



be interpreted as meaning that the Government is unappreciative of the vast importance of this industry and the urgent need for fostering and encouraging it in every possible way. In passing I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr. Parker on his appointment to the important portfolio of Minister for Mines and also to commend him for the efforts he has already made to familiarise himself with the needs of the industry. I sincerely hope that he will never stop reminding his colleagues in the Government that this industry in its brief history of 50 years has produced gold to the value of £300,000,000, and that last month alone the value of gold produced in Western Australia was just under £1,000,000. All going well, it is safe to assume that the goldmining industry is capable of producing more than £1,000,000 worth of gold per month in the years that lie ahead. However, it must be nurtured and encouraged to expand in every possible way.

This industry is not only vital to the welfare of the thousands of people who live on the Goldfields, but it is also vital to the welfare of the whole population of Western Australia. This fact, to my mind, has never been generally appreciated. There is a public attitude that anything will do for the Goldfields, because although they are here today they will probably be gone tomorrow. Let me try to assure this House that such an attitude is not only unwarranted but harmful and dangerous not only to the Goldfields themselves but also to the rest of the State. At present there is an uneasy feeling that all is not well with the industry. As in other directions, costs are mounting up, and there are great difficulties in obtaining essential requirements such as machinery. It was confidently hoped that before this, at least two or three new mines would have opened up on the Eastern Goldfields alone. I understand that capital is available. But in addition to the difficulties in connection with machinery, manpower and supplies, there is still a fear that the mining of low-grade ore is no longer payable.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Why?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: This brings me to the price of gold. In this connection I want to state quite frankly that I trust some means can be found of bringing about an increase. We do not want, and cannot

afford, the closing down of any mine whose grade of ore has hitherto been adequate to warrant carrying on. At the same time, it is folly to ignore the fact that the price now being paid for gold in Australia is in keeping with the price paid in all other major gold-producing countries, including all Empire countries. It is, in fact, the official world price, or at least the price in all countries that are members of the International Monetary Fund. The question of an increased price, therefore, is one which is by no means easy or simple of solution here in Australia, and above all it is not a matter of party politics. We read of the fabulous prices being paid for gold in India and some other countries, and it is easy to understand the longing to share in those prices. However, quite apart from the obligations under the Bretton Woods agreement, it can be realised that in the delicate and complex nature of world currency today, such a course might have damaging results and might even undermine the status of gold. I hope that the situation will be carefully watched and that close liaison will be maintained with the Commonwealth Government in the hope of finding some solution that will be satisfactory to the industry.

The value and importance of the goldmining industry to Western Australia cannot be over-stated. One direct contribution which I consider the State Government can make to the mining industry is to foster and encourage prospecting. I have frequently pointed out to this House that the prospector deserves every encouragement because it is he who invariably finds new mines and in doing so endures untold hardships and difficulties. Furthermore, although there are exceptions, the average prospector is fortunate if he makes wages. Geological surveys have already been proved to be of the utmost value, but the role of the prospector cannot be displaced and he will always remain a most important unit in the goldmining industry. The future welfare of the industry depends largely on the activities of the prospector and it is therefore important that his needs should receive careful and sympathetic consideration. In this connection I urge that the allowance granted under the prospecting scheme be increased to not less than £2 10s. per week. This is surely the minimum that a man would need to go prospecting these days.

Hon. W. R. Hall: It is not enough.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I said the minimum. Past experience has shown that most of the money advanced to prospectors has been directly repaid.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There are only about 110 on the scheme, I think.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I understand there are only 120 men on the scheme. I feel certain that if a more adequate allowance were paid, this number would be doubled in no time. The more prospectors there are, the better it will be for the industry. While I am on this subject I would also express the wish that men who are receiving the old-age pension be no longer debarred from coming under the prospecting scheme. The old-age pension is quite inadequate for a man who desires to go prospecting and at present some of our most experienced prospectors are debarred from obtaining assistance because they have reached the age of 65 years. These men have years of knowledge and experience, which more than make up for the disability they suffer from old age. I trust, therefore, that prospecting for gold will be encouraged in every possible way. I also hope the Minister will meet the wishes of the Prospectors' Association by appointing a supervisor of the scheme, preferably a man who is elected by members of the association, along the same lines as workmen's inspectors of mines are appointed. Such a man would not only be capable of guiding and advising prospectors, but would safeguard the interests of the department by ensuring that the scheme was not abused. This proposition has already received the unanimous approval of the Prospectors' Association, which is now a well organised body and one that fairly represents the views of all engaged in the industry.

