from the recommendations of the Board will be made known to the persons concerned at an early date.

### QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

#### *Case of Charles Denham.*

Mr. HOLMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands: In view of the motion carried by this House on the 15th December 1938, relative to papers dealing with Wellington location in the name of Charles Denham, will the Minister lay these papers on the Table without further notice?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: I have no objection to the papers being tabled and will table them tomorrow.

### MOTION—STATE FORESTS

#### *To Revoke Dedication.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.36]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 14, 22, 23, 24, 29, 37, 38 and 51, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on the 23rd day of November, 1939, be carried out.

The following are the particulars concerning the individual areas. The numbers quoted refer to the areas listed in the schedule to the proposal. Numbered plans are attached to the proposal. Area No. 1 is two miles east of Collie-Burn; it consists of 150 acres of low wet land carrying very little timber and is to be made available, subject to the approval of the Mines Department, to a settler residing in the locality. Area No. 2 is two miles west of Collie-Cardiff; it contains about 110 acres of poor jarrah country and is of no value for reforestation purposes. It is to be made available, subject to the approval of the Mines Department, to an adjoining landholder. Area No. 3 is four miles south-east of North Dandalup. It contains about ten acres of swamp land and has been applied for by an adjoining settler who requires the area for summer pasture. Area No. 4 is two miles south of Holyoake and contains about 15 acres of land carrying very little timber. It is not required for forestry purposes and has been applied for by an adjoining settler. Area No. 5 is four miles south-east of Keysbrook and contains about 15 acres of land carrying very little timber. It is not required for forestry purposes and has been applied for by an adjoining settler. Area No. 6 is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Jarrahdale. It contains about one acre of land which is of no use for forestry purposes. It is required by the adjoining landholder. Area No. 7 is two miles north-east of Jarrahdale and contains about one acre of ti-tree swamp. It is required by an adjoining settler for the purpose of water supply. Area No. 8 is two miles north-east of Jarrahdale and contains about seven acres of semi-swamp country. It is required

by the adjoining landholder for market gardening purposes. Area No. 9 is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles south-east of Jarrahdale. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres of swampy land has been applied for by the adjoining landholder. Area No. 10 is two miles south-east of Jarrahdale. About 20 acres of swampy land has been applied for for market garden purposes. Area No. 11 is two miles north of Marrinup. About  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of high land is involved carrying no timber, and it is required by the adjoining settler as a site for his house and buildings. Area No. 12 is five miles north of Muja. It consists of about 37 acres of open flat carrying very little timber. This block has been applied for by the adjoining landholder. Area No. 13 is one mile west of Wilga. This consists of 420 acres of poor quality forest that has been cut out and is no longer required for forest purposes. Area No. 14 is seven miles north-east of Hester. It consists of about 200 acres of land from which all marketable timber has been removed. This block has been applied for by the son of an adjoining landholder. Area No. 15 is 18 miles east of Wilgarup. It contains 112 acres of poor jarrah country not required as State forest, and has been applied for by the applicant for an adjoining vacant location. Area No. 16 is situated 18 miles east of Manjimup. This consists of about 33 acres of low loadage forest country, which is required by the adjoining settler to strengthen his holding and enable him to improve his water supply. Area No. 17 is eight miles east of Manjimup. The area contains about 40 acres, mainly blackboy flat, which is required by an adjoining settler to link two holdings that he now has under pasture. Area No. 18 is four miles east of Manjimup. It consists of about 23 acres of steep country of no value for forestry purposes, and is carrying only an odd jarrah tree scattered amongst poor fire-damaged blackbutt. This block has been applied for by an adjoining settler. Area No. 19 is south-east of Congelin, and consists of about 140 acres to be made available to an adjoining landholder in exchange for mallet country to be included in State forest. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**MR. J. H. SMITH** (Nelson) [4.44]: I have no objection to the excision of these areas from our forests. Similar proposals are made every year because, under the

Act, the Minister has to secure the approval of Parliament before excisions of the kind can be made. My only regret is that a larger number of areas are not excised. In my opinion the Forests Department is too conservative in regard to these areas. There is such a thing as the Conservator's being too stringent in exercising the powers conferred upon him. To get forest areas from him is almost as difficult as getting a tooth drawn by a dentist. All sorts of inspections have to be made before he will agree to make even a small excision. However, I am pleased to find that he is agreeable to these areas being released. I represent an area where the land is held hard and fast by the Forests Department, and I welcome such excisions as those proposed because I know they will be in the interests of forestry and will enable adjoining settlers to link up their blocks, obtain access to water or otherwise improve their holdings. So far as I am aware, no exception can be taken to the motion, because the Conservator has made a careful examination of the areas in question.

**Hon. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [4.46]:

The only objection I have is in respect to certain lands proposed to be thrown open at Collie with a provision that their selection shall meet with the approval of the Mines Department. Before those areas are included, we should have some knowledge of what objection is likely to be raised by the Mines Department. It would be useless for a man to select the land and then find that the Mines Department raised objection to his utilising it. No doubt the idea is to preserve any coal on that land. Under the existing law, when a man acquires land, he is entitled to only 200 ft. from the surface. Anything below that belongs to the Crown. In a Collie area he might have to go to a depth of only 30 ft. or 40 ft. to find valuable coal. Whether the object is to protect the Crown, I do not know. The Minister should advise the House, or the debate should be adjourned to enable a statement to be obtained from the Mines Department as to any possible objection. If a known coal seam passes through the property, the area should be reserved to the Crown. I am not aware of our having leased any land in which there are known coal deposits, except in the

North, but Collie has the only coalfield that is being worked. Perhaps any coal would be at greater depth than that to which a person receiving a Crown grant would be entitled. The Minister for Works might be at a disadvantage in moving this motion on behalf of the Premier, but I hope that before it is passed, we shall be given more information on this point.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [4.48]: I think the position is quite clear. First of all, the land is useless for forestry purposes, and therefore it can be excised. The land has been applied for by a settler in the locality, and we propose that it be made available to him subject to the approval of the Mines Department.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Mines Department should be asked to approve before the proposal is made here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the Mines Department would not be interested until the area has been excised. The point would then arise whether the land should be granted to the applicant. Before it is granted to the applicant, the approval of the Mines Department must be obtained. That is the safeguard. All we do here is to excise. We do not agree that any applicant shall receive anything that is excised.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But to pass the motion is tantamount to doing that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. An area applied for by a settler in the locality will be made available to him only subject to the approval of the Mines Department. If the Mines Department does not approve, saying that the area should be reserved for mining purposes, it will not be made available to any applicant. That holds in respect of the 110 acres situated two miles west of Collie-Cardiff.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the other excision is at Collie-Burn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think there is the slightest doubt as to the procedure. When it comes to granting these areas, the Lands Department will deal with the matter. However, before the Lands Department will make any area available to anybody, the Mines Department must say that it has no objection. I see no complication whatever about the matter. It is not as if the whole transaction was completed by the passing of the motion. The

motion merely gives the House the information that these areas have been applied for by certain persons for certain purposes.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Works, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

## **BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.**

*First Reading.*

Introduced by the Minister for Justice and read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This is but a very small Bill, although possibly it may prove important. Just now it is not highly important. The Licensing Act of 1903 provided for the taking of a local option poll in 1925 and in every fifth year thereafter. It will be seen that there has been no alteration of the law since the taking of the first referendum, in 1925. In view of the psychology now predominating, however, it seems to me that the taking of a referendum at the present time would be unwise. Therefore the Bill proposes to postpone the taking of the next referendum from 1940 to 1945. The cost involved in the taking of a referendum is between £7,000 and £8,000, a great deal of money to pay for something that we know could not prove successful at this juncture. A three-fifths majority is needed of the votes required before a referendum will be effective; moreover, it is necessary that 30 per cent. of the persons whose names appear on the electoral roll shall vote at the referendum. Furthermore, not only would the referendum be costly to the State, but it would also prove expensive to various organisations that have a perfect right to put forward their views on the subject; for instance, the temperance and other bodies. Seeing that there is no demand for a referendum, I do not consider it reasonable to spend so much money on the taking of one at present. The Licensing Bench has done an excellent job. I have observed its work all over the State, and I dare say many hon. members have done likewise. The liquor trade of Western Australia compares favourably with that of any other State in Australia, or for that matter in any part of the world, having regard to the smallness of

Western Australia's population. I have been inclined to think that the Licensing Court is sometimes too strict in the conditions it imposes. However, that is conducive to the trade.

Mr. Doney: What does that sentence mean?

**THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE:** That the accommodation provided throughout the State must be taken into consideration. A satisfied public is always helpful to any trade, though the expense of maintaining the standard required by the Licensing Board may be distasteful to people who are called upon to bear it. There has been no demand whatever for a referendum, and so why should the State be put to a considerable expense that is unwarranted at this juncture? If for one moment I thought that any section of our people was being denied its rights, I would say, "Let us take the referendum." If I thought there was any possibility of prohibition being carried, I would say that it was only reasonable and fair to give the people an opportunity to vote. Victoria took a referendum in 1930, with the result that 552,339 votes were cast in favour of licenses and 418,902 against licenses, a majority of 133,437 in favour of licenses and against prohibition. In 1938 Victoria held another referendum, 721,704 votes being cast in favour of licenses and 368,676 against, the majority against prohibition therefore being 353,028. This majority represents a gain of 219,591 for licenses in the eight years. In view of the result in Victoria, a much smaller State in area than Western Australia, it is plain that a referendum here would be purposeless at present. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—PLANT DISEASES (REGISTRATION FEES) (No. 2).**

*Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.2] in moving the second reading said: This is the usual Bill that is introduced towards the end of each session to deal with the closing of roads in different parts of the State. I have plans dealing with the various proposals, which I shall place upon the Table of the House. Clause 2 deals with the closure of part of Unicorn-street in the town of Wagin. The portion of the street affected has not been in use for many years, and the desire is to add it to the adjoining reserve and to continue Thornton-street, as indicated on the litho. The proposal is that the northern part to be closed shall be used for tennis courts, while the southern portion is to be added to an ornamental park already planted with trees. The owners of the land abutting on the portion of the road to be closed have agreed to the proposal, and no departmental objection is taken to the alteration. The next closure applies to an unnamed street off the Boulevard in the Mt. Hawthorn district of the City of Perth. The street serves no useful purpose, and it is proposed to close the road and sell the area.

In York there is a road known as Howick-street, and the local municipal authorities desire to close portion of it that will be useless when a railway crossing there is dispensed with. The land to the eastern side belongs to the Crown, and is used as a school site, while the land on the western side belongs to the Methodist Church, which organisation has no objection to the closing of the road. As the department is not opposed to the proposal, that closure has also been included in the Bill. At Geraldton, the local municipal authorities desire to close part of Evans-street, which abuts on an area used as a recreation ground that is vested in the council. The land on the western side is vested in the Workers' Homes Board. The other owners of land abutting on the thoroughfare have no objection to the proposal, which has been recommended by the Town Planning Board. The intention is to add the area to the recreation reserve.

The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council has requested that portion of Woodman-street be closed. The part affected is two chains in width, and the desire is to close part of the street so as to make the width uniform

throughout at one chain. No departmental objection is taken to the proposal, which will rectify an anomalous position, and will make two additional building blocks available. Clause 7 deals with the extension of the aviation landing-ground at Wagin. The proposal which has been supported by the Director General of Civil Aviation, is to add the portion of the road mentioned to the landing-ground to make available a longer runway. That improvement has been reported upon and is considered essential by the aviation authorities. The next proposal deals with the closure of Pembroke-street, which has been requested by the Perth City Council. The object is to re-subdivide the land in order to improve the lay-out of the area. The street adjoins blocks that are to be used for workers' homes, and the Bill provides that the land shall be vested in the Perth City Council to facilitate the carrying out of the re-subdivision, and for providing necessary rights-of-way and extensions of two other streets. All the proposals are straightforward, and have been recommended or applied for during the course of the year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

### **BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

- 1, Traffic Act Amendment (No. 1).  
With amendments.
- 2, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.  
With an amendment.

### **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. McDonald, read a first time.

### **BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION.**

#### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; Mr. Needham in charge of the Bill.

No. 1, Clause 3:—Delete the words "and the areas comprised in the Schedule to this Act" in lines 19 and 20.

No. 2, Clause 4, subclause (2):—Insert a new paragraph to stand as paragraph (iv), as follows:—" (iv) any person registered under the Architects Act, 1921."

No. 3, Clause 6, subclause (3):—Delete the word "two" in line 30, and substitute the word "three."

No. 4, Schedule:—Consequently upon amendment No. 1, the Schedule is deleted.

On motions by Mr. Needham, the foregoing amendments were agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### **BILL—INCOME TAX (RATES FOR DEDUCTION).**

#### *Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Works (for the Premier) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1.—Add at the end of subclause (1) the words:—"but such Proclamation shall not fix a day previous to the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and forty."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Council's amendment simply means that the Act shall not come into operation before the 1st July next. That was the intention. There would be no prospect of proclaiming the Act at an earlier date, and therefore the amendment is acceptable. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

### **BILL—FIREARMS AND GUNS ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [5.15] in moving the second reading said:

The Bill has been introduced at the request of the Commissioner of Police, who administers the Firearms and Guns Act. Most hon. members will be aware that the Act has been in operation for the last eight years and slight alterations are now found to be necessary. The Bill contains only a few short amendments to the original Act. In the first place, it is proposed to delete Section 3 of the principal Act for the purpose of amending the definition of an air gun and of a pistol. That is the principal amendment proposed. When the original measure was passed by this House an air gun was merely a toy used by children. With the progress of time, however, air guns have been improved to such an extent that they are now looked upon as being dangerous and for that reason it is intended to declare them guns under the Firearms and Guns Act. If hon. members will consult the annual report of the Commissioner of Police they will find in it a reference to this matter. On page 7 of the report the Commissioner states—

The total number of licenses issued during the 12 months was 35,084. In addition, 2,614 applications to include weapons on existing licenses were dealt with. One hundred and eighteen applications for licenses were refused. This number includes 25 applicants who held licenses but were refused with respect to pistols, and 18 who were refused with regard to .303 rifles. Ten licenses were revoked and 27 firearms (including four air guns) were confiscated, whilst 100 prosecutions and convictions under the Act were recorded at this office, the fines inflicted amounting to £278. Deaths caused by firearms totalled 17, of which number four were caused by unlawfully killing, 14 were the result of suicide, and two accidental. There were 15 cases of injury, consisting of one of attempted suicide and 14 accidental, also one of murder. One appeal was made against refusal to issue a license, and this was dismissed.

I come now to the particular portion of the report of which I wish members to take notice. It is as follows:—

A variety of air rifle of a much superior quality and greater power than formerly, has come on the market. These weapons fire a slug, and some of them are alleged to be capable of killing such animals as rabbits, etc., at a distance of 50 yards. They also fire very accurately. Although it has been held that it is not necessary to license an air gun or air-rifle, it is conceivable that the weapons referred to were not contemplated when the legislation was enacted, otherwise possibly some provision would have been made. The position now is that such weapons may be purchased, carried and used by anyone—children included—with-

out hindrance or control. It is trusted that amending legislation to deal with this matter will be introduced, and also that of aboriginal natives, particularly those in the North-Western portion of the State.

The required legislation has been introduced in another place, has run the gauntlet there and is now before members of this Chamber for consideration. Particular reference is made in the Bill to pistols. It is proposed to include toy pistols in the Act. The information supplied by the Commissioner of Police indicates that such pistols, which are prohibited by Commonwealth legislation, somehow drift into Australia. The pistol to which I refer is of the pocket variety. It is capable of being re-bored and re-fitted to such an extent as to convert it into a dangerous weapon.

By means of another amendment it is proposed to give the justice of the peace or resident magistrate who tries a case the right to inflict whatever penalty he thinks fit. At present it is provided that for certain offences a penalty of not less than £10 and not more than £100 may be imposed. The amendment is to strike out the words "not less than £10." Consequently if a magistrate upon hearing the facts of a case, considers that an offence was committed more in ignorance than by intent, he may impose a penalty of £1 or 10s. or 5s. or whatever he thinks fit. If I am able to supply members with any further information when the Bill is in Committee, I shall be only too pleased to do so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Warner, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [5.23]: I have no desire to oppose the Bill which I consider to be necessary. The great shortage of nurses has been responsible for the amendment proposed by the Minister. Some nurses do not get through their course in the three years and although the Minister did not make the fact quite clear, I gather that the amendment is designed to make it possible for the services of those nurses to

be retained. Some girls find it more difficult than do others to qualify in three years, and although the Bill does not clearly establish whether the term is to be shortened or lengthened, I believe the Minister proposes to alter it with a view to removing any doubt.

The Minister for Health: You are going to alter it.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: If the Minister will allow me to do so. I have been in touch with most of the leading nurses of Perth and they are quite in agreement with the proposed amendment, provided that a few words are added at the Committee stage.

Member: What about the standard?

