

to shift a civil servant unless some charge that he had done something wrong could be absolutely proved against him. To avoid doing anything wrong quite a number of civil servants did nothing at all. Of course a civil servant could not be dismissed for doing nothing at all, because he was in his position by Act of Parliament, by usage, by custom, by unwritten law, by the Public Service Act, and by the Public Service Commissioner; but when, in spite of all these things, a civil servant got put out, it was going altogether too far to bring the matter before the House and ask a select committee to sit upon it. There was a great deal of method in the American madness of each new Government changing the civil servants on coming into power. He intended to oppose the motion because he believed the civil servants had any amount of protection at present without coming to the House for more.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): It was his intention to support the motion for the appointment of a select committee. Mr. Hamel had spoken to him about the matter, and when the papers were laid on the Table he (Mr. McDowall) had looked through them. Although from the perusal of the papers he had failed to see that Mr. Hamel had a very serious grievance, yet Mr. Hamel maintained that his services had been illegally dispensed with, and by that contention Mr. Hamel had practically charged the Public Service Commissioner with having acted improperly. Under the circumstances the matter should be cleared up, and for that reason he would support the motion, in addition to which there was the further reason given by the Premier, namely, the peace of mind of hon. members. If this matter were finally dealt with it would be a great relief to him.

Mr. LANDER (in reply): It had not been his intention to bring this motion forward with a view to establishing a precedent in respect to dismissed civil servants appealing to the House. Rather had he been moved by the reasons given by Mr. Mitchell, namely, that there was justification for the proposed investigation. When, last session, he had agreed

to move for the papers dealing with the case, Mr. Hamel had assured him verbally that that action would be final. Since then he had taken the precaution to secure in writing from Mr. Hamel the statement that the motion for a select committee would be final. In view of this he thought he could assure the House that if the select committee were granted, finality would be reached.

The Premier: You had better put that written statement before the committee and mark it "Exhibit A."

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken, and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Harper, Munsie, B. J. Stubbs, Wisdom, and the mover (Mr. Lander), with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report this day fortnight.

House adjourned at 10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th September, 1913.

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

QUESTION—SUPREME COURT JUDGE, NEW APPOINTMENT.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1. Has his attention been drawn to an article in Tuesday's *Daily News*, wherein it is stated that Mr. Keenan, K.C., had been selected as the new Judge? 2. Is there any truth in the said statement? 3. Has Cabinet yet discussed the matter? 4. If not, can the Government, in the interests of honest journalism, do some-

thing towards curbing the excessive imagination of some pressmen?

The PREMIER replied : 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, No. 4, The suggestion would appear, with existing material, to be impossible. The matter, however, will receive consideration.

BILL—MINES REGULATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd September.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly) : It was not my intention to say anything on this very important measure, but so much has been said in favour of this amending Bill that it devolves upon me as a representative of the people, to enter my strong protest against this Bill being passed. I hope it will never go beyond this House, but will be relegated to the waste-paper basket. A very good case has been put up by my friends on the Government side, but it reminds me very much of the experience of a Scotch litigant who went to consult his lawyer on a very important case. When he had stated his case the lawyer told him that he had a splendid action and that without doubt he would be successful, but the Scotchman replied, "I hae told ye the other fellow's case." So I say of the members of the Government and those supporting them, they made out a very good case from their point of view, but it was purely a one-sided case. I am strongly against this measure, as the Government will find out before I have finished. It is always very easy to gull the public by bringing in humanitarian and philanthropic measures, but we have other responsibilities and duties to perform as legislators. We might as well bring in measures to prevent a farmer from working on a wet day, because that would be held by all medical men to be injurious and unhealthy.

Mr. McDowall : That is absurd.

Mr. HARPER : We might as well pass legislation to prevent lady typistes from following that employment, to prevent lawyers from going home at night and stewing over important cases. We might as well try to prevent a bank

manager from worrying over big overdrafts and bad securities, to prevent people from worrying over the financial position, and to prevent others from committing suicide.

The Attorney General : We do that.

Mr. HARPER : We might as well try to prevent members of Parliament from sitting at all hours of the night, and all day, because that also is injurious to their health. If we are going on in that direction we might go so far that there would not be any people in this country or anywhere else who could stand it.

Mr. Layman : All work is injurious.

Mr. HARPER : Of course it is. The Speaker no doubt finds it injurious to occupy that Chair for long hours at night, and so the same thing might be continued at any length. Now, with regard to my opposition to this Bill, we have in this State committed ourselves to a very large expenditure on the mining industry. Large sums of money have been spent on the goldfields, on water schemes, public buildings, railways, conservation of water, the making of roads, the providing of mechanics' institutes, and in grants to roads boards and municipalities, many of which are to-day extinct, and it is our duty, as legislators, to try to get some return from the large amount of money expended on those fields. Therefore, I say that every extra imposition and every harassing Act of Parliament we pass is injurious and will bring about a shortening of the lives of the mines. The Minister for Mines has referred to the fact that there has been no amendment to the Mines Regulation Act since 1906. Everybody knows, and I regret to say it is too true, that the mines ever since that date have been rapidly diminishing in value, and notwithstanding what anybody may say to the contrary—probably the remarks I am going to make may be unpopular—I say it is about time that people came out with absolute facts, and recognised that a large number of the mines in this State are struggling to pay expenses. The hon. member for Cue (Mr. Heitmann) has stated that we have the best mining engineers and the best managers

in the world. I agree with him. I agree that we have in Western Australia today some of the most patriotic and loyal subjects of the King's dominions in these mines. There are men such as I have referred to, some of the leading mine managers like Mr. Hamilton, who has been in charge of the Great Boulder for about 15 years, and is a citizen of whom Western Australia ought to be proud for more reasons than one. Every penny he has earned in this State, or anywhere else, is invested in Western Australia, and he is doing his best to assist, not only the mining industry in every shape and form, but every industry in Western Australia. He has put money into farming and I say he is deserving of the respect and admiration of every member of this House. And the same applies in a greater or less degree to all those who are in charge of the important mines in Western Australia.

Mr. Munsie: What has that to do with the present Mines Regulation Bill?

Mr. HARPER: It has something to do with the allegations made by the Minister for Mines. The Minister was reported in the *West Australian* of the 13th December as having said, "Was Parliament not justified in interfering in a matter of this kind, when managers of the mines were endeavouring to hound Britishers out of the country." That is a wicked and malicious, and I may say cowardly statement, because I defy him, or any other member of this House, to prove that such is the case.

The Minister for Mines: What was that in reference to?

Mr. HARPER: It is not the first time the Minister has made dirty, vindictive and slanderous statements against mine managers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Did the hon. member say the Minister has made dirty, vindictive and slanderous statements?

Mr. HARPER: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member had better not make such remarks.

The Minister for Mines: I do not object.

Mr. SPEAKER: I object and the hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. HARPER: Then I withdraw, but I have some other matter in that connection which I will bring out later on. We have in these managers men who are doing their level best to make ends meet, doing their best with poor propositions, at least so far as Western Australia is concerned, to carry on and make them pay under existing conditions. We have a large number of men employed in the Associated Gold Mines; they number 260. In the Perseverance 506 men are employed; in the Lake View, 450; in the Oroya Links, 280; in the South Kalgurli, 240; in the Great Fingal, 317; and in the Oroya Black Range, 228. There is a great number of other mines in Western Australia which are practically struggling to make ends meet. At the very least a half of the population of the goldfields is in a very critical position as regards permanent employment.

The Minister for Mines: You left a few in a critical position.

Mr. HARPER: I did nothing of the kind. I have done everything to assist the industry and I defy the Minister to show one act to the contrary, and I dare him to say outside of this House that he can attribute to me any dishonest motive. I challenge him and court investigation of my actions in this country since I came here 21 years ago, and I defy the Minister to attain half of the reputation which I hold. I dare him to say one word against me outside of this House; I challenge him, or any other member of this House, to say one word against me outside of this Chamber, for he would not long remain a member of Parliament. There is a large number of men employed in the mining industry in this State and we have these splendid mine managers, who have been referred to by the hon. member for Cue as the best in the world doing their level best to find wages—

Mr. Munsie: He said surveyors, not managers.

Mr. HARPER: He said mining engineers, who, I was remarking, are doing their best to find wages for the miners and half of the working population on the goldfields. We can go on making

conditions to apply to the very richest mines in Western Australia, but we ought to make conditions as far as possible which will encourage the industry. We have built railways, and conserved water and carried out a great scheme for a comparatively small population like that of the goldfields, the most humanitarian scheme probably ever carried out in the world—the Coolgardie water scheme. All this was done by the Liberal party, and yet, notwithstanding all this, no Liberal has a possible chance of being returned to this House by the goldfields electors.

Mr. Munsie: I am glad you realise the fact.

Mr. McDowall: We are all Liberals up there.

Mr. HARPER: We realise the fact, as I have previously expressed it in this House, that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a mine owner or mine manager, or mine representative, or any such individual, to be returned to represent the goldfields in this House.

Mr. Turvey: Wait until you get proportional representation.

Mr. HARPER: The line of demarcation is so well defined between the employer and the employee that it is high time every mine owner, and everyone who encourages or builds up any industrial concern, had equal voting power with the employee. For every 100 men employed he should have 100 votes.

Mr. Gill: Liberals?

Mr. HARPER: I want to show the absurdity resulting from all those employees engaged in industrial concerns voting labour. If I started a big manufacturing establishment in Pingelly and employed 1,000 men, it would become a Labour constituency. They would all vote Labour; no matter how well I treated them they would vote against me. They bite the hand that feeds them. I know that well.

Mr. Heitmann: You buy their labour; are you not satisfied?

Mr. HARPER: As soon as we come to spoon-feed them and give them favours, we suffer for it.

Mr. Heitmann: You had them crimping in the mines.

Mr. HARPER: According to some of the speakers, we have 50 millions of money invested in mining in Western Australia, and there is not one representative in this House of that 50 millions of money which has been so invested. The Minister for Mines ridiculed some of the booms which had occurred here, but I say that the mines regulations and conditions, the Arbitration Acts, the Compensation Acts, and many other Acts of Parliament are all preventing the carrying on of mining in Western Australia.

Mr. Munsie: Would you repeal the Workers' Compensation Act?

Mr. HARPER: I am not saying it is a bad Act.

Mr. Munsie: Would you repeal it?

Mr. HARPER: We have, as I said, 50 millions of money invested in mining in this State.

Mr. Munsie: On paper.

Mr. HARPER: And there is no chance of the mining interests getting a representative in the Parliament of the country. Would any member of this House hand over his money, after having had great difficulty in earning it, to a hostile Parliament or a hostile people? The people of the goldfields have proved themselves absolutely and unanimously against the mine owner and against the industry itself. There is a number of representatives of the goldfields in this House but all of them are representing one class and that class is the wage-earner. I do not blame them one bit for getting into Parliament through these expedients and under these conditions, but I say the principle is wrong, absolutely wrong.

Mr. Heitmann: What do you want?

Mr. HARPER: If we want the mining industry to go ahead and to continue, it is only fair that this country should give it some representation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot on this Bill discuss the representation of this House.

Mr. HARPER: But it is all bearing on, and relevant to the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the hon. member is very earnest in what he is say-

ing, but it has nothing to do with this question.

Mr. HARPER: I will abide by your decision but ever since I have been in this country the industry has had representation in this House for only a very short period, and that was a good while ago. We know that Mr. Gregory, when Minister for Mines, did his best but he was only here on sufferance; two-thirds of his constituents were Labour supporters. It is my honest conviction that wherever a man builds up an industry, he should not have all the employees in that industry voting against him on every occasion; and I say it will be necessary, in order that the industries of the country should go ahead, that the employers as well as the employees should be represented in Parliament, or anywhere else. I admit that mining has done a great deal for Western Australia. It has done a great deal for many other States, but I can say it has not been altogether an unmixed blessing to this State. On the other hand it has done a great deal of harm. It has established conditions of labour in this State that other industries cannot stand up to. We entered into arbitration in the boom times, when the goldfields were at their zenith, when they were being discovered one after another in rapid succession, and when labour was scarce. There was a great dearth of labour in those days, and the Liberal party brought in an Arbitration Act, and from that day on, notwithstanding the diminishing and rapidly decreasing gold returns, the conditions have been made more stringent. When I came to this country 21 years ago, I want to let this House know—

Mr. Heitmann: That you left your country for your country's good.

Mr. HARPER: I came to this country, to this country's advantage, and that is more than the hon. member can say. The hon. member has been a failure in every other walk of life except politics.

Mr. Heitmann: I have never had men in a mine stealing samples for me.

Mr. HARPER: The hon. member has been a failure all his life. I admit that mining has done a great deal for the

State, but it has not been an unmixed blessing, because it has established conditions which other industries in this State cannot stand up to, and under which they cannot continue to prosper. Were the conditions of the goldfields applied to the agricultural industry, we would soon have no agriculture at all in this State. This State cannot stand up to the present conditions brought about by industrial legislation. This reminds me that the Minister for Mines went back to the beginning of last century and referred to industrial legislation which had been passed and which had done so much for the working classes. He arrogates unto himself the only reasons for the improvement of the working classes in England and other parts of the world. I want to remind him that there are a great many other phases of this question, and a great many other reasons why the condition of labour and employment have improved during the last century. The farmer in Ireland is to-day getting double the wages he was thirty years ago, as I well remember. That cannot be attributed to industrial legislation, nor can domestic servants in this State claim that they have benefited by industrial legislation.

Mr. Munsie: They have benefited by industrial organisation.

Mr. HARPER: The law of supply and demand controls all these things. The great demand for domestic servants in this State has made them free and independent, and they have nothing to thank the Trades Hall for their conditions of employment. With regard to the employment of labour in the Old Country the improvement has been created as the result of emigration to America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, South America, and other places where people can demand good wages and good conditions. That has more to do with the improvement of labour than all these artificial conditions such as trades unions and trades halls. Trades halls and unions would be all moonshine if the work was not here for the people. When I was in South Africa I saw white men working

with black men because they could not get work anywhere else.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has all this to do with the Mines Regulation Bill?

Mr. HARPER: I was going to lead up to the contract system, because it is connected with one of the vital clauses of the measure. We have a number of mines in Western Australia that are showing a very small margin of profit. For instance, the Associated in June last made a profit of only £1,333. Burbank's Main Lode made a loss in May of £664, and a loss also in June of £220.

Mr. McDowall: They put up some new machinery.

Mr. HARPER: That is working expenses, and if the hon. member knows anything about mining he knows it would not be capital expenditure. The Commodore lost £200 in May; the Great Boulder Perseverance lost £658 in May, and in June made a loss of £2,556. The latter mine employs somewhere about 700 men. If the provisions of this Bill are passed, as I stated before, half of the miners and employees on the goldfields will be out of work. There will be no work for them; so it is our duty to see that the industry is continued. Some say that it is a dangerous and precarious occupation. I admit that it is, but I say that these men, if they are competent at their work, are as competent to judge what is safe or unsafe as any inspector of mines. Each miner is an inspector in himself; I say there is no difference if they are competent miners, and they should be competent in view of the wages received. If they are competent they are as well qualified to look after their own safety as any inspector of mines. We had the hon. member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) referring very arrogantly to the large amount of dividends. I would like to point out the Menzies Consolidated, which employs a large number of men in the member's own electorate; it has been worked since the early days of the goldfields and has never paid a dividend yet. The shareholders have had no return, and they have stuck manfully on to that concern in order, practically, to keep the hon. member in Parliament, as if it were not for mines of that description there

would be no necessity for the hon. member for Menzies. The hon. member never mentioned other mines, like the Lancefield, which has spent £300,000, and the shareholders have never seen the colour of their money back. The same remark applies to the Bellevue at Mt. Sir Samuel; they persevered with that mine for years and years and had to give it up at last.

Mr. McDonald: Why don't you pick out a few refractory mines?