I wish to join with Mr. Bennetts in expressing the hope that something will be done to make cheaper water available to people on the Goldfields. If we, as a nation, have one problem to solve above all others it is that of preventing the drift of our people to the cities. Surely the best way of tackling that problem is to make life in the country and on the Goldfields more attractive, and to reduce the cost of living in such areas. We find, however, that on the Goldfields the cost of water is such that the average person must regard it somewhat

as a luxury. I trust that that state of affairs will be remedied and I think no more appropriate time could be chosen than this year, when we are celebrating the centenary of the birth of the great Western Australian who established the Goldfields Water Scheme and laid such splendid foundations for the State in general.

During the recent election campaign I read, with the greatest interest, that the present Government had expressed its intention of liberalising the franchise of this House. I was disappointed to note that no reference to that matter was made in His Excellency's Speech. I trust that a Bill will be introduced to that end early in the session, and that some tangible amendment will be made to the inequitable law that now exists. I have previously pointed out that only one-third of the adult population are enrolled for the Upper House, and statistics show that of those enrolled only one-half vote. This means, in effect, that we can claim to represent only one-sixth of the adult population. That, to say the least of it, is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, and one that cries aloud for correction.

The Honorary Minister: Do you suggest compulsory voting for this House?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes, in due course. If the Honorary Minister will bear with me, I will put my proposition before the House. The solution is either to grant adult franchise or at least to liberalise and simplify the present qualifications. I believe it was in 1944 that this House appointed a Select Committee of which Mr. Baxter, our present President, Mr. Seddon, and Sir Hal Colebatch were members. That Select Committee was appointed to consider this question, and one of its recommendations was that the vote be given to every husband and wife who occupied a house of an annual rental value of £17. Surely that is the minimum amendment that should be made, and I trust that during this session that recommendation, at least, will be given effect. In these days, particularly when the parliamentary system of government is being attacked and even overthrown in some countries, we should take care to improve our institutions and, as far as possible, to make them conform to the true meaning of democracy.

The Honorary Minister: Something like the Commonwealth Government?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Another important matter has reference to one of the gravest social ills of our time. I am speaking of divorce. I am sure that no responsible person feels anything but a sense of anxiety on reading the long lists of divorces that appear in our papers with monotonous regularity. I wish mainly to refer to the undue publicity given to certain divorce cases in some sections of the Press. In such newspapers all the sordid details are published in the most unashamed fashion and are readily available to every section of the community, including our youth, with results that can only be imagined. Freedom of the Press is a great asset in a democracy, but I do not think we would be infringing too far on that freedom if we passed legislation similar to that existing in some other States, limiting the publication of evidence given in divorce cases to a minimum. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [4.55]: I am not a great believer in the Address-in-reply debate, but each year when it comes along most members have something to say about their own local requirements. I wish to join with others in expressing regret at the loss of our dear old friend, Mr. Drew. He set an example to this House which it would do many of us good to attempt to follow. To my recollection he never expressed any Party bias, and his method of dealing with Bills was always that of a courteous gentleman. I would also express regret at the illness of our President, and hope that he will soon be restored to health. To you, Sir, I offer congratulations on your temporary appointment as Deputy President. I hope that the new members who have joined us will duly be absorbed into the atmosphere of the House. It has been said that this House is capable of taming lions, and I believe there is something in it; so if any new member has views about reforming the House, he should be careful that the House does not reform him. I wish also to congratulate the Government on the appointment of its Ministers.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What do you want?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I think the selection made has been excellent, both here and in another place. Mr. Heenan referred to

the length of His Excellency's Speech and its lack of reference to the mining industry. I feel that in these days the more time that is devoted to administration and the less to legislation the better for the country. If ever we needed the most careful possible administration, that time is now. I think we spend too much time in making laws and too little in seeing that they are properly administered. We have enough laws to run this country properly now, without adding to them. I hope that for the first year or two at all events the programme of the new Government will be devoted more to administration than to the passing of new legislation.

With regard to land settlement, I know the problem is complex and full of all sorts of difficulties especially with the shortage of materials required for the settlement of men on the land. It seems to me that people who have properties for sale today are not getting fair treatment. Complaints have come in from all directions concerning the lack of administration in the land settlement office. Two cases have come before me, and I know both of them intimately. They concern large properties of which I have a close knowledge. One case was that of an extensive and valuable property. When it was known that the Land Settlement Board wished to acquire properties in safe rainfall areas this particular one was offered to it.

After a delay of some months a letter was received from the board saying that the property was unsuitable for the purpose for which it was required. The place was then immediately sold to a man who was, and had been, a keen buyer. He occupied the property, put in 1,000 acres of wheat, acquired extra plant and purchased stock. The board then wrote to the vendor and said he could not have the property as it had changed its mind and wanted the place for land settlement. This man was very concerned over the whole matter, and one cannot blame him for that. He then made other arrangements, as he possessed another property. Some months later another letter came from the board saying that it had changed its mind again, that the property was not suitable for soldier settlement purposes. In due course the property was sold to the first purchaser.