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The standard will be quite all right. If the standard were lowered there would be no reciprocity with the other States. Already the hours have been reduced by 19½ during the term of three years and would be further reduced if the nurses were given an extra fortnight's holiday per year. I would like to see them have all necessary holidays; but that is by the way. Whatever concessions nurses receive are not too great because theirs is a hard and strenuous profession. I do not want to see our standard lessened in any way; neither do any of the nurses. Therefore we must have a three years' course and not one of a lesser period. I believe the Minister also desires, in some cases, to increase the period, but he did not make that quite clear. I support the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.25]: I appreciate the action of the Minister in introducing the measure. There is a great need for more nurses and consequently for the provision of opportunities for the training of additional nurses. I believe a shortage exists not only here but also in other parts of the Commonwealth. Some time ago provision was made in Queensland for the training period to be four years in the larger country hospitals and five years in the smaller institutions. In many country towns in the Eastern States training schools exist at the hospitals and have proved most helpful. In common with every other hon. member I have a great admiration for those who engage in nursing in our hospitals. When, some years ago, I journeyed through Central Australia, I had an opportunity to meet some of the nurses of the Australian Inland Mission. The Department has to face great

difficulties in respect to the retention of the services of such nurses who, being extremely attractive, are naturally in particular demand in those districts. Consequently the Public Health Department is continually losing them. They are not, however, lost to the State because, in the great majority of instances, they marry and settle down in those districts. I am glad the Bill has been introduced because it will prove of great help to the Minister's department, and that means the State generally.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.27]: I want to be satisfied that the Bill will not interfere with the qualifications of nurses. We depend a great deal on the doctors of this State but a great deal more on the nurses. If girls without the necessary qualifications undertake nursing there will be an increase in the death-rate.

The Minister for Health: We shall give them another year's training and so increase their qualifications.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill does not say so.

The Minister for Health: It will.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: When I was Minister for Health an approach was made to me to extend the period of training from three to four years because there was a surplus of nurses. It was considered that if the training period were extended there would soon be fewer girls on the market. A little while later we find there is a shortage of nurses. I have no objection to the Bill but I want to make sure that our nurses of the future will be as highly qualified as those we have at present.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [5.39]: I assure the Leader of the Opposition that there will be no lessening in the qualifications of nurses. We must make provision for the training of more nurses, of which there is a shortage both in Australia and New Zealand. In the endeavour to overcome that situation, we propose to extend our training services by utilising some of the larger hospitals in the country. That training will not be as intensive as it is at the Perth and Fremantle Hospitals and at the Children's Hospital, where the nurses are on duty eight hours a day and attend lectures in the evening. Such nurses, undergoing such intensive training, can ob-



tain the necessary qualifications in three years. In the smaller hospitals they have not the same opportunity of intensive study, and at the end of three years their examinations have proved that the nurses are not as highly qualified as we would like them to be. As I have said, it is proposed to extend the opportunities given to some of the larger hospitals in the country. The examinations are set by the Australian Trained Nurses Association, and the Nurses' Registration Board, which works under the Act we are now amending, prescribes the length of time that nurses have to serve, and so forth. The Act prescribes a service of not more than three years, and the board is in the unhappy position of not being able to agree to an extension. Because of the lack of intensive training, nurses trained in other hospitals are not as fully qualified at the end of three years as when they have been trained at the Perth Hospital, for instance. The board wants discretionary power to extend the period of training to four years under the country hospitals scheme, if such extension be necessary.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 5 of the principal Act:

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I move an amendment—

That the following words be added:—"And by inserting after the word 'training' in line 3 of Subsection (2) of Section 5 of the principal Act the words 'as prescribed by the board' " be inserted.

If this amendment is agreed to the board will be able to deal satisfactorily with any situation that may arise with regard to the training of nurses.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have no objection to the amendment. Subject to the will of the Governor-in-Council the board is the only tribunal able to prescribe these things.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

**BILL—RESERVES (No. 3).**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [5.35]: This is the usual Bill that comes down every session to deal with requests made by the Lands Department, local authorities and other bodies. I have nothing to say about it. Several districts are referred to, and if any member representing a particular electorate has any objection to offer, he will no doubt give voice to it. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 12, First, Second and Third Schedules—agreed to.

New clause:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 13:—

Cockburn Sound Location: (1) All that portion of Cockburn Sound Location 839 held by the Fremantle city council as part of the Fremantle endowment lands, and more particularly described in the Fourth Schedule to this Act, and all the estate and interest of the said Fremantle city council therein may be surrendered by the Fremantle city council to His Majesty the King. (2) The said land, when so surrendered, shall vest in His Majesty as of his former estate, and shall be disposed of as follows, that is to say:—(a) A portion thereof, one chain in width, shall be dedicated a public road under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-1938, as an extension southward of Paget street in the city of Fremantle; and (b) the remainder thereof shall be dedicated by the Governor to the purposes of the Workers' Homes Act, 1911."

This new clause refers to endowment land at Fremantle. It is desired to excise portion of the municipal endowment area, and to construct workers' homes upon it. The Fremantle City Council, after consulting the Town Planning Board, wishes to surrender the area, together with a strip of land a chain in width so that a road may be constructed giving access to the land. The Workers' Homes Board and the Town Planning Board have both agreed to the proposal, but legislative authority is necessary to ratify the action taken.

New clause put and passed.

New Schedule:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as the Fourth Schedule:—"All that portion of land bounded by lines starting from a point on the southern side of Lefroy road situate in the prolongation southerly of the eastern side of Carrington street and extending 89 degrees 16 minutes 7 chains 1 6/10th links along the said southern side of Lefroy road; thence 179 degrees 10 minutes 10 chains; thence 269 degrees 16 minutes about 7 chains 1 6/10th links to a point in prolongation southerly of the eastern side of Carrington street aforesaid and thence 359 degrees 10 minutes 10 chains to the starting point. Subject to survey."

New Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

### BILL—POLICE BENEFIT FUND ABOLITION.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

**HON. C. G. LATHAM** (York) [5.43]: I do not propose to offer any objection to the Bill, which will clear up a mess that has been in the hands of Governments for many years. The statute is an old one, and provided that certain moneys should be set aside for the benefit of the police. In the old days a certain proportion of fines also went into the fund. Subsequently, when Treasurers became hard up, they omitted that provision from the Act, and it was agreed that the fund should be established on a certain basis. Evidently the matter was never referred to an actuary, or any person who knew a great deal about figures, who could say what the commitments of the Government or the police were likely to be. Up to the present all members of the police force who have retired have received the full benefit to which they were entitled under the arrangement between the police and the Government. That could not have continued much longer because the fund would soon have become defunct, as there was insufficient money in it with which to carry it on for any extended period. I presume the Treasurer has had the use of this money. The Bill repeals the Police Benefit Act, and passes over the control of the fund to the Superannuation and Family Benefits Board, and it is proposed to leave this sum of money with the Treasurer,

who has agreed to pay 4 per cent. interest upon it. There will be a nice little arrangement between the Treasurer and the board in question. The money has to be left there at the will of the Treasurer. I do not suppose there is very much wrong with that. In the days gone by the Treasurer probably had the use of the money as well as the accumulated interest. I am not sure of the rate it is proposed to charge the Workers' Homes Board for the use of this money. I understand that the money necessary for increasing the activities of the board will come from superannuation funds. If the interest to be paid by the board is to be in excess of 4 per cent., the Treasurer should pay 4 per cent. I desire to know what interest will be paid by the board for the money it will have placed at its disposal from the fund, and I also wish to know whether the Treasurer will get any benefit by being able to obtain this money at a lower rate of interest than the Workers' Homes Board will pay. Have satisfactory arrangements been made between the police and the Government in this matter? We know that there has been differential treatment in respect of those who paid more into the fund than those who joined the fund in later years. Those who contributed more will receive more. That will be a satisfactory arrangement. It certainly will provide for the members of the police force in the future. If the Act had been allowed to continue, there would undoubtedly have come a time when the Government would have had to find all the money. I support the second reading.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [5.47]: I am glad the Bill has been brought down. It represents the clearing up of an unsatisfactory position which has existed for some time. The fund amounts to a contract between the people of the State and the members of the police force, to afford the latter some security on their retirement, and it is only proper that we should take this opportunity of putting the fund in order so that we may carry out the undertaking upon which the men entered the service. I support the second reading.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1939-1940.

*In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 16th November; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

*Vote—Labour, £1,110:*

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [5.55]: The speech of the Minister in introducing the Estimates was of a heartening character. It had a healthy tone and indicated that the department had passed the Cinderella stage and was now considered to be of great importance. There is every indication that instead of spasmodic attempts to establish secondary industries in our midst, there will be considerable activity and continuity. The principal feature of the speech was the fact that the expert adviser to the department is a man who has been engaged in the Public Service of Western Australia, and it is encouraging to know that there are officers in our Government departments who are given the opportunity to prove their capacity. Ofttimes men have been brought to this State from other parts of the world and the Eastern States of Australia when, indeed, we had officers amongst us equally capable of undertaking the work, to carry out which men from outside were chosen. Therefore the Government is to be congratulated on the choice of Mr. Fernie, who is a very capable officer. The establishment of local industries is vital to the State and one in particular may develop by reason of existing war conditions. I refer to producer gas. There is every likelihood that this industry will grow into big dimensions by reason of the possible rationing of petrol. If that comes about, we shall have that local fuel to fall back upon. I venture to say that if that industry gets a footing in these times, there is every chance that it will revolutionise industry throughout the State.

As members know, a campaign in favour of the consumption of local products has been carried on for the past six years, but I regret we have not made very much progress in the matter of creating a local-product mind. The money sent from Western Australia to the Eastern States for products that can be turned out here is greater today than it was six years ago. I admit that

the quantity of articles imported from the Eastern States is not as great as it was when the campaign was started, but we must remember that there is a considerable difference in the price of all products today compared with the prices in 1933. The increased prices, in fact, obtain throughout Australia and this accounts for the difference in the figures. I consider that the department, with regard to local industries, might do a little more by way of advertising. I do not think the department has spent a great deal of money in that direction and I suggest that the Minister should do a little more. For instance, we could advertise our local products on the envelopes containing the cheques in payment of the salaries of our civil servants.

Mr. Seward: Such as, "Grow More Wheat"!

Mr. NEEDHAM: That was done. The advertisement should be directed to a greater consumption of our local products. An advertisement slip could also be inserted in the envelope. I commend the suggestion to the Minister. Our local products could also be advertised on the back of lottery tickets. Another medium of advertisement could be the State Hotels; they could bring under the notice of the public the necessity for encouraging the use of local products. Tradespeople could be asked to push the sale of local products in their shops. As a rule, that is not done. Shopkeepers should instruct their employees to put forward local products and thus encourage their sale.

As regards the Child Welfare Department, the magistrate of the Children's Court is still doing excellent work. His appointment, in my opinion, was a good one. He is not only fully competent to preside over the Children's Court and to adjudicate on the evidence given before him; but he goes to much trouble in advising both parents and children. He is handicapped in that he has not control of the probation officers. Were such control vested in him, he could do still better work than he has done during the past few years. Another matter worthy of attention is the provision of a farm colony, or some institution, where youthful delinquents could be placed. I believe the Government is favourably inclined towards the establishment of a farm colony to which such delinquents could be

sent, thus avoiding prison taint. Some little time ago five boys—the eldest of whom was 17 years—were brought up on a serious charge and sentenced to six months imprisonment. The charges were so serious that the magistrate was in a difficulty. He could not send the boys to any place other than the Fremantle gaol. Eventually some arrangement was made by which the boys were segregated from the other prisoners. I understand the magistrate cannot send such delinquents to an institution like the Seaforth Home, from which boys frequently escape. Some effort should be made to provide a place where boys of this type could be sent and encouraged to lead a new life. Certainly, it is inadvisable to send them to Fremantle gaol, even if they are segregated from the other prisoners, because the prison taint will remain with them and may affect their characters in future years. I hope the Government will give attention to this matter. The only other matter to which I desire to draw the Minister's attention is the grant made to religious institutions for the maintenance of State wards and other children. Early this year representatives of various religious denominations waited upon the Minister and pointed out to him the inadequacy of the grant in aid. I understand the present Government allowance is 7s. for each boy. The members of the deputation pointed out that the cost of maintaining children in their institutions ranged from 14s. to 15s. per week per child. As a matter of fact, the deputation asked the Minister to double the amount of the grant. The Minister, in reply, said that the deputation had made out an unanswerable case; but it all depended upon whether the Government had money available to accede to the request. He said there was no doubt about the merits. The Minister has since replied to the leader of the deputation saying that owing to financial stress the Government could not increase the grant in aid. There are 1,150 children in the care of these institutions, nearly 700 of whom are State wards. The children are divided amongst 14 institutions of various religious denominations. The allowance of 7s. is too small to feed, clothe and train a child in an institution. True, the Lotteries Commission assists by contributing so much per head; but even

with that aid the institutions have still to provide a large sum of money in order that the children may be properly trained, properly fed and properly clothed. Here, again, we have another example of the regrettable fact that each time the Government is asked for money to effect some improvement in the life of children or for adults, the invariable reply is that money is not available. At the same time, we are spending £200,000 per day not to build up and develop human life, but to destroy it. However, that is the position. I presume we cannot better it. I commend the request of the religious institutions to the Minister, and ask him to give it serious consideration, so that the financial strain on the institutions may not be so great.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [6.10]: My intention is to offer a few remarks on the Arbitration Court Vote, and on the question of local products. I commend the Minister for his interesting address on this Vote. When the Vote was previously before the Committee, the member for Katanning made some remarks upon it. He was worried over the fact that, under our system of wage-fixing, wages lagged behind prices and never quite caught up to the increases in the cost of living. I have been looking through the Industrial Arbitration Act and I notice that the provision fixing the basic wage contains a phrase relating to the domestic obligations of the worker, not to the efficiency of industry at the time. In my opinion, this Government or some future Government will have an opportunity to improve the formula for determining the basic wage. The Minister is well aware of the wording of the Arbitration Act, so there is no necessity for me to quote it. The Act does say, however, that in determining the basic wage, regard shall be had to the domestic obligations of the worker. Another provision lays down that the court is not to be bound by any previous decision when determining the basic wage for any year. That gives the court a loophole to strike out and make some increase; but, ordinarily speaking, it is generally recognised now that the basic wage is entirely a matter of ascertaining price levels, including house rent and other costs. These together constitute the basis of the wage. If that system is to be maintained, it will

mean—as was pointed out by the member for Katanning and by a member on the Government side—that wages will never increase in the true sense from century to century.

The Minister for Labour: The court granted an increase of 5s. in real wages some 18 months ago.

Mr. NORTH: That is so; but the fact remains that we should examine the wording of the provision for determining the basic wage. That provision is silent on the subject of the economic efficiency of the time when the wage is to be fixed. Domestic obligations are not matters upon which industry can work. Industry itself is becoming more and more scientific and efficient, and should be getting more productive from the point of view of return to the workers. Therefore, good ground exists for suggesting that the Government should consider the question of improving the formula for the basic wage, so as to give the court greater scope to make inquiries from time to time for the improvement of that wage. I know this must be done with great care both from the point of view of the employers and the workers; but, in my opinion, a tendency seems to exist to bring about a static effect, notwithstanding the Minister's interjection, which certainly shows that a change can be made from time to time.

The Minister for Labour: The court has granted a prosperity allowance to the workers in the goldmining industry.

Mr. NORTH: I did not notice any provision in the Industrial Arbitration Act for such an allowance, so the court must be leading us a little in those ideas. In the remaining two minutes before we suspend the sitting, I would like to deal with the question of local products, but in that short space of time I am afraid I cannot say all that I wish to say on this point. Has the Minister yet been able to investigate a suggestion that I made that our workers should be encouraged to patronise local products? The question is not one that can be discussed in thirty seconds.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. NORTH: Before discussing the question of industries, I should like to revert to the matter of the basic wage. The term "basic wage" might be amended in such

a way as to provide not merely for the obligations of the worker, but also for industrial and economic efficiency, which might be made a factor in the fixing of wages. This, of course, does not express the whole of the story. In applying such a suggestion, it would be essential to take other matters into consideration so that conjunctively the court would have a more flexible means of fixing the basic wage. The court might provide that if certain industrial plant was installed, the wages in a certain industry could be increased, but under existing mechanical conditions, the wages would not be increased. The court, too, would need power to fix an increased wage at a future date that would permit of time being given for improved plant being installed. Then would come the question of profits and the factor of monetary reform. All those things have been dealt with by Professor Reddaway in Melbourne. We are told that leaders in Europe are speaking of a new world, but I consider that we should set our minds to some of the problems now and not wait till a future time.

Some weeks ago I suggested to the Minister an idea that might be investigated. It was that local employers might impose a condition that employees should be purchasers of Western Australian goods in certain practical directions. If there is a will to achieve this object, it can be achieved. There would be difficulties to overcome, but a real desire largely to increase the demand of the workers—say there are 25,000 employees in our industries—would lead to a tremendous increase in the output of local manufactures. Workers, of course, could be required to purchase local goods only if other things were equal, for instance, price, quality, accessibility, etc. If this idea were adopted, it would accomplish more in a short space of time in the direction of increasing the market for local industries than anything I can conceive. I hope that the expert who is now working under the direction of the Minister will consider this aspect of the matter.