Mr. HARPER: They are not nearly as refractory as the hon. member himself. We have had nearly half a million of money expended on those mines and no return, and therefore I say these concerns ought to have some consideration at the hands of this House. The Minister for Mines has brought in a Bill to amend the Mines Regulation Act, and it contains not one item in favour of the industry being continued. Every clause of the Bill as brought in is inimical to mining. Every clause renders it more difficult to make these low-grade mines pay, and therefore I say it is a serious matter, and one which the financial position of this State, with its rapidly increasing deficit, cannot stand. It is not our duty as legislators to put another nail in the State's coffin of financial affairs. The present Government have done enough of that already. For instance, take the big deficit which is rapidly increasing and staring us in the face, and which should be a matter of great concern and alarm to every citizen who has the welfare of this State at heart. It is a very serious matter to see how the affairs of this State can be put on a better financial basis. As the Minister remarked, we have had no amendment of the mining laws since 1906. That is somewhat a surprise to the Minister for Mines, but I do not think we want any more conditions; the conditions are too severe already, and the day is not far distant when a large number of mines in Western Australia that are struggling to make ends meet will have to close down.

The Minister for Mines: Mines in this country have had to close down for other causes than legislation of this kind in the past.

Mr. HARPER: The Minister knows very little of what he is talking about;

in fact no member of this House knows less.

The Minister for Mines: If I did not know more than the hon. member I would get out of the House and hide myself.

Mr HARPER: I never impersonated anybody—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member had better continue his speech.

Mr. HARPER: All right, Mr. Speaker. We now come to the three classes of inspectors. It seems to me that if this Bill is passed we will not want any mine managers at all, but will govern the mines of this State by Act of Parliament. We have under this measure no fewer than three varieties of inspector. The district inspector exists at present, and now we are told that we want a special inspector and a workmen's inspector, but, as I have already pointed out, if the men are competent miners there is no need for more inspectors. From 1892 to 1895 I was working Fraser's mine at Southern Cross—

Mr. Mullaney: The effect of your work is apparent to-day.

Mr. HARPER: The face of the hon. member is enough to condemn him anyhow. I worked the mine for three years, and employed a large number of men, and kept a 20-head battery going all the time. We made it pay on 6 dwts. The only assistant I had at that time was one underground boss. The engine-drivers in those days fed and drove the engine, did all their own stoking for the 20-head mill, and got 11s. a day. We were then 175 miles from the nearest railway, and the freight in some cases cost us from £30 up to £50 a ton. Living was dear, and the men in those days worked hard and well, and did not suffer any injurious effects. We worked that mine for three years; we had no inspector of mines and no inspector of boilers, but were entirely dependent upon our own judgment. We had a very difficult mine to work; it was bad ground and had had a creep in it previously. I want to say that this idea of filling the list of Government officials in this country with inspectors of mines is nothing but an unadulterated fallacy. A competent miner is as competent to judge whether ground is safe or not as any in-

spector is. I would want no inspector to tell me whether a place was safe or not. I worked on a drift in Broken Hill—

Mr. Thomas: That is where you slept in the barrow?

Mr. HARPER: The hon. member was never as capable as I was or he would not now be selling pink pills and bile beans.

Mr. Thomas: That is better than running a snide mine.

Mr. HARPER: I never ran a snide mine, and I defy the hon. member to say that outside. I want to emphasise the fact that an inspector of mines is all very well so far as the shaft is concerned to examine safety cages, to test ropes, to see that there are proper thimbles, and all that sort of thing, but once we go away from the shaft, if there are competent miners—and we ought to have competent men at the rate of pay they are getting—then an inspector of mines is no earthly good. He only comes along after the accident has happened and states what should have been done. We want a man who can tell us before the event happens. There is no mine manager or no mining boss in Western Australia, and I will go so far as to say in the whole of Australia, who wants an accident to happen. There is nothing more harassing or more trying to a man's nerves or his system than have an accident, and I know, because I have had experience. An accident in a mine is a terrible thing, and it is enough to drive any man out of his senses.

Mr. Munsie: Then you must have had a lot of them in your time.

Mr. HARPER: Yes; I have had a few, but the only fatal one which happened at Fraser's mine, was due to the disobeying of instructions. The victim went into the winze and the shot went up from the rise. That was the only fatal occurrence during the carrying out of operations under my directions in a very precarious and difficult mine. We had to work there with face boards, false sets, and fill in close right up. Reverting to the Bill, it is provided that there can be six or seven from each side, and that the Government can appoint three to sit

on the special inspector's inquiries. If there are six or seven people from each side, six would be appointed by the mine owners and an equal number by the employees. Then it will only amount to the same thing as if the Government had their own inspectors, because each side will be for its own party. We might just as well abolish this part of the amendment to the Act. Then we have doctors brought into the question, and there is no doubt to my mind that a great deal can be said on the subject of miners' phthisis. The only remedy for that is for a miner not to remain too long at work in a mine. He should not make up his mind to stay all his life in that one occupation. I advised a good many men to leave the Great Fingal mine, which was a quartz mine. One man who took my advice had a big contract for stoping and he was making £10 a week. Being a quartz mine, the dust proved to be very injurious to the health of the men working in it. This particular contractor was getting pneumonia or miners' phthisis or whatever else it is called, and on my advice he came to work with me in a shallow mine where there were no rock drills. That same man is now working as a lumpner at Fremantle and is doing well. If he had continued his occupation in the Fingal mine, there is no Act of Parliament in the world which would have saved him. The same thing applies to other men who work too long in mines. They must suffer the consequences. We next come to a very important question, which seems to be a great favourite with the Minister, who is obsessed with the idea of inspecting and sampling mines. I want to remind him that the best experts in this State, or for that matter, anywhere else, have made fearful blunders in connection with mining. For instance, take Mr. Kolker, who got £5,000 for sampling the Great Fingal mine. That gentleman took something like 500 samples out of it, and I might say, in regard to his report and estimate that there was not a suspicion of doubt about its honesty or straightforwardness, yet the estimate was out to the extent of 50 per cent. I lost a good deal of my money in that mine, but I do not blame Mr.

Kolker, because I know that that gentleman's integrity could not be questioned and that he sampled the mine conscientiously. He made out the shares of the mine to be worth £6 5s. I kept my shares—I had £2,000 of them—which cost me £6, and I sold them subsequently at 25s., but, as I said before, I do not in the slightest blame Mr. Kolker, because his figures and his assays were absolutely above board. This shows that the idea of the Government to sample and report on mines is a fallacious one and will get them into trouble if they take on themselves the responsibility of advising the public as to what to do in regard to mining investments. I have been a long time connected with mining, and I would not advise any man to buy or sell shares.

Mr. MULLANY: You did at one time.

Mr. HARPER: You are a most arrogant perverter of the truth.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw that remark.

Mr. HARPER: I will withdraw it, but he would not say it outside.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw unreservedly.

Mr. HARPER: I withdraw, but it is not a right statement to make.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw absolutely.

Mr. HARPER: I will withdraw absolutely. There are many other mines in the State in regard to which reports have been issued, and which have not proved to be correct, while there are also some which have started well and which have been short lived. I would like to refer to the Bullfinch and say that up to the time the present leader of the Opposition was accused of booming this mine in the Budget speech he delivered on the 25th October, 1910, no mine in Western Australia had had anything like the results which had been obtained from it in a similar period. The Great Boulder, Lake View, and the Horseshoe had never had anything like the same results as the Bullfinch, and the leader of the Opposition at that time was justified in making the statement he did. I know that that gentleman held 100 shares in the Bullfinch, for he showed me his receipt.

I advised him to sell them at 63s., but he would not do so, because he believed in the mine. So did the manager of it, who was a personal friend of mine. However, the leader of the Opposition eventually sold them at a loss. I bought Bullfinch shares at 52s., and I sold them at 8s. and 9s., the very lowest amounts that they touched. In view of these facts, how can the Government take the responsibility of advising the public? I could quote hundreds of instances in Australia where the most capable mining experts have been wrong in their predictions. Take Mr. Bratnobar, the great American expert, who examined the Great Boulder, the Lake View, and the Ivanhoe, and who condemned them all. That gentleman reckoned that there were better reefs in Kanowna. Mr. Bratnobar is the greatest expert in the world to-day, and yet he condemned the Golden Mile, which has turned out so well. Many others offered similar predictions, but there was one, my dear old friend, the late Captain Oats, who predicted a big future for the Kalgoorlie field, but everyone told him that his report read like a fairy tale. Yet he was the only one who happened to be right. There are mines like the British Broken Hill, the Great Waihi, in New Zealand—

The Minister for Mines: And the Golden Pole.

Mr. HARPER: Yes, and the Golden Pole, which was a credit to those who were in control of it, and I defy the Minister to say anything to the contrary.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say anything.

Mr. HARPER: No; the Minister would like to say a lot, but he dare not. I stand here to defend the Golden Pole and everyone connected with it, so far as honesty and straightforwardness are concerned.

Mr. Munsie: There are others who can give a good account of it.

Mr. HARPER: My estimate was that it would produce 60,000ozs of gold and it turned out 70,000ozs. Of course the shares boomed as they have boomed on many other occasions in connection with other mines. The shares of the Lady Shenton went up to £3, and

those of the Cosmopolitan went to £2, and that mine only lasted twelve months. I am endeavouring to prove that it is no use the Government trying to get expert information as regards mines, because it will never be satisfactory. I would not like a Government expert to examine a mine and then either condemn it or recommend it.

The Minister for Mines: It is a question of reporting as he finds it.

Mr. HARPER: An officer could go and sample it, but mining is such a gamble that it is impossible to have hard and fast rules. If a Government expert only samples a mine, he could not sample it without saying something that would be either in favour of the mine or against it. The lower levels might look well and the upper levels might not, or *vice versa*. If the lower levels looked bad, he might condemn the mine, and in the next few days it might turn out well. Therefore, the position the expert would be placed in would be a most difficult one and the Government would never be out of trouble. In regard to the statement which the present leader of the Opposition made when delivering his Budget speech in October, 1910, I do not think that there was a single share bought on the strength of what he said regarding the Bullfinch. The mine had already boomed before he made that statement and the shares were then at a high figure. People who speculate in shares always want to make a lot of money. It is their own business and we cannot make hard and fast rules to prevent people from gambling in shares.

The Minister for Mines: You can refrain from misleading them.

Mr. HARPER: It is very difficult for even the best of mine managers and mine owners and inspectors of mines to be correct in regard to mining information. It is the duty of the public or those who speculate in mines to satisfy themselves and not to take speculative or irresponsible reports. Those who have money to invest in mines should safeguard themselves and not expect the Government to do it for them, because the Government will never be able to do it owing to many intricacies and difficulties.

Now there is no country in the world where mining is such a gamble or speculation as it is in Western Australia. Owing to the geological features and characteristics of the formation, we get so many rich patches which promise to be good mines, but which in a very short time cut out. I have started on what was apparently a good mine, and six months after the machinery was up I had not a vestige of ore in sight; but because the company had money I continued exploiting in every direction, and eventually we struck a good reef. That mine continued for seven or eight years afterwards, and paid dividends. I am merely showing how speculative a venture mining is in this State. I desire to make it very clear as regards the leader of the Opposition, that he was in no way to blame for his report.

Mr. McDowall: Why apologise so much for him?

Mr. HARPER: I have the right to do that, and I will do it. He has been accused of making booming reports, and so inflating values and encouraging the public to go into the speculation.

The Minister for Mines: The whole business in connection with the Bullfinch was the most discreditable that ever took place in the State. Mining will not recover from it for twenty years to come.

Mr. HARPER: The man who wants to put his money into a mine which he is satisfied is a payable proposition will not be kept out of it by the example of any Bullfinch or Boulder Deep Levels or Golden Pole, or any other mine. If I had a mining venture to-day which I could recommend as a payable proposition, I could get money for it in twenty-four hours. There would be no difficulty whatever. We have the Great Boulder Proprietary, and experts from one end of Western Australia to the other, Messrs. Bewick Moreing, and many other firms from the Eastern States, all looking out for payable propositions, with the result that we have the Cosmopolitan, the Great Fingal, the Lake View, and others—they have all invested in Nicaragua, in Burmah, and in Canada—the gold mines in Western Australia find the money to develop the mining resources of the world.

Mr. McDowall: More shame to the owners.

Mr. HARPER: Just so. I am merely showing the great necessity which exists for making the conditions so that mining will be carried on in this country, and the mines will not be closed down as they will be under this.

Mr. Munsie: Give us a reason why it will close them down.

Mr. HARPER: The hon. member ought to understand it himself. If he does not, I cannot give him brains to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. HARPER: I think I have made it clear that I, as one who claims to have a thorough knowledge of mining in this State and other States of Australia, absolutely exonerate the leader of the Opposition and the optimistic speech which he made on that occasion. I say it is not fair to accuse him of booming or boosting. It is very uncalled for. Then we come to the question of capital. The Minister for Mines confidently declared that it is hard to get capital into Western Australia, owing to these booms. I want to tell him that it is only a matter of what profits can be made. If we can show the British capitalist, or any other capitalist, that he has a good payable proposition, or a fairly reasonable payable proposition, he will take the risk. It is all moonshine to say that we have in this State payable ventures, or ventures with a reasonably good prospect of paying, for which money cannot be found. The money is available every hour in the day for a proposition of that nature. It is a fallacy to make these statements, absolutely without foundation or supporting facts. Then there is the matter of stopes. I have said before that the men working in stopes are the best judges. We have quite a number of accidents occurring in stopes. The Minister referred to some 14 out of 35. I want to say that if the men were instructed by the inspectors to take a great deal more care of themselves and to see that the ground was not baulky or winded for their mates to come into, perhaps in ignorance, and have the ground fall on them—if they would see that the stope

was safe before they left off work they would minimise the number of accidents considerably. I have mined in every State of Australia, except Queensland, and I want to say that the men are their own best guardians, the best protectors of themselves. If I wanted timber and could not get the proper tools to carry out the work of timbering in order to make the stope safe, I would report to the inspector. When I was in charge of a mine the inspector had practically unlimited power. When an inspector came along and told me that I should do anything, I knew it was of no use arguing the point; I had to do it. That was generally recognised, and no mine owner disobeyed the instructions of the inspector. Perhaps the Minister for Mines may know of some who have done so, but I have not heard of them. If he does know of any instances, no doubt he will let us have them.

The Minister for Mines: The inspector is limited, according to the provisions of the Act.

Mr. HARPER: Of course. Everyone is not tied down by the inspector. However, I remember having to take out two boilers under an inspector's instructions. That was before we had boiler inspectors. This inspector condemned two boilers, and those same two boilers a boiler inspector put back again. It cost us £1,300 to take out those boilers and put new ones in their places. He had some inferior pressure pump on, and had more pressure in the boiler than he knew of, and so our two boilers were condemned. That is on all-fours with the closing down of mines. That mine is closed down to-day. Then, in regard to stopes 20 feet in height, I want to say there is no mine manager or boss or supervisor who would go 20 feet high if he could help it. Stopes have been referred to by the Minister for Mines as being 40 feet and 60 feet in height. But there were no facilities for filling in those stopes, no mullock passes.

Mr. Munsie: They should be compelled to put the mullock passes in.

Mr. HARPER: But one might discover a shoot of ore which had no pass within hundreds of feet of the surface. If the ore stood there until the pass was put in,

it would never be taken out. We might continue a drive off a blank stope or drive, and find another shoot of ore hundreds of feet away which was never expected, and did not go up to the surface. Suppose it was 500 feet, 1,000 feet, or 2,000 feet down; would you insist upon having a pass brought down from the surface to fill in that stope before the ore was taken out?

Mr. Mullany: It is not necessary that the filling should be solid; it may be timbered up.

Mr. HARPER: It would not be up that height unless there was timber. They could not do it without something to stand on and place the machines upon; in fact if they had room at all they would require to have a stage. I have worked in high stopes in South Africa. There they had no filling at all for hundreds of feet. One could stand on the level below and look around in a sort of half-moon and see hundreds of men working with their lights, all round a big circle two or three hundred feet high.

Mr. Dwyer: Perhaps lives are not worth much there.