In the second case a property was offered to the Land Settlement Board. After

some months and much contact by telephone and correspondence, inspections were made, and the vendor was advised that the property was suitable. The price offered, however, was considerably below what the vendor was willing to accept. It was, in fact, something like the price he had paid for it 16 years ago when only 300 acres had been cleared, whereas he then had 3,000 acres cleared and had erected a house on the place. He was unwilling to accept the price offered. The board then said "That is the price." It was intimated to him that if he did not accept the offer, it was unlikely he would be able to sell the property to anyone else because the Price Fixing Commissioner would be advised of the situation.

Hon. H. L. Roche: The Commonwealth Sub-treasury.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not say he got a letter to that effect but that was intimated to him. The vendor said, "You are not going to have my property at that price—not on your life." He placed it in the hands of agents who found a buyer without any difficulty at a considerably increased price. The place was then withdrawn from sale, and so far as the board was concerned that was the end of it. This buyer had sold his property, he had inspected the house and intimated to the vendor that he was taking everything over. He was more than pleased with the property and all the arrangements had been made. The day before the first payment was tendered, the vendor was advised that he could not sell the property but that the board wanted it and was willing to pay the price the new vendor intended to give.

That sort of thing is unfair both to the vendor and the would-be purchaser. The Government or the board should be in exactly the same position as ordinary people. If the authorities want to buy a place and there is a willing buyer and a willing seller, the deal should go through. If land is offered to the board and the price is agreed upon, the board should buy; if the price is not satisfactory to both parties, that should be the end of the business. The vendor should then be free to negotiate with anyone else he likes as is the case in any free country. But that is not so in this State. Happenings occur that would not be tolerated in any other country outside Russia.

I wish now to refer to the beautiful South-West. Considerable development is taking place there today and there is a tremendous inquiry for properties. With the clearing of land in that area of heavy rainfall, a good deal of denudation is taking place. Today people are complaining of floodings. I attended a gathering of many settlers from around Bunbury to view the damage that has occurred this year. Flooding has taken place frequently during the last few years. Some farms were completely under water and in other instances large areas were inundated. Some of the settlers felt that they should be compensated, such people as vegetable growers who had lost their all. The main theme was that something should be done to avoid the flooding.

Some years ago attempts were made to erect levees along the lower reaches of the river as has to be done in America, Holland and other countries where flooding takes place, due mainly to the clearing of the country. The idea is to raise banks around the rivers so that the flood waters will not flow over them. A start was made on that work some years ago but because one settler refused to have soil taken from his land, the then Minister for Works, Mr. Kenneally, said, "We will scrap the whole thing and will not go on with the work." Today the waters are coming down and before they reach the levees are flooding the country. The water is now behind the levees and these people are in a bad way.

What are we going to do to stop this? It is not sufficient to place levees at the mouth of the rivers; it is necessary to go further back. During the winter months in the South-West we have one of the highest rainfalls in the world outside the tropics. During June, July and August, the rains are almost tropical. We get about 8 inches in June, about 10 in July, and 7 or 8 in August. Members can imagine the effect that such a rainfall must have after land has been cleared. An interesting fact is that cleared land is incapable of absorbing anything like the moisture that uncleared land can. When land is covered with trees and vegetation the rain falls on the leaves and twigs and runs down the trunks of the trees so that it is slowly absorbed into the soil. It is a process of nature that the rain shall

run gently to the earth. It also runs down grass and is slowly absorbed by the soil. If we take away these protections and we have an inch of rain falling in an hour and a half, it has not time in which to soak into the ground, and therefore runs away.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The roots absorb a certain amount of water.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, the roots do absorb water and water also runs along them into the ground. It is estimated that in areas where the ground is undulating and the rainfall is 14 inches, and the land has been cleared, not more than 8 inches of rain will soak into the soil because the water runs away to the gullies. Water cannot pour into low-lying parts without making rivers, which in turn flow to the sea. That is what is happening in the South-West and is a set of circumstances that will gradually become accentuated. Some 25 years ago when I went to my farm, the river was only six or seven feet across, four or five feet deep, and could readily be jumped with a pole. Since then the river has become 30 ft. wide and 20 to 25 ft. deep and the banks are composed of beautiful rich black soil. All that material I have been speaking about is going down the rivers and is flooding those people who are near the mouths of the rivers. Not only are they getting all this water but hundreds of thousands of tons of soil. This year I have seen beautiful soil banked up to a depth of three or four feet. We are only at the beginning of the development of the South-West areas. Unless we take some steps to control this flooding, not only shall we create tremendous difficulties at the mouths of these rivers, but we shall lose millions of tons of beautiful soil. I myself this year have lost hundreds; probably thousands, of tons of rich black soil, five feet or six feet deep. I have discussed this matter with the Public Works Department, and I sincerely hope an effort will be made to arrest the extreme flow of these rivers. It can be done.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What can be done?