I have two industries to suggest to the Minister. At first glance he will probably wave them aside, but on reflection he might see that there is merit in my proposals. In our territory of nearly a million square miles attempts have been made to combat the menace of flies, mosquitoes and other

insect pests. There is an imported article, a not very efficient kind of gauze, used to screen windows of private houses, hotels, hospitals and other buildings. I think the Licensing Court specifies the use of gauze for hotel windows. There would be a much larger demand for insect-proof material if the manufacturers could supply a more durable article that would stand up to local conditions. Most of the gauze at present supplied is unsuitable. Those who buy the ordinary gauze find that it rots through in six months or a year, and those who buy the so-called bronze gauze find that it develops a verdigris green and in two or three years wears out and has to be replaced. In view of the propaganda "Swat that fly," and the distress caused by mosquitoes, I believe that a large market would be available if a gauze were supplied that would be non-corrosive in our atmospheric conditions. There would not be a big market for this article in the old world where it is manufactured, because mosquitoes and flies are not so troublesome there. True, gnats are prevalent, but little notice is taken of them.

My next suggestion relates to charcoal gas. I understand that in Germany and probably elsewhere, there is available compressed gas contained in cylinders available for use on cars and other vehicles. Why should not this State investigate, through the newly appointed officer, the opportunity to improve the charcoal gas appliance which at present represents a comparatively heavy addition to the weight of a car? He should be able to work out a scheme for building cylinders locally and compressing the gas so that it could be used conveniently in cars in place of petrol.

The only other item I wish to discuss is that of child welfare and outdoor relief. With other members, I quite realise that more should be done by this department if possible. It is one of the most essential departments we have. The child should have full opportunity in this State if it is to become an efficient adult later on, and I would welcome any announcement by the Minister to the effect that he was able to improve the conditions under this vote. If he could say that all the children would be on 9s. instead of 7s., that would be a substantial improvement. I understand some are on 7s. and some on 9s., and I should

like to see that differentiation removed and uniformity achieved in this direction.

**MR. LAMBERT** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [7.39]: I propose to speak only briefly and to deal with the decision of the Government to make some attempt to establish essential secondary industries in this State. Not only the Government, but also private individuals, have endeavoured to establish some of the industries that are required in the linking up of our economic and social life. Many of those attempts, unfortunately, have failed, not because we lack the natural resources, but often owing to the lack of capital and knowledge, which would defeat the efforts of most people desirous of establishing such industries. The Minister has a big problem before him because he has the financial interests of the Eastern States to contend with. I daresay that nine-tenths of those who retail produce in this State are import-minded. They have been used to importing goods into Western Australia ever since Western Australia was founded, and to break down that prejudice is a difficult matter.

So far as I can judge, the Commonwealth Government has not been at all anxious to rectify the conditions in an ill-balanced State such as ours. The Tariff Board should have power to decentralise some of the secondary industries located in Eastern Australia. Many industries could be decentralised and established here if the Tariff Board were given power to operate in that direction. In the initial stages of Federation, we had a sliding scale of duties that gave Western Australia a small opportunity to establish secondary industries, but it did not continue long enough, and before we could make any appreciable headway, the Eastern States, with their big lead, proved too strong as competitors. Too many people, in speaking of the establishment of secondary industries in this State, think only in terms of pickles, jams and commodities of that sort. That might be very well in its way, but there are other industries—key industries—that could be established here where we have the natural resources requisite for their establishment and they could be linked up with a comprehensive scheme of national power production from our coal deposits. Somebody has said that the dehydration of fruit and other food pro-

ducts could be exploited in this State. That is so. It is a sin that we have not some form of dehydration process so that our glutted markets for fruits and vegetables could be relieved. Much the same remarks apply to our fisheries. The foreign element is exploiting our fisheries and no adequate effort has been made to deal with this important question. If we had a couple of trawlers, one operating in the Great Australian Bight and one in Shark Bay, they would be able to provide a supply of cheap fish for the people. That is only a minor matter. Let us get back to some of the bigger things that should interest us. I noticed that the Premier, while in the Eastern States, made inquiries in connection with one highly important mineral that Western Australia possesses in abundance—aluminium sulphate. At present the aluminium of Western Australia is merely exported to Eastern Australia, where it is fabricated. I have before me a report from Mr. Charlton Dodd, an American gentleman at present lecturing in the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, which shows that the alunite deposits at Lake Brown are convertible into aluminium if suitably treated. However, that is only a simple matter. The Minister, if he secures the information recently obtained by the Premier in the Eastern States, will learn that before alunite can be manufactured into aluminium its silicious content must be separated from the aluna. The work performed by the late Dr. Simpson, whose early death we all deplore—the loss to the State by it can hardly be estimated—has been of great assistance in this connection and the valuable research work carried out by Mr. H. Bowley, the present Government Mineralogist is equally important in this and many other directions. The Minister should take up the question of utilising our alunite deposits. Mr. Charlton Dodd's report is available to the hon. gentleman. It is necessary to have a good physical chemist at the University to carry out experiments either in flotation or otherwise, as he may consider best, to separate the silicious content. Glancing at imports into Western Australia I find that we import no less than £194,000 worth of sulphur per annum.

Mr. Patrick: That is for the manufacture of superphosphate.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. However, this is the farcical aspect, that in Kalgoorlie alone sulphur is passing into the atmosphere to the extent in value of £250,000 or £300,000 per annum. Recently the Electrolytic Zinc Corporation approached the Tariff Board with a view to the granting of a bounty on sulphur. British Chemical Industries have perfected a process by which elemental sulphur can be obtained. That industry in itself would be worth to Western Australia £500,000 per annum. I suggest to the Minister that he get in touch with the Electrolytic Zinc Corporation in regard to its request to the Tariff Board for a bounty upon the production of elemental sulphur. Alunite contains 50 per cent. of sulphur, and if we separated the silicious content in the roasting of alunite, 50 per cent. of sulphur would be produced; and that would meet the requirements of Western Australia, which, as I have said, last year involved an expenditure of £194,000 in the manufacture of superphosphate.

In yesterday's "West Australian" I noticed an article dealing with magnesian salt. Magnesian salt or carbonite is used extensively for the production of a light metal. Its use has gone ahead by leaps and bounds on the Continent. In this State it is safe to say we have by far the greatest deposits of magnesite in Australia. Under ordinary conditions we should do business with the Eastern States in that product. Only recently the Broken Hill Proprietary Company took up valuable deposits of magnesite at Bulong, and is now prospecting there. Undoubtedly at an early date the company will be sending magnesite to Eastern Australia for its own purposes. Magnesite is used extensively in the manufacture of Epsom salts. On the 20th September last it was reported that on account of the war with Germany a shortage of magnesian sulphate will occur. If any place can produce magnesian sulphate, or Epsom salts, cheaply, it is Kalgoorlie, within 20 miles of which large deposits exist. Probably production by Germany would be cheaper in respect of obtaining the material from salt springs and crystallising it.

I observe also it has been urged that some portion of the munitions of war required by Australia should be manufactured here. The Commonwealth Government should assist this State by granting finance or a bounty to establish the industry of nitrogen produc-

tion here. That can only be done by cheap power in a centralised location. I believe that with a big national power scheme such as we could establish at Bunbury, using Collic Coal as base for the production of power, it would be possible. The same can be said of the manufacture of explosives as well as of fixation of nitrogen. There are many other industries which could be established here if only we had the prime desideratum of cheap power. If Eastern Australia were cut off from the outside world tomorrow, it would hardly be practicable to produce steel in any quantity.

Mr. Patrick: How are the Eastern States getting on for manganese?

Mr. LAMBERT: They are obtaining supplies from Sweden and Great Britain. Ferro alloy can be produced in Western Australia; and so it is with many of these minerals. I am aware that the Minister already has a big job in front of him. Here is another. I refer to the manufacture of soap in Western Australia. Before a pound of soap can be manufactured here, we have to import caustic soda from the Eastern States. Now, the production of caustic soda is quite a simple process. Only a few years ago all Australia's requirements in the way of caustic soda were supplied from abroad, but the Mt. Lyell and other companies are now producing it. It will never be possible for us to establish such industries here unless in the first place we tackle the problem of workers' compensation. Some members of the medical fraternity of Western Australia, as a big merchant in Perth pointed out to me a few days ago, have been responsible for workers' compensation being 50 per cent. more costly here than in the Eastern States. That is due to the scandalous robbery—and I say robbery advisedly—practised by some members of the medical profession in Western Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting slightly away from the Estimates.

Mr. LAMBERT: This matter is linked up with industries. However, having said what I have said, I need not further explore the question except to say that I hope the time will come when in the matter of workers' compensation we can curb the activities of some members of the medical profession who are protected by the British Medical Association. That is one of the difficulties. I suggest to the Minister that in connection with many of the matters to which I have referred

he get in touch with the people directly interested and assure them that the Western Australian Government is earnest in its desire to establish those industries here.

Mr. North: The cheap power scheme is not yet approved, is it?

Mr. LAMBERT: No. The Royal Commission appointed for the purpose is simply tinkering with the subject. What is the good of inquiring whether a little power can be run to use a milking machine on some isolated farms? We should be inquiring whether some of the bigger industries can be induced to make use of a scheme of national power in Western Australia. I wish the Minister would take a note of this also, that if we could get the alkali business established in Western Australia, which would cost only £20,000 or £25,000, the effect would be to bring under immediate review the possibilities of paper pulp manufacture here. It is not practicable to utilise our waste wood unless we develop an alkali industry with both chlorine and alkali, and use them in connection with the bleaching product. All these industries are interwoven. Unless we start with one and go right through the others in sequence, there is no possibility of success being achieved. If the Government is in earnest—I have little doubt about that—in its desire to establish secondary industries, it must consider, quite apart from other disadvantages to which I have already alluded, the remission of taxation for a number of years until such industries become established. Manufacturers already well established in the Eastern States are not likely to consider decentralising their activities. Unless Western Australia can offer not only a ready market for their products but a remission of taxation over a number of years, there is little likelihood of those firms embarking upon industrial undertakings here. If an advantageous offer were made to those manufacturers under the conditions to which I refer, I believe some response might be obtained. I have mentioned one only of 30 or 40 other industries possible of establishment in Western Australia. Years ago Mr. Boas was despatched to America to make inquiries regarding the tanning industry and the production of tannin extracts. On his return he furnished a comprehensive report. That gentleman was subsequently employed



in the service of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. Although we spent so much money upon that investigation, we now find that practically the whole of our tanning products are exported, together with our hides and skins. At the same time enormous quantities of leather goods are imported. So it goes on down the miserable history of our secondary industries. In Western Australia we are capable of producing sufficient tannin extracts to cope with the requirements of Australia generally. So it is with many of our other industries. If proper protection were given to those prepared to invest money in Western Australia, the State would leap ahead as a manufacturing centre. I wish the Minister every possible success in his efforts. He has to contend with difficulties that are almost insurmountable. He is confronted with the fact that those associated with established industries in the Eastern States and the big financial institutions there have no desire to invest in industrial activities in Western Australia. So long as they can exploit the Australian market to the extent of £12,000,000 or £13,000,000 per annum, their feelings are not likely to be ruffled very much by any effort we may undertake to make the State self-contained and self-sufficient.

We can keep hammering at our objective, but we shall never do any good until we secure the restoration of our sovereign rights, so that we may protect and shelter our industries, as have been those in the Eastern States from their inception. One of the most regrettable features is that whilst the Commonwealth Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into our disabilities and that Commission recommended we should be granted our autonomy and allowed to protect our industries for 50 years, the Government ignored the recommendations of its own Royal Commission. We must keep urging the Commonwealth Government to amend the legislation controlling the Tariff Board, so that that body may be provided with the statutory right to decentralise industry and thereby afford Western Australia an opportunity for expansion. Until all sections of Parliament are prepared to band together in a determined effort to secure that end, we can never hope to achieve our objective. We should maintain the fight to free Western

Australia from the financial domination of the Eastern States. We are producing food-stuffs and much of our requirements, but the manufacturers in the Eastern States enjoy the benefit of too big a start. Unless there is a drastic alteration in the dominating policy, there is little hope for a small, struggling State like Western Australia. We have all the resources necessary to make the State self-sufficient. We have most favourable climatic conditions, and we have an abundance of mineral wealth. I know of little that we cannot produce in Western Australia, but we are at a great disadvantage because many of the deposits are a long way from the coast. Only by the provision of cheap transport and power facilities would it be possible to bring those deposits within the bounds of commercial possibilities. In India one mineral is produced and conveyed 700 miles by rail from the Central Province to port at 7s. per ton, whereas the cost of haulage of the same mineral in Western Australia is £1 7s. per ton. I do not blame the railway authorities, who, I believe, are doing their best, but our isolated position, our small population, and long railway haulage distances, combine to make it impossible to work our valuable mineral deposits on an economical basis. That they will be developed eventually cannot be doubted. Australia is the last of the great island continents to be occupied by white people, and in the western half we have possibilities that, given a reasonably fair deal by the Commonwealth Government, should ultimately be developed to the stage at which Western Australia will be able to rise above her difficulties and compete successfully with the large interests in the Eastern States. The Government should see to it that those in a position to aid the work should be given every possible assistance and so help to make Western Australia the State it ought to be.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [8.10]: The largest Vote in the Minister's Estimates is that which has reference to child welfare and outdoor relief. I wish to deal with only one aspect and that is the assistance given to children, particularly those in the orphanages. I desire to reinforce the request made to the Government to allow an additional sum to be placed on the Estimates to be made available for the relief of children

wholly or partly dependent upon the State. The amount provided in the past has been little enough. The Minister will agree to that. Because the cost of commodities has risen, that being reflected in the movements of the basic wage—in view of existing and future conditions, that cost is likely to rise still more—every time there is an increase the difficulties of those catering for the children become greater. Although it is a platitude, perhaps I might remind the Government that there is no asset that will better repay the State properly to look after than the coming generation. We should use the utmost endeavour to see that those deprived of the advantages of a home life, such as that enjoyed by the offspring of well-to-do or comparatively well-to-do parents, shall have the best opportunities possible. I assure the Minister that I do not care what he does, or where he gets the money from, apart from any serious breach of the law, and I shall support him.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [8.12]: I shall touch upon two departments under the control of the Minister because they appeal to me as being the most important. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has given a good indication of what is possible in regard to our mineral resources. I shall not deal with the Department of Industry, except to say I consider it of such importance that the Minister should devote his full time to the work associated with it. The portfolio of Labour and Child Welfare should be handed over to another Minister. There has not been much industrial trouble in Western Australia during the last year or two, but it is possible that, due to changing conditions, some unrest may be manifest in the future. During the session this House passed the Increase of Rent (War Restriction) Bill. The Minister has done his part except that, in my opinion, he has not gone far enough. The Conservative Government of Great Britain as early as the 2nd September, the day after war was declared, took steps to introduce legislation that went farther than did our Bill. The Rent Act of 1939, which became law in Great Britain on the 3rd September had far-reaching effects. Even at this stage of the session, the Minister should attempt to persuade the Government to introduce amending legislation along the lines of that existing in Great

Britain to protect people that may be threatened with eviction. One day last week I received a letter from a person in Lake-street, Perth, asking me whether the rent restriction Bill had been passed, whether it was in operation and, if so, whether it prevented a landlord from evicting one tenant and then raising the rent. Up to date I have not replied to that letter, but I know that the rent Act in Great Britain went so far as to prevent a landlord from evicting a tenant provided the tenant paid his rent. If it is possible under the measure that this House has passed for a landlord to get rid of one tenant and let his house at an increased rental to another, the measure should be amended to prevent that. I propose to inform hon. members of a few of the provisions of the rent control Act of Great Britain that has been passed since the war started.

The **CHAIRMAN**: The hon. member cannot very well do that.

**Mr. CROSS**: This affects the Department of Labour and the workers associated with it, and is a most important question for them. That the Department of Labour should give some attention to the matter is most important, in order that people likely to be affected might be protected. The British Rent Act of 1939 made provision for dealing with tenants of houses of a greater value than those dealt with under the old Act. I propose to touch on the matter briefly so that the Minister may have some idea of the provisions of that measure. It provided protection for tenants of houses up to a rateable value of £100 in London, which included the metropolitan police district and the City of London alone. It protected men in houses up to a rateable value of £75 everywhere else in England, and £90 in Scotland. The rateable value is that which was operating in April, 1939, and the standard rent fixed is that operating on the 1st September, 1939. That cannot be increased except with the permission of the court. It is also provided that the rent may be increased only in two cases: in the first place, if rates are increased, and then only to a similar amount—

The **CHAIRMAN**: I am afraid the hon. member is getting far away from the Estimates. I cannot find any provision in the Estimates regarding rent.

**Mr. CROSS**: I think, Mr. Chairman—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can think anything he likes, but I say there is nothing in the Estimates to provide for such a discussion.

Mr. CROSS: I have a definite reason for attempting to speak on the matter. Many of the people associated with the Department of Labour will be affected. I refer to men who are purchasing their homes. I know of men who have had mortgages called up and cannot get the money to pay. The Minister for Labour is interested not only in people employed by his department but also in those coming under other departments with which he is associated through the ramifications of the Department of Labour.