Mr. HARPER: The lives were all right there. I have talked to my friends there, and they were quite all right so far as safety was concerned. The ground there stands without timber or filling of any kind. If they had to fill in the mines in that country the mines would not be in existence to-day. I want to point out to this House, and the other House as well, that all these provisions are only practicable where the conditions will permit. There are plenty of places I know of in mines in this State and in other parts of the world which could not comply with these provisions.

The Minister for Mines: We are not legislating for other parts of the world.

Mr. HARPER: No, but I want to broaden this question as much as I can, and enlighten the Minister on this important subject. There are other places where shoots run flat, and where, consequently, it is very difficult to get stopes mullocked up. In such places, it would be absolutely absurd to impose these conditions. Those are my views in regard

to stopes. I say the inspector has ample power, and that he exercises that power. I can tell you that under a Labour Government there is no leniency on the part of mine inspectors in Western Australia.

Mr. O'Loughlen : That is a pity.

Mr. HARPER : Yes, although, perhaps, at times they have occasion to be severe. When they know and see anything of a dangerous nature they soon make a note of it in the book kept for that purpose. A book is kept in every office, which has to bear the signature of the mine manager to the effect that he has inspected everything and that everything is in good order. If the inspector finds that everything is not in good order, he hauls the manager over the coals. The inspector himself writes in the book the condition of the mine, and the record is there for all time, and for everybody to see it. I wish to show the absurdity of appointing such a large number of inspectors. In my opinion it is a reflection on the present inspectors that these other inspectors should be picked up anyhow and anywhere.

The Minister for Mines : Of course it is not a reflection for one man to be doing two men's work.

Mr. HARPER : As I pointed out before, if half the people in this State were inspectors of mines, we could not prevent accidents. The great responsibility rests with the miners themselves, and a person is not a miner unless he can look after himself. As long as he can get a good shaft, good winding engine, good ropes, and good everything else, as regards ingress and egress in connection with a mine, he should take the responsibility on himself. I was mining before there were inspectors, and I noticed that the accidents nearly always followed the mining inspectors. There were rarely accidents before they came on the scene.

Mr. Munsie : Who is reflecting on the inspectors now ?

Mr. HARPER : I am only quoting a coincidence. Now I come to the question of contract. We are all human, even miners are human, and it is their nature,

as it is that of everyone else, not to overwork, but rather to underwork, if they can still get the same pay and the same conditions. The contract system is the only genuine system for the proper carrying on of mining and many other works. It is the only genuine way of getting a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. I had an experience where six men working three shifts in the 24 hours drove 13ft. a week, and because it was soft ground they thought they were doing very well. I let the same ground under precisely the same conditions to three men on contract, and they worked single-handed and drove 53ft. a week. I can prove that statement, and I know of many other such cases. I can quote the clearing of the site for the Korrigin dam, beyond Kunjinn in my electorate.

Mr. Thomas : Where was that ?

Mr. HARPER : At Korrigin.

Mr. Thomas : Oh, no.

Mr. HARPER : It seems to suit the hon. member to contradict statements on matters he knows nothing about, but that fact I am certain of. The clearing of that four acres cost £44, or £11 per acre, and I mention this case to show the difference between the cost under contract and under the wages system. That land would be cleared by any farmer for 25s. or 30s. per acre.

Mr. Monger : Twenty shillings at the outside.

Mr. HARPER : Well, I am saying 25s. or 30s.

Mr. Underwood : Green timber ?

Mr. HARPER : Yes. I say that green timber, salmon gum, would be cleared by any farmer at from 25s. to 30s. per acre.

Mr. Underwood : Oh, no.

Mr. HARPER : The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

Member : Where did you get the figures ?

Mr. HARPER : I have the figures and the hon. member can find out whether the statement is right or not. It is the taxpayer who pays for that heavy cost; he is the one who is imposed upon.

The Minister for Mines : The workers are not taxpayers, are they ?

Mr. HARPER: Well, they have the benefit of the difference and it is a very big margin. The day labour system is the same all over Australia. There may be some exceptions, perhaps, in railway building, where there is a good check on the men, and where one engineer is pitted against another in the carrying out of work. In such circumstances the engineer may be fairly successful with day labour.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will you give us the figures for the Mount Magnet railway?

Mr. HARPER: I do not know anything about that.

The Premier: Or for the erection of the cyanide vats at Kanowna.

Mr. HARPER: I know something about that.

The Premier: So do I.

Mr. HARPER: I know more than the hon. member does, and I am not ashamed of it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You might think that we want to run a mine.

Mr. HARPER: As with many other things, the taxpayer would have to pay for it.

The Minister for Mines: But what was the total cost of those cyanide vats?

Mr. HARPER: Contract was tested on the Mount Eliot Mine, at Cloncurry (Queensland), and the miners there, the good genuine miners who were willing to work, carried the day. They had a strike as to whether they would have contract or day labour, with the result that the practical miner who was competent to carry out his work and who had the advantage over the inferior workman, won the day, and contracting is now being carried on in that mine. Then, in 1890, there was a big strike at Broken Hill to abolish contracting.

The Minister for Mines: That was the opportunity for some men.

Mr. HARPER: It was not yours, because you were not working for the Boulder municipality then.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. HARPER: I am trying to do so as much as I can.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Hon. members must not interject so frequently, and if the hon. member for Pingelly will address his remarks to the Chair, interjectors would cease worrying him.

Mr. HARPER: I will address my remarks to the Chair if I do not get too many interjections. I was saying that the strike at Broken Hill in 1890 lasted three months, and the miners suffered a great loss, with the result that the capitalists won the day. But before contract for stoping was insisted on, the men on many occasions did not handle a tool during the eight hours. I had a mate who went to sleep and never worked.

Mr. Underwood: Was that the chap in the Cousin Jack barrow?

Mr. HARPER: He was Cousin Jack enough, but I do not know whether he was in a barrow. At any rate, they were doing very little work at the time, and even the bosses did not want to catch men loafing, because those bosses had been members of the union.

The Premier interjected.

Mr. HARPER: You go outside and sleep. If anybody should be ashamed of going to sleep at work it is an engine-driver.

Member: Where did that happen?

Mr. HARPER: At Kalgoorlie.

The Premier: It must have been on the Golden Pole.

Mr. HARPER: We would not have the hon. member on the Golden Pole. We did not want loafers there. I am giving the House the reason why contracting was enforced at Broken Hill, and it was because loafing at that time was rampant. Even the underground boss would rather not notice men who were idle and loafing, because he was one of themselves. Owing to the peculiar nature of mining at Broken Hill at that time, only the men who had graduated in the mine were competent to be bosses. That was because of the square set system, which was an innovation in Australian mining, and the miners from Ballarat and other parts of Victoria did not know anything about that system. Therefore, the men who had graduated at Broken Hill were the only ones qualified to become bosses. They

had been members of the union before being appointed, and they remained members of the union, with the result that loafing was rampant. The bosses belonging to the union were not likely to insist on the men doing their work, and often they would go into Broken Hill township, have drinks together, and be the greatest of pals. Under those conditions it was impossible to get mining carried out on a payable and commercial basis. That was the reason why contracting was established by the mine owners, and the result is that to-day no work is done there other than by contract, if it can possibly be let on contract. The workmen themselves admit that they will not work on wages, because they earn better than wages. Although the Arbitration Court fixed the wages at 10s. or 12s. per day, they do not stick to day labour because they can make so much more under contract. Even boys of 17 and 18, filling in stopes, were making 17s. and 18s. per shift. I saw the wages sheets and heard the discussions, and I want to impress on this House the great necessity for continuing the contract system in our mines. The Minister for Mines referred to the absence of contracting on the Murchison, and I think the House will agree that he made a deplorable reference, bearing in mind that all those mining districts, such as Cue, Nannine, Lennoxville, Mount Magnet, Sandstone, Yalgoo, Stake Well—

The Minister for Mines: Meekatharra and Sandstone?

Mr. HARPER: Sandstone is practically defunct. Very little work is going on there.

The Minister for Mines: Last year it gave the record yield during its existence.

Mr. HARPER: Like all the rest, it is not in a flourishing condition. At all events, there is nothing to boast about in the fact that the Murchison is not operating the contract system, because a large number of the mines are closed down.

The Minister for Mines: How many have been closed since contract has been established? That is the point. They were all gone before it was abolished.

Mr. HARPER: The trend is all in that direction. Only the rich mines can afford

to bear the exorbitant conditions that prevail at the present time. Now I come to the Mines Regulation Board. The Minister for Mines shows a peculiar inconsistency, because he opposes wages boards. He is a great supporter of the Arbitration Court, and he says that while a judge and a magistrate may be very good on the bench in regard to questions of law, they are no good when they have to deal with practical or technical questions. Well, I can agree with him there, but the same thing applies to wages boards and arbitration, and the Liberal party in this House have championed the wages board system for quite a long time. The system is enacted in Victoria, and it would be more satisfactory to have local wages boards with men competent to judge, and conversant with the work and the conditions of employment. Wages boards are certainly preferable, more equitable, and more satisfactory than a Supreme Court judge.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Why are the Liberal Government in South Australia dropping the wages board in favour of arbitration?

Mr. HARPER: I do not think they are. I have my own opinion about arbitration. It is only a makeshift; it cannot be enforced, and it becomes only a whitewashing business. In regard to this Bill a mines regulation board would be the most competent, but I am afraid it will be rather complicated to have six or seven men on each side, and officials of the Government besides. However, the latter would certainly be the board because the representatives of each side would have their own views on the different questions submitted to them. Before leaving the question of contracts I would like to say that in South Africa all the kaffirs work under contract. Ministers might laugh at my statement—

The Premier: Do you want our miners to be compared with kaffirs?

Mr. HARPER: The kaffirs work under contract conditions. Each man's contract is three feet a day, and when he has finished that by single hammer he can knock off and go home to the compound.

Mr. Munsie: Provided they can get off.

Mr. HARPER: They can get off, and do get off: I have seen them going home at all times between lunch and 4 o'clock.

Mr. Underwood: How about getting some kaffirs in here?

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why bring your friends into this discussion?

Mr. HARPER: I want to say that if it were not for the kaffir labour in Johannesburg no white labour would be required there. The kaffirs do the work and do it for one-third of what white men could afford to do it. Living is very expensive there—

Mr. O'Loghlen: I suppose it is on account of the good conditions.

Mr. HARPER: Will the hon. member stop his haggling over a matter he knows nothing about? The contract system there is certainly satisfactory, and if the South African mines were in Western Australia the industry would cease to exist.

Mr. Underwood: How is it they work the mines cheaper than here?

Mr. HARPER: I am glad of that interjection, because I can explain the point for the Minister's information. The conditions of work in the mines in South Africa are totally different from those in Western Australia; the geological features and characteristics and the formation are so different.

The Premier: They are in defined lodes in South Africa.

Mr. HARPER. No. If the Premier waits I will explain it to him; I see he knows nothing about it. The vein is small, but regular. The lode is only two feet or three feet at its thickest, and nearly all the gold is carried in a small vein of three, four, or five inches thick on the wall, and being so small they have to take what may be termed the hanging wall side of the reef. They take out only enough stuff to enable them to get to work, and that means only about three or four feet. That is small compared with the eight, ten and up to forty feet wide lodes in Western Australia. I know of one fire in the Fingal which broke down 80 tons of stuff. That was on contract, and at 4s. a ton it paid the contractor well. In regard to South Africa the veins are small, and the formation is flat, necessitating very laborious work

to get the ore broken on the flat stopes. The angle is practically 30 degrees from the horizontal, and it is laborious work to get the ore to the level in order to truck it and send it to the surface. When it reaches the surface the ore has to be hand-picked. It is put on a revolving table with a spray of water playing on it, and it is hand-picked by kaffirs. Consequently if the mines were carried on under similar conditions to those prevailing in this State they would, as mining ventures, cease to exist. I challenge anyone to refute that statement.

The Premier: It is practically free labour.

Mr. HARPER: But the conditions make it very difficult, and it is very different working a stope eight, ten or twelve feet wide and working on a small narrow vein. The white people of Johannesburg have to thank the kaffir for being there at all. Their presence is absolutely due to the cheap labour of the kaffir because all said and done the success of mining, wheat-growing, or anything else depends entirely upon the cost of production. Much as members on the Government side will ridicule the idea, I maintain if we had the same cheap labour which is obtainable in South Africa we would have more white men employed in Western Australia as bosses.

The Minister for Mines: Are you advocating it?

Mr. HARPER: The gold resources of Western Australia right up to Pilbara are magnificent, and given the conditions prevailing in South Africa, an enormous number of mines would be working in this State to-day, and Western Australia would have a population of millions of people, and white people at that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Black people; you would ruin the country.

Mr. HARPER: The hon. member knows nothing about it. There are 120,000 people in Johannesburg, white people all living in luxury and making large sums of money, practically fortunes.

The Minister for Mines: Out of slavery.

Mr. HARPER: The white men who boss the kaffirs make £50, £60 and up to

£100 a month, and they do no work but supervise the kaffirs at work. The action of Mr. Deakin, when Prime Minister of Australia and of Sir Joseph Ward, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand, in interfering in connection with the importation into South Africa of Chinamen, was ridiculous and absurd. They did not understand the position.

The Premier: That is the Liberal policy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the subject.

Mr. HARPER: The only reason why I diverged from the subject was to enlighten hon. members on the Government side of the House. It is a fact which it is just as well for this country to know, that the importation of Chinamen was necessary to keep the white people there at that time. I was in South Africa at the time, and I know the position well.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. HARPER: I will. If you will just allow me to say a word or two I will have finished with that subject. At that time they could not get the kaffirs to work because they had made enough money to—

Mr. SPEAKER: I will not allow the hon. member to discuss that.

Mr. HARPER: And—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! If I allow the hon. member to discuss that, it means that every hon. member will want to do likewise.

Mr. HARPER: I will bow to your decision. Coming to the question of the abolition of the night shift, I say that no mine manager employs men on the night shift any more than he can help. The night shift is worked for developmental reasons in order that the plant may have sufficient ore to continue its operations. A great deal has been said about the Great Boulder, and it is a very serious matter, and one that I much regret that the Great Boulder proprietary recognised the necessity for working only two shifts. If the ore were continuing down they would never have volunteered to work only two shifts in the 24 hours, and it is an indication that the Great Boulder is not looking too well; I mean it would be

suicidal for a mine like the Horseshoe to adopt the two-shift principle.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you think your remarks will have some effect on the shares?

Mr. HARPER: Not the least. It does not matter what I say with regard to the intrinsic value of the mines, either for or against. It will make no difference to those who hold the shares because they know the position just as well as I can tell them. The manager informs them to that effect.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The manager will not agree with you.

Mr. Lewis interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is too much interjection altogether. The hon. member is entitled to address the Chair. Interjections will always be permitted if they are for the purpose of explaining some point or illustrating a portion of the Bill, but they must not be too frequent, and above all, they must be pertinent.

Mr. HARPER: I want to explain that it is a serious matter for the Great Boulder Proprietary to have to make this admission. I know something about this matter. I have done away with the night shift myself when I had no more ore to develop below. I docked one shift because I could not stope enough to keep the battery going. To carry on development and keep sufficient ore ahead of the mill it is not safe for a company to have less than three or four years' ore in sight, and in order to continue the development and preserve the life of the mine it is necessary to have the three shifts. For instance, take the Horseshoe.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. HARPER: Before tea I was speaking on the question of the night shift. I might here explain that I hold no brief for the Chamber of Mines, nor do I hold any brief for those who supervise mines, and I am not representing a mining district or goldfields constituency.

Mr. Heilmann: They took care of that.