Hon. L. CRAIG: A stop, or a series of stops, can be put in. Such a stop has already been made in the river running through my property. If water has a fall of 20 feet in two, three or four miles, it runs at a terrific pace. The water comes

down perhaps 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep and takes all before it. The least obstruction will divert the water into a bank. A tree has only to fall down; the water hits it and shoots it at an angle into the bank, thus causing the side to fall. That gouge has the immediate effect of shooting the water across to the other side, which in turn is gouged out. Therefore, instead of the river flowing in a straight line, the water goes from side to side, brings down the soil and takes it away. I hope I am not wearying the House on this matter.

Members: No.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It is very interesting.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We can do what has been done in England and put in flood gates, or build small weirs, which could be built up here almost with stone, but the department states that concrete is needed. The level of the water is lifted until the fall is, say, a few feet per mile. That steadies the flow. The water can be dropped down 10 feet on to a concrete or stone base and it would then run quietly. This work is necessary in the South-West and will become still more essential as time goes on. It will not be very expensive and will save millions of tons of beautiful soil.

With regard to building operations in this State, I saw the figures recently and they struck me as interesting. All of us are worried about the housing problem. When I look at some of the new houses I am shocked. They are all right of their kind, but they are not a very good kind. They are little dog boxes, one beside the other, with low ceilings and small roofs.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Did you find verandahs?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No. At Wundowie, homes are being erected for the workers in the charcoal-iron industry. The site of these homes is on a hill and in the summer-time the houses will be very hot. I have tried my best to have sleep-outs added to these homes. The extra cost would not exceed £20. These houses are similar to the type now built in Perth, but they are being erected on ironstone hills. The children will want to spend all their time after the sun goes down outside, and will want to sleep outside, but there will be no accommodation for them to do so. A couple of houses were provided with sleep-outs.

Do not forget that the timber there is very cheap; the works have their own mill and cut their own timber; but can one induce the Workers' Homes Board to agree to that extra expenditure of £20? Not on your life! Dressed boards would not be required. All that is needed is a small verandah, which would make all the difference in the world to those homes. The mothers would have a place where they could let their children play. A railing could be put along the verandah, with boards in between, and the children could thus play outside in the shade. Apparently the Workers' Homes Board is tied up in some way on account of the cost. All my efforts to secure verandahs for those homes have been fruitless. Our building costs are high, as we all know; but it may be interesting to learn that similar houses in New Zealand cost from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. more than our houses, while in the United States the cost is 50 per cent. to 100 per cent. greater. I think our homes are probably a little better than those in the United States.

I wish to refer to another matter which might be of interest to the Minister for Agriculture. He probably knows much more about it than I do. I think it was the Minister for Works, or possibly the Honorary Minister in this Chamber, who dealt with road transport versus rail transport. We are to have further restrictions on petrol supplies. That no doubt is necessary owing to the dollar position. Nevertheless, the time has arrived when highly valuable perishable commodities should be allowed to be transported in the easiest and most suitable way. The owners of these commodities should be permitted to select their own method of transporting them to market. The Honorary Minister knows all about the matter; but I think attention should be drawn to the length of time taken to deliver butter. I am referring more particularly to the summertime.

Hon. H. L. Roche: How long does it take?

Hon. G. Bennetts: What line are you speaking about?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Butter comes only from one area—Bunbury southwards, Boyanup, Bridgetown and Manjimup and other centres. I am not dealing with milk, but butter, which is a highly perishable com-

modity and requires extremely careful handling as it is subject to contamination. It has taken as long as 36 hours to deliver butter from Manjimup to Perth. Am I right in stating 36 hours, or is it 48, Mr. Honorary Minister?

The Honorary Minister: Near enough.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Manjimup is probably the farthest distance from which butter is delivered to Perth. The distance from Margaret River is almost the same.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It takes about 16 hours.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And the rest!

The Honorary Minister: By rail.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Butter from Margaret River, Manjimup and Busselton could be taken by road to Bunbury in the evening and put on a night train for Perth. I would remind members that the saving in cost, if butter were delivered by road instead of by rail, would be £5,000 a year to the South-West Co-operative Dairying Co. Should that company not be allowed to save that £5,000 and at the same time put a product on the market in prime condition? At present, in some cases butter has been known to be running out of the boxes. Is it not fair to make this request, even if it means a loss of £5,000 to railway revenue? I think it is.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It takes another 38 hours to get the butter to Esperance and it arrives in a shocking state.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The butter to which the hon. member refers would be purchased in Perth.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is right.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And it would have been knocked about a bit in getting to Perth. The time has come when we must say to the Railway Department, "You have to stand up to some competition; if you cannot transport goods at present prices, you must raise your freights and passenger fares, in the same way that everyone else is doing. How can you carry on with the 1918 fares and rates when everything else has rocketed sky-high, and keep the railways in decent condition and pay interest on the capital?" It cannot be done.

