

action of this kind, but we have entered into it believing that it is the only means by which we can give the people concerned really equitable terms.

The members of the syndicate who still remain in partnership with the Government cannot hope to get anything out of the venture unless it proves a success. Anything that they are likely to receive, anything that it is possible for them to receive, can be obtained by them only if the industry is successfully established. For that reason I think we should be prepared to commend the attitude and the actions of those men, not only for the way they have persisted against the disabilities referred to but because of the fact that they are prepared to give this country the benefit of their research and of the work they had put in and of the money they had expended.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Those men will receive salaries?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Three of them are on salary; and they are very capable men too, I understand. Mr. Norwood was one of two recommended to the Government by the C.S.I.R. He has spared no pains, and has received no remuneration whatever, and cannot receive anything from the venture unless it proves a success. I appreciate the manner in which the Bill has been received. The points raised by Mr. Seddon have all been examined and I believe I have dealt with most of them here. I can but reiterate that the professional men who have been engaged on this venture have done remarkably well; and in view of their advice to the Government and to the syndicate I consider we have no option but to approve of the action that has been taken and of the Bill as it has been presented to this House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Approval and ratification:

Hon. W. J. MANN: I would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether there is any other agreement between the Government and Messrs. Martin and Norwood. I do so because I have heard it said that there is an agreement for the payment to those gentlemen of a royalty based on the ton-

nage of potash produced. I have heard that from more than one source, and would like to know whether it is a fact that there is something supplementary to this agreement. I have read the agreement carefully, and cannot find any evidence of it there.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no knowledge whatever of any other agreement. So far as I am concerned, this comprises the whole of the agreement made between the syndicate and the Government.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [5.48]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 11 a.m. on Tuesday, the 8th December.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd December, 1942.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—MINERALS FOR WAR INDUSTRIES.

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister for Mines: 1, In view of the national importance of minerals for war industries, will he advise the House what steps have been taken to exploit our minerals now that overseas and Commonwealth moneys are available? 2,

Can be advise whether consideration has been given to the erection of special treatment plants in various portions of the State for the treatment of these minerals? 3, Does he consider it advisable to call a meeting of goldfields members to discuss plans to open mineral deposits by—(a) printed advice to prospectors regarding locations and testing urgently required minerals; (b) assistance to prospectors on a more generous scale than the present prospectors' assistance of £1 per week?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Active steps have and are being taken to exploit our minerals and details will be given when dealing with the Mines Department estimates. 2, Financial assistance has already been rendered to several mineral deposits for the erection of treatment plants suitable for the particular class of ores affected. The question of certain State batteries being altered to enable treatment of certain minerals is under consideration, and work is already being undertaken on one. 3, There is only a market for strategic minerals, viz., those of value to the war effort, and it is desirable that known deposits, of which there are a considerable number, be developed quickly, and that any suitable manpower available be concentrated on same. The Government is agreeable to prospectors under the present gold prospecting scheme turning their attention to minerals, and will render every possible assistance, but is unable to increase existing sustenance rates.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS [11.4] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, which does not occupy very much paper, is an attempt to give further consideration to farmers who are placed in serious difficulty, even in spite of the consideration given in regard to the composition of their debts and, because of the varying nature of their debts, to give some relief under one specific heading, and that is the debt owed by farmers who came within the scope and under the application of the Rural

Relief Fund Act of 1935. The Commonwealth Loan (Farmers' Debt Adjustment) Act, No. 23 of 1935, provides—

No grant shall be made under this Act to a State unless or until there is in force in the State legislation constituting an authority empowered on application being made to it, and at its discretion, to take action having the effect of suspending, either wholly or in part, the rights of any secured or unsecured creditor of a farmer against that farmer.

In another part of the same Act will be found the prescribed conditions under which the moneys granted to a State shall be paid out. One of the conditions is found in paragraph (d) which states—

If any of the moneys are advanced to or for the benefit of the farmer and are repaid wholly or in part to the State, the moneys so repaid shall be applied by the State for the purposes of the State scheme, and, for the purposes of this section, shall be deemed to be moneys granted to the State under this Act.

This obviously presupposes repayment to the State and the giving of authority under State law to make the necessary arrangements. To obtain the benefits, firstly to the States, of moneys advanced under the 1935 legislation—in Section 6 will be found the sums prescribed to be allotted to each State from the initial loans that it was intended at that time to raise—it became incumbent upon all States accepting such money to pass legislation of its own, giving authority to the trustees to suspend debts where necessary. It is essential not merely to have our State legislation but also to have in fact trustees appointed and operating if we are to accept moneys from the Commonwealth under that legislation.

I raise this point because in this Chamber recently, comments were made—I think for propaganda purposes—to the effect that the trustees have little to do and might as well be placed in other jobs. I point out that under the Commonwealth statute, it is necessary to have Rural Relief Fund Trustees actively operating to give consideration to farmers' debts and also to continue the operations of the trustees if we are to accept further moneys from the Commonwealth. This year we have had further moneys from the Commonwealth—not very much; not as much as the quota mentioned in Section 6 of the Commonwealth Act permits, but we have had some money. In the provisos in the Commonwealth Act, which give the trustees the unfettered

control of the fund, certain provisions are specifically set out. These preclude the payment of Crown debts, or statute-barred debts and the making of advances to farmers unless they have a reasonable chance of success.

It is unfortunate that this class of legislation is sometimes used as a basis for propaganda. I regard that as most unfortunate. Therefore it is highly pertinent to observe that if the trustees in their unfettered control of these Commonwealth moneys ceased to exist, so would the prospect of further advances cease to exist, and so would the consideration given to many farmers disappear. There is one particular statement on this subject, made recently in this Chamber, to which I desire to refer. The member for Avon in speaking, I think, on the Address-in-reply said that he knew of storekeepers—using the plural number—who had received 1s. in the pound.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is not in order in making references to a speech made during this session. This was a statement made in this session's Address-in-reply debate.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But it is entirely in reference to farmers' debts.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Orders say that the hon. member is not in order in referring to that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is highly interesting to note—without any reference whatever to the speech made by the member for Avon on the Address-in-reply—that out of 3,695 cases considered by the trustees, in only two cases was 1s. in the pound paid in full settlement. In only one case in this State was 1s. in the pound paid to a storekeeper. So that it is quite an erroneous impression to go forward that the hon. member knew storekeepers who had been paid 1s. in the pound. In that particular case, where the total debt was £7,000 odd, the storekeeper's was a little over £100. As to further statements in regard to machinery under this Bill, I had better await a more opportune occasion. But it is well to observe that the trustees have considered the farmer's interests as well as those of his creditors. From some speeches made in this Chamber it was difficult to get an indication whether the concern being expressed was for the creditor or for the farmer. However, the trustees have always considered the interests of all concerned. They are

specifically bound by the proviso to the Commonwealth Act to give assistance to farmers if it will give them an opportunity to carry on successfully.

The Act originally was an ideal; and if seasons and prices during its currency had been at all satisfactory, it would have been one of the greatest moves to alleviate the distress of farmers that we have had in any statute. But, unfortunately, the experiences have been very sad. Concurrently with the composition of farmers' debts and the writing-down of large sums of money, reducing the total debts by terrific amounts, the farmers again struck bad years, drought years, little crops, low prices. We have had experiences where sums of £1,500 and £2,500 have been written off, and in four years' time the debt of the farmer has assumed proportions almost identical with those existing prior to the previous composition.

Mr. Patriek: They will continue to do so, too, unless the seasons as well as the prices give to the farmer some better prospects.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In reply to the interjection, I would say that although prices have not militated against success in the case of farmers such as the member for Greenough himself, seasons have, as well as prices, contributed very largely to the difficulties of farmers in our not-so-safe districts, especially when the factor of prices is taken into consideration. I would like those who criticise and, as I think, criticise unfairly and give interpretations that are not quite fair, to take into view the whole of the Act which guides the trustees in their administration. There are particular sections of that Act which give the trustees the authority to suspend interest, to waive interest, and to do all manner of things.

In looking for a way further to assist farmers under this legislation, I have examined very many possibilities during the last few years; and the Bill which I now present to the House has for its purpose the giving of added authority to the trustees to enable the writing-off of sums for which now no authority exists, and in those writings-off to give the farmer less debts and fewer accounts, and to afford him a better prospect. For example, I had a look at Section 65 of the Agricultural Bank Act, which section gives the Commissioners authority to do certain things and examine the prospects of applying to

the debt the Rural Relief Fund Act. But I want to go further with such debts as those, giving the Rural Relief Trustees power to do certain things under Section 65 of the Agricultural Bank Act. Accordingly this Bill is designed to give those trustees very wide powers in regard to the writing-off of money in certain circumstances, and in all of the circumstances where the incidence of debt could be considered to be the predominating factor contributing to the farmer's lack of success.