Mr. HARPER: I know that it would not be possible for me to get elected by a constituency dominated so much by Labour. Concerning what I have said to—

night, I want it to be clearly understood that it is not on party lines in any shape or form, but is purely in the interests of the gold mining industry of Western Australia, and with the desire that that great industry may be continued, and prosper. I am speaking here as one who has vested interests in Western Australia, as one who has brought up his family in Western Australia and has made this his home and the land of his adoption for the last 21 years. In this State I have invested every shilling I possess and I desire the State to flourish. Accordingly I want the mining industry long to prosper and continue, and it is not in any party spirit that I have gone into this very important subject. It is not with any degree of antagonism to my friends of the Government or those opposed to me politically, but it is only right that I should, as a member of this House, and one identified with Western Australia, give the benefit of my opinion and experience, whatever they are worth, for the good of the State. My friends opposite may speak from sentiment and certainly from a humanitarian point of view, and no doubt their side of the question would be more popular than mine, because it is never the popular side to take to say the industry is not flourishing, that it is fast diminishing, or that it is not a permanent industry. The Government at the present time are spending large sums of money to encourage the industry, but at the same time they are attempting—I hope that they will not succeed—to make the conditions quite as damaging or more damaging than all the good they are doing on the other hand; I mean that the damaging effect this Bill will have will outweigh any good they are likely to do with the mining vote in the matter of diamond drilling, encouragement of prospectors, etcetera. The night shift is a matter which could be well left in the hands of the mining engineers, who have such a splendid reputation, for which the hon. member for Cue gives them credit. If we want to encourage this industry it ought to be left in the competent hands of the men in charge. Another reason

why contract work should not be abolished is that it is so very difficult to supervise and to get work supervised in a mine; it is a very different proposition from getting supervision carried out strictly on a railway and on surface work, because the men are working in such obscure places that they have all the advantage of loafing if they like without the boss seeing them. I have had men myself whom I was paying well as underground bosses, and I proved after some time that these bosses whom I was paying well to supervise and look after the night shift were in the habit of sleeping during the dead hours of night. Speaking of one in particular, the system he had of preparing to meet me when I came down in the morning to see how the night shift had got on, was for the platman to go and awaken him as soon as the signal was given. They would know at that particular time of the morning that only the manager was coming down, and the underground boss was ready to meet me. During the night he had been neglecting his duty. This shows the necessity of having contract work. Serious charges are made against speeding up, but if a mining engineer finds that the work is going pretty slow on one level and he cannot get satisfaction from the supervision of his underground manager, who may be friendly with the men and not prepared to discharge them if they do not do their duty, the only way the manager or owner can get anything like a decent or reasonable amount of work done is by letting a similar contract in some other part of the mine under similar conditions, and, if the contractor does so much more work than the day wages men, they know very well what the result will be, and it is a good way of getting work done. I want to impress this House as much as I can with the difficulties of getting supervision on a mine. It does not matter whether it is night or day, it makes no difference underground. It is dark all the time there and they have to work with artificial light at any hour of the day.

Mr. Underwood: What light were you sleeping by?

Mr. HARPER: I want to say that it gives the worker so much of an opportunity of watching his boss. He can see him and hear him coming a long way off. Often, when going along the drives, one will hear no hammers and no drills going, but, as soon as one goes up the rise and gets near the stope, the men start, the machine starts to go, and the hammer starts to beat the drill. It is so difficult to get work done unless by contract that to do away with contracts would mean practically the shutting up of every mine in Western Australia. That was the cause of the big strike in Broken Hill in 1890, and I hope this House will turn down this clause of the Bill. We come now to the question of aliens. This is another highly controversial matter, and it has been discussed widely. I want to say here that there is no mine owner in Western Australia who, all things being equal, would give preference to an Italian, and providing that the men were equal so far as work was concerned. I am sure that in nearly every case the aliens or Italians, whatever nationality they may be, will certainly give better work for the money than the Britisher, or else the Britisher would be employed.

Mr. Heitmann: What rot! Absolute nonsense.

Mr. HARPER: I would never be mean enough to attribute that to any mine employer in Western Australia. I certainly say that if the work returned for the money received was equal in the case of the Britisher, there would be no Italians or other foreigners employed.

Mr. Underwood: Did you ever get a sub. off an Italian?

Mr. HARPER: No, no one ever had the temerity to offer me one. I want to say that the aliens are more largely employed in the outback centres where the Britisher does not want to work. We find a greater number employed away up in Leonora than we do in Kalgoorlie, the reason being that the Britisher prefers Kalgoorlie, and naturally he would, because I know in times gone by we often had men leave us at Kanowna to go into Kalgoorlie, because they had more amusement, more comfort, and better facilities

for enjoying themselves; they would often travel by train to Kalgoorlie to have a good night's amusement. Of course that meant expense, and they were better off when working in Kalgoorlie for the same wages than they were at Kanowna. The same thing applies to the Gwalia mine and the Ida H. Again, the Lancefield mine was practically closed down because aliens were not allowed to work there; at least, a sufficient number of them did not pass the language test.

The Minister for Mines: What mine was that?

Mr. HARPER: The Lancefield. I want to say here that no mine owner or mine manager in Western Australia would prefer foreigners to Britishers to work in a mine provided they got the same amount of work for the same amount of pay.

Mr. Heitmann: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. HARPER: As mining is of such a precarious and hazardous nature, and seeing that there are so many fatalities incidental to it, why not let a mine like the Lancefield be worked by Italians—all Italians; let there be no one else in it but Italians.

Mr. Heitmann: Killing off the Dagos.

Mr. HARPER: And see if there are a greater number of accidents in that mine than in any other through the foreigners not being able to talk the English language. The accidents that happen in mines are largely due to the negligence of the men themselves. It is the manager's duty, and it is often a difficult duty, to see that everyone takes sufficient interest in his work and exercises care in the direction of preventing accidents happening. There is no owner or manager in this State who would permit an accident to happen in his mine if he could foresee it. We next come to the question of the 44 hours week. When I was mining myself I had my eight hours to put in, and that was not from the surface either. It was from the time of relieving in the face, wherever the men were working. It is quite different to-day. I venture to say that it takes half an hour, and in some cases, three-quarters of an hour, before the last

men of the shift are lowered from the surface to the scene of operations on a mine like the Horseshoe. Then they have to get the drills ready and prepare to fire out. They start at about 11.30 and perhaps there is no more work done until lunch is over.

The Minister for Mines : It is a perfect holiday in fact.

Mr. HARPER : The Minister must know that this is an established fact.

The Minister for Mines : Yes, one round of pleasure underground.

Mr. HARPER : Mining is certainly preferable work to any other hard work that a man can follow.

The Minister for Mines : You have been saying the very contrary.

Mr. HARPER : The time for finishing the day's work comes only too soon, and I repeat that it is the easiest work of its kind that a man can follow.

The Minister for Mines : Quite a holiday.

Mr. HARPER : It is easy work for the reason that the machines do the work; they do the slogging. The machines bore the holes and all the man has to do is to turn the handle gently. The man has only to change the drills and apply water. Perhaps it is an injurious occupation because of the dust, but it certainly is a light occupation. It is not hard work to attend to a machine drill. The hammer and drill is hard work when there is the hammering to do, but it is not hard for the man who carries the drill. At the present time, out of the 47 hours a week, I venture to say, and I am certain of what I am saying, that the men do not work more than seven hours a day. I will assert that seven hours is the longest day's work underground when time is taken off for crib and for getting to the face.

The Minister for Mines : Look at the pleasant rides they have up and down.

Mr. HARPER : And when we take off the time occupied in starting to fire, the day's work will be more like six hours.

Mr. Munsie : What difference does that make if they are contractors ?

Mr. HARPER : The proposed reduction of hours to 44 will deal a fatal

blow to the industry, and that is the reason why I want to enter my protest against it. The member for Menzies referred to the miners who worked at Bendigo, but I say that working in the deep mines there is quite a different proposition from that of working in the mines of Western Australia, for the reason that in Bendigo the ventilation was never carried down from the surface, as is the case in the Kalgoorlie mines, and owing to the flat nature of the reefs, they are not worked in the same way with passes and rises, as is the case in this State.

Mr. Heitmann : You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. HARPER : With regard to the height of rises, we are asked to limit them to 20 feet.

Mr. Munsie : Ten feet too much.

Mr. HARPER : We might as well not have rises at all. Between levels the distance may be 100 or 200 feet, but in rising, if there is a double rise with mullock or timber in the centre, there is one way to go up and the rope falls down or goes into the other side, and there is good travelling way. There are no buckets to fill, as is the case in the winzes. If there were rises there would have to be passes. There must be rises or winzes because this is the only way to get connection between the two levels, and the only way to get ventilation down to the lower levels. I agree with that part of the Bill relating to ventilation.

Mr. Munsie : Your leader said it was impossible.

Mr. HARPER : There is no mine manager who does not try to get his winze down to connect with his lower levels. He must have air, otherwise the men could not work, and he does this out of necessity and without an Act of Parliament. The more winzes he gets down the better the work that can be done. If this were optional with miners—if they had to make a connection between the two levels, they would invariably put up a rise in preference to a pass.

Mr. Heitmann : Would you put any limit on the height of a rise ?

Mr. HARPER: As far as the air could be got up. In some cases you can get air up to 60 feet.

Mr. Heitmann: In the Fingal mine it was 200 feet.

Mr. HARPER: Of course that is a long distance.

Mr. Heitmann: Without any boxes, too.

Mr. HARPER: That might be too much, but I have no intention of entering into an argument on the matter. After all, not so many accidents occur in rises as in winzes. For instance, we notice that an accident happened by a man falling off a bucket. If a man is hauled up and down 100 feet in a shaft, we know the danger to which he is exposed. In regard to the timbering of shafts in hard ground it is not possible to timber, because you make it dangerous for the men working below. There is another proposal in the Bill which is undesirable, and it is that the shaft has to be timbered within 40 feet of the bottom. It ought to depend on the hardness of the ground whether you can timber safely or not. I have known ground that it was not possible to safely timber below 60 feet, because of the hard rock. A shaft of that description does not require to be timbered. The rock will not fall out of ground of that kind, it is too hard, and therefore it is not necessary to timber from the point of view of safety. It is, however, necessary to timber for hauling purposes, so as to get cages down. I would like to remark here that the Bendigo mines are not nearly so healthy to work in as those of this State, for the reasons which I have already stated. Of course I know that there are a lot of men in this State who are suffering from pneumonia or miner's phthisis.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Thirty per cent.

Mr. HARPER: I doubt those figures. It does not matter what complaint a man has it is put down to miner's phthisis.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Miner's phthisis is responsible for it.

Mr. HARPER: I say to those men who are inclined to work too long in a

mine that they should not do so. There is other employment for them. They could go to agricultural districts and engage in the work of shaft sinking, and earn £1 a day. There are many who would do well if they went to the agricultural centres and there they certainly would be free from the injurious dust.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Tell them where these places are.

Mr. HARPER: I have told some already, but I cannot tell them all. I come next to the question of State batteries, which, it seems to me, is a very debatable subject. It is one that I have always opposed, whether it has been submitted by a Liberal or a Labour Government. My reasons will perhaps be difficult for the untrained men to understand. The incentive to prospect is largely done away with by the existence of State batteries, and because of the fact that there are no buyers of payable propositions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot discuss that matter.

Mr. HARPER: Other hon. members did.

Mr. SPEAKER: The leader of the Opposition did. The hon. member cannot proceed further on that question.

Mr. HARPER: Very well, I shall refer to it on some other occasion. I notice that the Chamber of Mines considers that greater use should be made of the services of the geologists.

The Minister for Mines: Where do they say that?

Mr. HARPER: I noticed it in some reports lately. If the geologists were as valuable as some people seem to think, they ought to be able to find mines, but so far in Western Australia the pick has been the finder of most of the mines. We have heard lately of the discovery of mines which did not outcrop, but most of the mines in Western Australia have shown some indication in one way or another, sufficient at any rate for prospectors to develop. There may not be much of an outcrop, but most often there is quartz strewn about which gives an indication of a reef or patch near at hand. The Great Boulder was referred

to. There again, although perhaps payable gold did not come to the surface, the district gave every indication to the expert prospector of a rich and promising field. The best encouragement we can give to mining is not to interfere with it too much. We want to see it continued, but every new Act which has been passed of recent years has made it more difficult to carry on this very important work. I hope the House in its wisdom will see the advantage of what I have said, and remember that I have said it without any bias, and in the interests of the people who work on the gold-fields, so that they may continue to work there. In looking over the different mines, and the contracts made, I notice that the Associated mine's contracts average 19s. 6d. per day; the Golden Horse-shoe, 16s. 11d.; the Main Reef, 16s. 9d.; the Perseverance, 17s. 8d.; and the Lake View, 19s. In some cases the average is as high as 20s. That is sufficient to show that the contract system should be continued. I do not intend to keep the House much longer. What I have said has been said in the interests of mining and in the interests of Western Australia. If we go on imposing these conditions on the industry in Western Australia we soon will have very few people left to defend Australia if occasion should arise. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) referred to the possibility of the British miners being required to defend this country. It is important that the mining industry should continue to employ large numbers of people, for there is no better way of defending the country than by having a large population. We require to encourage, not only mining but agriculture. I know that when the mines peter out, as I hope they will not, the agricultural districts will have to pay John Cohen & Sons the interest on the vast amount of money which we have borrowed in this State. I am speaking in the interests of those who have vested interests in Western Australia, and who have made up their minds to live here. I hope the mining industry will be encouraged in the directions which I have indicated to-night.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans): I desire to say a few words in support of the Bill introduced by the Minister for Mines. I have listened very carefully to the two speeches delivered from the Opposition benches, and have endeavoured to find some reasons advanced by those gentlemen why some of the provisions of the Bill should not become law. I have utterly failed to grasp any one particular item which they have mentioned, or any practical illustration of how the Bill is going to do any harm whatever to the mining industry if it is placed on the statute-book. I appreciate the different attitude adopted by the leading Press of the State towards the Bill introduced this session, as against the attitude adopted by it to the same Bill as introduced last session. On both occasions a leading article appeared in the *West Australian*. I want to say, as I said on the previous occasion, that the article which appeared after the introduction of the Bill of last session was an absolutely misleading statement from beginning to end. The article which appeared on this occasion, though in many places stressing points that are not facts, was of a much milder form than the earlier one. I trust also that the Bill will receive better treatment at the hands of another place than did the Bill of last session. I appreciate the difficult task the leader of the Opposition had in dealing with a subject such as mining. At the outset of his remarks on the previous occasion he said—

I admit at once, so far as I am concerned, that I should like to have the benefit of the knowledge of experts in the mining industry to assist me in coming to a conclusion on such an important matter.

Apparently, after the present Bill was introduced, the leader of the Opposition took the opportunity of getting the adjournment until the following Tuesday in order, I take it, to consult those experts. After having listened to that gentleman's speech from beginning to end, I want to say that it is patent to anybody who has ever read any of the literature issued from the Chamber of Mines, that the expert consulted by the leader of

the Opposition is the ex-secretary of that institution.

Mr. Allen: A very good man.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are quite wrong.