Mr. J. Hegney: If he is not interested, he should be.

Mr. CROSS: Yes. That is why I think I should be permitted to say a few words on this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I tell the member for Canning that he must cease. There is nothing in the Estimates to provide for this discussion.

Mr. CROSS: I will attempt to deal with it on some other Vote. I want to bring the matter under the notice of hon. members, as it is of paramount importance.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will give consideration to the Chairman's directions, and cease discussing the matter.

Mr. CROSS: Very well. I wish now to speak about the department mentioned by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). That is the department from which I received the letter I read to the house during the Address-in-reply debate. In that letter the statement was made that much of the department's information was received anonymously. Members will recall my complaining then that the Child Welfare Department had received a most wicked letter containing untrue statements about a certain woman. Those statements were proved to be untrue. I wrote to the department asking it to remove that letter from the file, but so far as I know it has been kept there. I was told in a letter from the department that much of its information came through anonymous sources. I hope the Minister will agree that one of the vilest letters I have ever read in my life should be removed from the departmental files. The woman concerned has been

proved by investigations made by the department to be innocent of the charges made against her. The member for West Perth mentioned that the children at certain institutions did not receive all they were entitled to.

Mr. Needham: His reply was justified.

Mr. CROSS: It was, and I will prove it. We have a sympathetic Minister in charge of the department, but he has too much work to do. I have gone to the trouble of gathering some figures from the Estimates of the last few years, and those figures demonstrate the remarkable fact that the department seems always to end the year with a surplus. Members will recall that last year I drew the attention of the Government to that fact. I pointed out, as I point out now, that the matter is not a party one, but that the responsibility for looking after the aged and sick and of women and children in need is one that all hon. members and people of the State generally must face. I do not care what Government is in power; if that Government leans to the generous side in its treatment of destitute women and children, the people are not likely to put it out of office on that account. I do not think we are sufficiently generous towards those in need; in fact, we are very parsimonious. From what I can see, this department seeks at all times to reduce as far as possible the miserable allowances that are given to its unfortunate clients. I know that is not the desire of the Minister or of the Government.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why do not you alter the position?

Mr. CROSS: I would if I could, and I will if I possibly can.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What is preventing the Minister from doing it?

Mr. CROSS: I point out to hon. members that the estimate for the department this year is only £1,000 more than that of 1937. The Premier has provided for an increased allowance to the small-unit families: not before time. It is not as much as I desired, but the concession was keenly appreciated by those affected. Up to last year, the maximum that a woman with two children could receive from the department was 27s. per week. After the change, it was possible for her to obtain 33s. a week. I do not know where a house fit to live in can be obtained for less than 15s. a week. That being so, hon. members will surely realise that a woman cannot properly look after two

children and provide them with food and clothing and the other necessities of life if she receives only 33s. per week. It has to be remembered, too, that those children will be the citizens of tomorrow. If this is to remain an "A" class nation, the children must be properly cared for. That cannot be done with such a small amount of money. Even after that sum had been granted to people in need, the department finished last year with a surplus of £4,605. In 1938 it had £1,151 of its Vote unexpended, and in 1937 £3,981. That would not be due to the Minister, but to the administration of the department.

The Minister for Labour: And improved economic conditions.

Mr. CROSS: Yes, I admit there may be something in that. One would, however, think that with so much poverty existing amongst the people to be cared for by the department there would not be any surplus. I know something about the matter because I have taken particular interest in cases handled by the Child Welfare Department, not only in my area but also in many other places. The Vote has been increased by £1,000 over that of 1937. The estimate this year is £112,200, as against £111,200 in 1937. In 1938 the amount was £107,100, and in 1939, £114,450.

In my electorate there are four or five institutions caring for children. One of them has 80 children, 65 of whom are assisted not by the Child Welfare Department, but by the Department of Native Affairs. I refer to Sister Kate's Home. The children in that institution should be transferred from the Department of Native Affairs to the Child Welfare Department. They have been brought up in exactly the same way as white children and anybody looking at some of them without knowing their parentage, would not suspect them of being quarter-castes. Does the fact that there is a touch of colour in a child mean that that child can be kept for 2s. a week less than other children? Would any hon. member, for 5s. a week like to have to provide clothing, food and other necessities for a child? The whole situation seems to savour of parsimony and should not be tolerated. The amount granted per child in the other institutions is far too low, but the first thing to be done is to raise the allowance to the children in Sister Kate's Home to the level of that

received by the children in other institutions. I hope this appeal will not fall on deaf ears. I think all hon. members will support it. Even if to make this extra provision means securing additional taxation of between £10,000 and £20,000 a year from the wealthier section of the community, I do not think those people will grumble very much. The Child Welfare Department appears to me at times to be most casual in some of its activities. A few days ago I was at a public meeting and a man told me he had borrowed a few shillings from the department. He had been sick and had had to apply for assistance. That money had to be paid back and they had a garnishee upon his wages. He complained that the only receipt he received was in pencil on the back of an envelope, and he produced a pay envelope. I could not follow him. I have received a letter from a public body asking me to take the matter up with the Minister, because the man does not know what he owes, whether the money has been properly returned, and whether it is right that a receipt written in pencil should be given.

The Minister for Labour: What is the name of the public body?

Mr. CROSS: It happens to be the Canning Branch of the Australian Labour Party.

The Minister for Labour: It must be a good case.

Mr. CROSS: The name of the man is Ferby, employed at the Canning dam and living at Queen's Park. Possibly the receipt was given by the paymaster at the Canning dam. I hope the Minister will take up the appeal I have put forward, and that the department will be more generous in its treatment of women and children who are dependent on the State. Costs in the next few months and years are bound to rise. When there was a general increase in the basic wage people receiving assistance from the Child Welfare Department did not benefit by that increase. I know that in the case of a large number of families rents and costs have risen, and they have had increasing difficulty in carrying on. I hope the Minister will take steps to meet the rising costs and see that the people referred to get a better deal than they have had in the past. I am sure no one would complain if the de-

partment was over-generous, something that it cannot be accused of at present. If the mark is overstepped, no one will complain, because the children who will be assisted will be the citizens on whom the State will rely in years to come.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [8.33]: I am going to touch upon a point that has not yet been dealt with, namely, the Arbitration Court. There is nothing new in that topic, but there are aspects regarding that tribunal that should receive consideration. I refer particularly to the appointment of a permanent industrial magistrate. This matter was dealt with by me on the Address-in-reply, and I gave reasons why such an appointment should be made. During the course of years deputations from responsible bodies have waited upon Ministers, in connection with this matter. Unfortunately, no particular move by any Minister has yet been made. It is peculiar that such a big factor in the industrial life of the State should not be looked upon with more favour, especially as these are the days of specialisation when industrial matters are dealt with by the Arbitration Court. I find from the report to the 30th June, 1939, that no fewer than 166 industrial unions and associations are registered at the Arbitration Court, and that these involve a membership of over 56,000 workers and employers, and that the number of employers in associations is 1,180. When we consider that all these organisations are working under different awards and agreements, it seems strange that we have only a temporary or make-shift magistrate to deal with industrial cases. It is possible for each of the 166 organisations to be controlled by five, six or seven awards or agreements. I could refer to the organisation to which I belonged. That is working under no less than seven industrial awards or agreements. When we go before the court with cases of industrial breaches we have to do so on Thursday, and put our case before a magistrate who is obliged to carry on his ordinary duties during the remainder of the week at Fremantle. Specialisation by magistrates is nothing new. We find from the votes with which we are now dealing that a special magistrate has been appointed at an estimated cost of £535 to do the court work associated with the Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief Department. During the debate spec-

ial reference has been made to that magistrate, and the good work he is performing in the Children's Court. No one can deny the value of that appointment or that it has been fully justified by the results. That magistrate has specialised in children's cases. We can well ask why such a step has not been taken in connection with the industrial courts. I understand that approximately 400 cases will be dealt with this year in the industrial court. I was very much surprised that I could not get a copy of the "Industrial Gazette" at Parliament House. If the Chairman does not stop me I will say it is high time the House Committee took that matter up. I shall probably have to get a copy from the Government Printer. A great deal of work has to be done in connection with 400 industrial cases. They embrace a variety of subjects, interpretations, legal difficulties, and cover a variety of awards and agreements. How anyone could expect a magistrate, who is only a human being, and can devote only one day a week to bringing his mind to bear upon such important matters, to deliver intelligent judgments upon the questions brought before him, I cannot imagine.

The industrial cases are heard by the magistrate in Perth on Thursdays. He may have to deal with questions affecting the Railway Union, the Printers' Union, the Tramway Union or the Timber Workers' Union, all being difficult cases. He is supposed to interpret the awards placed before him, and the department gives him one day a week to assimilate all that knowledge. The system is ridiculous, and should not be allowed to continue. The magistrate spends the rest of the week in the Fremantle court. He takes industrial cases in Perth on Thursdays, may devote a day a month to cases at Midland Junction, may occasionally visit Pinjarra, and also takes industrial cases at Fremantle. The officials of the department are the last people to wake up to the need for specialisation. The legal fraternity has taken cognisance of it, and the organisations of workers as well as of employers have also specialised in industrial law. The union does not go to any legal firm when it wishes to be represented in the industrial court, but chooses its own specialist in industrial matters. The Employers' Federation was brought into existence so that it might have its own specialists in industrial questions.

It has officers who deal solely with cases heard before the Arbitration Court. Employers outside the Federation also know this is the day of specialisation in industrial law, and seldom do we find cases handled by other than solicitors who have specialised in industrial law. Whilst all these forces are brought to bear upon the specialised side of industrial law, we find that a magistrate who is not himself a specialist has to hear all these cases. Probably he could become a specialist if he devoted his own time to doing so.

The Minister for Labour: He has done so.

Mr. HOLMAN: The more shame to those who have allowed it. He should be able to acquire the necessary knowledge in his ordinary working hours, and should not have to engage in research work in his own time. Other people are not expected to do that, and do not have to do it. The numerous important cases that come before the Industrial Court make it imperative that a permanent magistrate should be appointed to deal with them. An organisation may bring a case before the Industrial Magistrate, and the first thing that gentleman has to do is to decide whether the case is one for him to deal with or for interpretation at the hands of the Arbitration Court. How can we expect a magistrate to deal with ordinary criminal cases during the week, and then devote his attention to determining whether issues shall be sent on for consideration by the Arbitration Court? We ask him to undertake a task that normally is the function of the Arbitration Court, and at the same time do not allow him to specialise. This is all the more important because the Act is so framed that he has to arrive at decisions in respect to matters that cannot be considered by the Arbitration Court. He cannot pass on matters of interpretation to the Arbitration Court if the terms of the applicable awards have expired. Thus the magistrate has to interpret such awards himself, and we foist upon him a task that is usually undertaken by the President and his colleagues on the Arbitration Court bench. If it is essential that the President and the other members of the Arbitration Court shall specialise in industrial law and matters associated with industrial problems, surely it is equally essential that the magistrate who has to decide

whether the awards issued by the court are carried out or not, should be also required to specialise along those lines. Another important phase of the problem is that while we expect the magistrate to undertake such work with restricted conveniences in so limited a time, that officer has not facilities one could reasonably expect would be available to a person holding such a responsible position. Some time ago I referred to the lack of an Industrial Court library. I have since learned that the industrial magistrate is allowed access to the library of the President of the Arbitration Court. But that is not a complete answer to my criticism. Probably I would feel much the same as the industrial magistrate must feel when, so to speak, he has to go cap in hand to the President for permission to consult the reference books in his library. Even though he has access to the library, he is not favourably situated from the standpoint of studying the authorities. The President of the Court has a comfortable room wherein he can engage upon his research work. When he wishes to read some authorities or make various inquiries, the industrial magistrate has to do his reading in a passage or else beg the loan of a room from some officer. If any member can regard that as adequate, I shall be extremely surprised. The decisions of that magistrate may affect thousands of people and govern the expenditure of thousands of pounds. In those circumstances, it is high time a protest was made to protect the interests of the employees concerned. Then again, if regarded from the employers' point of view, members will remember the criticism levelled at the Arbitration Court and the Industrial Court. In my opinion, that criticism has been largely justified seeing that the work has been carried on in such a ridiculous manner. On some Thursdays the industrial magistrate has a full list of applications to deal with, and he has to reserve his decisions. In what little time is available to him, he has to carry out his investigations and study the issues involved before he can reach his conclusions. He has to collect what data he thinks necessary, and take it with him to Fremantle, where he devotes what time he can to arriving at a decision that he deems will be equitable to both sides. As I mentioned previously, many of his

decisions are of vital importance. Once he reaches Fremantle he loses touch with the library of the President of the Arbitration Court, and should a point crop up that needs elucidation he has to return to Perth to consult further references. Why should not better facilities be provided to enable him to arrive at his decision more advantageously? That is all the more important when we consider that his decisions are subject to the right of appeal to the higher court and even to the Full Court. A magistrate who has to deal with problems involving these important issues is allowed one day per week to deal with them. Matters relating to our industrial laws constitute one of the most difficult phases of judicial work. Of the members of this House few are versed even in a small way in our industrial laws, which are extremely hard to interpret. The industrial magistrate has to exercise extreme care in arriving at his decisions because in any circumstance once the decision is announced by the Industrial Court, the worker has no right of appeal. That is intolerable, and would be intolerable even if we had a permanent industrial magistrate who was allowed to specialise in his work. The existing circumstances make that position ten times worse. From the employers' standpoint, only a limited right of appeal is available, because unless the penalty is over £20 no such right exists. Very often employers ask that a penalty of £20 shall be imposed so as to allow of the right of appeal. One recent case may perhaps convince the department of the seriousness of the position. The Commonwealth Bank case involved interpretations of the Commonwealth Constitution and the Commonwealth Banking Act. The man who had to undertake that task is employed as an industrial magistrate for one day per week. An application lodged by the Clothing Trades Union also involved an interpretation of the Federal Constitution. I shall not labour the point further. I hope the Minister will give serious consideration during the coming year to the points I have raised, regardless of the fact that the requests of deputation after deputation have been rejected. I trust the Minister will recognise the difficulty, not only from the point of view of the interests of employees, but for the sake of industrial peace.

One other point I shall make relates to the Factories Department. I trust that in

the near future more inspectors will be appointed to police the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act. I have made various inquiries regarding the work of inspectors, and I believe that, owing to the small number of inspectors, the policing of the Act amounts almost to a farce. When we consider that each factory inspector has to remember particulars of a hundred or more awards and agreements, and is required to travel long distances and to visit numerous factories, how can we expect the task to be carried out properly? I urge co-operation between the Federal Department and the State Department to enable the factory inspection work to be undertaken more effectively. As it is to-day, a State inspector is not allowed to enter Federal shops. That is most unsatisfactory. I trust the Minister will consider the points I have raised. Although I have appeared in the role of a critic, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on much of the work he has undertaken, particularly that in relation to the establishment of local industries. I shall not discuss that phase because it has already been traversed satisfactorily.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [8.59]: I shall draw attention to one matter only, and that relates to farm labour, which is a serious problem to-day. During the week several farmers told me it was absolutely impossible to secure men in the country districts, either to take off the crops or to make preparation for the harvest. I am not surprised at that. When introducing the Loan Estimates, the Premier stated that arrangements had been made for labour to be available to farmers. That is only the beginning of the question. He did not mention any provision enabling the farmers to pay wages that the workers might rightly expect to receive, and which we all would like them to receive. For some time past men have been gradually drawn from the farming districts into the city for Government relief work. They are in receipt of wages prescribed by the Arbitration Court and are enjoying the hours fixed by that authority and therefore one cannot expect them to give up what they have been receiving and accept a lower wage for farm work. Not that the farmer has any wish to pay low wages—that is due to economic circumstances; it

is almost impossible for the farmer to pay any wages at all. During the past few weeks sufficient has been said in the daily Press and in the Federal House, as well as in this House, to convince the most ill-informed person of the condition of the wheat-growing industry and other primary industries, although these latter have not possibly suffered to the same degree. Wheatgrowers have been asked to accept for their commodity about half the amount it has cost them to produce it. Evidently, therefore, farmers cannot pay anything but a very meagre wage. I think farmers are entitled to obtain from the Government some form of subsidy that will enable them to pay their workers the wages they should receive. Two cases were brought under my notice last year after seeding was finished. A married man with two children living in the country told me he had finished work for a farmer because the season had ended and he asked me whether I could get him work. I did know of a farmer who wanted workers, but he could not afford to pay a sufficient wage for a married man. I put this man's case to the Minister and asked him if it were possible to provide a subsidy which would enable the man to undertake the employment offering and maintain his home in the country. The Minister replied that that form of subsidy could not be countenanced by the Government and that the man had better make application for relief work. I immediately counselled him to do so and assisted him. He came to Perth and was put on relief work. Had some form of subsidy been provided, I venture to say that that man could have enjoyed at least eight weeks' work in the country, whereas he received only three or four weeks' work in Perth for the same money. That is not by any means the only case that has come under my notice. Other people have come to me since and I have unhesitatingly advised them to sign an application for relief work and send it to the Employment Department. They have in that way secured relief work. But all this is taking workers away from the farming industry. Still another case came under my notice. I will read a letter I received from an employer of labour who is about 150 or 180 miles from Perth. It is as follows:—

As an employer of youth labour I wish to complain through you to the Minister for

Labour re the railway fares charged them when going to the country to work. As most are raw to farm work and have to be taught at the expense of the employer, they cannot demand a very large wage. Also they all require fitting out for rough work, as most have either not been employed before, or have been working in the city wearing light boots and cloth clothes, which are useless on a farm. It takes about two months' pay to clear them of their outfitting bill, and 2½ weeks' pay for their railway fare, while a man on the dole gets a free fare to a better-paid job, less hours and a free pass back to Perth after so many weeks' work. If free passes were given to boys and farm workers in general, quite a large number would leave the city.