There are very many farmers who get a multiplicity of accounts. They get them not merely from Government instrumentalities and in relation to Government-advanced moneys, but also from very many private people and institutions. Those accounts, to a man who is landed in a desperate plight, do not occasion worry. He gets to that stage where he says, "It is just another account." But on farmers who have had good prospects, who have had their debts composed, who have a keen desire to make good and get out of trouble, those accounts, if they are over-burdening, have a very bad effect. What I am seeking to do in this Bill is to make provision for protection to continue. The Bill provides, for example, that where the farmer has enlisted, he shall receive the concession of instalments being written off during his period of service, if that is considered reasonable, in which case it may be done by the trustees. Those who know the Act will remember that it contains a provision for the repayment of sums advanced within 20 years, to commence after the first three years have elapsed, thus giving approximately a seventeenth of the sum already advanced to compose the debt by annual re-payments.

This Bill gives the trustees the authority not merely to suspend payments due, but to wipe off all the amount due if the farmer's circumstances are such that he has not much prospect, with his debt, of succeeding. By the first provision in the Bill, this applies where the farmer has enlisted. The second provision deals with those farmers who are in the outer areas or in marginal areas, so that where there is a mortgage or where there are two mortgages on the property, and the property is situated in a marginal area, if in the view of the trustees it is considered reasonable to write off the whole amount in order to give the farmer a better opportunity in the

case of the marginal areas, all of the sum owing to the Rural Relief Fund can be wiped off by the trustees.

Mr. Warner: Government debts also?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trustees cannot write off Government debts.

Mr. Boyle: Debts owing to the trustees?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The trustees will, under a paragraph in the Bill, have authority to wipe off the debt owing to them where the property is situated within a marginal area. Obviously, with all the proposals for linking up and encouraging farmers to continue on their properties in those areas, one of the best things we can do is not merely to avoid a total debt, but also a multiplicity of creditors. I think that objective is a worthy one. The Bill further provides that where there is very little margin in the security, and where either a State instrumentality or a private institution holds a mortgage over the property, the trustees may at their discretion write off all or any part of the debt owing to them.

A further provision dealing with abandonment, and where the mortgagee is obliged to sell the property for a sum less than the amount of principal and interest due, gives the trustees an easier way than the law at present permits of enabling the farmer to get a bigger share of his equity than he can obtain at present. Another clause might be said to be a drag-net clause, but at the same time it leaves the position wide open, in that at the discretion of the trustees, with the consent of the Minister, if for any good reasons other than those specified in the preceding clause, there is necessity to reduce a farmer's debt, it may be reduced. With that brief explanation of the desires behind the Bill, of its intentions and what it provides for—in the main, to give the farmer, in the words of the Commonwealth statute, some reasonable prospect of carrying on his operations successfully—I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Boyle, debate adjourned.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR [11.23] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to establish in Western Aus-

tralia a scheme for the compulsory retirement of coalminers at 60 years of age and the payment to them subsequently of pensions. Both these questions have been under consideration in Australia for many years. Some five years ago, very active consideration was given to them in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia. The State Government of New South Wales was approached at the time and a proposal was put to it by those concerned favourable to the establishment of a scheme for the compulsory retirement of coalminers and the payment to them of pensions upon their retirement. Two years ago the then Government of New South Wales introduced a Bill containing a scheme with the objectives to which I have referred. That measure, which was carefully considered by both Houses of the New South Wales Parliament, was passed in 1940 and has been in operation since. It is true that the compulsory retirement provision was recently suspended and will remain suspended during the war period. The reason for the suspension will be immediately obvious to members, as they will realise that every man capable of working in a coal mine in any part of Australia is required to carry on his work today and during the remaining war period.

Mr. J. H. Smith: There are a good many workless days.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I do not desire at this stage to complicate my explanation of the provisions of the Bill by entering into a discussion with the member for Nelson, or with any other member, as to the causes responsible for workless days which occur from time to time in the New South Wales coal mines.

Mr. Cross: There has been a gross exaggeration in that respect.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In 1941 the Government of Queensland introduced into the Parliament of that State a Bill, based largely upon the New South Wales Act, for the purpose of establishing and operating in Queensland a scheme for the retirement of coalminers and the payment to them of pensions similar to that operating in New South Wales. It will, therefore, be clear to members that two State Parliaments of Australia have already passed and are operating legislation similar to that proposed in this Bill. Furthermore, the Government of Victoria, through its Premier (Mr. Dunstan), recently introduced

into the Assembly of that State a Bill drawn almost entirely on the same lines as the relative Acts of New South Wales and Queensland. Members will thus realise that the principle of compulsory retirement of coalminers and the payment to them of pensions has become well established in Australia. Consequently, it is both desirable and reasonable that the Government of Western Australia, supported by Parliament, should place the coalminers in this State in a position similar to that in which the coalminers in two other States already find themselves and similar to that in which the coalminers of Victoria are likely to find themselves within the next few weeks. It will also be obvious to members that the measure is not what might be described as a Labour Party scheme. The scheme has not been put into operation only by a Labour Government. The Government which passed the legislation in New South Wales is not a Labour Government, nor is the Government which is sponsoring similar legislation in Victoria a Labour Government. The Government in Queensland which passed the legislation was a Labour Government.

Mr. Doney: Without an Upper House.

Mr. McDonald: Is there any legislation similar to this in England?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not in a position to say at this stage whether there is a scheme similar to this operating in England, but the member for Collie may be able to give us some information on that point at a later stage of the debate.

Mr. Patrick: Have you considered applying the scheme to those employed in gold-mining, one of our main industries?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The question of the development of a similar scheme at this stage for goldminers was considered, but that problem is much bigger and more complicated than establishing a scheme for the coalminers. There are in operation some schemes under legislation in this State that do provide relief, although not on retirement, for the coalminers of this State. It can fairly be claimed, I think, that on the basis of service given to the industry the coalminers of Western Australia are deserving of treatment at least equal to that received by the coalminers in any other State. I put that point forward because I feel that any body of workers that continues to operate an industry, thus assisting produc-

tion, is a body entitled to some credit and praise.

It is unfortunate that those groups of workers that never cause any industrial trouble never receive any credit, never receive any praise of any kind. Their performance is taken as a matter of course. On the other hand, if any group of workers, whether it be large or small, ceases work for even one day, the wrath of many people in Australia and the wrath of most newspapers in Australia comes immediately and heavily upon the heads of the men who constitute that group. So it seems to me very appropriate at this stage that we should express some appreciation to the coalminers of Collie upon the fact that they have in peacetime, and particularly in war-time, established a record for continuous production which probably has not been excelled in any other part of Australia or any other part of the world. This Bill is divided into five parts. It is so divided for the purpose of simplicity and for the further purpose of assuring a reasonable understanding of its contents and a reasonable administration of the scheme if the Bill be passed into law. It is divided into those parts because it is not thought that in the event of the Bill being passed all parts of the then Act would be brought into operation at one and the same time.

The two parts of the Act that will come into operation immediately upon the Act receiving the assent of the Governor, will be Parts I. and V., which are the least important parts of the measure. Those two parts deal with the preliminary contents of the Bill, and with the miscellaneous provisions in it. The three vital parts are those that deal with the fund and the contributions to it, the compulsory retirement of the workers at 60 years of age, and the establishment of a tribunal to administer the fund and generally manage the whole scheme. The tribunal to be established will consist of three members. One member will be nominated by the Government. He will be the chairman of the tribunal and will remain in office for a period of six years, at the end of which time he will be eligible for re-appointment. The second member of the tribunal will be appointed on the nomination of the mineworkers. He will remain in office for three years, and will then be eligible for re-appointment. The third member of the tribunal will be appointed on the nomination

of the coalmine owners. He will remain in office on the same terms and conditions as the mineworkers' nominee.

As soon as practicable after the appointment of the tribunal and after the commencement of the appropriate part of the Act, the tribunal will be required to estimate the amount of income it will need to finance the operation of the scheme from the date of its commencement until the 30th June next following. That means in effect that the first period during which the scheme operates will not be a complete year. The scheme might first commence to operate in, say, February or March. It becomes obvious, therefore, that its first period of operation will not be a full year, but approximately a quarter of a year. In that event the tribunal would be required to estimate what would be needed by way of finance from the various contributors to the scheme to enable the scheme to be operated during the period in question. It will be necessary for the tribunal to estimate not only the amount required to meet current pension payments, but what it will require to obtain by way of income in order to provide for general administration costs and, in addition—which is very important—to enable a safe reserve fund to be established, so that in the event of emergency conditions arising at any time in the future there would be a reserve fund from which the operations of this scheme could be financed until the period of emergency had been concluded.

After the tribunal has done what the Act will require of it in connection with that first period of the operation of the scheme, it will thereafter be required, before the 31st March in each year, to prepare an estimate of the total amount required for all purposes to finance the scheme during the next succeeding 12 months, from the 1st July to the 30th June. The tribunal will, of course, decide the contributions to be paid by the various contributing parties. I will refer to the basis upon which the parties concerned will be called upon to contribute when the scheme is operating. The fund to be established under the Bill will be known as the Coal Mine Workers' Pensions Fund. It is to be kept at the Treasury and, as I have already said, will be administered by the tribunal. The contributing parties to the scheme will be the Government, the coal

mine owners and the coalmine workers. In the first period of the operation of the scheme, which will be less than a full year, the Government's contribution will be such proportion of the sum of £2,000 as that sum bears to the period of a full year. If for instance, the first period of operation of the scheme is half a year, the Government's contribution for that half year will be £1,000. If the first period happens to be a quarter of a year, then that will be the proportion of £2,000 to be paid by the Government, and similarly if it happens to be three-quarters of a year.