I noticed in the paper yesterday, as I am sure everybody else did, that the Commonwealth Government proposes to take over

all the banking business of Australia. I wonder what that Government is after and what it proposes to gain. I am assuming that the Commonwealth Government will be acting constitutionally. I wonder what it is after. Many other things can be socialised that do not give the services which the banks render. It is another form of "Taking from you and me the right to live our lives and to trade in the way we want to trade." Imagine what will happen when we have only one bank! It is not so much the taking over of the banking business, as the absolute control of industry, because the authority having control of banking holds the keys to all industries. There will be only one authority to go to for finance. That is the beginning of the financial squeeze. We shall become totally socialised and, unfortunately, controlled individually. No person objects to other people holding their views on the rights of a Government to enter industry, but people will object to individual control.

As a free democratic people, I do not think we will stand for it. We shall get to the pitch when we will revolt. I am reminded somewhat of the Communist speaker in Hyde Park. He was talking to the usual crowd and said, "Friends, when the day of freedom dawns, it is you and I who will be living in those beautiful homes in Park Lane; we, the workers, and not the people who have bludgeoned on us." A little red-haired man said, "I say, mister, I don't want to live in one of them big homes because they are a nuisance to keep up. I like a little home that my wife and I can look after." The speaker glowered at the little man as though he were a fool, but did not say anything. A big Rolls-Royce car then went past, and the speaker said, "Friends, when the day of freedom dawns, you and I will be riding in that beautiful car and those parasites will be walking the streets."

Hon. G. Bennetts: The workers are waking up!

Hon. L. CRAIG: The little man said, "I say, mister, I don't want to ride in that motor car. I like walking. Those big things take a lot of looking after." The speaker again glowered at the little man as though the latter had no brains, but again did not say anything to him. He then proceeded, "Friends, when the day of freedom

dawns, we will be well dressed. You and I will have walking sticks and gloves; we the workers." The little fellow then said, "I don't like gloves. I hate gloves." The speaker looked at him and said, "My friend, when the day of freedom dawns, you will bloody well do as you are told."

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is exactly what is happening today. Rosy pictures are held up to us, but all the time there is tightening of controls, until the time will come when we shall all do as we are told. That is what they mean by it. In order to have such controls, it is necessary to control the individual. We had a Russian working on our station, and my brother said to him, "What is Russia like now?" He replied, "The same as it ever was. The working man gets kicked in the guts just the same!" He was a working man who spoke straight from his heart. He said that no changes had been made in Russia and I think he was most expressive.

The question of the franchise for this House was raised by Mr. Heenan who said it should be liberalised and suggested that at least the wife of the landholder or householder should also get the vote. I look at the franchise for this Chamber as something quite different. If members disagree with me, I do not say that they are right or wrong, but our franchise was originally based on a property qualification and nothing else. The rights of a man, or a wife or a child were not considered. It was based entirely on a property qualification.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do we have to stick to the original idea?

Hon. L. CRAIG: If members want to get away from that foundation, I have no quarrel with them, but I do not think they can shilly-shally. It is either a property qualification or it is not. If we are going to break away from it, I do not know where we can stop. We might have to go the whole way, but to my mind the basic principle is the property qualification. The man who has a stake in the country should have some final say because a person who does not own or even rent a house, or own a piece of land, has not the same intrinsic value as one who is willing to put his stake in the ground and say, "This is my own my native land!"



I believe there is something in that. He should have the final say. We say to these people, "You can have a vote and you will help run this country through your representative and have a final say." If members disagree with that, I have no quarrel with them; but I do not think they can shilly-shally and say that it will be a properly vote except for this, or except for something else. I would not budge an inch on the question of property, but if we do get away from the property qualification I would say that we would have to go "the whole hog" and have the franchise as it is for the Senate.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Do you advocate any change?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I personally stick to the property qualification.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You would have no change?

Hon. L. CRAIG: I would make the qualifications easier, but I would not make the franchise any easier. But I have no quarrel with those who say that it should be based on the Senate franchise, or something else. They are entitled to their views. But we cannot have the property qualification and something else.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You apparently disagree with the Government.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I disagree with many people.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No Government is always right.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is so, and we would be poor old individuals if we did not sometimes disagree with the Government.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You will be voting against the Government.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I will vote as my conscience dictates and as my electors would have me vote. I support the motion.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.35]: I desire to congratulate you, Sir, on being elected Deputy President of the Chamber. I hope the time is not far distant when our President will regain his health and be back with us. I also want to join with the members of this House in expressing my sincere sympathy and regret at the passing of the late Hon. J. M. Drew. I did not know him for as many

years as some other members did, but I always found him to be an honourable gentleman, and I am sure this House will miss him considerably. I join with members in sending sympathy to his relatives.