Mr. MUNSIE: The whole speech, from beginning to end almost, bristled with the old platitudes that have been played upon for years past by the Chamber of Mines' journal. On every occasion, not only in regard to the Mines Regulation Bill, but when any other Bill has been introduced for the benefit of humanity, or which is going to make the conditions of the lower classes better, they always indulge in these gloomy forecasts that is going to cripple, if not absolutely ruin, the industry. I want hon. members to seriously consider any suggestion that has been put forward by the two gentlemen who have spoken as to what is going to be the result if this Bill comes into operation. Neither the leader of the Opposition nor the member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) advanced any argument that cannot be refuted by practical experienced men or by the actual facts as they exist to-day. So far as the leader of the Opposition is concerned, his chief criticism of the Bill was first of all directed against the abolition of the night shift. We have heard a good deal from the member for Pingelly also as to the abolition of the night shift. Neither of those gentlemen quoted any figures, gave us any reasons, or attempted to show us how this is going to interfere with the mining industry if it is put into operation on the date stipulated in the Bill, namely, the 1st July, 1914. On the other hand, as one who has had 16 years of practical mining experience in this State. I know of no instance in Western Australia where night shift cannot be abolished with very little cost and very little inconvenience indeed to any of the companies. I desire to quote figures to show that where the night shift has been abolished it has proved of benefit to the company itself. I am honestly of opinion that if night shift generally was abolished it would be a good thing for the companies, as well as for the employees. Anybody who has had any experience of the climate on the goldfields during the summer

must of necessity realise that it is an inhuman action almost to ask men to work on the night shift. They have absolutely no possibility of getting any sleep during the daytime, unless they sleep in underground cellars, or something of that description. The leader of the Opposition, in condemning the abolition of the night shift, quoted the fact that various mines on the Golden Mile are working at a very low ebb, or on a very small margin, and he instanced the Great Boulder Perseverance and the Kalgurli Mine, and pointed out that both of these properties were showing a very poor grade of ore at a depth. I would like to know what that has to do with the abolition of night shift. I would like to ask that hon. gentleman if night shift is continued is it going to improve the value of ore at a depth? To my mind his argument seemed a little absurd. But even supposing that it did improve the value of the ore, I would like to quote the developments that have taken place in the Golden Horseshoe and the Ivanhoe mines at a depth, and to quote their increase in value as against the decrease in value quoted by the leader of the Opposition, and to hold up the one argument as a set-off against the other. As far as the night shift is concerned, I would like to quote the result of the first month's operations after the abolition of night shift on the Great Boulder. I know it has been argued that mine managers generally, if it were possible to work their mines without the night shift, would immediately resort to the two shifts. I maintain that practical experience has proved that this is not the case. I want to say that five years ago the Great Boulder Proprietary Company was in a much better position to introduce the two shifts than on the day it was introduced, namely, the 1st July of this year. The company then had a considerable quantity more ground to work and a considerable quantity more ore opened up five years ago than on the 1st July of this year. Yet the Great Boulder did not then attempt to put the two-shift system into operation. The system was inaugurated on the 1st July of this

year. Now here are the figures for the two months, June and July. For June, when they were working three shifts, the tonnage treated was 16,457 tons, the revenue £44,141, the cost £21,116, and the profits £23,002. For July, the first month during which the two shifts only were worked, the tonnage treated was 18,788 tons, the revenue was £48,320, the cost £23,868, and the profits, which seem to be the only consideration with our friends opposite, were £24,451 19s. 1d. These figures go to prove conclusively that if the night shift was abolished it would be a benefit to the mining companies themselves.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Not at all.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am perfectly satisfied they would get greater efficiency out of the men, better results from the men employed, if they worked only two shifts instead of three.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are all the mines as well developed as the Great Boulder?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, they are not; but we are giving them a reasonable time in which to develop their mines sufficiently well to allow them to abandon night shift on any mine on the Golden Mile, or indeed in Western Australian.

Mr. Monger: Oh, pass the Bill.

Mr. Heitmann: Pass the mustard.

Mr. MUNSIE: When hon. members have ceased cross-firing I will proceed. I want also to say that the Great Boulder is not the only mine on the Golden Mile which is working only two shifts. The Lake View and Boulder Star have worked two shifts for the last two years, and the costs of that mine compare more than favourably with the cost of any mine on the Golden Mile working three shifts. Yet that company is at a very big disadvantage compared with almost any other company on the Golden Mile.

Mr. Monger: What was the price of the stock 12 years ago?

The Minister for Mines: Not as high as Bullfinches.

Mr. Monger: It was £27 12s. 6d.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Lake View and Boulder Star Company is at a disadvantage because it has to carry two-thirds of the ore put through the mills at least a

mile by tramway to the battery. That fact, considering that this company is working practically the same lode as other mines in the vicinity, and considering that its costs are lower than those of the other mines adjoining, which are working three shifts, is sufficient evidence for me, at all events, that the Lake View and Boulder Star is getting greater efficiency and a greater amount of work out of the men by working two shifts, than it would be possible for the employees to give if they were working three shifts. The next item that the leader of the Opposition took serious exception to was the limiting of the height of stopes to ten feet. Again I must say that the leader of the Opposition either misread the Bill, or misquoted it in some way, inasmuch as he stated that the measure prohibits the working of a stope to a greater height than ten feet. This Bill does nothing of the kind. It does limit the height of stopes to ten feet, but there is a proviso empowering the inspector to grant a permit where he sees the ground is sufficiently safe for the owner to stope it up to 15 feet, and I am perfectly satisfied that no mine manager who knows anything of the economical working of his mine should ever, or would ever, except upon very, very rare occasions, work a stope to a greater height than 15 feet. I must admit that there are dozens of places in Western Australia where stopes are worked to heights of 60, 70, and 80 feet, but personally I am of opinion that where that condition exists it is through want of knowledge on the part of the man managing the mine. No one can tell me that he can economically work a mine that is stoped to the heights at which they are working to-day, and I say it will be a benefit to the shareholders in those companies if by Act of Parliament we can compel their managers to work the mines economically for them. Another item which the leader of the Opposition took exception to was the appointment of workmen's inspectors. The Bill does provide for three classes of inspectors, but practically only two classes are new. The three classes are

district inspectors, workmen's inspectors, and special inspectors. The appointment of workmen's inspectors is not new, and the Minister in making that proposal is not introducing anything that is an innovation to the Commonwealth. There have been workmen's inspectors in the coal mines of New South Wales for the last 15 years, and no serious objection has been taken to them by the colliery managers and proprietors. In my opinion the objection that is being raised is a mere bogey, and I want further to say on behalf of the employees in the mines that they are never going to get the efficient inspection they are deserving of until they have the right to appoint inspectors from their own ranks to be responsible to them alone. The leader of the Opposition, in criticising this particular portion of the Bill, endeavoured to lead hon. members to believe that any Tom, Dick, or Harry, irrespective of his knowledge or ability, could become a workmen's inspector. That is not the case, because the Bill definitely provides that before a man can become a workmen's inspector he must have had at least five years' practical experience underground. That being so, I think the Government are insuring the appointment of fairly qualified men to the positions of workmen's inspectors. I am perfectly satisfied that if we give to the employees the right to elect their own inspectors they will see that capable men are chosen.

Mr. Monger: You will not be one amongst them.

Mr. MUNSIE: I will have a better chance of being one of them than the member for York.

Mr. Monger: Very likely.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hope and trust that on this occasion the employees in the mining industry will receive that consideration they have been asking for during the last 10 years. They have petitioned Government after Government with the object of getting this concession, and I trust that on this occasion the good sense of members in this House and in another place will allow those workers the conditions which they re-

quire. In regard to inspection, the leader of the Opposition and the member for Pingelly, particularly the latter, contended that the majority of accidents were due to the negligence of the men themselves. I can give the House my own experience. I have worked in places which I believe to be unsafe, and I have complained repeatedly to the shift boss and the underground manager about certain places not being fit for men to work in, but that was as far as my complaint went, and that that was the full extent of the relief I got; because if I had attempted to put that complaint into practical shape I would have been looking for work the next day. And there are hundreds of others who would be in the same position.

Mr. Monger: We do not like these complaints.

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member knows nothing about it because he has never been there. In referring to accidents, the leader of the Opposition stated that the height of stopes had nothing to do with accidents occurring, and to back up that assertion he instanced an accident that had taken place in the Kalgurli mine in which an employee was killed at a place where the height of the stope was only four feet. He argued from that fact that accidents were not due to falls of ground. I know of an accident which happened in the Horseshoe mine less than two years ago through a fall of ground from a side not more than three feet from the filling, but it fell with sufficient force to kill one employee and maim another. On this point I would draw the attention of the leader of the Opposition to page 24 of the report of the Mines Department for last year. There he will see a list of accidents, fatal and otherwise, for the years 1911 and 1912. The causes of accidents were as follows:—1911, explosives, two fatal, 15 serious; falls of ground, 12 fatal, 42 serious; in shafts, 12 fatal, 33 serious; miscellaneous underground, 3 fatal, 291 serious; and in 1912, falls of ground were responsible for 14 fatal accidents and 62 serious. Now I contend that so far as fatal accidents are concerned, falls of ground have been re-

sponsible for more than any other cause that can be mentioned. That is one of the reasons why I advocate that it is absolutely necessary to limit the height of stopes. As a practical man, I contend that it is impossible for an employee, no matter how careful he may be, to ascertain whether or not the stope is safe when it is worked to such a height as many of the stopes are worked to-day, and as for the argument of the member for Pingelly with regard to the filling in of stopes, I say that it would be a benefit and no hardship if the Government were to absolutely enforce a provision that no company should be allowed to work a mine or any portion of a mine where there was no opportunity of getting mullock into it. I am absolutely in accord with the provisions in this amending Bill, to limit the height of stopes to 10 feet generally, but giving the inspectors power to grant permission to work stopes in safe ground to a height of 15 feet. Another provision which the leader of the Opposition treated with ridicule was that requiring a separate exit from the mine, other than the main shaft. I hope and trust that that provision, at all events, will be granted to us. The member for Pingelly said that there was no necessity to make that provision by Act of Parliament. I say there is a necessity to make that provision by Act of Parliament, and the necessity has existed for very many years past, particularly on the Golden Mile. I worked in one mine in which at least two-thirds of the employees were engaged from the 1,200ft. level downwards, and if an accident had happened to the main shaft every man at the 1,200 feet level or below would have been trapped like a rat in a cage. There was no possibility of any of the employees getting out of the mine other than by the main shaft, and such a position proves conclusively to my mind that it is necessary for legislation of this description to be brought in to compel people, who do not realise their responsibilities, to realise them for the sake of those whom they employ.

Mr. Monger: I would sooner have Pingelly's experience than yours.

Mr. MUNSIE: If such a provision had obtained in Tasmania that deplorable accident at Mount Lyell could not have happened. There was an instance of men being employed underground, a fire took place in the main shaft, and the whole of those men were doomed to stay below, simply because there was no means of exit except by the main shaft.

The Minister for Mines: It is a criminal risk to take.

Mr. MUNSIE: Of course it is. The leader of the Opposition stated that this provision was impracticable, that it could not be carried out, that there was no need for it. He added that if a shaft was down only a few feet it would be possible to compel the owners to sink another shaft for an exit. Now this measure, like any other measure, will require to be administered with common sense. If it is not, it will never be of any use and it certainly will not do much harm. The leader of the Opposition endeavoured to mislead the people generally by one of his statements in connection with the re-introduction of the penalty clause. In dealing with the matter he said this was placing a further burden on the mining companies. That I am prepared to admit; to an extent it is, but while he was trying to justify the deletion of the clause, he stated that if an employee met with an accident he could claim at common law, under the Workers' Compensation or the Employers' Liability Acts. Any mine employee who meets with an accident, or if it is fatal his relative has no possible hope of ever claiming anything in the way of damages at common law, and the leader of the Opposition knows it. Since the introduction of the Workers' Compensation Act repealed Section 14 of the Mines Regulation Act, there has never been a case brought before the courts of Western Australia that has proved successful at common law. On two occasions on which, to my knowledge, it has been tested, the applicants for damages have received a verdict from the jury, but in both instances the employers have pleaded common employment and the judge has had to throw the case out. On every other occasion the

verdicts have gone against the men. To emphasise this, I want to point out that on one occasion, two men were injured in a shaft at Kalgoorlie at the same time. Both of these men took action, one at common law and the other under the Workers' Compensation Act, and, although both men were injured in the same accident at the same time, the one who sued under the Workers' Compensation Act got compensation, and the one who sued at common law got nothing, while in the latter case costs which almost equalled the amount of the claim were given against the man, proving conclusively—

Mr. Monger: Bad legal advice.

Mr. MUNSIE: Proving conclusively that there is no chance while the Act remains as at present, of recovering any damages at common law.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Good legal advice from a lawyer's point of view.

Mr. Monger: No; name the lawyers.

Mr. MUNSIE: Another proposal which has been severely criticised is that of reducing the hours from 48 to 44 a week. The leader of the Opposition said that under no Act of Parliament in the Eastern States is 44 hours provided. I am not prepared to say what the Mines Regulation Acts of Queensland or Victoria stipulate in this connection, but I am prepared to say that in Queensland to-day, and for the last twenty years, miners have never worked more than 44 hours a week underground, and in Victoria, where men are working in deep levels, they work only 36 hours a week, irrespective of what the Act provides.

Mr. Monger: Let them stay away altogether.

Mr. MUNSIE: I desire to compliment the Minister on again introducing the provision limiting the number of foreigners in mines.

Mr. Monger: I thought you would leave all these congratulations to me.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not think it is necessary to say very much on this subject, as I believe the figures quoted by the Minister in moving the second reading should carry sufficient weight to cause

hon. members of this House and in another place to recognise that something in this direction at all events is necessary if we intend to keep the employment in Australia for Australians.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What are you going to do with the men you have got?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Give some to the hon. member's friends, the farmers.

Mr. MUNSIE: It struck me as being rather peculiar to hear an hon. member of this House advocating, as the hon. member for Pingelly did, the introduction of coloured labour.

Mr. Monger: He did not argue in that direction.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am pleased to an extent that the hon. gentleman has at last come out in his true colours. The whole of his argument in connection with the proposed limitation of foreigners in mines went to show that so far from supporting the provision, he thought we should extend it and give the right to bring in cheap coloured labour from abroad.

Mr. Monger: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. MUNSIE: I will take the opportunity from the public platform at an early date to tell the people of the Goldfields what the hon. member said in this connection.

Mr. George: Scandal again.

Mr. Monger: Quote *Hansard* correctly.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He said it here to-night.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MUNSIE: If any hon. gentleman doubts it, he can put his own construction upon the statement and give the House the benefit of his knowledge. I listened very attentively to the hon. member, and that was practically the only point I took from his speech as being worth replying to. I was surprised that an hon. member of this House should advocate the introduction of cheap coloured labour into Western Australia.

Mr. Monger: He never did anything of the sort.

Mr. O'Loughlen: He did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MUNSIE: The hon. member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper), in giving us the benefit of his experience of the contract system on the mines at Broken Hill, said that he had known a man who, prior to the introduction of the contract system, had gone below and slept through the whole of the shift. I think it was hardly fair for the hon. member to blame his mate.

Mr. George: We have had engine-drivers sleeping at their job before now.

Mr. MUNSIE: In the early part of his speech, the member for Pingelly said there had been 50 millions of money invested in the mining industry of Western Australia. I do not know the amount that has been invested in mining in Western Australia, but if 50 millions has been spent, it has been on paper only, and I am satisfied that in the industry there is an asset to-day which, with the dividends that have been paid, more than compensates for every penny put into it. Another item which evoked some criticism was in connection with the granting of certificates of competency to mine managers and shift bosses. I applaud that provision also. I am sorry the hon. member for Pingelly is not in his place, because I am prepared to say that if this provision had been contained in the Mines Regulation Act of 1906, many mines which to-day are closed down would still have been working and some of the managers would never have obtained certificates.

Mr. Monger: That is a nasty reflection.

Mr. MUNSIE: It is a duty of any legislature when considering a Bill dealing with a hazardous occupation like mining, to make it compulsory that a certain examination should be passed before a man is put in charge of a mine and of men who are working underground. We have had men as general managers, more so than men as underground managers, who have had no practical experience in mining in Western Australia, or in any other part of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Underwood: Some are frightened to go down a mine.