Mr. Warner: Could you persuade the Minister for Lands to bring down a similar Bill for the farmers?

The Minister for Lands: This is on a contributory basis.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In the first full year the Government's contribution will be equal to one-quarter of the total amount required from all sources to finance the scheme for that first full year, or the sum of £2,000, whichever is the lesser. If one-quarter of the total amount required for the first full year is greater than £2,000, the Government's contribution will be not a quarter of the total amount required, but £2,000. If one-quarter of the total amount is less than £2,000, the Government's contribution will then be one-quarter of the amount needed. In the succeeding years the Government will pay one-quarter of the total amount required, with the following limitations:—Second completed year, £2,500 maximum contribution; in the third year £3,000 maximum; in the fourth year £3,500 maximum; in the fifth year £4,000 maximum; and in the sixth year and all succeeding years £4,500 maximum. Of the balance required during the first short period, or any full year thereafter, the owners will contribute two-thirds and the mine workers one-third.

The contributions by the mine workers will be paid weekly or fortnightly, and power has been given to the employing companies to deduct those contributions out of the wages due to the workers for the services they have rendered to the industry and to the owners. There is no need to explain to members the simplicity and economies involved in the collection of the contributions by that method as against trying to collect them under some other scheme from each individual miner. The mine owners

will not be permitted to pass the whole of their contributions on to the consumers by way of adding the amount to the price of coal.

Mr. Patrick: Is there not only one consumer?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There is practically only one consumer—the Government—in respect of the coal produced by the Amalgamated Collieries, Ltd. The Griffin Coal Mining Co., however, is now, during war-time, producing a fair amount of coal and disposing of it to private consumers in the State. This principle of preventing the companies from passing on in the price of coal the amount of their contributions to this scheme will apply equally to both companies and will, of course, apply in the same way to any new company that may commence operations in this State in the future. The proportion of the cost of the company's contributions, which each will be permitted to pass on to the consumers by adding it to the price of coal, will be 50 per cent. In other words, the companies will be able to add to the price of coal 50 per cent. of whatever contributions they are called upon to make to the tribunal for the purposes of this fund. The balance of 50 per cent. will have to be met by the companies themselves.

The Bill contains a provision that will legalise any arrangement which either company may find it necessary to make in order to meet, out of profits, the 50 per cent. of its contribution to the fund which this Bill, if passed into law, will not allow them to recover by adding to the sale price of coal. That point must be quite clear to members. The principle is a reasonable one. It would be unfair to all concerned if the coalowners were allowed to pass on the whole of their contributions to the coal consumers of the State.

Mr. Kelly: What ratio will the company have to find in comparison with the Government?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I explained that the Government will pay one-quarter of the total amount required in each period, with a certain maximum each year. The companies and the mine workers together will find the balance. The companies will find two-thirds of that balance and the workers one-third. In other words, the companies will contribute at the rate of £2 to every £1 contributed by the mine work-

ers. Members will have no difficulty in realising how unreasonable it would be if the Amalgamated Collieries, Ltd. was permitted to pass on the whole of the cost of its contribution in the price of coal which it sells. If that were allowed, the Government would not only pay the whole of its own contribution, but would finally pay the contributions of the Amalgamated Collieries, Ltd., because the Government, through the Railway Department, buys practically the entire output of that particular firm.

The definition of mine worker in the Bill is fairly extensive, although certain exclusions are set out, which members will be able easily to follow. The definition covers a person employed at the commencement of the Act in or about a coal mine, and a person who was at any time after the 31st December, 1937, engaged as a mine worker in the coal industry of this State. That means, briefly, that under the definition of the term "mine worker" the Act will apply to any man or person working in or about a coal mine at the time the Act becomes operative. With regard to the second group of workers I mentioned, the definition in the Act will also include persons who at any time after the 31st December, 1937, worked in or about a coal mine in this State. It will be seen, therefore, that the measure will have retrospective application for a period of five years. In that respect those who worked in the industry after 1937, but are not working in it when the Act is proclaimed and becomes operative, will be entitled to come under its provisions.

Mr. J. H. Smith: How will it be applied retrospectively from the financial point of view?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The retrospective application of the measure will be financed from the fund to which contributions will be made from time to time by the Government, the mine owners and the workers.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But some may come in after three or six months.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: In that regard it is probable on account of war conditions that the contributory part of the Act may commence at a period before the pension provisions apply in respect of the men now working.

Mr. Marshall: The New South Wales Act was made retrospective for a much longer period.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes. Another class of person included under the definition refers to those who after 1937 and before the commencement of the Act were rendered permanently incapable of work, because of an accident or injury suffered during the course of their employment in a coal mine in this State. There is a restriction in that regard inasmuch as the injury or accident in question must have been of a type that entitled, or does entitle, the worker concerned to be brought under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. If a man suffers from an accident or injury in the course of his employment which does not entitle him to relief under the Workers' Compensation Act, he will not then be covered by the definition of "mine worker" as set out in the Bill. It is very difficult to think of any accident or injury that a mine worker could suffer during the course of his employment that would not be compensable under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Another section of employees brought within the definition comprises those mainly engaged in the transport of coal from the mine to the railway depot. It will be understood that not every person engaged on a coal mine works underground. Some are engaged on the surface and some in the transport of coal, as I have already indicated. All are nevertheless essential to the continuation of coal production and therefore have a claim to be brought under the scheme equal to that of those engaged in the actual hewing and production of the coal. Furthermore a check weigher or miners' check inspector will be covered, as well as a workmen's inspector appointed under the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, as will also an elected official of the Mine Workers' Union. The inclusion of an elected official of the union is provided for in the Queensland and New South Wales Acts and is also embodied in the Bill now before the Victorian Parliament. The basis of contribution in respect to the pension payable to the elected official of the union is different from that which will apply generally.

Instead of the Government, the mine owners and the mine workers contributing to the pension of that union official, the basis

of contribution will be that the elected official will himself contribute upon the same basis as the mine worker, and the balance of his contribution will be made up by the union. It will therefore be seen that in respect of that official and the pension he may subsequently receive, the contributors will be himself and the union of which he is an official. The exclusions from the definition of the term "mine worker" comprise a superintendent, manager or under-manager, a person engaged in clerical work on a coal mine, a coke worker and a superintendent or instructor of any mine rescue corps or body. A person occupying any one of those positions will not be eligible to come under the scheme and will not in any way be affected by the provisions of this legislation. The eligibility standards in respect of the rates of pension to be drawn are set out in the Bill. Those standards require careful study by members before they can be clearly understood. For instance, there are different rates of pensions to be paid to varying classes of mine workers. The maximum rate of pension to be paid per week to any retired mine worker is £2.

A lower rate is provided in respect of other classes of workers who will be paid 30s. a week. In addition to the pensions provided for retired workers, there are pensions provided for wives and children of those retired pensioners. The rate for a wife is £1 per week and for every dependent child under 16 years of age it is 8s. 6d. per week. The maximum amount that any one pensioner can draw on behalf of himself, his wife and children is fixed at £4 5s. 6d. per week. In the event of the retired miner dying, his widow's pension is to be increased from £1 to 30s. per week, but the rate of pension or allowance for each dependent child under 16 years of age will remain at 8s. 6d. per week. These rates of pensions may seem to be generous. They may even impress some members as being super-generous.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I thought it was the other way about.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am glad the member for Nelson considers they are not super-generous.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The sum of 8s. 6d. is not much for a child.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There are in the Bill certain provisions which in operation will reduce the amount of pen-

sion that any one family can receive. Any income received by a family by way of old-age or invalid pension, child endowment, widow's pension or from workers' compensation sources, or from other sources which are specifically set out in the Bill, is to be deductible from the pension to be received by the retired miner, his wife or his children. It will be seen, therefore, that the maximum of £4 5s. 6d. will not be drawn in every case. I think it is reasonable to assume that it will not be drawn in even the majority of cases, because where there are dependent children under 16 years of age they will be entitled to receive child endowment payments which will be deductible from the allowances for mine workers' dependent children.

Mr. J. H. Smith: There would not be likely to be many of them in the case of a miner retiring at that age.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I do not know the mine workers well enough to be able to answer that question with any degree of certainty, so I will not attempt to do so. If the mine worker's wife is the same age as her husband, on compulsory retirement at 60 years she would be entitled to the old-age pension which would be deductible from the complete pension the miner would be entitled to draw in respect of himself, his wife and dependent children. The scheme is not so absolutely generous as it may first appear. It is not possible to say at this stage what outside income each miner and family would receive on his attaining the age of 60 or when retiring, so it is not possible to give detailed information regarding the amount that will be deductible in each case from the pension. That is a problem that will have to be investigated by the tribunal—and by the registrar—which is to be set up under the provisions of the Bill for the purpose of going into details of questions of that character.