That seems a very reasonable request. I will read the reply received by me from the Assistant Minister for Employment:—

In reply to your letter of June 29th requesting the payment of railway fares for youths to farm work in the country, I have to advise that this was done some years ago, but in practice proved unsuccessful. There can be no fair comparison made between the conditions prevailing on Government relief work and private employment.

With that expression of opinion on the part of the Assistant Minister I heartily agree. When the private employer comes to the end of the year he has to make up his returns. He can only afford to employ labour and incur other expenses within the measure of his income; but when the Government employs a man the matter of making ends meet is not one for consideration at all. The Government can pay any wages and pass the cost on to the general taxpayer. The letter continues:—

In the former the Government is the employer; with the latter it should be the responsibility of the private employer to provide decent wages and conditions to his employees.

I accent "decent." The letter continues—

This will include payment of fare to the job after, say, six months' service, and return fare after 12 months' service. This is the practice carried out by good pastoralists in the North-West and frequently by good farmer employers. My personal opinion is that the difficulty experienced in obtaining farm labour both for youths and men is caused chiefly because of the lack of a decent standard of wages and conditions.

It is easy for the Minister to talk about decent conditions and decent wages. No farmer has the slightest desire to pay other than a decent wage or—shall we say—Arbitration Court wages. In almost every case the farmer gives his employee the same conditions as he has himself.



Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Does it take two months to pay for a youth's outfit? That should not cost more than £5.

Mr. SEWARD: It depends on the nature of the work that the man is doing and the country in which he is working. It also depends on the man. Some men can make an outfit last only a certain time; another man can use it twice as long. The man whose letter I quoted is an employer of labour, and a good man. He works hard himself, but his workers observe the same conditions as he himself does. Those conditions are not over-strenuous. He also takes a fatherly interest in the young fellows. I know him personally and know the men whom he employs. I can assure the hon. member that the man is one of whom his employees will speak well.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: He is out in his calculations.

Mr. SEWARD: Not at all. As he himself indicates, many of these youths are absolutely raw to the work.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: But does it take two months to pay for the outfit?

Mr. SEWARD: Yes. It should be quite obvious to the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe that if a man has to be taught he cannot expect to receive the full rate of wages paid to a competent man. That is self-evident. This employer says it is necessary to teach these young fellows. They cannot expect while being taught to receive the same wages as those paid to a man competent to work alone. That is the position.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Do they get 10s. a week?

Mr. SEWARD: It does not matter whether the amount is 10s. or £10. The farmer pays what he can afford to pay. The Minister knows perfectly well that the condition of the industry today is such that farmers cannot afford to pay much in the way of wages.

Mr. Rodoreda: The industry has never been able to pay.

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister apparently has a different opinion from that of the member for Roebourne.

Mr. Rodoreda: It never has paid anything decent.

Mr. SEWARD: I flatly contradict the member for Roebourne. I maintain that the men were paid as high wages as the industry could afford to pay. Since then

things have considerably altered. It all depends upon what is termed "decent."

Mr. Rodoreda: They do not get decent conditions, either.

Mr. SEWARD: As the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) said the other day, the Arbitration Court has been largely responsible for the present high level of wages. Unfortunately, it is not the worker who is receiving the benefit. Rises in wages have brought about altered conditions; prices of commodities have risen. While it is possible for secondary industries and commercial bodies to pay increased wages, it is absolutely impossible for primary industries to do so, because the products of primary industry are being sold to-day for the same price as they were sold 20 years ago, whereas the necessities required by the primary industries have risen over 100 per cent. I put this aspect of the matter very seriously to the Minister with a view to his doing something to help men who are forced to go to the country and work for low wages. Nobody wants that. Something must be done to enable these men to accept employment in country districts, so that farmers may get labour which is so desperately necessary for them during the coming harvest.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [9.11]: I briefly appeal to the Minister for something to be done for religious institutions through the Child Welfare Department. Some of those institutions will not accept money from the Lotteries Commission; and the 7s. per week allowed by the department is not sufficient to keep a child. Therefore special consideration should be given to those institutions, the persons controlling which conscientiously cannot accept money from the Lotteries Commission. That is one point. I am sure the Minister will, if he can, do something for those bodies. I have seen some of the children in these institutions, and they are as well kept as is possible on the amount of money provided for their maintenance. I am sure the Minister will realise that in these so-called patriotic times, when all funds are being diverted to war purposes, it is becoming increasingly difficult for those particular institutions to carry on. Therefore, I appeal to him to try to do something for those people who are not at present in a position to do all they would like for the children en-

trusted to their care. Another point I desire to touch upon is the question of widowers whose children are under the guardianship of the Child Welfare Department. These men, when in employment on relief work, contribute towards the maintenance of their children. When not employed, they are treated as single men, but the amount due by them to the department for maintenance is debited against them. For instance, if a man earns £2 a week on relief work, he has to pay an amount towards the maintenance of his children whilst he is unemployed. That sum keeps mounting up. I know some relief workers who owe considerably over £100, and have no hope of paying it. While they are in employment, 5s. per week is deducted from their wages and applied in reduction of the debt. The point is, however, that they can never hope to pay all that money, and, as I say, the debt is mounting. Naturally, the men become disheartened; in fact, one man told me he would commit suicide unless he could get money to pay his liabilities. Of course, it is impossible for him to do so. Another point is that the men have to sign an agreement that they will pay this money, which seems to me quite wrong. I trust the Minister will do something regarding the first question I raised and will look into the other matter, because I am sure no hardship is intended. I have found that in the Child Welfare Department all possible consideration is shown. Whenever I have taken people there, efforts have been made to meet the difficulty and I have never been refused help. At the same time, the officials cannot act contrary to the policy of the department, and I believe it is the policy that makes the men responsible to the department for the amount of money owing.

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [9.16]: I express appreciation to all those members who have taken part in the general debate on these Estimates. I shall have inquiries made regarding the points put forward covering the Department of Labour and the Child Welfare Department. Regarding the policy of the Government to promote industrial expansion, I wish briefly to mention some of the major matters that are receiving active consideration at present. There is the producer-gas industry which is probably the industry that promises most in

the near future in the way of industrial development in this State. A conference is to be held in Melbourne next Monday at which the Commonwealth and State Governments and the Universities of Australia will be represented. The conference will discuss fully the possibility of establishing the gas-producer industry upon a commercial basis. This State will probably be represented by the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Public Works Department, Mr. Shaw, and the Industries and Works Promotion Engineer Mr. Fernie.

The gas-producer industry is much further advanced in Western Australia than in any other State of the Commonwealth, so much so that gas-producer units are exported to the Eastern States. We must be represented at the conference next week, because possibly a suggestion will be put forward, or an effort made, to establish this industry on a more or less monopoly basis of production in either New South Wales or Victoria. I understand that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited is considering the question of establishing itself in the field of manufacturing gas-producer units. If the company so establishes itself, we can be reasonably certain that Western Australia will not receive much consideration in the matter. We are carrying out investigations to expand the fishing industry in respect to the capture of fish, the sale of fresh fish, the freezing of fish for sale and the canning of fish for sale. There have been important developments in these directions, and members know that this field is one that offers almost unlimited possibilities.

The alunite deposits mentioned by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) in his interesting and informative speech have been investigated. We are endeavouring to have 100 tons from the deposits at Campion put through special treatment processes to ascertain to what extent they can be commercially exploited in the near future. The production of jams, preserved fruits and fruit juices has received careful and thorough consideration during recent weeks. We are convinced that the production of jams, fruit juices and preserved fruits will, during the coming season, exceed the value of any previous season by £50,000.

The question of manufacturing tractors in Western Australia is being investigated. We have made valuable contacts in that connec-

tion. The idea being considered is that of manufacturing in this State tractors suitable for running on charcoal gas. If we can persuade or assist the manufacturers concerned to establish an industry of that kind in Western Australia, it will be a great step forward, and will certainly be of immense assistance to the farming industry. We have given some consideration to the question of manufacturing sulphuric acid. Our investigations so far indicate that the best prospects are probably associated with the copper mines of Whim Creek, situated in the Roebourne district. Those investigations will be advanced. We have made some inquiries as to the possibility of establishing a steel manufacturing industry on a small scale for a start. If this industry can be established, it will be of great help not only for itself but for allied industries already operating and for others that can be established, provided we can produce steel of good quality.

Mr. Lambert interjected.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The export of Government scrap steel has ceased. Wherever possible we are preserving our supplies of scrap steel for use in local industries, and we hope some tests will be carried out with scrap to ascertain whether it is possible to manufacture certain classes of steel in this State.

Interesting discussions have taken place this week on proposals to establish the cellophane industry in Western Australia. Seemingly the coming of the war has hastened the establishment of this industry somewhere in Australia, and this State, we understand, is as well suited as, if not better suited than, any other State for the establishment of this industry. We believe that if the manufacture of cellophane can be established in Western Australia, it will prove a great asset to the State and will provide a foundation on which other allied industries can be built. Several other matters are receiving consideration, but I do not intend to delay the Committee by giving details of them now. I trust that whenever a member has an idea or suggestion that might be of value in assisting the establishment of secondary industries, he will send it along and we shall be happy to investigate it. I invite any member of Parliament who has in mind any point about secondary industries to discuss it with me, with the secretary of the depart-

ment or with the Industries and Works Promotion Engineer.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Factories £7,360; Arbitration Court £6,400; Council of Industrial Development £2,900; Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief £130,400—agreed to.*

[Mr. Withers took the Chair].

*Votes, Mines, £144,305:*

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [9.27]: This is one of the industries of the State that continues to be prosperous, and on that account it is one of the industries that does not cause a great deal of worry. The price of gold has made for the prosperity of the industry. During the year 1938, 3,759,720 tons of ore were crushed for 1,172,950 fine ounces of gold, valued at £A10,409,928. For the first nine months of 1939, 911,615 fine ounces were produced, valued at £A8,634,015. During September a record month returning 136,862 fine ounces worth £A1,434,566 was reported. It is estimated that the yield for the year 1939 will be 1,250,000 fine ounces of gold.

Dividends declared for 1938 totalled £A1,103,244, and for the first six months of 1939, £A539,938, making the total distribution by goldmining companies to the 30th June last, £35,774,331. The number of men reported as engaged in the industry is 14,867. Most of the principal producing mines reported treatment of increased tonnages, and a number of smaller mines became steady and consistent producers. Tindals mine which was assisted with a Government guarantee of £30,000, came into production this year. Since the inception of the prospecting scheme in July, 1933, assisted prospectors have crushed 59,072 tons for 30,119 fine ounces of gold. To the end of September, 8,135 men have been granted assistance by way of rations, rail fares and tools. At present there are 765 men on the scheme. I secured information regarding some of the prospectors and it is interesting to see how they have fared. The outstanding crushings since January, 1939, are as follows—

Snell and Henderson (Mt. Magnet) dollied 72 ounces between January and March valued at £650 and repaid their assistance in full.

D. Girvin (Murrin), who had been on the scheme for two years without being interested

in a crushing, recovered 650 ounces of dollied gold valued at £6,000. The assistance rendered him was repaid in full.

Bassula and Rubery, in the Laverton district, treated 10 tons of specimen stone for 55 ounces and crushed 16 tons for 134 ounces. A further crushing by this party of 27½ tons yielded 119 ounces. The value was £2,200. The assistance rendered was repaid.

Wells & Cott (Cue) found a 10-ounce patch a few days after their arrival in that district. They were sent from Perth, and I understand that it was their first attempt at prospecting in that district.

Waldeck and Brown Bros. (Coolgardie) treated 15 tons for 72 ounces.

Daultry and Thompson (Broad Arrow) treated 10 tons for 50 ounces.

D. T. Walton (Southern Cross) crushed 12 tons for 42 ounces.

E. O. Craddock (Ora Banda) 5 tons for 22 ounces.

J. Stearn (Ora Banda) 15 tons for 45 ounces.

W. J. Matthews (Wiluna) 4 tons for 16 ounces; dollied 9 ounces and a further crushing of 10 tons for 21 ounces.

Merry and O'Neil (Mt. Magnet) dollied 22 ounces.

Fallon and Son (Coolgardie) 25 tons for 40 ounces.

H. McMurray (Cue) treated 80 lbs. by Berdan pan for 29 ounces.

Wilson and Drew (Laverton) dollied 32 ounces.

P. M. Finnegan (Laverton) one ton for 21 ounces and dollied 55 ounces.

Black and Field (Kalgoorlie) ½ cwt. for 33 ounces.

H. H. and H. A. Cole (Laverton) dollied 49 ounces.

G. J. P. Hammond (Coolgardie) treated Berdan pan and obtained 22 ounces.

R. Saunders & Son at Morley's Find were on the scheme some time ago. They have a fair show at Morleys, and during this year have treated 1 cwt. for 46 ounces, 100 lbs. for 25 ounces, 27 tons for 167 ounces, and 2 tons for 95 ozs. They repaid the department £130.

These facts give hon. members some idea of what prospectors are doing in their own small way in gold production which was initiated through the prospecting scheme established by my predecessor, the late Mr. Munsie.

Increased activity in the production of base metals was recorded during 1938. Exploratory operations are being continued at Yampi Sound, and undoubtedly a fine deposit of high-grade iron ore has been disclosed. It is expected that the war will stimulate mining for certain classes of base metals.

With regard to State batteries I have some interesting figures. There has been a good deal of talk in this Chamber and outside

as to reduction of State battery charges. Notwithstanding the considerable increase in wages and salaries and cost of commodities, there has been no increase in crushing charges since 1909. I have obtained from the department figures dealing with the scheme since 1938. At the close of that year there were 24 plants in commission, and these treated during that year 108,966 tons for 80,033 ozs., of bullion. At Marble Bar and Boogardie, mills have been increased to ten head; and at other plants many improvements have been installed. I now give figures relating to State batteries from their inception, about the year 1898, to the 31st December, 1938:—

		£	s.	d.
Expenditure .. ..	2,350,310	10	1	0
Depreciation .. ..	413,092	6	0	
Interest .. ..	535,264	0	0	
Sinking fund .. ..	126,948	14	6	
	3,425,615	10	7	
Less Revenue .. ..	2,248,672	4	1	
	£1,176,943	6	6	

Total capital expenditure £524,497 5 3

Year ended 31st December, 1938.

		£	s.	d.
Expenditure .. ..	112,557	0	9	
Depreciation .. ..	9,157	8	1	
Interest .. ..	19,146	0	0	
Sinking Fund .. ..	1,234	0	0	
	142,094	8	10	
Less Revenue .. ..	124,179	11	11	

Loss .. .. £17,914 16 11

Cartage subsidy £14,957 12s. 8d. and capital expenditure £12,408 10s. 11d. are not included in the foregoing figures.

While on the goldfields it was noticeable to me that many prospectors and others were under the impression that the department received the full amount of 2 dwts. 8 grns. as its tailing treatment charge. That is not so. Our extraction in regard to tailings is 75 per cent, and thus the actual amount received by us is 1 dwt. 18 grns., which is 75 per cent. of the 2 dwts. 8 grns. In many cases of course, the tailing produced does not assay 2 dwts. 8 grns. In 1938 only 52.89 per cent. was worth that amount, while 43.95 per cent. averaged only 1 dwt 10 grns., and 3.16 per cent. contained too much copper to be treated. It is my intention to amend the existing regulations regarding this matter in order to make it quite clear that the department charges only

1 dwt., 18 grns., fine gold, and not 2 dwts., 8 grns.

With regard to inspection of mines, an additional inspector for ventilation purposes has been added to the staff, and special equipment has been purchased. The department's policy is to make the mines as safe from accident and disease as is humanly possible, and we are receiving every possible assistance in this regard from managements and men.

In addition to the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, we have now established schools at both Wiluna and Norseman. By this means it is hoped to provide a regular supply of trained men for the technical posts available in the industry. At one time it was common for the Minister for Mines to be signing the death warrant of a poor miner suffering from miners' phthisis and silicosis. I am glad to be able to state that such cases are now rare.

I have personally visited most of the goldfields this year, and have been particularly impressed with the efforts being made to treat low-grade ore profitably. The price of gold has steadily increased, and is today fixed at £8 8s. sterling, or £10 13s. in Australian currency. The Commonwealth excise of course reduces the price to £9 15s. 6d. receivable by the producer. The department's policy of financially assisting struggling mines has been continued, and it is pleasing to record that two of the larger properties assisted, viz. Tindals and Celebration, came into production this year, and are employing large numbers of men.