I want to congratulate the new members of the House—Hon. R. J. Boylen, Hon. E. M. Davies, Hon. L. A. Logan and Hon. C. G. Latham—and I extend to them a hearty welcome. I have no doubt that they will give valuable service to the people they represent and will be an acquisition to the Chamber. Mr. Latham is well known to us for his many years as a member of the Legislative Assembly. After leaving that House he rendered valuable service as Deputy-Director of War Loans for the State of Western Australia. I also wish to congratulate Mr. Parker on being appointed to hold the portfolios of Mines and Health. I have heard it said that the Minister for Mines should be in another place. However, I am very pleased that we have him in this House for once. I think that some members here, who represent Goldfields constituencies, will be able to tell him as much of the troubles of the fields as could members in another place.

I am very concerned about the mining industry and I am sincere in what I have to say. From what I read in "The West Australian" this morning it would appear that the goldmining industry is suffering a setback, and if some steps are not taken to alleviate the difficulty, the position of the industry will become very precarious. The Minister for Mines has travelled all round the northern part of my province, as well as through the Goldfields, during his term of office which has not been very long. I am sure that when he was in the northern centres such as Menzies, Comet Vale, Laverton, Mt. Morgans and Malcolm, he saw just what happens when the industry is badly struck, and what occurs to it overnight when things do not go too well.

To my mind, the prosperity that was evident on the Goldfields prior to the war, and in some cases during the war, does not exist today. Many things are responsible for that state of affairs. One is the high cost of producing the ore at present: another is taxation, which adversely affects the industry; another is the cost of supplies which are necessary for the mines. I am, in all sincerity, going to ask the Minister for Mines to see if it is possible to

do something to alleviate the present conditions so as to bring the industry back to the pre-war standard. Most of the Goldfields owe their existence to the mining industry, and without it I do not know what this State would be like.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Without it we would not have the population that we have today.

Hon. W. R. HALL: That is so. The pastoral industry might be more or less on top at the moment, but it also has its bad times. Generally speaking, it has in the past, been down when the mining industry has been up, and vice versa.

The Honorary Minister: What about the agricultural industry?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I mean that; I am talking about the cockies. With the way the industry is at present, it is necessary for a richer grade of ore to be produced, which means that the life of the mines will be shortened. We all know what that signifies. It will have a detrimental effect on the industry and on the State as well. That brings me to the position of the prospectors, which was mentioned by Mr. Heenan. They are the ones who really find the goldmines in the first place, and to whom the mining industry owes its existence. They are the men who blazed the trail and made it possible for this great industry to be what it is to Western Australia. They should receive encouragement so that they can go out to find new mines. Mr. Heenan mentioned the allowance which they are paid. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is inadequate.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Quite right.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I am talking of the man who does go out; the man who gets for that purpose, a half-year's rebate of the license for his motor vehicle—and some have not even got a vehicle! I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to increasing the allowance paid to these men so that they may be able to fare a little better. There is not much in life when they have to go out into the bush and batch, struggling along day after day hoping that something will turn up. The other day we read of a prospector who was in despair and had fired the last shot in the hole he had prepared. Lo and behold, that last shot opened up a 4- to 5-ounce show. Men such as he are the ones I desire to receive

some encouragement by means of a little extra financial assistance.

While dealing with the mining industry, it is necessary for me once more to refer to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Last session I explained fairly fully the position regarding the turned-down miners and the help they received from that source. I have always considered the payments made from the fund to these men to be inadequate, particularly when they get to the stage with tuberculosis that entitles them to receive the full pension, which in itself is not in keeping with the basic wage. Men in that state of health require a lot of looking after. Some are not fortunate enough to have wives, who possibly passed away years ago. I have seen many of these men and have noticed their sufferings. They have been treated harshly, and in their remaining days the paltry amount they receive weekly to keep themselves is not sufficient to enable them to live decently and to feed themselves properly. The other day the wife of a man who has been turned down for some time said that it cost her 30s. a week for medicine, and I can assure the House that men suffering from these mining diseases require all sorts of medicines because of their state of health.

Despite that fact, men in that unfortunate position do not receive even the equivalent of the basic wage. I have seen, and know, a lot of these men, and I think it is possible for the Mine Workers' Relief Fund to increase the weekly allowance payable to these unfortunates. I do not think it is beyond the scope of the fund or of the State Government to do what I suggest. Surely, when men have given most of their lifetime to an industry and are now suffering from the terrible diseases associated with it, they should be entitled to live their remaining days on earth in reasonable comfort. I make a solemn plea to the Minister for Mines to see if his Government cannot do something to alleviate the sad position of these men. In the Press early this month I read an article dealing with the position under the Commonwealth Tuberculosis Act and indicating that the small amount payable to a man and his wife was only £4—and they were expected to live on that! Is that a fair thing? I consider it absolutely unreasonable, and the amount payable is paltry. Such people should receive at least the full basic wage

prevailing in the district where they reside. If that could be arranged, it would be at least to the credit of those in a position to do something for these people.