The Bill contains a provision which will enable this State to enter into reciprocal arrangements with those other States where similar schemes are in operation. Members will realise how necessary it may be for this State to enter into reciprocal arrangements with Queensland and New South Wales where similar schemes to that proposed in the Bill are in operation. If Victoria passes into law a Bill which its Parliament is now considering, it will be desirable for us to be in a position in this State to make what-

ever reciprocal arrangements are necessary with the Government of that State. As members will understand the Bill contains many other provisions. Most of these are of a machinery character. They will deal with questions such as the examination of accounts each year, their presentation to Parliament, and actuarial investigations which will have to be carried out at least once in every three years by the Government Actuary, who will have discretion to make more frequent actuarial investigations if he considers them to be desirable or necessary. The results of any investigations carried out by the Government Actuary will be presented in the form of a report to Parliament as soon as practicable after the completion of such investigations.

The tribunal set up will be given power to deal with what are described in the Bill as hard-luck cases, but which perhaps we would understand better as border-line cases. Under a measure of this description it is not possible to say that the measure is a fair and complete cover for mine-workers who may have a fair claim to some recognition. Therefore, to meet the possibility of the existence of such cases we have included in the Bill a provision which will enable the tribunal itself thoroughly to investigate these border-line or hard-luck cases, and after investigation either to grant a pension upon any basis it thinks right and just, or to reject the application as being without merit, or not containing sufficient merit as to warrant the granting of a pension. There are other provisions dealing with the imposition of fines and penalties for breaches of the measure, and fines and penalties inflicted in respect of any breaches are to become part of the pensions fund and to be used for the purposes of the pensions scheme.

Pensions payable under the Bill will be inalienable from the person receiving the pension, and cannot be taken from him by any method whatever. The pension will be the pensioner's own money to be used as the pensioner himself or herself decides and thinks best. The other provisions are not as important as those to which I have referred. I mentioned earlier that the compulsory provision for the retirement of men at 60 years of age is not likely to be operated during the war. Members will appreciate that it has been very difficult during the war, particularly in recent

months, to have sufficient coal produced at Collie to enable the essential requirements of the State to be adequately met. In the earlier part of the war many of the younger men from the Collie mines enlisted in one or other of the branches of the fighting services. That means we are dependent today in respect of production from the Collie mines largely upon the older men, men who are over the age of 60. It would, therefore, be undesirable and unwise to bring into operation in its entirety such a measure as would have the effect of excluding from working in the mines many coal-miners now working there, but who are beyond 60 years of age.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I believe there will be many heartburnings after the war as the result of excluding some of these men from the mines.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I cannot imagine there will be any heartburnings after the war in respect of the men to be excluded. A small number might prefer to continue working in the mines after reaching the age of 60 and perhaps even 65 years.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I am speaking about the men at 60.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: But the great majority of the men at Collie are favourable to a compulsory retiring age of 60 years. They accept that principle. Therefore I do not anticipate any trouble except perhaps from one or two or half-a-dozen individuals who would prefer to continue to work and earn full wages, as against receiving only what is provided for by way of pension under this measure. In any event, we are sure that after the war many of the younger coalminers will be returning and desiring to go back to their old employment in the mines at Collie. The passing of this measure will assist the rapid absorption of these younger men into their old occupation, and at the same time will not compel the old men, on retiring, to be dependent entirely upon an old-age pension, or something of the kind. This pension scheme will supplement the income that the older miners, after retiring, will receive from other sources.

I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of members. There is much in it to be considered, studied and determined. In the Committee stage alterations may be deemed necessary, some of a major character, others probably of less

importance. The Bill is not a cast-iron measure. The Government is bound to the principles contained in it, but in respect of other matters will be quite happy to receive suggestions and advice from any member and will be prepared to give them the utmost consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. J. H. Smith, debate adjourned.

BILL—PIG INDUSTRY COMPENSATION.

Message.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

[12.14] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, as its title indicates, is designed for the purpose of establishing a fund to provide compensation for pigs and the carcasses of pigs destroyed on account of having contracted certain diseases. About three years ago, an effort was made to place before producers a scheme for the creation of a fund from which owners of pigs could be compensated in the event of a serious outbreak of disease occurring. The scheme was submitted to the producers of pigs and to the people representing the treatment interests in this State, but it was turned down. That was in November, 1939.

I believe it was turned down because of the psychological reaction to the normally healthy condition of pigs in Western Australia. When an industry is operating quite smoothly and is not threatened in any way, there is not the demand for legislation for the control of a disease that perhaps has not made itself manifest in times past. Representatives decided that there was not very much risk to the industry from such a virulent disease as swine fever, and did not support the idea of a contributory scheme which had for its object the compensation of owners of pigs that suffered or died from disease. As time passed and war circumstances altered conditions, the outbreak of disease has caused the minds of those associated with the industry to undergo a very great change.

During recent weeks many people have asked the question, "What is the source of

the swine fever outbreak?" Because of the necessity for proving absolutely and without any possibility of doubt the source of the outbreak, I have refrained from giving a direct answer to the question. We have very strong direct evidence that the disease had its origin in frozen pork brought to this State from some oversea country.

Mr. Mann: Where swine fever is very prevalent.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

In some countries of the world, swine fever is always prevalent and losses are severe. This brings us to a consideration of what the relaxation of quarantine regulations might entail to this country. Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution provides that there shall be absolute freedom of trade between the States. Section 92 has been challenged in the court on one or two grounds, but where a variation from the section has been the responsibility of States regarding foodstuffs, plant diseases or animal diseases, the States have had authority to refuse the passage through their territory of questionable commodities that might be carriers of disease. For instance, we have an absolute prohibition in this State against all apples from the Eastern States because of the risk of introducing Codlin moth. We have an absolute prohibition against certain types of vines coming to this State and of potatoes being imported unless they are certified to be free from certain diseases. In a reciprocal spirit, other States have prohibited the importation from this State of certain commodities, notably the importation of oranges into South Australia.

It is a remarkable fact that, although the quarantine laws of this State are very rigid and perhaps in their entirety have ignored international free trade, we have found, for purposes associated with the war, a necessity to relax some of the most vital of our quarantine laws. Therefore I introduce into this debate at the outset a reference to the very difficult position that has arisen for a State department in the control of pests and diseases because of the relaxation of quarantine regulations.

Mr. Mann: Was it necessary for the country indicated to send its pork here?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Shortly I will read to the House a document that was put up in March last by the Director General of Health, and also the

subsequent Commonwealth regulations, the reason for which it is very difficult for me to understand. But prior to getting to that point I want to instance some things that have happened in connection with disease and pests since the outbreak of war. We have been very fearful of such pests coming into this country as the Colorado potato beetle. We would not stand a chance of our potato industry surviving if we had pests of that nature coming in. Members will recollect some very drastic action I took with some soil that was part of a cargo at Bunbury. I was severely criticised in some quarters for such drastic action, but I insisted that although it cost the shipowners two or three thousand pounds to comply with our shipping laws and dump that soil rather than that it should be spread at Bunbury, the soil should be taken out to sea and dumped there. We can trace the introduction of such pests as the red mite to the bringing of soil to a port of this country from South Africa.

Mr. Doney: Those are the very occasions on which you need power!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But because of war circumstances there has been a general relaxation in regard to foods and other commodities considered essential by the Allied Forces. We have had occasion, since the war broke out, to go to a lot of trouble to trace dogs that had been smuggled ashore in spite of our laws being known to those who did the smuggling. One dog, after having been smuggled, was caught at a great distance from Perth and was destroyed without any notice or compensation because it came from a country where rabies is highly prevalent.

We have had our veterinary officers absolutely insulted at the port of Fremantle by officers and men from ships because of taking animals ashore for the purpose of immediate destruction. During the dreadful trouble of the evacuations from Singapore, two cows were brought here, obviously from rinderpest country. Had they been permitted to land, it is quite likely that we would have had a recurrence of that drastic and dreadful disease in this State. We have had cases of bales of Bathurst burr being landed in this State since the outbreak of war, Bathurst burr seed being used in some countries for medicinal purposes. So that generally many officers associated with the Agricultural Department,

whether on its agricultural side or its stock side, have, because of war circumstances and the difference in traffic, had a very severe job to keep track of things that are coming to this country and that might be very detrimental to it now and in later years. It is most unfortunate that when animals which threaten our animal population have arrived at Fremantle, our officers have been subjected, openly and publicly, to abuse for taking drastic action.