Mr. MUNSIE: If this provision is enforced, I believe that the good mine managers and underground managers and

shift bosses will welcome it, and even if they do not, those who are every day risking their lives in that occupation will welcome it. There are many other matters in this Bill which, in my opinion, are directed in the right course. Among the new provisions is one which includes the inspection of quarries. I am sorry that the present Act does not give the Mines Department power to inspect or see to the safe working of quarries, but I consider that the present measure does not go quite far enough. The Bill limits the quarries which can be supervised by the inspectors to those which are more than 20 feet from the natural surface, which depth is altogether too great. There is just as much need for supervision in a quarry which is only ten feet deep, as in one 100 feet deep, and I would like to see this measure provide for the inspection of any quarry irrespective of its depth. Another new clause provides for guides in shafts. That is a wise provision; it only stipulates that a guide shall be placed in a shaft where men are hauled or lowered. That is a necessary alteration to the present Act. There is another new provision and a good one, dealing with the method of signalling. Some of the finest possible methods of signalling are in use on the Golden Mile to-day. There is any number of mines throughout Western Australia which could conveniently and without much cost adopt the system outlined in this Bill, and I believe that system is practically in vogue to-day in the Perseverance mine on the Golden Mile and on two or three of the other mines, and if that system is adopted throughout the State, it will be the means of preventing many accidents which happen at present. Another clause makes it compulsory that all cages or skips in which men are hauled or lowered shall be provided either with gates or doors. This is necessary. The chief inspector of the Eastern Goldfields district, a gentleman in whom I have every confidence, in discussing this particular proposition, admitted that this alteration to the present Act was necessary. He has had the painful duty of conducting two inquiries into fatal accidents which have happened to men who

were being hauled up a shaft on the Golden Mile. If this provision had been in force in the past, these accidents could not possibly have happened. These gates or doors can be provided without putting any company to an expenditure of more than 30s. at the outside. Small though these matters seem to be, it is nevertheless necessary that such provision should be made for the protection of the life and limbs of those who are employed in the industry. I want to say in conclusion that this State has had to incur a good deal of expense in providing means for the upkeep of those who are left behind as the result of the death of workers employed in the mining industry. I honestly believe that if we get this measure through and many of the objects comprised in it become law, not only will we be getting rid of an evil which causes so much distress on our goldfields, but I believe that in time to come we will practically eradicate to a great extent the dread disease of miner's phthisis. I trust that the Government will, irrespective of this Bill, in the near future, so far as the Mining Development vote is concerned, or even from a special grant, lay down some scheme or cause some interest to be taken in the prevention of dust in mines by offering a substantial reward. Something in that connection should be done. I believe that the provision contained in this Bill for the abolition of the night shift will go a long way towards eradicating the dust nuisance as it exists to-day. I am sorry that the measure does not go so far as to compel all mines to sprinkle or to use water to allay the dust nuisance on every level where men are employed. That, in my opinion, can be done economically and cheaply, and for the information of the hon. member for York (Mr. Monger). I might point out that it is done to-day in one mine in Western Australia, and was introduced at the instigation of the manager himself. I refer to the Fenian mine, at Meekatharra, which employs a considerable number of men; on every level of that mine pipes are laid on and the working faces may be sprinkled.

Mr. Monger: I am glad to hear it.

Mr. MUNSIE: When we have men controlling mines who do not take the same reasonable view, and the same interest in the health of their employees, I say it would be a good thing if we could institute some legislation to compel them to look after the health of their employees a little better than they are doing at present. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. McDOWALL (Coolgardie): The practical members of this Chamber have, I think, exhausted pretty well everything in connection with this measure. Therefore, it only remains for me to say a few words generally. I listened to the hon. member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) to-night, and I confess that I listened to him with very much amusement. The hon. member started off by telling us it was all very well to go in for humanitarian principles and matters of that kind in connection with mining. He told us we might prevent a farmer from working in wet weather, or a lawyer from going home and stewing over cases at night. He also said something about a lady typist, but what it was I did not quite catch. He also went on about the overdrawn financial position, and members of Parliament sitting up late at night. What that specially had to do with an important measure like this I do not know, but I do know it is ridiculous to compare mining, an unhealthy occupation, with the work of a farmer, and with those other occupations. Of course it was a sad and pathetic picture. I pictured in my mind's eye the poor farmer going out in the drizzling rain. I pictured him with his oilskins going along to his fields and endeavouring to do his work. What a terrible ordeal, what a terrible thing! Then I look at the other picture. I go into a mine, the stope of the mine or the various parts of a mine after firing has taken place, and I inhale the fumes among which the unfortunate miners have to work. That is the difference between these occupations. It was an absurd comparison in every possible way. We all know that the mining industry is unhealthy, and requires special consideration. For that reason I have

great pleasure in supporting the measure introduced by the Minister for Mines. That it is a necessary measure is beyond argument. The hon. member for Pingelly also said that if a man is losing his health in mining he must put up with the consequences if he continues to work too long in a mine. I must confess that that is a beautiful sentiment indeed. How can a man help working if he has a wife and family dependent on him? If he has but himself to keep he must work, and we can understand the agony of mind that must be endured by a man knowing that his health is going and knowing that he must still continue to work to get bread for himself and his wife and family. I maintain that mining is the cause of more disease than any other ordinary occupation, and in the circumstances it is deserving of special legislation. The other evening the leader of the Opposition told us that if we could reduce the cost of production by about 4s. a ton it would be a splendid thing for the mining industry of the State. He, of course, did not tell us how we are going to bring about this reduction. He simply mentioned the reduction. Surely the hon. member would not dream of bringing this about by a reduction in the men's wages. Surely he would not dream of bringing it about by neglecting necessary precautions in order to ensure the comfort and well-being of the men working underground.

Mr. Monger: Who made that suggestion?

Mr. McDOWALL: I tell you the leader of the Opposition suggested it would be a splendid thing for mining if the cost of production could be reduced by about 4s. a ton. I agree with the leader of the Opposition so far as that is concerned; if it could be brought about by improved machinery and better methods, then by all means let us have the reduction in the cost of production. But if it is to be brought about at the expense of the unfortunate men working underground, at the expense of their health, I certainly do not agree with him. The leader of the Opposition also told us that if we are to have a revival of mining

presently the wisest thing to do would be to curtail to some extent the expenditure on Government batteries under the Mines Development Act. I am astonished indeed to find such a sentiment emanating from the leader of the Opposition. I think it must be confessed that the State battery system has been of immense advantage to this State. It is of immense advantage to the prospector who is constantly endeavouring to find new fields, and without such aid it would be very difficult indeed to get any returns. The State batteries have produced £3,973,736 worth of gold. That is an enormous amount, and I think that the stimulation of the mining industry would not take place by doing away with these State batteries. The hon. member for Pingelly told us that every clause in the Bill is inimical to mining, but he failed really to point out where the clauses are inimical. He simply told us it was so, and did not attempt to prove it in any way whatever. I do not believe for one solitary moment that any disastrous results are going to follow the putting into operation of this measure. I do not think there is the slightest fear that the ill effects predicted are going to take place. The leader of the Opposition seems to have a terrible dread of check inspectors. He says it would be harassing the industry, and he alludes with scorn to the so-called workmen's inspector, forgetting that these inspectors exist in New South Wales, and that they have proved effective and useful so far as the mining industry there is concerned. The hon. member for Pingelly informed us of the immense amount of work he did on Fraser's mine when there was practically no inspection. That is no argument whatever why we should not have these inspectors. It might have been a certain amount of chance that enabled the hon. member to get on so well. It must be understood that the only desire is to appoint competent inspectors. We have no desire to appoint inspectors who do not thoroughly understand their work. Then we have the leader of the Opposition, and also the hon. member for Pingelly, becoming quite indignant on the question of the limitation of the height

of stopes. They told us that 10 feet is ridiculous; they maintained that there should be no restriction in this direction, but I prefer to believe in the opinions of practical miners who have spoken in this House, and in the practical experience that has been obtained by them. Surely these men know something of what the conditions are under which they work, and common sense tells us that when a miner cannot touch the ground to ascertain whether it is sound, there must be some danger. Of course, no man can touch a stope 40 or 50 feet high, and under the circumstances I pin my faith to the practical man who has considered this question. Then we have the 44 hours question. The leader of the Opposition says the reduction in the worker's earning capacity would amount to 6.8 per cent. as it was not likely the companies would pay the same for 44 hours as they would pay for 47. This argument has been advanced almost from time immemorial. No reform has taken place in working hours but this same argument has been trotted out. When the eight hours system came in, many people said it meant ruin, as it was impossible to obtain the same wages for shorter hours, but the results have proved that it was not impossible, but on the contrary it has worked out splendidly, better even than had been supposed. The Minister for Pingelly told us—I must admit to the amusement of the various mining members—

Mr. George: You are prophesying, are you not?

Mr. McDOWALL: No. I am not.

Mr. George: You referred to the hon. member as the new Minister for Mines.

Mr. McDOWALL: I intended to say the hon. member for Pingelly. The hon. member said, certainly to the amusement of the mining members, that mining is the easiest work. I think it is a remarkable thing for an hon. member to make a statement of that kind.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: He is the prospective Minister for Mines.

Mr. McDOWALL: Mining certainly cannot be the easiest of work, yet the

member for Pingelly informs us to that effect. Then we have the question of the night shift, and it is predicted that if the men cease to work between midnight and 8 in the morning the country will go to ruin. Is there any reason to believe that for one moment? The member for Hannans has pointed out what has taken place in connection with the Great Boulder mine, and no evil result has followed, while none is likely to occur. Therefore, I think that it would be a splendid thing to do away with the night shift. It must be realised that the weather is very warm on the goldfields at times, and, as has been pointed out, it is impossible to sleep during the day. In view of all these facts, therefore, I cannot see any reason why this should not be an excellent portion of the measure. With regard to the question of the employment of foreigners on mines it is a reasonable thing that they should be able to understand the English language. There is no doubt about it that they endanger human life very frequently now. Mr. Justice Burnside, a few years ago, in dealing with a case on the goldfields, said to some of the foreigners "The law requires that you should all readily speak and understand English. I have had ten before me lately and not one of you has been able to speak English." It is ridiculous to say that it is safe to work with people who do not understand your language. Under the circumstances, we have every reason to be pleased that the Minister for Mines has brought in this measure. At the commencement of my remarks I stated that the practical members of the House had said pretty well everything that could possibly be said with regard to this measure, therefore it is not my intention to occupy very much time. I think, however, it must be admitted that the measure is one that is necessary. If it were not necessary it would not be advocated in the way that has been done for many years by the mining members, and the people resident on the goldfields. I sincerely trust that the measure will become law and that it will tend to improve the conditions of the miners and cause their lot to be better than it is at the present time. The mea-

sure is a step in the right direction and I most heartily support it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I have no wish to pose as a mining expert but it appears to me that the Bill has been discussed not from the point of view the Minister wished, but from the personal experiences of the representatives of the goldfields. I am afraid that they have paid little regard to the alterations proposed in the Bill. I am bound to confess that the Minister made a moderate speech, and put his case fairly and in such a way as to win support. The Minister realised the responsibility he is under when he suggested these amendments, and of course he will be called upon to take the responsibility when the measure comes into force. Hon. members on the Government side who support the Minister have ignored his proposals and they have discussed happenings in the mines. If we desire to make mining safe, I think we shall have to close down the industry. No work can remain free from accident. Men are apt to become careless and treat danger with contempt, and then accidents happen. Mining is no more dangerous than work in the timber industry. A man who rides in a motor car takes a risk. I doubt whether the Minister would be wise in going as far as he has done in the direction of reducing the chances of accident, because it is utterly impossible to achieve that object, but it is possible to saddle a good deal of additional cost on to mining operations. We know that the mines year by year are producing less. I have turned up the reports of the Mines Department and I find that there were 1,728 fewer men employed in mining during 1912 than in 1911. Surely this is an important matter which should not escape the notice of the Minister. Why has there been this falling off? Is it because mining is less profitable? Is it because the conditions set up against mining are such that the mines are unable to employ as freely as they did before? I cannot supply the reasons, still I think it is advisable that the Minister should tell us why there has been this falling off. The Minister should not, by any suggestion, make it

still more difficult for the investment of capital, with a chance of earning a profit. I notice also that the profits from gold mining have fallen considerably. We on this side of the House are just as desirous as the Minister that men should find work at good wages, and that they should be protected. But when we find that dividends have decreased from £2,160,000 in 1905 to £814,000 in 1912, and when we remember that over 25 millions sterling has been brought out to assist in the development of the country, it will be seen that we are likely by legislation of this kind to make the position more difficult for the investor. People who invest money in the mining industry are entitled to get a fair return for it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They have had nearly 25 millions in dividends.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not urging that profits should be the first consideration, I realise that this House has a duty to perform to the people, whether it be to the men who invest money in our mines or the men who work in the mines. But I am bound to call attention to the true position in regard to gold mining. Year by year there has been a decrease in the number of men employed, and year by year there has been a decrease in the profits.

Mr. Heitmann: Therefore, we must not take precautions for the miners.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am pointing out, as every hon. member should do, just what has happened. The member for Coolgardie took the leader of the Opposition to task for suggesting that it would be well if we could reduce the cost of mining. I think that would be a grand thing because it would then be possible to work mines which were not now being worked. If we can take 3s. or 4s. off the cost of treating stone, it would be possible to double the number of men who are now being employed in the industry. No one, however, wants this result achieved at the cost of the men themselves, and the leader of the Opposition would be the last man to suggest such a thing. Hon. members know that mining costs have already been

decreased by the expenditure of capital, and by the expenditure of brain power on the part of the mine managers. It has been due to their ability and experience that costs have been reduced, with the result that probably thousands of men have been kept in work, who, if the conditions had been permitted to remain as they were five or seven years ago, would to-day be out of work because the mines would have had to close down. We have reduced costs, but at the same time we have increased wages. The member for Coolgardie need have no fear that the leader of the Opposition wants to reduce wages, but he does hope, as we all hope, that it will be possible to reduce costs by some means or other without affecting miners' wages. Regarding the question of the employment of foreigners, I know this is a difficult one, but I would like to ask the Minister what he proposes to do with the men if they are taken away from the employment they are now engaged upon. Will he find work for them in the timber or the agricultural industry? He certainly cannot drive them out of the country. They are better suited to mining than to any other occupation. I do not know whether the Minister can frame legislation that will apply to the future, but I would point out that all these men can eventually become naturalised, and when they do he will have no control over them under this measure. These men, who are Europeans, will become good citizens. They are here now and they will have to be provided for. I agree, of course, that no one should work in a mine unless he can speak English. I do hope the Minister will realise that in asking the House to agree to these proposals he will be throwing these foreigners on the labour market. By denying them the right under the system he suggests to work on mines, they would have to come on the local labour market, which is already fairly fully supplied. However, it is for him to take that phase of the question into consideration and take the full responsibility for it. There are five important proposals contained in this measure and

the one I think the most important is that in regard to inspectors. There are to be three different sets of inspectors, the district inspector we know of now, special inspectors, and workmen's inspectors. The last named are to be nominated by the unions, but if more are wanted why not continue the system of district inspectors, which we have now. So far as I know, the district inspectors of to-day have given satisfaction; they are appointed by the Minister and he can see to it that the right men are selected for the position. So far as I know there have been no complaints against them; their actions have never been questioned.

Mr. Heitmann: I questioned one.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Except, perhaps, on one occasion. Their devotion to duty is undoubted, and their ability so far as I know is beyond question. If they are suitable, why not continue the system, which does not make for divided authority, as is provided now by the Minister. If inspectors have failed in their duty, why not produce instances to show in which direction the failure was?

Mr. Heitmann: Special inspectors will only be appointed on special occasions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, special inspectors requiring special knowledge, but they will be inspectors all the same for the time being, so that a mine owner will have to submit to these three sets of inspectors. The workmen's inspector will serve under the district inspector; he will be really assistant to the district inspectors.

Mr. Heitmann: A check upon them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A check upon the district inspectors, a check upon his superior officers. He is to be a man appointed to see that the district inspector does his duty. Why do we pay the Minister for Mines to look after these men, and see that only the right men are appointed? I object strongly to the appointment of one set of officers to look after another set of superior officers. Surely that cannot be the suggestion of the Minister for Mines. The hon. gentleman put up a very good case, I admit, but apart altogether from that case we

have the Bill, which is of much more importance, since we can see for ourselves just what the Bill provides. Does the Minister in all seriousness ask us to agree to the appointment by the unions of inspectors to be paid by the Government, to watch inspectors who are now already employed, their superior officers? I for one do not propose for a moment to agree to that arrangement. If the safety of the miners demands greater activity on the part of the inspectors, say so; if the safety of the miners demands a greater number of inspectors, say so, and let us have them. No one wishes that the safety of the miners shall be endangered or interfered with in order that we may save the expenditure of a few hundred pounds a year. But let us see that we exercise some commonsense in framing the law that controls them. Let us see that nothing is done which will discourage the investor or hamper those controlling mines in the discharge of their duty. Then, too, there is the suggestion that 44 hours shall constitute a week's work. Is the pay of the miner to be reduced because of the reduced hours? The Minister for Mines shakes his head; but will the Minister or any one else pay as much for 44 hours' work as for 48 hours' work? The difference in the volume of work may not be very noticeable for a little time, but what will be the effect in a year or two? A man can only be paid for what he earns. Even under the 48 hours' system there has been a falling off in the work done in the mines. The Minister knows that the same rate of pay cannot obtain for 44 hours' work as obtains for 48 hours' work.