During my trip I was also struck by the modern conveniences installed for men on the mines. Having visited several of the big mines, I was much impressed by the facilities that are now afforded to employees to preserve their health. The department had been concerned by several accident cases occasioned by carbon monoxide, and decided to learn whether it was possible to obtain a rescue mask. After negotiating with an English firm we ascertained that a mask for rescue work was procurable. I had an opportunity to exhibit such a mask, but the outbreak of war has prevented the department from, as yet, procuring supplies of the appliance.

In examining statistics, our attention was drawn to the numerous accidents resulting in head injury. During my trip I found that at the Big Bell mine a safety hat had

been adopted. I brought the matter to the attention of the Chamber of Mines, which has agreed that these safety hats should be used. A regulation has been drafted making it obligatory on all companies to furnish every man working underground with a safety hat. These hats are also being asked for in the Collie coal mines. The introduction of this safeguard will effect a large reduction in head injuries, especially in the gold mines. The formation of safety committees by the miners will also operate in the direction of continuously lessening the number of accidents in general.

I am very glad to be able to report that the mining industry continues to be prosperous. All things considered, I believe we can look forward to a further period of prosperity in gold mining. The increase in the price of the metal has given the industry an opportunity to exploit low-grade areas which, as men familiar with our goldfields are aware, have long been lying idle. However, with capital the low-grade ores have now been developed. I have pleasure in submitting the Mines Estimates.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [9.45]: It was pleasing to listen to the Minister's introduction of these Estimates. There is no doubt that the goldmining industry is recognised by all hon. members as being a wonderful asset to the State, inasmuch as it has been instrumental in absorbing large numbers of men who would otherwise have been unemployed and consequently a liability instead of an asset to the State. We can accordingly be most thankful for the existence of the goldmining industry. From time to time I have endeavoured to prevail upon Ministers who have held the portfolio of Mines to recognise the fact that the Act governing the industry is badly in need of reconstruction. My efforts up to date have been of no avail. Seemingly they are not likely to be effective. There has been no mention of any prospective legislation; there will certainly be none introduced this session, but if the industry is all we have calculated it to be and if we recognise its importance, it is high time something was done to revolutionise the Act. There are not many more members interested in the Statute, because not many represent the goldmining industry.

**Mr. Patrick:** It is a very old Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: It dates back to 1904. Fortunately this year there are one or two additional members in the Chamber interested in this matter, and I am hoping that by virtue of increased pressure we shall get something done. It is no use members imagining that this industry can continue to flourish unless we give some protection to those investing large sums of money in it. As the Minister has pointed out, tonnage has increased, together with values, but the money invested is not increasing, and that is the point to which we must give serious consideration. I am informed that today a bar of gold could not be sold in England, because investors have become sceptical. That is due in the main to market manipulation and rigging and the flotation of what we call wildcat propositions. I understand that the New South Wales Mining Act was amended several years ago in a manner that gives some guarantee to those investing capital in the industry, the prospectus as submitted to the public having to be reasonably true and correct. If anyone attempts to float a proposition that is not genuine and not in accord with the prospectus he is liable at law and can be subjected to heavy penalties. For some unknown reason, while the industry enjoyed the advantage of having a large investment of capital, the then Minister for Mines visited England. I respectfully suggest there was no occasion for any visit at that time, and I am sorry to say I do not think the visit was materially valuable from the point of view of inspiring further investments. Time has demonstrated that fact. I do not know that there has been any period in the history of the industry in Western Australia when investors from other countries needed so much encouragement through amended legislation to continue investing in the industry as they need today. The time is not far distant when some of the mines must of necessity be worked out, and if we have not a steady flow of capital into the industry its prosperity will be a thing of the past, as is the case in most of the other States. To amend the Mining Act is more opportune now than at any previous time, and a visit to England by some mining authority from Western Australia would do more good than any former visit ever did.

The Minister for Mines: You cannot get money from England now.

Mr. MARSHALL: We are not hoping that the war and the consequent restrictions placed upon the export of capital will continue for a long time.

The Minister for Mines: Are you trying to get rid of me?

Mr. MARSHALL: I would not care who went; but I think the first job of the Minister is to amend the Mining Act. Unless that were done it would be of no use anyone going to England to try to encourage investments. The Act has been in operation since 1904. Only minor amendments have been made, and the measure is as obsolete as it could possibly be. I venture to suggest that one-third of the contents of the Act could be repealed. A complete redrafting is necessary. The Act is so badly framed that one has difficulty in ascertaining what is and what is not the law regarding the industry. It is in a deplorable state, and comprehensive amendments should be made. Otherwise we are not likely to encourage investors to put further capital in the industry. That so much apathy should be displayed is deplorable. If we value the industry we should do something, and time is the essence of the contract. I respectfully suggest again to the Minister that, whether it is distasteful to him or not, the obligation is upon him to do something, and I hope he will get his departmental officers to work on amending the Act.

I have also endeavoured to persuade previous Ministers, as well as the present Minister, to recognise the fact that the Act needs to be amended in another direction. The Minister spoke of the prosperity of the industry, referring to the amount of wealth it had created; but there is a sad tale to be told when another side of the picture is viewed. We cannot tell the actual number of men who have lost their lives in the production of gold in Western Australia. Outside of those killed by accident there are many thousands who have died from the diseases peculiar to this industry; and they have died at a very early age. I have repeatedly asked Ministers to do something in the way of amending the Act to provide for the proper ventilation of mines. The most remarkable fact is that a big company after having bored its proposition and found the dip and the width of the lode can send draftsmen into the office to draw a working plan for stopping out or mining out that proposition, but it is not

obliged to submit to the Minister, side by side with those plans, some positive and definite scheme of ventilating the mine. This is one of the most important aspects of the industry from the worker's point of view. We allow the companies to continue operations until they get the mines worked down to great depths, then the inspector complains about the ventilation. To do anything at that period, however, involves considerable expense, and that is the usual excuse advanced. The preservation of the health of the men employed in this industry should be a consideration at the outset, and all persons proposing to operate in a big way should be obliged, when they are drawing up their plans for the mining of the ore, to submit to the Minister plans for the proper ventilation of the mines. If we insisted on that the cost would be gradual and unnoticeable. Failing that, we will allow them to continue ruining the lives of thousands of young men. Every time an effort has been made by an inspector to secure proper ventilation and sanitation the reply has been made that to provide those facilities would be too costly. The Minister has a responsibility to see that something is done in this connection.

Time and again I have made mention of the provisions relating to the forfeiture of leases. Every man with experience of the industry knows full well that there are very valuable blocks of land kept out of a state of productivity because men will not apply for their forfeiture. Men will not apply for a forfeiture by others who are their colleagues and friends. I tell the Minister what I have told his predecessors, that there is nothing harmful and unfair in amending the Act to make it possible for an inspector of mines to call upon any lessee or holder of a prospecting area to show cause why his proposition should not be forfeited. Upon being informed that a certain lease was not being worked, the inspector could by personal investigation soon satisfy himself as to whether it had or had not been worked within a few days of his examination. He could then call upon the lessee to go to the court and show cause why the lease should not be forfeited. If a man is not complying with the Act, he should not be entitled to hold the lease any longer. For the second time since he took office I ask the Minister to give consideration to this matter. Many valuable blocks are remaining in a state of unproductivity because men will not stoop to apply for forfeiture and thus earn for

themselves the title of professional jumpers. The obligation to make such application should not be placed on them. Inspectors continually tour these districts and if authority were given them they would be able to call upon lessees to show cause why their blocks should not be forfeited. If the industry is to carry on, the matters to which I have referred should receive urgent attention. We cannot allow the industry to decline to the state it was in before the price of gold increased. If we do so the results will be tragic because the possibilities of experiencing a new revival will be remote. I ask the Minister to look at the New South Wales Act and see whether he cannot adopt from it certain sections dealing with the prevention of the flotation of "wild cats". Secondly, I want him to see that all companies first submit a plan of ventilation before commencing operations, and, thirdly, I want him to give inspectors of mines authority to call upon any lessee to show cause why his block should not be forfeited.

Mr. Patrick: As is done under the Land Act.

Mr. MARSHALL: I believe that sort of thing applies under the Land Act. This is not too much to ask of the Minister. If ever he takes proper hold of the Mining Act, he will find that one-third of it can be cast aside. Its sections are obsolete, and have out-lived their usefulness. The Act should be remodelled in such a way as to separate the different minerals. We should not have gold mixed up with lead and other metals, oil, coal, etc., all dealt with by hundreds of regulations. A man would require to be a Philadelphian lawyer to understand the Act and the regulations, and no one could be sure of doing so even then. The industry is too important to be administered by legislation that is in such bad condition as is this.

I wish to deal, too, with the health of the men working in and around the plant at Wiluna. This is as much a matter of the health of the men as it is of the mining industry itself. I have been in consultation with medical men in the city. I think the Minister knows Dr. Hislop, who has given particular attention to this question. Many of the men working in and around the plant at Wiluna are suffering from poison emanating from the arsenic plant and the treatment plant. Doctors have informed me that this is the only place in the world where such a position is active. They have

no guide and nothing to refer to from which to get a lead. In consequence, men are ruined in health and are getting no compensation. Medical men at Wiluna are too busy attending to their patients to deal with this particular phase. They have suggested to me that the Minister should send a special man to Wiluna, to remain there for a period and study all these cases. He would then be able to diagnose the effect of arsenical poisoning, and compile statistics to show how it affected some men and not others. The object of the investigation would be to ensure that the men affected were properly compensated for being incapacitated. Men are compensated for practically every other mining disease. I am told the State Insurance Office is paying compensation unfairly in some cases, and in other cases is unfairly denying compensation. It is no use depending on local doctors, when a specialist is required to give careful and lengthy consideration to the matter. I understand that on the lead mines in the Eastern States compensation is given in special cases. The authorities there have precedents to follow. In the mines of that State some men can resist lead poisoning and are able to continue their work, but others very quickly fall victims to the trouble. Compensation laws have been passed in New South Wales, where every care is taken to prevent trouble, and when it occurs the men are fairly compensated. Something is required to be done urgently at Wiluna, and the Minister should give consideration to the matter. If he will confer with the officers of the State Insurance Office and Dr. Hislop and others, he will get valuable information from them. Although the industry is a valuable one, I hold that the health of the workers is the first consideration. From the point of view of humanity that consideration should be given. I have watched thousands of strong young men enter the industry, last a few years, then live an agonising life for a few years, and die. The ventilation of our mines must be improved, and a proper investigation must be made into the conditions of men working on the Wiluna mines. I am pleased that the industry is flourishing so well. It has been of great value to the State, and I do not know what would have happened during the depression but for the industry. It has absorbed many thousands of men who would have been a liability upon the State, and provided employment for thou-

sands of people elsewhere than in the industry. It has been of untold benefit and profit to Western Australia. The amendments I have suggested to the Mining Act are urgently necessary, and I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to them.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet) [10.8]: I agree with the member for Murchison that the Mining Act is long overdue for a close examination. I did not know that the difficulty with respect to bogus companies could be overcome by amending that Act, and thought it would have to be done by amending the Companies Act; but if it can be done by the means suggested, it ought to be done during the next session of Parliament. I have had a lot of experience of mining companies and bogus flotations in this State and elsewhere. Men who have posed as honourable mining engineers, some of them operating in Western Australia, have been anything but honest in the opinions they have expressed. They have made statements that proved to be false. One mining engineer reported recently on a big proposition near Kalgoorlie. He showed that the lode was protruding from the ground for a distance of over a mile and was approximately 10 feet in width. The amount of ore that he said was in sight was extensive, and he considered the values to be fairly good. His reports were made in detail. After the company had spent between £30,000 and £40,000 it failed to produce one ton of payable ore. That engineer should be imprisoned. I hope the Act will be amended to prevent men of that description engaging themselves as mining engineers, and making false reports of that nature. Many instances of the kind could be quoted.

The Mining Act was quite an efficient piece of legislation in the old days when the workings were more or less alluvial, but now that we have so many deep mines it is of very little avail. The Mines Regulation Act is of greater importance than is the Mining Act, which deals for the most part with leases. I strongly support the member for Murchison in his request that a closer examination should be made into the health of the men engaged in mining. As a member of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board, which handles men who have been turned out of the industry for health



reasons, I have had a good deal of experience of this sort of thing. The figures taken from the laboratory show that numbers of men are still contracting miners' phthisis. Before members can understand the position they should know what procedure is followed. Prior to 1926 any man could get a job in a mine, for no consideration was paid either to his physique or his health. He went below and worked, and when he was too ill to work, he left the industry. In 1926 the examination of men began. Before a man was taken on to work in the mines he had to undergo a thorough physical examination by a qualified doctor, and in addition his lungs were X-rayed at the laboratory. If there were the slightest signs of pleurisy or pneumonia, the man was excluded from the industry. Every one had to be physically perfect, and any person who did not come up to the standard was refused employment in the industry.

After 13 years one would expect that all the old miners would have left the industry or have died as a result of miners' complaint, and that those who were left would be physically fit. Judging by the examination that has taken place, however, it appears that cases of early silicosis are constantly being found. That is quite wrong. It is wrong because companies are not making sufficient provision for ventilation. It is not wrong on account of the incidence of mining because there are no mining operations that will not cause dust to be liberated, dust that leads to miners' phthisis. There is no known method of dealing with the trouble except by ventilation, by pure air. South Africa is far in advance of Western Australia in these matters, and it has been shown there that even though the air in the mines is as clear as is the air in this Chamber, it contains minute particles of dust that are 150 times too small to be detected by the eye, and dust that in still air takes six hours to sink 5 feet. That air is continually sprayed with very fine water sprays, in the endeavour to reduce the amount of dust content, but the results are not to be compared with what happens when clean pure air is admitted. The clean air takes the dust away, because the dust is so fine that it has become a gas. Mining companies put down a shaft for developmental work without any thought of

future ventilation. What they depend on is the venturi system. That is a system whereby air is forced into a pipe which has an outlet, and that air is driven into the workings. One can feel the air when standing in front of the nozzle and people imagine that they are breathing clean, fresh, wholesome air. Experiments, however, have shown that actually the system is only circulating bad air, and in many instances the air contains an accumulation of dust. In fact, the air is full of dust. If sufficient fresh air was travelling through the mines, there would be no dust content, and the air would be clean throughout. Two ventilation officers only are employed by the Government. They are thoroughly competent men, but they have long distances to travel, and cannot be on any mine all the time. As they examine various mines they make reports, and by that means the position is gradually being clarified. They cannot, however, be expected to do impossibilities. Commenting on a mine in Wiluna, Mr. Brisbane, the ventilation expert, on page 32 of the Mines Department's annual report states—

The main ventilation of the larger producers is in very fair order. There is some trouble on the west lode of the Wiluna Mine. Some of the stopings involved are in workings that are now inaccessible, and restoration of the system will probably be difficult. The connection of the Happy Jack shaft on the 1,800ft. level, which is now being made, may help the ventilation of the west lode.

That sort of thing should not occur in any mine of consequence. A proper ventilation system should be carried out everywhere on the mines. I can well understand that a mine manager who is pushed for cash may say, "We will forget about ventilation; it will cost a lot of money; we can pick it up later." It is impossible to pick up the ventilation later. If our mining laws provided that, before a mine could be operated, adequate provision was made for ventilation we would overcome the difficulty.

There is another matter to which I desire to refer. I am a member of the safety committee. That consists of representatives of the Chamber of Mines, inspectors of mines, and of the union. The committee meets about once a month and discusses matters appertaining to the health and safety of men working in the mines. It is an efficient committee and has done a lot of good work. The analytical chemist, Mr. Dodd, who was referred to by the member for Yilgarn-

Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert), has placed a proposition before the committee to deal with the nitrous fumes given off by the blast. In his opinion, those fumes are responsible for the loss of lives in the mines. Men die rapidly in badly ventilated winzes or ends. They can go there to work and, without the slightest warning, collapse and die as a result of poison from the fumes. Mr. Dodd considers he has a method of combating the fumes and some months ago he gave a demonstration before the committee with the use of bullets that are inserted in the holes when they are discharged. The result is that the bullets give off ammonia gas, which nullifies the effects of the nitrous poison gas. If we have not been able to make a thorough examination of the proposition because the Government has not the adequate appliances with which to carry out the test, I consider that when men's lives are at stake, all haste should be exercised in securing what appliances are necessary. That should be done, and if the test should prove satisfactory, in my opinion, many of the poison cases that are reported from time to time could be eliminated from the industry. I feel sure that the Minister will do all he can as speedily as possible to ensure that the ventilation of the mines is adequate. If that is done, there will be no miners' phthisis reported in Western Australia. Regarding the incidence of miners' diseases, members will find a further reference in Inspector Brisbane's annual report on ventilation in mines, as follows:—

One fuming accident with fatal results to two men occurred during the year, and there were a few cases in which men were seriously affected. One of the men referred to above lost his life in attempting to save the other.