Now with regard to the swine fever disease! Pork is a very important article of diet to the Forces of one of the United Nations. Shortly after the outbreak of war it was realised that under certain war conditions there was a possibility of this disease coming to Australia. It is a common experience that during war periods diseases from most outlying countries are likely to be transmitted to man, stock, or crops; and for that reason very stringent regulations have in the past been put into effect. We find that always in war-time when there is relaxation of quarantine some serious difficulty follows. When that was realised many months ago, on the 27th March last, the Director General of Health, Dr. Cumpston, advised the Headquarters of the United States Army of the quarantine regulations governing the importation of meat, produce, and vegetables from the United States of America. Lieut.-Col. Mann, of the Headquarters of the United States Army, sent this memorandum to the various units of the American Forces—

The Director General of Health, Dr. J. H. L. Cumpston, has advised this headquarters that the quarantine regulations governing the importation of meat, produce and vegetables from the United States of America, have been lifted temporarily, so as to enable such food-stuffs to be imported into Western Australia, for the sole use of the United States Forces. As these goods during their transportation and distribution would be at all times under military control, strict supervision will be exercised to ensure that camp refuse will not be permitted to leave the camps for the feeding of stock, principally of pigs, but will be destroyed by burning, under supervision.

It is feared that the diseases and pests, which are non-existent at present in Western Australia, be introduced; owing to the lack of resistance of our strains of plants and animals, such diseases and pests should spread rapidly and might seriously embarrass the food position locally.

The Commanding Officer of all United States Army units in this Base Section, will assist and co-operate with the Department of Agriculture, in ensuring that imported foodstuffs

find their way to the destination to which they are intended; namely, camps containing United States Army personnel.

The Quartermaster, staff officer, this headquarters, will be advised of all importations of fruit and vegetables from the United States of America for the use of the United States troops. Permission will be granted for quarantine officers from the Department of Agriculture to visit camps periodically to see that such arrangements are being carried out.

By order, Lieut.-Col. Mann.

27th March, 1942.

That document gives ample evidence of the fears of the Department of Agriculture and of the fears of Commonwealth authorities of the prospect of introducing pests which could have dire results on our industries because of the relaxation of quarantine. That order gave specific mention to the necessity for destroying, by burning, of all refuse from camps, principally the meat of pigs; but it is a very sad thing to relate that because of some pressure somewhere, because of the tremendous quantities of such refuse, there was a relaxation put forward under Regulation No. 262 of the Statutory Rules. It is a very unfortunate happening for this State and possibly for Australia.

Mr. Seward: That is a Commonwealth rule.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In spite of that order of the 27th March, we find that the Commonwealth Government, by National Security Rule No. 262, varied it! On the 10th June of this year the Commonwealth Government said that a person shall not use for feeding to animals any food refuse which has been removed from any Naval, Military or Air Force encampment or establishment unless the refuse has been treated by boiling or by some other process of heating approved by a Chief Quarantine Officer. Firstly, there was a complete ban on its use, to which ban we absolutely subscribed. Since it was necessary that frozen products should be imported for the feeding of Allied Forces in the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth decided to relax certain quarantine regulations.

The regulations in regard to pigmeats were extremely rigid because of the prevalence of dreadful scourges in pigs in other countries, and because it was recognised that the bacteria associated with those diseases did not die if the product was frozen. The bacteria live for a lengthy period even if the product is held much below freezing point, but do not survive when the meat

is boiled. They cannot live under treatment which canning processes involve. In spite of that knowledge, which was accepted in March last, the Commonwealth on the 10th June this year varied the previous order providing for the burning of refuse. On that date the Commonwealth said that the refuse could be used if it were boiled or treated by some other process of heating, approved by a Chief Quarantine Officer. The order also provided that the owner of animals to which such food refuse was to be fed should comply with certain requirements. He was to carry it in certain kinds of containers, he was to cleanse such containers and his vehicles, he was to dispose of all residue and do other things, subject to the approval of the quarantine officer. I cannot state—and will not, in case it gets even into "Hansard"—the number of military camps in this State, but we know the number and how widely scattered they are.

The point is this: Statutory Rule No. 262 was impossible of policing. The Department of Agriculture undertook to send to every known and registered pig-owner in the metropolitan area a notice that if, under this relaxed order, military camp refuse was fed to pigs, he must first see that it was boiled. Notwithstanding that, we know that many pig-owners who obtained refuse from military camps fed it liberally and freely to their animals without boiling it. Very difficult to police, very difficult to trace! What happened? Early in October there was an outbreak of a mysterious disease in the metropolitan area near a military camp. The owner thought his pigs were merely sick and that he had better sell them before they died. He therefore sent them into the Midland Junction yards for sale.

Mr. Mann: Was he a foreigner?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. Mann: Was he an Australian?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The result was that the pigs so purchased—they were marketable pigs—found their way into the bacon factories of the State. They were killed. The meat was sent all over the State, to military camps, restaurants and wholesalers. It is an accepted fact that all such carcases, unless treated by boiling, will carry the disease. The trimmings of the bacon rind, if put into the refuse tub and carted away as

swill, would be a potential menace to the pig industry of the State.

The Press has been very insistent in trying to get me to make a statement and members have asked—and rightfully so—for information, but I was reluctant to furnish it until I was able, after great difficulty, to bring down a Bill providing for compensation to pig-owners dependent upon pigs for the major part of their livelihood. The first knowledge we had of this disease was in October, but the veterinary officers recognised it immediately. I made my first report to Cabinet, I think, on the 20th October. The disease had then been known for only three days, and four additional days were required to incubate the germ so that the officers could be definite about the disease. The germ was isolated and the disease was identified four days later as swine fever. A very big responsibility fell upon the department and its officers when it became necessary to take drastic action because of the threat to the entire pig industry. Many opinions were expressed as to what the veterinary officers should do. Many opinions were also expressed as to what they should say to the pig-owner and as to what they should force him to do.

I have been guided so far, and intend to be, only by the advice of the Chief Veterinary Officer and his staff. That advice has warranted the taking of drastic action; it has resulted in the slaughter of thousands of pigs—I will give the exact number shortly. Immediately the disease was discovered, arrangements were made to trace it to its source. Imagine the difficulty! More than one yarding of pigs had been sold by owners whose pigs were affected by a type of disease about which they knew nothing. They did not report it, but sold the pigs. Fortunately, we have been able to trace every pig that went through those yards. Some of them were mixed with 3,000 odd pigs that one processor had in his yard awaiting sale.

Mr. J. Hegney: You made no mistake about the identity, either.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: When those pigs reached the slaughterhouse they quickly began to infect other pigs awaiting slaughter. We could not ascertain how many pigs the initial truckload might have affected; the germ might have got into the pigs at the time of slaughter, as no

evidence of the germ were found in the carcasses. Hundreds of pig carcasses, in addition to the infected pork which came from overseas, have been distributed throughout the State. Action had therefore to be taken to prevent the obtaining of any food refuse at all from military camps. We have gone further than that. We have issued an order preventing swill of any sort from being used for the feeding of pigs, whether it be boiled or unboiled.

Mr. Berry: This is going to be very difficult to police, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is very difficult. I want to tell the member for Irwin-Moore, who is vitally interested since his district carries a pig population, that the Government has recalled all its veterinary officers and stock inspectors from the country and has spent thousands of pounds in the last six weeks in an endeavour to trace infected pigs. Nothing has been spared and work has been done day and night and at weekends to trace any indication of pig sickness. We have prepared for drastic action involving substantial fines if a person is found to be endeavouring to evade responsibility. We now have the co-operation of the military authorities and their recognition of the dire results that might occur unless the menace is controlled. We have induced them to co-operate.

Previously the attitude was "This is something for nothing. It is wonderful feed;" and it was being hawked in different parts of the State for pig-raising. New piggeries sprang up near military camps for the express purpose of using the refuse from military camps, but those people today are left without any single source of questionable food of that sort, and, although it is a matter of extreme difficulty, the military authorities are facing the responsibility for the destruction by burning or deep burying of the refuse from their camps. At this stage, while it is impossible to say that the disease is definitely under control, the Chief Veterinary Officer believes that because of the prompt measures taken, not merely in the metropolitan area but as far as 300 miles from it, it will be controlled. The tracing of infected pigs to country districts, and subsequent inspection of herds in all districts to which pigs were despatched, has given us an opportunity of control that might otherwise not have been

possible. The Chief Veterinary Officer does not expect widespread outbreaks in country districts if we can rigidly police the last regulations. I think it may be said that, as a result of his action, the matter is well in hand.

The purpose of the Bill is to bring into being a compensation fund. As I have said, it is an unfortunate fact that some farmers, when a serious disease breaks out on their properties, endeavour to realise as much as possible on their stock before they give any notification to anybody. That unfortunately was the experience in regard to this outbreak, and that was the cause of the rapid spread of the disease in the metropolitan area. Approximately 8,000 pigs have been slaughtered, owing to the prevalence of the disease. Three thousand have been of trade grade, have been passed by the meat inspectors and are at present held in cool storage at Robb's Jetty. Let me elaborate on that point for a minute. Everybody leads a busy life these days. But one of the most difficult week-ends I have had in recent times was when I had to make arrangements, without notice, if we were to save any of the stock not affected, for their slaughter at the works. Members opposite know and appreciate what has happened in regard to the lamb industry. Superimposed on that was the problem of transport, slaughter and storage of all the clean pigs we were likely to get. But we were able to do it and we have at present in cool storage in Fremantle over 3,000 animals that have been passed as trade grade, and for which we hope to find a market. As a matter of fact we already have a market but we are hoping for a better one.