The Minister for Mines: All history is against you; because side by side with the reduction of hours there has been an increased volume of work.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, if that is so, why not make it one hour per day, and be done with it? Eight hours per day is a fair day's work.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member knows that wages were lower when a ten hours' day obtained.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may be so. It may be that 10 hours is too long a period for a day's work. Eight hours

seems to be the accepted standard of a fair day's work, and we base our wages on the eight hours' system, and our standard of living on the earnings obtaining under the eight hours' system.

The Minister for Mines: There is no special reason why it should be eight hours.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, there is no special reason at all. A man can earn enough in four hours, so long as his wants are in keeping with what he earns. But I venture to say that we do not wish to reduce wages or the standard of living. Yet we are asked by the Minister for Mines to do both. We are asked to agree to a 44 hours' week. By statute we are to reduce the hours of work to 44 per week. I venture to say that if the Minister for Mines will turn up the report of the Commissioner of Railways; if he will turn up the words uttered by the Minister for Works at Fremantle a few weeks ago, he will see that both those gentlemen question whether they are getting as much work now as they did in the past. Effort under the 48 hours' system has decreased; what is it going to be when we adopt the 44 hours' standard? At any rate, the Minister again takes the responsibility. If he introduces this 44 hours' system, wages must be reduced. I venture to say there will certainly be a reduction in wages if the Minister succeeds in putting this provision on the statute-book. Then there is to be no piece work. The man who has special knowledge and special ability is not to be allowed to make use of it, is not to turn it into coin of the realm. He is to work for day wages, to work all the time for a daily wage. He is not to have the opportunity of earning a specially good wage. The proposition is ridiculous. Why should not a man have some freedom? Why should he not be allowed to put up a special effort and earn a special cheque? The Minister knows that the men on piece-work on the goldfields do not earn less than a fair day's wage. The Minister knows that they earn a great deal more than the average wage paid to the ordinary mine worker. I believe that a man should have the right to do piece-work, whether on the mines

or in the coastal districts. A man should have the right to take piece-work just as he pleases. The Government let work by contract, piece-work really, on their railways. They let out small jobs. The formation is let and the clearing is sometimes let, and various other items of the work in connection with railway building are let by piece-work. Still, the miners are by statute going to be denied the right to take a contract to sink a shaft. Does the Minister think that is reasonable? There ought to be enough members in this House of 50 to vote the Minister down on a proposition of this sort. I do not know very much about stopes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Do you know anything about truck work?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not propose to discuss the question of stopes, beyond expressing the opinion that the member who spoke before the member for Hannans was perfectly right when he stated that the matter should be left to the mining inspectors. He pointed out that the proposed limit of 10 feet should be increased if the inspector thought it safe. I think a man should be allowed to work beyond 10 feet if it is safe. Of course the limit should be reached before the work becomes dangerous. I agree with the Minister that some restriction should be placed upon the height; but that restriction should not be unnecessarily severe. Then we have the night shift. The Minister says this is all-important. So far as I can see the Minister realises the difficulty of enforcing the night shift clause, because he says he is not going to put it into operation for some considerable time. I daresay that if the House were to urge him he would agree to extend that time. At any rate, the provision must have the effect of throwing men out of work. It is true that some of the mines on the goldfields can work without the night shift, and that those mines do work without it. But they are well developed properties. The Great Boulder and one or two others have been opened up sufficiently to be able to put down a sufficient number of men to keep their mills going working two shifts.

Will the Minister say that other mines can do the same? Will he tell us that there are not many mines which would have to close down if he enforced the night shift straight away? Of course the Minister is going to give time to enable the mines to put in sufficient developmental work to make the two shifts possible. I do not know whether the time he suggests is sufficient to enable this developmental work to be completed. The Minister did not tell us whether the mines are in a sufficiently good financial position to carry out this developmental work. The Minister ought to be very careful before he does anything which will discourage employment, particularly when employment is not too plentiful. The Minister admits that mine managers prefer day work, and would not indulge in night work if they could avoid it. Is it not possible that they will come together on this question without any compulsion from this provision? I am told that this night work is particularly dangerous to health, and I realise that we all owe a responsibility to these workmen. If it could be shown that night work is particularly dangerous, then the Minister would have the right to expect the House to be entirely with him on this question. Certainly, so far as I am concerned, I should be. But he has not shown that night work is particularly dangerous to health. So far as I can see, the work underground is unpleasant at all times. I have been down many mines, and I frankly admit that I do not wish to work in any of them. There is no occupation which appeals to me less. The dirt and the damp and the darkness and the danger are all factors which should make the employment much less popular than it is. However, it is a fact that men who go away from the goldfields to the broad acres of Western Australia and take up agricultural pursuits never want to go back and undertake mining again. If the Minister can show that special protection should be afforded to these workers, and that his measure is a reasonable one, and that men will not be thrown out of work, and that the mines will be allowed to continue operations

with some reasonable chance of success, then I think members on this side will support the Minister. But the Minister has not shown us that there is a special danger, or that the mines can do the development work necessary in the time he proposes to give them. These proposals of the Minister really form the basis of the Bill. There are no other alterations or amendments of any consequence. We have the 44 hours standard, the doing away with piece work, the doing away with the night shift, and the appointment of inspectors. These are the principal features in the proposed amendments. The Bill is a consolidating measure, and so probably hon. members do not realise that there are these new suggestions presented for our consideration. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper) referred to the mines in South Africa, and pointed out that those mines are worked by coloured labour under the control of white men who earn from £60 to £100 a month. I should not care to be one of the white men controlling these coloured men at from £60 to £100 a month. He went on to refer to the work on our mines by coloured labour. He did not recommend it at all. He said that if we worked the mines in Western Australia as the mines in South Africa were worked every man in the country would be a boss and would escape work and draw a fairly big salary. But he did not suggest that our mines should be flooded by Chinese or coloured men. Another hon. member endeavoured to fix upon the member for Pingelly the responsibility of having said that coloured men should be brought in here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He said, "if we had them here."

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But he did not say they ought to be brought here; he said nothing of the sort. He simply made a comparison, and the Minister and every hon. member knows that the member for Pingelly suggested nothing of the sort. If such a suggestion were to be made it would not be supported by any member on this side of the House. During the discussion it has been suggested that the leader of the Opposition showed small concern for the worker, and that every member sitting on this side of the House

showed the same lack of concern. That is not true. We realise that we have a responsibility to the worker. We want him to have work, and we realise that there is a danger in these suggestions, and that he may not have as much work as he has now. We believe that if the suggestions of the Minister become law, men will be thrown out of work, and so we enter our protest against them. The member for Menzies referred to the late Colonial Secretary (Mr. Connolly) and criticised him because, although a representative of the goldfields, he opposed this Bill. I venture to say that the goldfields industry has no better advocate than Mr. Connolly, because in speaking of mining he knows what he is talking about, and the hon. member for Menzies, I am sure, will admit in his calmer moments that the reflection on the late Colonial Secretary is not warranted. Hon. members on the Government side should give their opponents credit for doing what they believe to be right, and no man has taken a keener interest in mining, or done more for it in his position than Mr. Connolly. I have no wish to detain the House any longer, and I should not have spoken at all if members representing the goldfields had dealt with the amendments proposed by the Minister for Mines, and not, as they did, with the question generally. I desire that members shall know what the Minister proposes, and that there shall be no uncertainty. The Minister no doubt believes that his proposals are necessary, but I venture to say that if the Bill becomes law in its present form, the Minister will regret its passing before many months are gone. Of course the persuasions of the Minister may influence hon. members to carry the measure. We, who sit on this side of the House, are proud of the fact that the gold mines do pay the wages that are paid to-day, and that the conditions imposed upon the workers are as favourable as they are. I suppose that no other set of mine managers in the world, if given the same opportunities, could produce the same results for the worker. I hope that the Minister will see to it that the provisions of this Bill are made quite clear to the country, and that when the Bill is before another place he

will see that the Minister there places the matter clearly and fairly before the public. I believe that there is great danger in these proposals, and that if they become law the Minister will be saddled with a very great responsibility indeed.

Mr. DWYER (Perth): I do not desire to discuss the provisions of this measure at any great length, but merely to compliment the Government in a general way on having introduced the Bill, and to refer to a couple of clauses, the importance of which to the mining industry and the men engaged in it is very great indeed. It is well within the memory of some members of this House that under the first Mines Regulation Act passed here during the regime of Sir John Forrest and taken from the New Zealand legislation of that time, the occurrence of an accident in a mine was made evidence of neglect on the part of the owner or his agent, the mine manager, and the person injured, or, in the case of death, his representative, had a good cause of action under the Mines Regulation Act on proof of an accident occurring. The onus of proving that all care and caution possible had been used and exercised lay on the mine-owner or mine manager. However, further legislation in the shape of the Workers' Compensation Act was shortly afterwards passed, which destroyed those two sections in the Mines Regulation Act of 1895, and apparently as a sort of recompense to the miner, while he was robbed, so to speak, of his right of legal redress for the occurrence of an accident to him, or the right to redress on the part of the person representing him in the case of death, he was given a sort of sop in the form of a small compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, a compensation altogether inadequate for his needs and not at all just in view of the fact that the responsibility for the observance of these regulations in mines should rest on the shoulders of the persons who were reaping the most benefit, namely the owner and his manager and the persons placed in positions of high authority. Following on that, we had a decision, confirmed by the Federal High Court, that a man occupying the high position of a mine manager was in com-

mon employment with and a fellow-servant of the man who worked for a daily wage of twelve or fourteen shillings, and therefore an accident due to carelessness or to lack of due precaution could not, generally speaking, be compensated for under the Employers' Liability Act. I see that an attempt is now to be made to alter that position, and I hope it will be a successful attempt. There was no reason that could be offered why the workers in mines should have their rights stripped away from them by the original Workers' Compensation Act, and there is every reason to hope that the rights taken away from them at that time will now be restored to them. I hope that the good sense of the House will see that they are placed in the same position as they were in 1895, when the first Mines Regulation Act was passed, under the regime of Sir John Forrest, and I hope that the legislators in another place will see that those rights are restored to the men. After all, the men engaged in mining are in a very hazardous and dangerous occupation. Those who go into the bowels of the earth to seek to win dividends for the shareholders take the greatest possible chance of losing their lives. They deserve first of all decent conditions; decent hours and good regulations, and they deserve, in view of the hazardous nature of their employment, that if an accident has happened to them they should have redress from the mine manager or mine-owner if that accident is caused through non-observance of some of the regulations under the Act. It struck me at the time, and it still strikes me, as one of the worst anomalies in the laws of the community, a community containing such a large proportion of working men, and the one which of all communities should most sympathise with the workers in these mines, that we should have a section of this character in the Mines Regulation Act of 1906—

Nothing in this Act contained shall confer on any person a right of action which would not have accrued to him if this Act had not been passed.

In other words, the worker was left simply to his rights as if no Mines Regu-

lation Act was in existence, and the only penalty meted out to mine owners or managers for non-observance of the regulations was simply the small fine proposed under the Act, and the injured worker and the relatives of persons who had sustained fatal accidents were left without redress and had to rely solely on their claims under the Workers' Compensation Act. I say that in this community such legislation is a disgrace to our statute-book, and I hope that it will be amended. It is not in conformity with the legislation of other countries, of New Zealand, or even of England, and I hope this Bill when passed will contain the two provisions I have referred to, that the rights of the men which have been taken away from them will be restored, and that the mine owner or manager, if he neglects to observe the regulations laid down here clearly and definitely will pay the penalty of his neglect, if injury or death ensues, by being compelled to pay sufficient compensation to men who have been injured and to the families of those victims who have been killed.

Mr. MONGER (York) moved—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. MONGER: Divide!

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow a division. There were not any voices for the ayes.

Mr. MONGER: I beg to join issue with you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will take his seat.

Mr. MONGER: May I speak to the motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may speak on the Bill.

Mr. MONGER: I moved the adjournment of the debate and the motion was duly seconded. I cannot quite understand what has happened. I desire in the first place to congratulate the Minister on having introduced this Bill. I desire to congratulate him upon the splendid manner in which he introduced the Bill, and I also desire to congratulate the members for Leonora, Menzies, and one or two other "outside blocks," on the manner in which they supported the

measure. I would further congratulate every member sitting on the Government side of the House on the fact that if there has been one desire on their part to create a little bit of friction and to do something antagonistic to the interests of the people of the goldfields, in this measure they are going to very nearly succeed. I am going to support this measure to-night, because we have a goldfields Ministry and naturally they could only introduce legislation which would have the effect of benefitting the goldfields community. It is with that desire, and knowing how interested they are that I am going to support the second reading of this measure. But I say at the same time that if ever there was a great scandal and a great piece of maladministration attempted in the interests of these same people, it is being introduced by the goldfields Ministry. I congratulate them upon having introduced, and practically carried by an overwhelming majority—

Mr. Lewis: Brutal majority.

Mr. MONGER: Overwhelming majority, this peaceful bit of legislation which is going to do more to damn the goldfields industry than anything that was ever attempted to foist on the people of Western Australia. For these reasons I congratulate the Minister—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MONGER: I congratulate the Minister—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. MONGER: For having—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MONGER: Consequently!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for York cannot expect me to be lenient with him all the days of the session in this Chamber. He has received more tolerant treatment than any other hon. member, and the hon. member is not grateful for that treatment. If he does not keep order in future when called to order, I shall unhesitatingly name him.

Mr. MONGER: I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have only in conclusion to congratulate the Minister for Mines upon the introduction of this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (in reply): The strength of the opposition that has been offered to this Bill is of such a nature that I need occupy but very little time in reply. The speech of the leader of the Opposition was along the lines which have been familiar to us on the goldfields for many years past; in fact, it contained all the stereotyped arguments that have appeared in the columns of the journal of the Chamber of Mines for very many years. It contained nothing new; nothing which is of any value so far as I am concerned.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Much that ought to be answered, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope to be able to answer most of the points raised by the leader of the Opposition when we reach, in the Committee stage, the various clauses with which he dealt. But of quite a different character was the long rambling, disjointed, and incoherent utterance of the hon. member for Pingelly (Mr. Harper). That hon. member roamed in his mental vision from Queensland to South Africa, and the wide world over.

Mr. Harper: He did not impersonate anyone to get a job under an assumed name.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It contained nothing by way of information to this House, though it was certainly most interesting, and I take it the hon. member was pronouncing or voicing the policy of the Liberal party so far as the mining industry of this State is concerned.

Mr. Lewis: The country party also.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I say that, because when the hon. member resumed his seat he was greeted with loud applause by those hon. members on his side of the House, evidencing thereby that the sentiments to which he had given expression received their hearty endorsement.

Mr. Dwyer: It was a complement of long-windedness.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And I regret, for the sake of the public life of Western Australia or of the Commonwealth, that it should be left to Western

Australia and a member of this House to advocate the introduction of coloured labour into the mines in this State.

Mr. Harper: That is a deliberate falsehood.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must withdraw.

Mr. Harper: I will withdraw, but I never did.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will do.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Those who were present will remember that the hon. member became quite eloquent, if such a thing were possible—

Mr. Thomas: It is not possible.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: When he was describing the conditions, the ideal and happy conditions obtaining in South Africa—

Mr. Harper: *Hansard* will not support you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The ideal conditions where 100,000 or 160,000 white people were living in luxury at the expense of the toil of the kaffirs. The hon. member pointed out that if we had similar labour in Western Australia, if we had kaffirs and coloured races here, dozens of mines which are now idle would be working to-day.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He did not advocate bringing them in.