That refers to the man I mentioned earlier regarding the effects of the fumes. As to the incidence of miners' phthisis itself, the particulars of the 13th examination made in 1938 show that the number of men suffering from silicosis early, previously reported as normal, totalled 13, while those formerly reported as silicosis early aggregated 266, or a total of 279 men out of an aggregate of 7,141 examined, are definitely doomed to be silicotic advanced cases within the next two or three years. Even if the ventilation of the mines is improved within the next year or two, those men are doomed to that fate. That indicates the incidence of the disease. If they were not to leave

the mines suffering from silicosis advanced, 12 months hence they would become sufferers from silicosis plus tuberculosis. That is a position dangerous not only to the industry but to the whole community. If they are pulled out of the industry, they become classed as T.B. miners, and within the next three years will become a burden on the taxpayers of the State. Moreover, they will be a danger to the community at large. The number of men suffering from tuberculosis has fallen away, and people are apt to think that the incidence of the disease is not as great as it was. The fact is that tuberculosis has decreased only because men are now taken out of the mines before reaching that stage and are paid compensation accordingly. Under the old Act, they had to remain in the mines until they were definitely tubercular before they could claim compensation. Whatever can be done to improve the ventilation of the mines should be accomplished with all haste in order to improve the conditions of the industry. No mine should be allowed to operate without a plan of ventilation being drawn up. Only then should development be allowed to take place. Any steps along that line will have my support, and anything that the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) seeks to achieve to improve conditions in the industry will equally have my aid. The industry is a wonderful asset to the State. It provides employment for a large number of men at a reasonably decent wage. Irrespective of whether the mine-owners can afford the expenditure, they are required to pay the prescribed wage. The miner usually spends all he gets. If he earns £10 or £12 a week, he spends it all, and his money is in circulation. I trust that the Government will lose no opportunity to improve the conditions in the industry. I support the Vote.

**MR. W. HEGNEY** (Pilbarra) [10.11]: I desire briefly to refer to the necessity for stimulating prospecting in the Pilbara district. For some years past the Government has carried out a prospecting scheme on the Murchison and the eastern goldfields with a fair measure of success. I have received a number of requests from prospectors and others in the Pilbara district for the extension of the scheme to Marble Bar and Nullagine. The Government has given evidence of its confidence in the possibilities of

mining in that part of the State, by increasing the capacity of the State battery at Marble Bar and subsidising the erection of a battery at Nullagine. I believe that if the prospecting scheme were extended to the Pilbara districts, results would justify that step. Recently I received information to the effect that a private party intended to erect a battery 46 miles east of Nullagine at a centre known as Eastern Creek. Gradually the number of prospectors in the area is increasing. On perusing the "West Australian" of the 4th November last, I was interested in a paragraph dealing with the proposed stimulation of the goldmining industry, which read:—

Following the receipt of a telegram from Sir David Rivett (chief executive officer of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), the Western Australian State committee of the Council yesterday discussed means by which gold production in this State could be stimulated. A sub-committee consisting of Professor E. de C. Clarke (Professor of Geology in the University of Western Australia), Mr. H. Bowley (Acting Government Analyst and Mineralogist), and Mr. F. G. Brinsden (manager of the South Kalbarri gold mine) was appointed to examine forms of investigation which might lead to increased production of gold and other minerals.

Professor Clarke emphasised the importance of further geological surveys being made in the various mining areas in Western Australia. The State Geological Survey Department, he said, had investigated the Yilgarn and Laver-ton areas and the results of the surveys had revolutionised ideas on the occurrence of gold in relation to the geological structure of the country.

I do not know the extent of its powers or its functions, but I presume the committee will act in close co-operation with the Mines Department of Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: If so, it will be the first time that a Commonwealth committee has done so.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I trust that will be done, because otherwise the results of the committee's work will not be as effective as they would be if that body worked in co-operation with the officials of the State Mines Department. I hope that if there is any such investigation, the Minister will do what he can to extend it to the Pilbara district.

Mr. Patrick: Was the tax on gold one of the stimulants?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No, but the Commonwealth Government, which certainly imposed that tax, appointed the committee

shortly after that impost had been levelled upon the gold mining industry. The fact that the Pilbara and Nullagine districts are so far removed from the Eastern goldfields should not deter the authorities from devoting attention to them. Another point to which I shall make reference concerns the visit of the laboratory to Marble Bar. Over 100 men are employed on the Comet Gold Mine and on the adjoining property known as McKinnon's lease. I am led to believe that when the laboratory visited Marble Bar in September, 1938, many men in the outlying districts were not notified of the fact, with the result that those engaged in the industry were not examined. As quite a number of newcomers have appeared in the district during the last 12 months and as an examination is essential, I trust that the Minister will see that if it is not practicable for the laboratory to visit Marble Bar by the end of this year, it will do so early in the new year.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Medical, £41,140:

#### THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon.

A. H. Panton—Leederville) [10.20]: The Public Health Department is composed of three sections known as the medical, public health and mental hospitals branches. The medical branch governs the administration of all hospitals, medical and relative matters; the public health branch deals with sanitation and health matters generally, and the functions of the mental hospitals branch are self-explanatory. The latter branch has been under my administration for some months past. The administration of the medical section is rendered extremely difficult owing to the vast and sparsely populated area of the State throughout which hospitals are established from Wyndham in the north to Esperance in the south. The magnitude of the work carried out can be gauged by the fact that the State's hospital services are borne by no less than 91 scattered institutions. The department depends entirely upon the national hospital fund for the maintenance and building of hospitals. For the financial year ended the 30th June, 1939, the hospital tax produced £264,074 and hospital fees yielded £49,914, making a total of £313,988. To this must be added Treasury grants from the previous year. As at the 30th June, 1939, there was

a credit balance of £2,684 in the fund, but against this there were numerous works in hand or to be carried out. It may be interesting to members if I submit for their information a table showing the amount of the hospital tax collected during the years from 1931-1932 to 1938-39 together with particulars of expenditure from the hospital fund under the headings of administration and collection, maintenance and buildings, respectively. The details are as follows:—

Year.	Expenditure from Hospital Fund.			
	Tax Collected.	Administration & Collection.	Maintenance.	Buildings.
	£	£	£	£
1931-32	133,885	4,040	123,202	4,340
1932-33	146,042	4,266	132,344	12,775
1933-34	154,237	3,259	151,752	6,553
1934-35	183,308	4,040	168,256	17,834
1935-36	206,539	4,233	166,882	25,680
1936-37	234,590	4,568	212,736	20,287
1937-38	245,659	4,578	216,361	33,782
1938-39	264,072	4,481	259,983	38,643

From 1934-35 onwards the hospitals have received certain grants from the Treasury, mainly towards buildings; and in the year first named £15,000; last year £25,000. In 1931-32 the total beds occupied were 1,256; the aggregate maintenance costs amounted to £213,690 and patients' fees collected amounted to £85,967. In 1938-39 the total beds occupied were 1,838.8; the aggregate maintenance costs amounted to £434,710, and patients' fees collected amounted to £173,152. The tremendous increase in the cost of maintenance was brought about largely by the nurses' award, which, among other things, provided for a reduction of hours.

Mr. Marshall: Who was responsible for that?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Nurses' Association, like other good unions. That is the position. No new hospitals were opened during the year, but many improvements were made to existing hospitals, some of them of a major character including:—

(1) Extensive additions and re-modelling of the old section of the Busselton Hospital at a cost of nearly £10,000.

(2) Replacement of portions of the Kalgoorlie Hospital which were destroyed by fire early last year at a cost of approximately £29,000.

(3) A new children's ward at Geraldton costing £2,000.

(4) Additions to the children's ward at Kalgoorlie costing £2,000.

The new block at the King Edward Hospital costing between £65,000 and £75,000 is nearing completion and will be opened shortly; tomorrow week, as a matter of fact. In addition, works have been carried out or are in course of construction at many other hospitals, including the following:—

Extensive additions to the nurses' quarters at the Fremantle Hospital and additional ward accommodation, including provision for intermediate cases (the Alex. McCallum Memorial Ward).

Extensive additions to the Kellerberrin, Southern Cross, Pingelly, Mount Magnet and Lake Grace Hospitals.

Additions and improvements to the Laverton, Roebourne, Reedy and Tambellup Hospitals.

An X-Ray room at the Wagin Hospital.

Sewerage installation at and renovations to the Wyndham Hospital.

Staff quarters at Mount Barker.

At Beverley and Corrigin private houses have been purchased, and by this means excellent staff accommodation has been obtained at a low cost.

Practically the whole of the works carried out during the year and referred to have been made possible only by the assistance of moneys raised locally and donations made by the Lotteries Commission. Work has commenced on the first section of a comprehensive programme for the re-building of the Perth Hospital at a cost of approximately £425,000. It is expected that this work will take approximately three years to complete; when it is completed, we are hopeful that arrangements will be made for the completion of the whole of the re-building programme, the total estimated cost of which is between £700,000 and £800,000. At Marble Bar the small hospital has been conducted for many years by the Australian Inland Mission; but with the large increase in mining operations and a consequent increase in population, representatives of the Australian Inland Mission have requested that the hospital be taken over by the Department. After discussion the Department agreed to assume control on the 1st September, 1939.

Considerable additional expenditure in connection with the maintenance of the nursing staffs at all public hospitals has been caused by amendments to the Nurses' Award in August, 1938, and by recent basic wage increases. We have heard repeated criticism of the fact that the people of Perth do not sufficiently support their local hospital; and I am not averse to such criticism, as I believe it is fully justified. My experi-

ence, however, is that it is much easier to interest country people in hospital matters than people in the city, and I think the reason is that in most country centres the hospital is looked upon as the people's own. Anyone and everyone is entitled to admittance to a country hospital when requiring medical attention, whilst in Perth the hospital caters only for those in indigent circumstances. Consequently, Perth Hospital has, over a long period of years, been looked upon as a Governmental institution. In addition, this hospital is a training centre for doctors and nurses, and it has been very difficult to obtain a starting point to develop that interest which is so prominent in country districts. I suggest, however, that despite that lack of interest by Perth people, no justification exists for not providing hospital facilities and accommodation for those cases which are treated there at present.

The expenditure from the Hospital Fund last year on building, equipment and maintenance on all the 91 State hospitals was £298,636 5s., of which £156,867 15s. was expended on country hospitals, and £141,768 10s. on hospitals in the metropolitan and neighbouring districts, including the King Edward Memorial Hospital, the Perth, Fremantle and Children's Hospitals, the Dental Hospital and the Home of Peace. The maintenance of these hospitals is an ever-growing problem, and I am not satisfied that we are obtaining the maximum efficiency for the amount expended. I suggest the time has arrived when a complete survey should be made of hospital requirements to ascertain the best means for providing for and maintaining them. In my opinion, there are altogether too many small hospitals in the State. One must admit that a few years ago they were necessary, owing mainly to difficulties of transport and other drawbacks of those times; but now, with our excellent roads and modern speedy means of transport, it seems to me that the most efficient method of treating the sick is to have a more up-to-date central hospital in certain districts, and casualty or clearing stations within a defined radius served by an up-to-date ambulance which would be stationed at the central hospital. At present hospitals are scattered throughout the State with an average of less than two beds; yet it is essential to maintain a staff—seldom less than five—to carry them on. If, however, I suggest that they ought to be closed

down, and that a nearby hospital—sometimes ten and twenty miles distant—be used, immediate indignation is expressed, meetings are called, and deputations headed by the member for the district concerned wait upon the Minister. I can, of course, understand that once a hospital is established it is difficult to impress upon the people the desirability of closing it, but I am quite convinced that a reconstruction of our ideas on hospital administration is essential if we are to take advantage of the progress made in road construction and in modern transport for the attainment of efficient, up-to-date hospital services.

The medical service, which is affiliated with the hospital services, is carrying out wonderful work in the North of our State. The extension of this service and the more efficient way in which it is administered have been largely due to the appointment of full-time medical officers in the North-West centres, which move was made about five years ago and has been fully justified. By the introduction of this new system, instead of subsidising doctors to practise in the various centres, local communities are receiving a far better medical service at no greater cost to the department, and the new system is fully appreciated by the people in the northern centres. Until recently the doctor at Port Hedland looked after both Port Hedland and Marble Bar, but owing to the increase in mining operations at Marble Bar and the consequent large increase in population, the medical work at this centre has been taken from the district medical officer at Port Hedland, and a district medical officer has been appointed for the Marble Bar district. Thus we have added another brass plate to the "Harley-street of the North". Fees earned by these doctors are collected by the department and paid into revenue in the same way as are hospital charges. In conjunction with the doctors appointed at Port Hedland and Wyndham, aerial medical services have been continued. The flying service at Port Hedland is controlled by the Western Australian section of the Aerial Medical Services, and at Wyndham by the Victorian section of the Aerial Medical Services. The actual flying services have been interrupted at Port Hedland owing to the destruction of the aeroplane and hangar by a storm which struck the town early in the year. Arrangements have however now been completed for the supply of a new aero-

plane. The "Flying Doctor" services, or—to use the correct and official title—the "North-West Medical Services" are now widely known throughout Australia. A few months ago these services were given publicity in an article by an Eastern States newspaper in which they were dubbed the "Harley-street of the North"—a very apt title—as now, with the assistance of the wireless pedal sets and the flying ambulance, a doctor at Port Hedland can, for instance, journey within an hour or so to his colleague at Broome and confer over cases that may present difficulties.

The following institutions are under the control of the Mental Hospitals Department:—Claremont Mental Hospital, Greenplace Mental Hospital, Whiby Falls Mental Hospital, Lemnos Hospital, and the Heathcote Reception Home.

On the 31st December last, 1,477 persons were certified as insane in this State as against 1,476 on the 31st December, 1938, an increase of one. During the year deaths numbered 94, and discharges 85, of these 37 were discharged as recovered and two deported under the Commonwealth Immigration Act. At Heathcote, during the year ended the 31st December last, the number of admissions was 416, of which 76 were re-admissions. Of the cases discharged, 132 were recovered or relieved and 76 not improved. Ten patients died in the Home and 57 were transferred to Hospitals for the Insane. The number of patients in Heathcote at the 31st December last was 103. A treatment and admission block is in course of erection at the Claremont Mental Hospital. Its estimated cost is £26,000; it will accommodate 22 males and 22 females in four wards, and it will provide additional accommodation for eight males and eight females in single rooms. When the block is completed it will help to relieve overcrowding, facilitate the carrying out of newer forms of treatment, and provide more satisfactory hospital accommodation and suitable admission wards. A similar block which will fulfil the same purpose at Heathcote is under construction. Its estimated cost is £15,000, and it will provide accommodation for 26 patients. A residence for the medical officer is also being constructed at Heathcote at an estimated cost of £1,400.

A property has been purchased by the Government at Wokalup at a cost of £9,400.

When an institution is built there it will assist to overcome the overcrowding in the Mental Hospital, provide manual occupation for male patients, and increase farming operations in co-operation with the Agricultural Department. Everybody who knows the property will agree that it is a wonderful one and that it will be eminently suitable for the purpose for which the Government intends to use it. A few days ago I was asked what the Government intended to do with Whiby Farm. That also can be put to use. Various schemes are under consideration, one of which is the utilisation of the property for youths who are continually getting into trouble. Wokalup will not only be a very fine establishment for those unfortunate people who are committed to the Hospital for the Insane, but it will also become a producing centre. By intensive cultivation we should be able to grow all the produce required by the various Government institutions.

**MR. MARSHALL** (Murchison) [10.43]: I wish to make a few brief remarks on this vote, more by way of complaint against the attitude adopted by the Medical Department towards hospitals in remote parts of the State. We have been led to believe that people who make an effort to help themselves will get first consideration from the Government through the medium of its departmental officers. I take exception to the treatment meted out by the department to some of the hospitals I have mentioned. The policy that is continually being enunciated by the Government has not been put into effect by the department. What the Minister told us regarding the people of Perth contributing little or nothing to their hospital and the country people making fairly large contributions is true. Notwithstanding that fact, those who get the greatest consideration are the people who do not contribute at all to their hospitals. This is due to numerical strength. Those people can bring pressure to bear on their political representatives and even on the Government. I do not know of any medical funds outside those on the goldfields, in the timber industry and in the coal mining industry that provide for contributions for the maintenance of hospitals. Take Wiluna, which has 1,300 subscribers at 2s. each per week.

The Minister for Health: There is £7,000, and you said there were no other funds.

Mr. MARSHALL: But the number is infinitesimal. For the weekly contribution, the subscribers get limited hospital accommodation; it is not provided in all cases. Although these workers contribute up to 2s. a week and pay the hospital tax over and above that, they have to wrangle to get any assistance from the department. At the same time other people, due to their numerical strength, can, without making any weekly contribution, get hospital accommodation of a better class.

The Minister for Health: Where is the wrangling going on?

Mr. MARSHALL: In some of the hospitals in the outer districts. There was one at the Cue Hospital.

The Minister for Health: I did not know it was a wrangle.

Mr. MARSHALL: I take exception to a letter written by the Under Secretary for Health, Mr. Huelin. I want to tell Mr. Huelin that he has no right to dictate to the Cue Hospital Board. Members of hospital boards accept the responsibility and worry of administering hospital affairs, and when they call upon the department to subsidise their income, they get a letter such as the one before me. This sort of thing applies to most of our hospitals. Every man working on a mine is under an obligation to contribute to the hospital fund. That is a condition of employment.