Mr. Doney: That is part of the 8,000?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We hope that all the proceeds from the 3,000 will be paid into the fund formed under this Bill as a part recoup to the fund of what will be paid to farmers.

Mr. Sampson: It is to be retrospective?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but only to a specific date, the reason for which I will give later. Since the 27th October, when this disease occurred and was definitely defined, there has been more or less panic amongst pig growers in the State. Very many people have helped materially but some have not helped as well as they might have done. In all cases where the disease was located in a piggery, arrange-

ments were immediately made for the transfer to the treatment works of all pigs that appeared to be healthy. Those that had died were burned or buried. Unfortunately, on arrival at the works, very many were found to be suffering from a more advanced stage of the disease. By special arrangement we have transported them all by road and have taken every precaution possible for disinfecting the vehicle, so that there would be no prospect of any clean area being affected. This disease is so virulent that, if a man walked into a piggery where the germ was present, and from there went into another piggery, he would carry the disease in the soil or dust picked up in the first piggery. The incubation period is 14 days, and its virulence can best be understood by the fact that the germ is able to survive freezing and is able to be conveyed even in scraps from the table. It can be conveyed in even only partly-cooked bacon or the trimmings that might be discarded from the kitchen. The Bill provides for compensation by means of a compulsory levy not exceeding 3d. in the £ on all sales of pigs in the State.

Mr. Berry: Pound weight or money?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Obviously money. Other States have varying rates. In New South Wales so much per head is levied. Originally a shilling per head was charged on all pigs sold in the State. In Victoria there is a contribution of 2d. in the pound and it has been possible there to build up a fund of £51,000. In 1941-42 there was a very serious outbreak of swine plague which depleted the fund by nearly £40,000.

Mr. Seward: How long did it take to build that fund?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A few years.

Mr. Mann: What was the disease?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A swine plague but not the one which has occurred in this State. There has been no outbreak of swine fever in Australia since 1926, as far as we can discover.

Mr. Berry: Is ours the only State affected at the moment?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The basis of the compensation in South Australia is 2d. in 20s. on all pigs sold for slaughter only, with a maximum of 2s. 6d. per pig. Victoria has been able to reduce its maximum from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 3d., and its levy from 2d. to 1d. As soon as

the fund reached the large proportions it has now attained the amount collectable was reduced. New South Wales has, I understand, recently reduced the levy of 1s. to 9d. Although in this State at the moment it looks as if no further outbreak will occur, the responsibility amounts to nearly £17,000. That is the value of the pigs already slaughtered here. We have in the freezers pigs worth about £6,000 and we have had to undertake certain costs for transport and slaughtering which will have to come out of that amount. We have been paying hundreds of pounds a month for the extra work which has devolved on the officers. This all started through, perhaps, the extreme carelessness of one of the owners in not reporting a mysterious disease before it became widespread.

There are 70 piggeries affected in this State. As I have already said the Chief Veterinary Officer thinks that he has the trouble well in his grip now because he has traced every pig from the first outbreak, and every transaction from the affected areas since the outbreak. We were able to trace a case in the York district not from a sale which took place in the metropolitan area, but from swill feeding!

Mr. Mann: These country sales would not help to reduce the epidemic.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: These country sales might have to stop. We are trying to limit the transactions in pigs to slaughtering only. Certainly within the metropolitan area, or any other quarantined area, pigs are not permitted to go out. If a farmer sends a pig to the metropolitan area he has to take the price it is worth to the butcher, because it cannot go out of the metropolitan area.

Mr. Mann: Would it not be wise to stop all sales of pigs at Midland Junction for the time being?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. Mann: They should send them direct to the slaughter-yards.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We are trying to encourage that, but we are taking good care that no pigs sold through the metropolitan saleyard go anywhere but direct to a piggery works. The owners of pigs in clean districts and who have clean properties still want to sell their pigs. We do not wish to be unduly restrictive, if, in

the opinion of the Chief Veterinary Officer, there is no danger from these transactions.

Mr. Seward: There were pigs involved in the Upper Swan train smash. They were going out of the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so, and all those pigs have been traced. Some of them happened to be from sales which included two or three pigs from a suspected area, but there have been no outbreaks at the destination of those pigs. Although we realise that 3d. on 20s. in the case of all sales will not build up a fund in one or two years to compensate for this present outbreak, we are including in this Bill a special provision to ensure that any pigs condemned or dying from swine fever as a result of the present outbreak after the 27th October last, will come under the compensation provisions of the Bill. The diseases specifically mentioned in the Bill which would come under payments for compensation are, swine fever, tuberculosis, swine exyx, erysipelas and paratyphoid.

Mr. Mann: What is paratyphoid?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a form of fever causing the pigs to come out in spots. It is a virulent disease but there have been no real outbreaks of it in this State. We are trying to bring about conditions to make for better pig sanitation. Unfortunately, the pig is regarded by some of the bigger growers as a dirty animal and one which can have its sanitation neglected. When members have a chance to read the Bill they will notice that special provisions have been included—and will be included in the regulations—whereby compensation will be payable if the grower carries out his part of such an undertaking; that is if he keeps his pigs in reasonable order and condition. Almost all the swine plague outbreaks that we have had in this State—the member for Beverley knows well some of the outbreaks that have occurred in areas not far from where he lives—have occurred through lack of cleanliness and proper sanitation. Such conditions cause these diseases to spread. We are trying to control every disease so that where an epidemic of a virulent disease occurs provision will be made for compensation.

Mr. McDonald: Is it not considered necessary to make provision beforehand, as in the case of cattle?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad the hon. member mentioned that point. About four years ago, during the life of the late Hon. J. J. Holmes, we tried to build up a compensation scheme based on a levy on all stock sales in the State. That scheme was to provide compensation in the case of stock diseases such as this. We approached the stock-owners of the Kimberleys and asked them to contribute 1s. a head on a voluntary basis. While the majority were favourable to the proposition we could not get some, who had interests outside of Australia, to agree even to a paltry shilling. We went into the matter at great length. Recently I have looked into that with the idea of introducing a comprehensive Bill now. But time has not permitted of that being done. It would be impossible, in connection with this present outbreak, to attempt to include other stock in different parts of the State. For that reason I have confined this Bill to the particular outbreak. Of all the diseases mentioned in the Bill swine fever is the only one likely to occur in epidemic form and cause wholesale slaughtering of pigs. The condemnation of carcasses for tuberculosis is not very high, considerably under one per cent.

Mr. Mann: What about the cattle fund compensation?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That deals with prescribed districts.

Mr. Mann: What about the rinderpest outbreak?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That was something entirely different. Ultimately, after much pressure had been brought to bear, compensation was received from the Commonwealth Government in connection with that outbreak. In this measure no provision is made for compensation for heads or small parts of the carcass which are sometimes condemned in tuberculosis cases. Swine erysipelas and paratyphoid, where they occur in pigs, do not cause death as in the case of swine fever, but because of the danger to health the carcasses of pigs affected are usually condemned. In this Bill, where pigs or carcasses are condemned, arrangements are made, in the case of healthy pigs, for full compensation to be paid to the grower. In the case of diseased pigs the compensation is set out as being 75 per cent. of the market value of the pig or carcass if the pig has died, and it can be shown to have died of

swine fever before the carcass was inspected. The market value is determined as being that at the place where the pig was condemned.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was dealing with the principle of not compensating wholly for these diseases. Where pigs are found to be healthy after having been condemned as suffering from disease, the compensation will be 100 per cent., but where there is disease, the grower will be indemnified on a percentage basis—usually generous—of the market value. The same principle is followed in the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act. Where the owner of cattle in a prescribed district of the metropolitan area comes under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, he is recompensed up to 90 per cent. of the value of a cow condemned as suffering from tuberculosis. As the condemnations are not on a wholesale scale such as would obtain if we had a scourge like swine fever, where that principle is applied under the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, there has not been any difficulty in making adjustments as between the owners and the officers of the department, who hand their recommendations for compensation to me.

Special provision has been made in this Bill to cover cases where virulent disease has broken out and pigs have died as a result of some kind of fever before the arrival of an approved person. Unless such a provision were made, we might have a very difficult disease present in epidemic form and of such disease not being compensable from the fund. In such cases it would be necessary to hold postmortem examinations to get the fullest particulars for the approved officer and enable a person to qualify for compensation from the fund. The Stock Diseases Act provides for certain condemnations of parts of carcasses. I have already referred briefly to cases of condemnation for tuberculosis. It is not infrequent, although we do not have 1 per cent. condemned for that disease, that parts of the carcasses have glandular infection, usually the head. That part is often condemned and the rest is free from disease.