Mr. O'Loghlen: He did.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will satisfy the hon. member that he did advocate bringing them in.

Mr. Harper: You are an absolute prevaricator of the truth.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What was the object of the hon. member in pointing out to the House the conditions of labour in another country and what was the point in explaining to the House that the mines could be worked to the advantage of Western Australia with such labour, if it was not with the purpose of convincing hon. members that it would be to the advantage of this country to bring coloured labour here?

Mr. Harper: That is your conclusion.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What was the point the hon. member was trying to make if that was not his purpose? One is not surprised at his attitude when

we know that he has recently joined an association, whose fighting policy of longer hours and shorter wages is blazoned across their banners.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is not so; that is not fair.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Longer hours and shorter wages might be more easily obtained by labour of the description the hon. member eulogised.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is not their policy, and you know it. We may as well say you believe in South African labour because Watson went there.

Mr. Heitmann: He has never had men stealing samples from a mine for him.

Mr. Harper: Who is the stealer?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am going to ask hon. members to cease these interjections. They are not pertinent to the question under discussion, and are merely personalities hurled across the Chamber, which provoke hon. members to lose their temper and say things which afterwards, I feel sure, they will regret.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The pronouncement of the hon. member in favour of coloured labour is all the more important in that he being the only member on that side of the House with mining experience, we may safely predict he will occupy the office of Minister for Mines in the next Liberal Administration.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: If there ever is one.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But under present circumstances that would be the portfolio allotted to the hon. member. Then we shall probably have the conditions described by the hon. member as existing in South Africa when he, with a majority then behind him, will introduce the labour of which he is so fond.

Mr. Harper: I will never expect any support from the goldfields.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member was unable to impartially criticise the Bill, he was unable to criticise it intelligently for quite another reason, but he was unable to impartially criticise the Bill because of the fact that the goldfields population have always voted against him and his party.

Mr. Harper: I have never had experience as a municipal scavenger in Boulder.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member will have more experience before I have done with him. Members on this side of the House have admitted that Western Australia has mine managers of capacity and knowledge with regard to the industry not excelled in any part of the world. That sentiment I endorsed when the leader of the Opposition was speaking, but I did it with a mental reservation. I did not intend it to apply to all the mine managers that Western Australia has had during her mining experience. In this respect there have been mine managers, as there are men in every other walk of life, to whom the term I referred to does not apply at all. I know of mine managers or those who have occupied the position of mine manager in Western Australia who obtained their first rise in that direction by means and by methods which I am pleased to say are not resorted to by the large majority of those who occupy such positions. I know, for instance, of a mine manager who obtained his first rise from the position of a labourer underground to that of a shift-boss by the fact that he purchased a position from the manager at the particular time.

Mr. Thomas: Is that the one who went to sleep in a barrow?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What about the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am referring to matters dealt with during the course of the debate, and I am using this as an illustration in order to show that there were incompetent mine managers who became mine managers by reason of the fact that they possessed other qualities for the position than that of ability.

Mr. Harper: Was that in this State?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It was not in this State; it was in another State.

Mr. Harper: Which State?

Mr. Heitmann: One man borrowed £100 and could not pay it back, and the other was given a job instead.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : So far as the criticism of this Bill is concerned it has been of the nature I anticipated, and the whole of it can be boiled right down to that of profits or working costs. The members who spoke, the leader of the Opposition, and the member for Pingelly, throughout the whole of their arguments in dealing with the various proposals, stressed the point that the measure would increase the costs of mining in this State. Never for one instant did they mention the point as to whether it was going to reduce the number of accidents, minimise the risk of accidents in our mines, or produce healthier conditions than prevail at present. The one god in this case, as it has been in the case of all other Bills of a similar character dealing with the wages and conditions of employees' industrial life, has been that of profits, profits from beginning to end, and I say there are other conditions and other points to be taken into consideration besides that of the actual cost, and while I stated in moving the second reading of the Bill that I did not admit it would increase the costs to any considerable extent—

Hon. J. Mitchell : It may throw men out of work.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I am taking the responsibility for the number of men who will be thrown out of work. It is not the number of men who will be thrown out of work if the Bill is passed that concerns the opponents of the measure—

Hon. J. Mitchell : It is.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : It is quite a different object they have in view.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Certainly not.

Mr. Harper : Nothing of the kind.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The men themselves are prepared to take the risk of losing employment by virtue of the operations of the measure. As I have already stated, even if it had the result to a slight extent of increasing the costs of mining operations in this State, if it is going to improve the conditions of labour underground, then I say it is

amply warranted from that point of view alone.

Mr. Harper : Better have no conditions at all.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The hon. member would have Chinese and kaffirs and those conditions which appeal to his imagination. The thing which appeals to him is what he told us he saw in South Africa, and if those who are associated with him—I exempt hon. members in this House—and those who think with him had their way, they would have the same conditions prevailing in Western Australia. The very fact, if I am in order in saying it—but I shall not say it. The hon. member talked a lot of what would be said outside of the House. I am perfectly prepared to say what he desires me to say outside, although the hon. member may depend on the length of his purse.

Mr. Harper : I will depend upon you proving your statements.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The provisions of this Bill are not going to increase the costs, and they are not impracticable. I have been asked what I am going to do with the foreigners if they are turned out of the mines, and they are turned out of the timber industry, and where they are to find employment, but I say there are not more foreigners in Western Australia to-day, if they were spread over the whole of the industries and occupations, than could be readily absorbed. By the introduction of a clause such as we have in the Bill, it will be possible to prevent the influx of this class of aliens in the future, and therefore we shall not have an alien problem. It is unquestionable that preference has been given to foreigners by some mine managers in this State. The hon. member for Pingelly waxed wroth because I said absolute preference had been given, but if that was not the case, how comes it that 72 per cent. of the workers in the Sons of Gwalia mine are foreigners ? If some managers can get on with the employment of a limited number of foreigners, why cannot the rest of them do so ? It has been said that the number of Britishers on the

goldfields is limited, but do they expect the Britishers to camp around the mines month after month until such time as the foreigner shall be turned out by a visit of the inspector of mines, or the manager sees fit to give preference to his own race.

Mr. Allen: Why is preference given to foreigners?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I say it is because they are more tractable than the Britisher, and will work in places where the Britisher will not work. The foreigner is not so well acquainted with the conditions and regulations he is entitled to work under as the Britisher, and it is undoubted that preference has been given to him. The number of foreigners working in our mines in recent years has increased enormously, and to-day there are close on 600 foreigners employed underground in Boulder, and I say that if the employment of foreigners continues to increase at this rate the whole of the chief mining towns in Western Australia will be in the possession of these men; and I would like those members who say they are so solicitous for the welfare of the mining industry, and that they recognise the great importance of it, to state what will be the position of the industry when it is in the hands of foreigners of this class. I have no objection to foreigners if they will become British citizens, and assimilate our customs, but I say that those coming from the southern parts of Europe, who do not become educated to our language, and do not assimilate our institutions, will be of no benefit to the State, and would be of no value in a time of war to defend this State. I say that if they do not become naturalised British subjects, then in the event of danger to the Commonwealth they would be of no value to us.

Mr. George: Then why not prevent them coming in?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have no power to prevent them, but the best means to check them is to restrict the avenues for employment. I have no doubt that these men are coming in under contract, a breach of the Commonwealth statutes, as one can go frequently to the wharf and see a party of

20 or 30 met by a compatriot from the goldfields, who takes them straight on to the mines or to the timber areas. All the evidence points to the fact that these men are being brought out under contract. I say that legislation of this kind is not new in other countries. Only recently in the Press I saw that in one of the States of America, I think it was New York, they were considering the advisability of limiting the extent of alien immigration to one-tenth of the foreign residents already in the State.

Mr. George: Have you any means of showing what wages these men receive?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They are receiving the same pay, I believe. I do not allege for one moment that they are being paid below the ruling or arbitration rate of wages.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Are they unionists?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some of them who have been longest in the State are unionists. Turning to other countries, I believe that in Japan, and China also, certainly Japan, a Britisher or European is not permitted to own land of any description. His rights and privileges are restricted, and if the interests of this State, and its industrial life, demand that there shall be a restriction of aliens, this House is justified in doing the same.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Have not these men white faces?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not to say that because they have white faces they are altogether desirable. The hon. member would not associate with, or take into his household, every man because he had a white face.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Czar of Russia has a white face.

Mr. George: And he is not a bad man either.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is one class of labour on the goldfields which foreigners have monopolised entirely, and it is that of wood cutting. Practically the whole of the wood cutting work on the goldfields is in the hands of these foreigners. As I have stated before, they are not a race that are of any value to us, and I do not think it would

much matter whether the industry continued or declined considerably if it was going to get into the hands of this class of alien. It is all very well for the hon. member for Northam to dilate upon the question of the night shift, and say that the night shift is necessary if the mines are going to work at a profit.

Hon. J. Mitchell : You admit it in your Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I question whether the time is long enough, and I will be prepared to extend it if necessary, but I contend that that which obtains to-day in the Great Boulder, Lake View, and Hannans Star mines, in regard to the night shift, can be made apply to every other mine in this State if they have sufficient time to cope with the altered conditions. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie), the figures show that the profits of the Great Boulder in the first month of the altered condition of affairs exceeded those of the previous month. Of course it is alleged that the Great Boulder is an exception, because it has three shafts, and more working faces underground, which fact enables the company to get a greater output for two shifts, but alterations can be made in the other mines, and I believe that with the abolition of the night shift, the increased efficiency of the men will fully compensate the management for any increased cost they might be put to to make the alterations, which are essential from the health standpoint alone. Those who have worked underground from one week's end to the other know that when a mine becomes full of smoke the conditions must be anything but healthy, and given eight hours in every 24 for the smoke to clear out, the ventilation will be so much improved that the men will be able to give increased results from their labour, which will fully compensate the management for any increased expenditure. On the subject of check inspectors the hon. member stated that he could never agree to workmen's inspectors being appointed to teach or criticise the work of the district inspectors. We cannot, however, have official Government

inspectors on every mine in every district of this State. Some of these inspectors' work covers a large area indeed, hundreds of miles in the back country, and while the officer is miles away there may be great need indeed for some form of inspection in another mine in the district, and the workmen's inspectors will be on the spot to inspect a mine if necessity arises at any time. Power is not given under the Bill to the workmen's inspector to take any action or initiate any prosecution; his duty is, if he sees danger or risk, to point it out to the district inspector, and it will be for the district inspector to take any action under the provisions of the Bill. As I have already stated this system has obtained in coal mines, throughout the whole world, I believe, and certainly in the coal mines of Australia. At Collie they have had workmen's inspectors and the same is the case at Newcastle and in other parts of the Commonwealth, and it has never been contended by mine owners that it has resulted in the friction predicted by hon. members, or harassed or hampered the industry.

Hon. J. Mitchell : They have different powers.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : They have practically no different powers under the Bill from what they have in the coal mining districts. I do not intend to take up any more time now, as there will be opportunity to debate these matters in Committee. I want to emphasise the fact again that in the whole of the arguments advanced in connection with this measure the one point kept steadily in view by hon. members opposite was the question of profits.

Hon. J. Mitchell : We have just as much right to our opinion as you have to yours.

The MINISTER FOR MINES : I say that the hon. members unduly kept that point in mind. When an amendment is considered it is not how it is going to operate in the direction I have indicated, as to the conditions of employment underground, but how it is going to operate in the matter of increased cost. As I have stated, there are other condi-

tions besides that of increased cost, and it has been necessary in the past in many directions to legislate in a manner to protect the interests of the employees in industries, and even though the effect of that legislation might have been to curtail profits and to diminish the output—

Hon. J. Mitchell: You will legislate men out of work if you are not careful.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It has always been the history of mining that many mines have never made profits, and this has been so since the days of, we might say, King Solomon's mines. In the very nature of the industry there will always be those mines which will not pay, as well as those which pay large dividends. Because there are mines not paying to-day, must we be neglectful of what is due to those employed on them? By following the same argument, and by removing all restrictions, we will bring to a profitable stage mines that have been unprofitable, and work mines by the dozens that are now lying idle. But there is a point to which we cannot go in that direction, and that is to lengthen hours and decrease wages.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are not asked to decrease wages.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If we reduced wages a shilling a day we would bring to a profit-earning stage mines that are now idle. If we made a further reduction of a shilling a day we would bring still more mines to a profit-earning stage, and so on.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No one proposes that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but that is the kind of opposition that has been offered to the Bill and to similar legislation. It was the argument that was used in opposition to the proposals that were first brought forward to take women out of the coal mines in England.

Mr. Harper: They are working in the coal mines in Cornwall to-day.

Mr. Lewis: No.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is a reflection on Cornishmen.

Mr. Harper: Still they are working there to-day.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is not a woman working in any mine in England.

Mr. Turvey: Would you like to see women working in our mines here?

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They are working on the surface washing tin.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In any case it is a deplorable state of affairs to recall that a few generations ago women went to the coal mines, and were harnessed with chains around their waists to draw trucks. These remarks cause the member for Pingelly to smile.

Mr. Harper: A cynical smile at the absurdity of the statement.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member would smile over the corpse of his nearest—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The same opposition was raised when an effort was made to prevent children seven years of age being taken into the coal mines at six o'clock in the morning and made to work there for 10 and 12 hours a day. It was urged then that the removal of those children would hamper the mine-owners, that it would decrease the profits and throw a number of men out of work.

Mr. Harper: A sentimental speech.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know it does not appeal to the hon. member because he is as cold-blooded as a—

Mr. Gill: Fish.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, fish. It would be a poor old world if it were entirely deprived of sentiment. If sentiment in the past has been responsible for the removal of the conditions to which I have referred, it is better than all the logic with which the hon. member for Pingelly is filled.

Member: And that would not fill many volumes in history.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Notwithstanding what has been urged there are not so many mines that are not paying. The men employed in the industry to-day are producing wealth greatly in excess of the wages they receive. For instance, the average value of gold produced per man employed above and below

ground, was £380 in 1911. Those figures are very instructive as showing that the increased efficiency in our mines has resulted in an increased output per man, and whilst on the one hand values are going down, there is a compensating balance on the other hand in the shape of increased efficiency and higher production per man.

Mr. Harper: That has its limits.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Like the hon. member.

Mr. Harper: Like the Minister for Mines too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The value of gold produced per man in 1911 was £380, and in 1912 it was £403, an increase of £23 per man in that year. The average tonnage of ore raised shows an increase from 180 tons per man to 203 tons, again an increase of 23 tons per man. The average raised per man is the highest in East Coolgardie, namely, 321 tons of an average value of £583, so that every man employed in East Coolgardie whose wage would average about £4 10s. per week or about £225 per annum produced gold to the value of £583.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Were there no other expenses?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course there were.

Mr. Harper: That is attributable to the engineers in charge.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit it is due to the application of scientific knowledge, and the brains of mining engineers. They are responsible to some extent, but I claim that a fair measure of that increase is due to the efficiency and the high standard of labour on the goldfields of Western Australia. It has been stated by men who have been competent to judge, and who have had experience the world over, that there is no country where there is a better class of miner than in Western Australia.

The Minister for Lands: You do not hear of that where they employ cheap labour.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is what Watson did.

The Minister for Lands: He did nothing of the kind.

Mr. Harper: He went to South Africa and employed Chinamen.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He went to a country where cheap labour was a necessity, and when one goes to such a country he has to fall in with the views and the conditions existing there, whether he approves of them or not.

Mr. Harper: Watson made money out of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, it was an honest way of making money.

Mr. Harper: I am glad the Minister admits it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope on this occasion the Bill will pass another place. There is greater need for it now than ever in the history of mining in Western Australia. The report of the Royal Commission on the ventilation and sanitation of mines which sat in 1904 pointed out that the conditions existing then in the State were becoming worse year by year, by reason of the fact that the mines were going down to a greater depth. If that was so seven years ago, how much more so is it at the present time, when we are approaching 3,000 feet in most of the big mines? It is, therefore, absolutely essential that increased protection should be given to those employed in the industry by means of this Bill.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.