Dealing with the question of water supplies, it is perhaps not necessary to stress the fact that these are of vital interest to the people on the Goldfields and in the surrounding districts. Year after year we have heard similar speeches made in this Chamber all asking the Government to take steps to reduce the cost of water in those areas. The Goldfields people have been waiting patiently for years for something to be done. A few months ago the Minister for Mines was in Kalgoorlie and received a deputation on this important question. He stated that he would bring the matter under the notice of the Minister concerned.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We asked for a flat rate.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Of course, it was not the Minister's pigeon, but he promised to place the facts before the Minister for Water Supply and to convey to him the request for a flat rate. While I may desire to criticise, I shall not do so unfairly. The present Government has not been in office long, but nevertheless I hope that the Minister now in charge will see to it that the people of the Goldfields get some relief. Members may have read with interest reports about what the local authorities in that part of the State were doing with regard to the provision of a green belt in the district. I have no illusions as to what should have been done in the first instance.

Had the Government of the day given consideration to reducing the cost of water to the Goldfields people, thereby allowing them to grow lawns and hedges, it would have gone a long way to alleviating the dust nuisance in the homes, which affects detrimentally the lot of housewives there. Under existing circumstances the cost of water is so high that it is impossible for 90 per cent. of the people there to put down lawns or to have any greenery whatever growing about their homes. In the metropolitan area we see the position in reverse. There is plenty of water here. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I often wonder why we on the Goldfields are not placed in the same category as the city people regarding water supplies. I trust the Government will give consideration to this matter and see if it is not possible to

allow a flat rate and thereby give the people on the fields an opportunity to enjoy amenities that they have to dispense with at present.

I have another very serious matter to place before the House. Last year I mentioned the air services between the Goldfields and the metropolitan area. The former Minister for Mines told the public that he wanted to provide transport for the people of the State—I am not sure whether he used the word "State" or referred to the Goldfields—by air, road, or rail, and that he desired to give them the facilities that they desired. That brings me to the point I wish to raise this evening. I am pleased that there are two daily air services between Kalgoorlie and Perth, but at the same time I do not want to see any deterioration in the rail service.

Before very long the Skymasters will be putting down and picking up passengers at the Kalgoorlie airport, and that must certainly affect the railway system, which will then suffer much more than it is at present. In fact, I think it will have a very serious effect upon the railways because, owing to the speedy nature of air travel, many people desire to take advantage of it rather than to continue patronising the much slower railway service. I have had experience of the railways for over 25 years, and I know that in that period little, if anything, has been done to shorten the time spent on the journey. I cannot recollect on how many occasions the times of arrival and departure have been altered. At one stage we had a train that used to reach Perth at three minutes to nine o'clock in the morning, and that was one of the best arrangements that could have been made.

If the railway service is to hold its own, faster transport will have to be provided for those who patronise it. In these days, to spend from 5.30 p.m. to 10 a.m. the next day is altogether too long for a journey of 375 miles, and I feel sure that the time taken could be shortened by at least two or three hours. Even if a train were to leave Kalgoorlie at 7 or 8 p.m. and reach Perth at 9 or 10 a.m. the next day, it would provide a better service. It would eliminate the necessity of having dining cars put on at the commencement and towards the end of the journey. At present a dining car is put on the train at Kalgoorlie when it leaves at 5.30 p.m. and is taken off at Yel-

lowdine. Then another dining-car is put on at Northam for the morning meal and, furthermore, between Kalgoorlie and Perth there are four refreshment rooms.

One would think that people got on the train with the object of eating all the time, seeing that not only are the dining-cars attached to the train but stops are made at various stations where the refreshment rooms are located. All that means so much loss of time. The train stops half an hour here, 20 minutes there and three-quarters of an hour somewhere else. I am never awake at Merredin so I do not know how long the train stops there, but at Southern Cross it is nothing unusual for the train to stop for upwards of three-quarters of an hour. If the time spent at these refreshment rooms were cut out, it would be quite easy to make up the two or three hours by which the journey between Perth and Kalgoorlie could be shortened. Then the department would be paying attention to the needs of the passenger service. I think the suggestion should be made to the Minister for Railways that if it is considered essential to have a dining car on the train from Kalgoorlie to Yellowdine and another from Northam to Perth, a lower charge should be made for the meals than the 3s. 6d. for tea and 3s. for breakfast now charged, and there would then be no need for the station refreshment rooms along the route.