The system for collecting funds for the compensation trust account is very simple and economical. It consists in affixing compensation stamps to invoices and receipts

by vendors or agents when effecting the sale of a pig. Arrangements will be made, as in the case of all simple forms of taxation where stamps are concerned, such as the hospital tax stamp, to have supplies available at all post offices so that the measure might be complied with and the necessary stamp tax affixed to receipts. Owners are required under the Bill to ensure that such receipts are properly stamped because, where compensation is claimed, growers will be required to produce receipts for pigs sold by them to prove that legitimate contributions have been made to the fund. Unless there is proof that a person has made legitimate payments to the fund by means of stamps, we would run the risk of having wholesale evasions and of many people not living up to their responsibilities but expecting compensation if they met with disaster.

The marketing of pigs in this State is not wholly in line with the practice adopted in other States, and since most of our traffic is through two or three works, in addition to the butchers' trade, it should be an easy matter to arrange, whether pigs are sold singly or in lots, for an assessment to be made for the lot or for the individual sale. There is a system of interlotting which is practised at the Midland Junction saleyards and also at large country sales, and we do not wish to interfere with any practice that is in operation or cause any detriment to trade in general. If this Bill is passed it will result in the cessation of the condemnation scheme at present in operation regarding all pigs sold in the Midland Junction saleyards. In recent years I have had many inquiries from members as to the reason for the deduction for compensation. It appears on all account sales received by growers. Under this scheme, which is one the agents themselves formulated, there is a deduction equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on all pigs of over 40s. value. This amount is also deducted from the accounts of purchasers of pigs and is intended to insure buyers of pigs against losses which might be incurred as a result of such stock being affected with disease. A deduction from the amount bid and the amount received on the grower's part is made on the account sales as a sort of compensation in the event of there being a death or loss to the purchaser after the purchase has been completed.

Mr. Patrick: Has a fund accumulated?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They do not accumulate a fund but deduct a percentage from both parties in the event of the purchaser needing compensation.

Mr. Doney: That would seem to create a fund.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but in many cases no money is collected. It is a lesser charge in case there is a loss on the consignment or on a subsequent sale. It is deducted at the time of the sale. It is claimed that under this system butchers and other purchasers freely bid to the full value of any animal placed before them, and do not deduct an amount to replace loss which may be incurred. They meet the loss when it does occur. The amount deducted is equivalent to 1.2d. in the £1, and as this covers only half the pigs slaughtered or sold in the State, it is a fairly high rate to pay based on the condemnations that occur—much too high a rate. The Bill provides for the abolition of those practices. Compensation will be paid, in fact, whether pigs have been killed because of disease or have died as the result of disease. During 1941 the condemnation of whole carcasses was only .43 per cent. of those marketed, while part-condemnations were only a further .34 per cent., the bulk of which would be "heads," for which no compensation would normally be paid, and for which we are not making provision in this Bill. We propose by this measure to create a fund not only to provide for the future, but also for the £16,000 which will at least be required to compensate owners for pigs destroyed during this epidemic.

Mr. Cross: You had better make it retrospective.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Had the hon. member been in his place he would have heard my explanation of that before the luncheon adjournment. A specific date is mentioned in the Bill and the Bill will be retrospective to that date. We do not intend to entertain any claims for compensation before that date. There are excellent reasons for having a set date. One reason is whether it may not be necessary to take action against persons who indiscriminately, or through carelessness, spread this disease to some extent. I am diffident about paying compensation to people who by their own action caused the severe spread

of this disease. Members will notice that the date mentioned in the Bill is the 27th October.

I hope that the attempt in this Bill to form a plan providing for compensation for the future for losses from specified diseases, and to enable a fund to be built up to compensate for the losses in the present outbreak, will be favourably received by the House. It has been exceedingly difficult, in the short time at my disposal, and without the opportunity of access to information as to action taken in the other States in respect of some aspects of this matter, to bring down a Bill adequately to meet the situation. I think this Bill will. We shall be able to put aside annually £6,000 or £7,000, and therefore three years will be occupied in collecting sufficient money to pay compensation for losses in the present outbreak. Members will also notice that I have arranged for a Governor's message to be sent, because the Bill involves the expenditure of public money. Provision will have to be made for the Treasury to meet compensation payments for losses in this outbreak. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 1st December. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for the North-West in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Constitution of board:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on this clause, to which the member for Canining had moved the following amendment:—"That in line 2 the word 'ten' be struck out with a view to inserting the word 'eleven.'"

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	24

Majority against .. 15

AYES.

Mr. Fox
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Needham
Mr. Tonkin

Mr. Triat
Mr. Willson
Mr. Withers
Mr. Cross

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. North
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Nulsen
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Wise
Mr. Millington	Mr. Stubbs

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 23—agreed to.

Clause 24—Power to purchase property for stations, etc.:

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of Subclause (1) the word "of" be struck out, and the word "or" inserted in lieu.

This is merely a typographical error.

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

Clauses 25 to 36—agreed to.

Clause 37—Contributions towards expenditure:

Mr. McDONALD: When speaking on the second reading, I made reference to this clause because it omits a part of the existing legislation. By the amendment agreed to last year, the local authorities and insurance companies are not required to contribute towards any fire brigade expenditure used for the purpose of what I call A.R.P. preparations, or for the purpose of providing for damage occasioned by enemy action. It was at that time thought that the amount was an unpredictable sum, and that in any event it was outside the principle of the Act, which dealt with civil expenditure by fire brigades; that is, the normal expenditure for the purpose of preventing and extinguishing fires. Fire brigades' expenditure to meet damage caused by enemy action is abnormal. The Commonwealth Government has recognised that by setting up the War Damage Commission and assuming responsibility for compensating property-owners who suffer damage, including fire, as a result of enemy action. The Commonwealth War Damage Commission has been set up since we passed that amendment last year. The view held by this Chamber that it was outside the ordinary expenditure of fire brigades was confirmed by the attitude adopted by the Commonwealth Government in assuming responsibility for damage, whether by fire or other means, occasioned

by enemy action, and by levying upon all property-owners a premium, which has now attained large proportions. That money will form the fund from which the Commonwealth will meet the compensation to be paid because of war damage. I ask the Committee to continue the decision arrived at by Parliament last year, and reinsert in this measure the provision contained in the existing legislation. I am sorry that by an oversight my amendment does not appear on the notice paper, but it is very simple in principle. It refers to Subclause (2), which deals with the amount of the expenditure to be contributed by the local authorities and insurance companies. I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause (2):—"Provided that for the purpose of this subsection the term 'annual estimated expenditure' shall not include any moneys expended or proposed to be expended in relation to or arising from either directly or indirectly war or warlike operations."

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I hope that the hon. member will not press this amendment. As I explained when moving the second reading, I am positive it is not necessary. It will not achieve the object of the member for West Perth. I explained, firstly, that the board has to make up an annual estimate of expenditure, and that is all that this clause deals with. These estimates are drawn up by the members of the board, and we seek to protect them against extra expenditure. No provision is made in these estimates for war or warlike purposes, and therefore no such expenditure can be incurred. This amendment would not protect the members of the Fire Brigades Board, or the funds of the fire brigade. On the other hand, it would put an encumbrance on the board members. In my opinion, which is backed by legal opinion, to be strictly within the Act the members of the Fire Brigades Board should, in their annual estimates, include such items as wages to employees and upkeep of appliances for fire-fighting purposes. It is on such items as those that the board is legally entitled to spend money.

To be consistent, if this clause is enacted, the members of the board should first satisfy themselves that a fire has not been started through war or warlike operations before being justly entitled to spend money in extinguishing the fire. I have legal advice confirming that opinion. The provision in the Act, which is similar to the amendment,

was included at the request of another place, and I agreed to accept it so as to give it a trial. The provision has been in operation for 12 months and it has not proved of advantage but rather a hindrance to the operations of the board. The effect would be that if a fire was started by a fifth-columnist or even by a bomb, the board would not be entitled to spend money on suppressing it and could be made to refund any expenditure incurred in any such undertaking. I agree with what the member for West Perth said regarding the Commonwealth Government accepting responsibility for insurance to cover damage arising out of the war or warlike operations, but the amendment will not improve the position locally and is not necessary.

Mr. CROSS: The amendment is stupid. What does the member for West Perth suggest would happen if there should be a raid over Perth and bombs should be dropped? Fires would occur, and how could the Fire Brigades Board determine whether a particular fire was caused by the explosion of a bomb or otherwise?

The Minister for Lands: It might be a case of incendiarism.

Mr. CROSS: I would be more inclined to proceed along the lines adopted in the Eastern States, where extra precautions have already been taken to safeguard against eventualities associated with the war. In Melbourne 16 extra men have been placed on duty on the wharves, which are protected day and night. The intention is to secure a recoup of the extra cost from the Commonwealth Government. In Adelaide 19 extra posts have been established and they are manned day and night. They have been provided solely for war purposes, and the equipment provided there and in the other States was manufactured for war purposes only. In Melbourne the fire brigades are in readiness for bombing raids.

Mr. McDonald: Who paid for that?