The Minister for Health: Not at Cue.

Mr. MARSHALL: Every man employed on the Big Bell Mine has to contribute, and the money is applied to the maintenance of the hospital. Over and above that these people have to pay the 1½d. hospital tax, as do other individuals. Therefore they are taxed twice, and they should not be addressed in such terms as are contained in this letter. Probably the officials consider they have an obligation to press these people continually because they are far removed from the centre of administration and have only one member to represent them, a member who cannot bring much pressure to bear. Mr. Huelin's letter dated the 17th October, 1939, read:—

We have just been taking out figures of the calls on the hospital fund by the Cue Hospital for the past few years, and the amounts paid to you were £830, £1,124 and £1,348 each year respectively.

We cannot continue to find such large amounts from the hospital fund towards the maintenance of your hospital.

Already this financial year you have had special grants totalling £1,050 and it is extremely doubtful whether we can find any further special grants this year for your hospital.

The Cue board disputes that statement.

One method by which your revenue can be improved and a saving made in your calls on the hospital fund is for your board to increase your rate of subscription, which is lower than any other hospital in the Murchison.

Your board should therefore place the position before the subscribers with a recommendation that the rate of subscription be increased to, say, 2s. per week. This is the same as Wiluna and less than Meekatharra.

In view of the fact that Big Bell subscribers may possibly feel that they do not get quite the same advantages as the Cue subscribers, perhaps a reduced rate for the former could be arranged, but something must be done to assist the hospital and to curtail the large calls which are being made on the hospital fund, and we must ask your board to give its very earnest consideration to this matter.

What about the hospitals maintained solely from the hospital fund to which no contributions are paid? Are letters of this kind sent out to them?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am very doubtful.

The Minister for Health: They are going out every day.

Mr. MARSHALL: To increase a contribution already being made? That could not be so, because most of the people I refer to subscribe nothing towards the maintenance of their hospitals. Therefore similar letters could not be sent to them. This letter demands an increase of contributions in order to reduce the call on the fund. I do not mind the officials advising the committee to exercise economy and secure efficiency of administration, but such a letter should not be forwarded, and I protest against it. Each and every committee in my district is particularly careful in the matter of administration costs. If there is any lapse the department can step in and give a reminder, but it is not fair to tell committees to increase their contributions while there are thousands of people who do not pay anything over and above the 1½d. hospital tax.

The Wiluna contribution of 2s. is due to the fact that money had to be provided years ago for the erection of a hospital, since which it has not been possible to reduce the rate of contribution. Seemingly the workers there will be required to continue to

pay that amount. Once a district shows any willingness to help itself, it is kept up to the obligation. I do not take exception to that, but I do object to the department's demanding an additional contribution. Until everybody is contributing, the department might well keep such advice to itself.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [10.56]: I should like to hear from the Minister whether there is any chance of providing transport to convey expectant mothers to the King Edward Hospital. Could a private car be provided to convey a pregnant woman from her home or from the station to the hospital? I do not know whether there is any Government car that can be used, but I think arrangements could be made if a telephone message were sent to the hospital. I hope the Minister will take this matter into consideration. Perhaps the Metro. buses could be induced to pass the institution, and that would give people from Fremantle and other suburbs easy access to the hospital.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [10.57]: I wish to mention a complaint that I think can hardly be true. I have been informed that when casualty cases are sent to the Perth Hospital by the ambulance, if they are discovered to be compensation cases, they are allowed to wait for some time until arrangements are made. I should like to know whether there is any truth in the statement; I can hardly imagine its being true. I should think that if the hospital authorities discovered that it was a compensation case, the least they would do would be to arrange for transport to a private hospital.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [10.58]: I wish to congratulate the Minister for Health on his activity in regard to country hospitals. I do not think any district could offer him such congratulations with more sincerity than can the Forrest district. I have said that before and I repeat the statement. One point I wish to raise concerns the proposed hospital at Donnybrook. This centre has long been suffering owing to the lack of hospital accommodation. Through force of circumstances delay has resulted. The idea of providing a hospital at Donnybrook was mooted ten years ago, but various circumstances have resulted in the

suggestion not being carried into effect although the local residents have endeavoured to assist themselves by raising a fairly large sum of money. There is one point in a letter from Mr. Huelin that I should like to mention to the effect that the department did not consider itself committed to any expenditure at Donnybrook and was not yet convinced that any expenditure on a large scale was warranted in the Donnybrook district. In view of the war one of the best ideas that could be investigated at present would be that of a decentralisation of hospitals. Apart from medical cases, accidents occur, and Bunbury is the nearest hospital to Donnybrook. Donnybrook is certainly a large enough centre to have a hospital of its own. To people willing to help themselves, a greater impetus of aid should be rendered by the department. At present negotiations are taking place, and I understand the Health Department has asked the Principal Architect to prepare plans of a hospital for Donnybrook at a cost of about £4,000. The people have been long-suffering, but they are feeling upset over the whole business and want to see it hurried up. I hope the Minister will hasten the proceedings and see that Donnybrook gets a hospital.

Another matter I wish to mention is the hospital at Dwellingup. I heard the member for Murchison say that some people have a habit of helping themselves. That is the case with the Dwellingup people. They built the local hospital in the first place, and have been good as regards making additions and alterations. At present they are engaged upon a big effort to raise more money; and I sincerely hope that the Department of Health, when this appeal is finished, will contribute sufficient to make up the amount required. After all said and done, Dwellingup is a mill centre, and the people there have not a great amount of money. It is remarkable that people on such small wages are continually putting their hands in their pockets while, moreover, they are paying the hospital tax. Their efforts should be recognised.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [11.2]: I have only one matter to bring before the Minister, and that arises out of the inquiry into Heatheote Hospital. The British Medical Association was interested purely and simply to see that the best hospital treatment



was obtained for patients. The association had legal assistance to put its case before the Royal Commission, and made representations to the Premier and Treasurer asking that the association might be reimbursed the expenses which it had incurred in connection with the inquiry. I request the Minister to help by taking the matter up with the Premier. The position is rather exceptional, because doctors represent an unpaid branch of the Public Service. They discharge, at a moment's notice, services for which they receive no payment at all. They incurred the expenses here in question in doing something which they thought was for the benefit of the community. I hope that in the circumstances the money will be reimbursed.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore) [11.4]: The only point I would like some information on is the van attached to the Dental Clinic. The dental van was put into operation about a year ago, and from reports received it has seemed to be an eminent success. I would like the Minister in his reply to state what chance there is of an extension of the dental van service into areas further off than those it has been working up to the present time.

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [11.5]: The member for Irwin-Moore will appreciate the fact that the dental van has a long way to go. It was started in the South-West because we were not certain how it would work, and wanted it near home in case it did not work properly. However, it has functioned most successfully. The State has been mapped out into dental zones as regards the outlying districts. The dental van is intended especially for small schools in the wheat belt, and these it serves. The van is gradually working its way around the wheat belt, and every school will be attended to as soon as possible. We only wish we had two more vans.

As regards the appeal of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) this is the first I have heard of the matter. I have no knowledge whatever of it. However, there is no reason why the Treasurer should not be approached.

The town of Donnybrook, I regret to say, does not know exactly what it wants. That is the cause of its trouble. As it is a very small place, I include it among those centres for which I personally would not

consider a hospital as necessary at all. I am loth to see hospitals started in such small places. There should be a general hospital survey of this State. I am quite convinced that with the means of transport now available, we could get a much more efficient hospital service by chiefly establishing central hospitals.

**Mr. Wilson:** What about Greenbushes?

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** Greenbushes has a live board. The facts with regard to the case brought up by the member for Canning should have been ascertained privately. No workers' compensation case is taken into the Perth Hospital for treatment because the whole of the medical work there is done by an honorary staff. There are 63 of them, all specialists in the metropolitan area, and they are doing a wonderful job; but they naturally are not going to treat a man for nothing when he has funds in the shape of workers' compensation. A workers' compensation case, however, is given all possible first treatment in the hospital. If a workers' compensation patient is unconscious, he is kept in the Perth Hospital. But as soon as he can be interrogated, then upon being found to be a workers' compensation case he is asked who the doctor is. The doctor is then rung up and asked what hospital he would like the patient sent to. If the patient has not a doctor, he is asked what hospital he would like to go to, and is then transferred to it by an ambulance van. The Perth Hospital merely charges such a patient for the first treatment. I may mention that that hospital has 600 out-patients alone, and that occasionally a doctor or a nurse might not be available for two or three minutes. But the patient, having been taken to the Perth Hospital in such circumstances, receives attention very speedily.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Public Health, £13,710; Mental Hospitals and Inebriates, £123,500—agreed to.*

*Vote—Chief Secretary, £18,675:*

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley [11.10]: This Vote covers the administrative activities of the head office and of the following sub-departments under the control

of the Chief Secretary: Registry, Friendly Societies, Prisons, and Observatory. Various other activities of a miscellaneous nature also come under the control of the head office. The estimated expenditure for the current year shows an increase of £1,375. The appointment of an Assistant Under Secretary, and grade increases and basic wage adjustments account for the bulk of this extra expenditure.

The Correspondence Despatch Office was established 25 years ago, its main object being to facilitate the transmission of inter-departmental correspondence, files, etc., and a reduction of general expenditure. It acts as a central depot for the exchange of departmental correspondence, conducts Government mail service to 46 country districts, and has a messenger delivery service to all firms and private residences within a certain radius of Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Bunbury. During the year 1938-39 a further country despatch office was opened at Corrigin, with an estimated annual saving to the Government on postages of at least £50 per annum. The opening-up of further centres at Wongan Hills and Dalwallinu is now under consideration. The Officer-in-Charge of the Correspondence Despatch Office is also responsible for the bulk of the cleansing arrangements of the various departments. This co-operation of the cleaning services has reduced the cost to the Government and increased the efficiency of the work.

The estimates for the Registrar General show an increase of £1,410, due mainly to grade increases in salaries and to the fact that some officers who were employed for only a portion of 1938-39 will be employed for the full year 1939-40. The Registry section deals with the registration of births, deaths and marriages, celebration of marriages, and the issue of certified copies and extracts from entries.

The Statistical section deals with the collection and tabulation of data covering most of the activities of the State. Statistics are compiled and published relative to the following:—Agricultural and Pastoral, Vital, Industrial, Local Government, Overseas and Interstate Trade, Employment and other activities. Information is also collected relative to retail prices and house rents, from which are computed index numbers that are used extensively by the Arbitration Court, etc.

The section Friendly Societies and Government Actuary deals with the registration of friendly societies, co-operative societies and building societies, a report upon which is made annually to Parliament. Actuarial valuations of the friendly societies registered are undertaken, and various actuarial calculations are made for the Government departments.

Referring now to the Prisons Department, the daily average number of prisoners at Fremantle for the year was 206.5 and at Pardelup Prison Farm 45.45. The system of classifying criminals is still being maintained, and every care is taken to safeguard the youthful and first offenders from the habitual criminal class. The efforts to reclaim prisoners are not confined to first offenders only, but in every case where any desire is shown by the prisoner to improve himself encouragement is extended. Many prisoners endeavour to become efficient workmen in the available activities. When prisoners are released, assistance is afforded them to rehabilitate themselves. The increased scale of gratuities continues to show improved results; prisoners take more interest in their tasks, and avail themselves of the opportunities to become proficient in tailoring, carpentry, bootmaking and printing. The value of remunerative work performed at the prison for the year 1938-39 was £3,922.

At the Pardelup Prison Farm there are about 50 prisoners under the supervision of four officers, including the officer in charge. The prisoners are engaged on afforestation work, clearing land for agricultural purposes, apple-growing, sheep-breeding and dairying. Development work is steadily carried on, and land is cleared for further pastures. Drainage of the Pardelup swamp is progressing satisfactorily; and the flock of sheep, which was depleted last year, will be built up again. The wool is considered to be of high standard, and satisfactory returns are anticipated. The value of the remunerative work performed at Pardelup during the year 1938-39 was £5,565. The appropriation for the Prisons Department is £30,090, which is only slightly in excess of last year's actual expenditure. It is proposed to expend a further £584 on the purchase of sheep for Pardelup. This, together with grade increases, less some economies in other directions, makes a total net decrease of £577.

At the Observatory the time service was maintained efficiently throughout the year, the railways, post office, and Applecross radio being served continuously as in the past. Earthquake records were kept and results distributed to 30 co-operating stations in the world. It has been proved definitely that the seismograph responds to oscillations emanating in some way from distant tropical disturbances on the Indian Ocean and use of this peculiarity has been made by the Weather Bureau in forecasting. The Port Hedland tide tables were tabulated and issued for use of shipping on the North-West coast. Numbers of tourists from the mailboats visit the Observatory mainly to see the wonderful panorama of Perth and its surroundings from the top of the tower.

**MR. TONKIN** (North-East Fremantle) [11.16]: Dealing with the question of prisons, I notice in the report of the Comptroller General that for the year ended the 30th June, 1938, some difficulty was experienced in keeping first offenders separate from hardened criminals. I do not know whether it has been found possible to remedy that state of affairs this year, but it is most essential the department should give early attention to the matter. Owing to the depression, a number of young men, and possibly a few young women, strayed from the path of virtue. They did that through no fault of their own; economic circumstances forced men to do it, and they found themselves for the first time in prison. Their experience would have been likely to prove sufficient to deter them from getting into trouble again, but unfortunately it was not found possible to keep them separate from the hardened criminals and their association with those criminals has had the effect of causing them to err again and again. Had it been possible to separate them, I believe that many who sinned for the first time would not have done so subsequently, and I hope every endeavour will be made by the department to provide the facilities for keeping those offenders separate from the hardened criminals. The Comptroller General states that one of the reasons he cannot keep them separate is that he has insufficient workshops and insufficient work available. Consequently he is obliged to keep them all together. More workshops should be provided and to supply additional work should be easy.

The report goes on to say it is a pity that young men are wasting their time in prison polishing floors and whitewashing walls. Of course it is a pity because that sort of thing is not going to make them any better fitted to take their place in society when they leave prison. They should employ their time on something that will prove useful to them when they come out of gaol. In Fremantle we find quite a lot of these young fellows who, when discharged, wander about the streets, buffeted by the police. They find it impossible to get work, and before they know where they are, they are back in gaol. If it were possible to employ them at something useful while they were in gaol, they would have a better idea of taking their place in society when they came out. The Comptroller General of Prisons recognises that. It is no fault of his. He is asking for additional facilities to be made available and I think they should be. To quote his words—

It is a great pity to see young men wasting their time in prison, polishing floors and whitewashing walls, whereas they could be employed at some form of work that would be beneficial to them on their release, and, maybe, assist them to rehabilitate themselves and become useful citizens.

With that I entirely agree and I hope the Minister will see if something can be done to meet the wishes of the Comptroller General. It is most essential because even though those people have sinned against society, that is no reason why we should abandon them to their own devices. We should make it easy for them to take their places in society again. We often find young fellows who do not know which way to turn when they come out of gaol. They feel their position keenly. They fancy every person is looking at them. Unable to get a job, they are moved on by the police all the time, and threatened with arrest under the Vagrancy Act because they have no visible means of support. We have busied ourselves in getting them picked up for single men's relief work, and sent away to the country, but that is a most unsatisfactory way of dealing with the problem. If while they were in prison they were taught some useful occupation came out they would have a far better chance and would not be bobbing in and out given some incentive to work, when they out of prison.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley—in reply) [11.22]: The only note I have on this matter is to the effect that practically all the attention it is possible for the Comptroller General and his understudies to give to the problem is being given. A system of classifying criminals is still being maintained, and every care is taken to safeguard the youthful and first offenders from the habitual prisoner class. The efforts to reclaim prisoners are not confined to first offenders, but in every case where any desire is shown by the prisoner to improve himself, encouragement is extended. Many prisoners endeavour to become efficient workmen in the available activities. When prisoners are released assistance is afforded them to rehabilitate themselves. The increased scale of gratuities continues to show improved results, and the prisoners take more interest in their tasks and avail themselves of opportunities to become proficient in tailoring, carpentry, bootmaking and printing. I assure the hon. member I will draw the Chief Secretary's attention to the remarks he has made.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Registry and Friendly Societies, £14,010; Prisons, £30,090; Observatory, £1,450—agreed to.*

Progress reported.

### BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 11.26 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 29th November, 1939.

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

### QUESTION—MINING, TAILING TREATMENT.

*Payment of Premium.*

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the amended regulations recently gazetted referring to the charge for treatment of tailings at Government Batteries, does the Government intend to pay to prospectors the gold premium on the 1 dwi. 18 grains deducted as a treatment charge?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: No.

### QUESTION—GOVERNMENT STORES DEPARTMENT.

*Tenders for Water Heaters.*

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is he aware that quotations have been invited by the Government Stores Department for the supply to the State Government of three Junkers, or equal, single point gas automatic water heaters? 2, In view of the fact that the Junkers water heater is a German product, will the Government consider the advisability of directing that preference be extended to tenders for the supply of heaters of local, Australian, or British manufacture?