If the prices were reduced to 2s. 6d. and 2s., more passengers would have their meals on the train and the dining cars would not be only half patronised as they are at times. Before the present Government undertook the catering on the dining cars, they were more or less empty half the time, but the service has improved under Government management. The point I wish to make is that there is no need for all the refreshment rooms along the route when dining cars are attached to the train, because this is merely duplicating the service. The train is run at night time when people can sleep, and they do not need to run out to refreshment rooms every little while.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about those who cannot sleep?

Hon. W. R. HALL: At times I have not been able to sleep on a train, but I do not favour so many stoppages at station refreshment rooms. The so-called express

to Kalgoorlie has become more or less a mixed goods train, and judging by the trend of events, it will finish up as a goods train.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The price of meals on the train used to be 2s. 6d.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Some of the pump-kin and cabbage served in the dining cars during the war was not worth 1s., much less 2s. 6d. However, I say without fear of contradiction that, since the cars have been under Government management, the meals have been definitely better.

Hon. L. Craig: They are cheap, too.

Hon. W. R. HALL: I cannot agree with that statement. The hon. member would not like to be charged 3s. 6d. for a luncheon in a restaurant. When passengers do not patronise the dining cars but go to the refreshment rooms, their food costs them more. I say that as one who knows.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What do you say of the class of coaches being provided?

Hon. W. R. HALL: Coaches of the four-berth type are being used, though the latest type has two-berth compartments. The other night the express consisted of four coaches and three or four large vans. To my way of thinking, that train should be described only as a mixed goods.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The train last night had two rabbit vans on.

Hon. W. R. HALL: Some of the passengers feel like rabbits when travelling on that train. Though I say the service has been improved, there has been no improvement in the way of speed. If the time taken on the journey were reduced, it would be beneficial to all concerned. The trains travelling from Kalgoorlie to Laverton and to Leonora occupy a long time on the journey. The department should realise that we are now living in a different age and that it is time consideration was given to the question of speeding up the railway services generally.

I wish now to refer to transport by road. Recently a road board conference was held in Perth attended by the representatives of 119 road boards. It was a very good conference and many questions affecting the ratepayers were discussed. One of the subjects was the very bad condition of the roads generally throughout the State

but particularly in the metropolitan area and on the Goldfields. I have explained previously that there is not a road board in the State with a revenue sufficient to allow it to carry out a programme of providing 100 per cent. roads for its rate-payers. Most road boards have territory in which they cannot in any circumstances construct the roads and do the work necessary to satisfy the residents of their districts.

Hon. H. L. Roche: What about Peppermint Grove?

Hon. W. R. HALL: I do not know much about that, but if the hon. member is referring to the Minister for Mines, he should direct his interjection to him. The question of improving the Great Eastern Highway between Coolgardie and Southern Cross or a little further was a matter that the Labour Government had well in hand. Most of the surface from No. 5 Pumping Station to four miles this side of Southern Cross has been tarred, and although work was discontinued during the war period, it has been resumed. I have great sympathy for the motorist of today, who is one of the greatest assets the State and Commonwealth have. He more or less pays for the roads and yet, even in the metropolitan area, we encounter some "wicked" roads, of which I could name several. When that state of affairs exists in the metropolitan area, members can imagine what the country roads are like and what a toll the corrugations take of the cars. Seven or eight years have elapsed since we were promised a good road between Coolgardie and Southern Cross, and I hope the present Government will have that section completed as early as possible.

Motorists had a very bad spin during the war years. They are taxed heavily and I claim that they are entitled to greater consideration now that the war is over. Doubtless the acute tyre position was brought about largely through the roads being in such a bad condition. As the Main Roads Board is doing the work on the Coolgardie—Southern Cross section, efforts should be made to complete it as soon as possible. I hope that my remarks will carry some influence with the Government, and above all I trust that

the mining industry will receive the consideration it deserves.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19th August, 1947.

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Question: Milk, as to monopoly for treatment licensees | 213  |
| Electoral, swearing-in of member                       | 214  |
| Address-in-reply, sixth day                            | 214  |

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

### QUESTION.

#### MILK.

*As to Monopoly for Treatment Licensees.*

Hon. J. T. TONKIN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware that in the exercise of powers under Section 26 of the Milk Act the Milk Board in reducing the number of treatment licenses and refusing to approve of contracts except as between dairymen and holders of treatment licenses has created a situation which is already developing to a state of complete monopoly of the treatment of milk for distribution to consumers?

(2) Does he consider that the formation of a monopoly of the treatment of milk was intended by the Legislature when the Milk Bill was enacted?

(3) Does he believe that a monopoly of the treatment of milk is in the best interests of the people of the State?

(4) Does he intend to take steps to prevent it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. This action was advocated by my predecessor when introducing the Milk Bill last session. (Hansard No. 4, page 297.) The Chief Secretary also indicated the policy of consolidation of treatment depots