Mr. CROSS: The Melbourne Fire Brigades Board. In Brisbane 160 extra men have been put on and they are being trained to cope with outbreaks of fire due to bombing raids. It is common knowledge that the Commonwealth Government is providing a lot of extra equipment, of which Western Australia will receive its share. I do not know how the plant will be paid for, but the States generally should take concerted action to compel the Common-

wealth Government to meet that cost seeing that it has taken from the people millions of pounds for war damage insurance business. On the other hand, the State Government and the Fire Brigades Board must be ready for eventualities. I suggest the amendment be withdrawn with a view to concerted action being taken by the States to require the Commonwealth Government to shoulder the expense.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I oppose the amendment for reasons different from those advanced by the member for Canning. As Minister in control of civil defence matters in this State, I assert that the provision the member for West Perth seeks to include in the Bill and which now appears in the Act, has been the cause of constant friction between those affected on the question of what would be regarded as war-caused fires and what were not. The chairman of the Fire Brigades Board, the chairman of the Perth Road Board and I have almost had stand-up fights on the question. I can safely assure the Committee that there never has been and never will be any intention of asking the Fire Brigades Board to pay for any equipment that is likely to be required for war purposes. I have attended five conferences to deal with civil defence matters, and it has been definitely determined that the essential equipment shall be provided by the Commonwealth and State Governments. I do not know quite how much we have received, but I know the equipment to hand is quite extensive.

Hon. N. Keenan: What cost was involved in that respect?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot say offhand. As for the possibility of the fire brigades refraining from dealing with an outbreak until such time as the board decided whether the conflagration was war-caused or not, I do not think that would arise. There is absolutely no reason for the amendment. When it was included in the Act 12 months ago, it appeared to me to be innocuous but it has not proved to be so.

Hon. N. Keenan: What has been the cause of the quarrelling between you and the others?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: One hundred and one considerations. I do not propose to go into the details. From the standpoint of civil defence, I do not want the amendment included in the Bill, for it will

only lead to further friction. I have already given my assurance to the Committee that there is no desire to make the Fire Brigades Board pay for the equipment as suggested.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The member for Canning declared the amendment to be stupid. I failed to note anything in his opposition to the amendment that was intelligent. Nor can I understand the attitude adopted by the Minister for the North-West and the Minister controlling civil defence matters. The latter Minister spoke about the board ascertaining the cause of a fire before permitting brigades to attend the conflagration. The amendment does not deal with that aspect. If a fire breaks out, the brigades will be on the job. The amendment deals merely with the computation of annual expenditure. Should the brigade have to deal with a fire that is caused by enemy action a certain amount of expense would be involved and provision would have to be made accordingly in the board's estimates. The Minister who deals with civil defence matters assured the Committee that the Commonwealth Government would provide the money. But I would remind members that when the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act was under consideration, I secured an amendment the effect of which was to ensure that the Commonwealth Government accepted its responsibility to pay for air-raid precaution work as part of the defence of Australia. Experience shows that it is best to safeguard such a position. In this instance the amendment will not prevent the fire brigades from turning out to deal with an outbreak. I assume the Commonwealth Government will subsequently be asked to meet the cost.

Mr. Cross: And you are likely to get them to pay for it, are you not?

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member should not make himself appear any less intelligent than he showed himself to be when he opposed the amendment. We should make assurance doubly sure and agree to the amendment. I do not doubt the Ministers' sincerity when they suggest that the Commonwealth Government will ultimately foot the Bill, but the amendment should be embodied in the measure.

Mr. McDONALD: The principle involved has been clearly stated by the member for Perth. There is a possibility of abnormal expenditure due solely to war causes, in

respect of which the Commonwealth Government has already assumed control under the War Damage Commission. The member for Canning suggests that the amendment is stupid. He must remember that the amendment is word for word with what Parliament, stupid or otherwise, agreed to last year, so it is not new. The Minister says that the amendment is not necessary, but he sees no harm in it. Why not include it, so that there will be no possibility of a mistake? Even if the amendment does no good, it might well be inserted. However, it is highly necessary that Parliament should declare what it considers to be the proper responsibility of the Commonwealth, assumed by the local authorities and the insurance companies, in respect of contributions to the expenditure of the board. Every year the board meets and decides upon its estimated expenditure for the forthcoming year. That having been done, the local authorities and the insurance companies are included in that portion of the Bill. After that, and during the year for which expenditure has been estimated, if a fire occurs anywhere from any cause the brigade must turn out. The amendment will not stop it from turning out.

Should it prove that the expenditure for a year, owing to an unusual number of fires having occurred, exceeds the estimate, the Bill provides that the excess must be added to the estimated expenditure for the following year, in respect of which contributions are again made as set out in the Bill. Thus no harm can result from the amendment. But the whole point, as the member for Perth has said, is whether we are going to leave the door open for the Commonwealth to collect all the money for insurance against war damage, and pass the expenditure for preventing such damage on to the State instrumentalities. We would be saving the Commonwealth money by putting a fire out. In unmistakable terms we should declare that this is a Commonwealth responsibility, and that the Commonwealth ought to shoulder it. I have adopted the wording of my amendment because it is a wording which already exists in law.

Mr. CROSS: This amendment will not compel the Commonwealth Government to pay anything whatever. If it is adopted, it will be the source of much rancour and wrangling. Should the Fire Brigades Board desire to incur some expenditure which ultimately might prove suitable for war

purposes, there would be objections raised that this could not be done legally. The amendment does not compel the Commonwealth Government to contribute anything whatever towards the board's expenses. Again, the Civil Defence Council would say "We have not the money." Fire control should be under a single authority. The only way to get the Commonwealth Government to pay is to reject this amendment and then take concerted action.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I fear the Committee is being misled by the introduction of references to the Commonwealth insurance scheme and the Civil Defence Council, which have nothing whatever to do with the subject. The Commonwealth has taken over responsibility for war insurance. Our Fire Brigades Board can expend only a certain amount of money, as authorised by the Bill. Members of the Fire Brigades Board, if they incurred unauthorised expenditure, could be collectively and individually sued for repayment of the money; and that penalty might result from the adoption of the amendment in the case of money expended, innocently, without authorisation.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	14

Majority for	3
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AYES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Perkins
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kelly	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Warner
Mr. Needham	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Wise
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed, the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 38 to 61—agreed to.

Clause 62—Owner to give information as to insurance:

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (1) after the word "employee" the words "or member" be inserted.

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

Clauses 63 to 73, Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [3.24]: I opposed the continuance of this Act last year, and I see no reason why I should alter my opinion on the present occasion. Rather, subsequent events have strengthened the opinion I then held. The original Act was passed in 1914 for a period of three years, which ended in 1917. It will be remembered that the Act was one to deal with farmers over a drought period, particularly the 1914 drought. This year the annual continuance Bill is celebrating its 25th re-enactment. If it were necessary to have such a piece of legislation on the statute-book and that it should be re-enacted for the period of 25 years, one would think that had it the merits claimed for it by the Minister it would be made a permanent measure. In his second reading speech the Minister remarked—

When the original Bill, which subsequently became an Act, was introduced it was considered, I believe, that assistance to industries under this kind of legislation would take a very different form from that into which it has subsequently drifted; because now the main part of the operation of the Industries Assistance Act is to permit advances to be made to farmers, and the subsequent collection of these advances.

The Minister admits in that remark that the legislation subsequently drifted. If legislation drifts or if it is a type of legislation that has a tendency to drift, that drift should be arrested. I would offer no objection if the Government brought down a Bill or amended the Agricultural Bank Act to make assistance to farmers a permanent portion of that Act. That position exists all over Australia today. In New South Wales there

is a Farmers' Relief Act which is attending to the requirements and relief of over 4,000 New South Wales farmers. That Act does recognise the personal element. It recognises in a very different way from our Act the farmer as a co-partner in his production and work. The New South Wales Act takes up the position that a portion of the farmer's produce should be allotted to him. On the contrary, the Western Australian Act, in Section 15, which is the basis of the Industries Assistance Act, evidently makes no such provision because in that section, which is the machinery section of the Act, it is laid down that the principal and interest of all advances made, or deemed to have been made, shall be, and until fully paid shall remain, a first charge in favour of the board in priority to all other encumbrances—

(a) upon the estate or interest of the applicant in all lands held or occupied by him for agricultural, farming, or grazing purposes, including all such lands held by him under lease or contract for the purchase thereof, or as a homestead farm, or otherwise; and

(b) upon all crops to be sown in or grown upon such lands and the produce thereof, and the share or interest of the applicant in any other crops wheresoever grown; and

(c) upon all implements, livestock, and the progeny thereof, and other chattels supplied to the applicant under this Act; and

(d) subject to prior encumbrances, shall be, and, until fully paid shall continue, a charge on all other livestock, implements, machinery, plant, and moveable structures of the applicant.

It leaves no provision at all for the farmer. It will be remembered that in order to arrive at some conclusion in justice to the farmers particularly, I moved to repeal Part 2 of the Act. I think that was two years ago. You, Mr. Speaker, ruled me out of order, and the House agreed with your ruling. I accept—I have no other option but to accept—the decision that you and this House reached at that period, which was that the whole of the proceeds of the farmer indebted under the Industries Assistance Act are the property of the Crown. That is a most extraordinary position in which we find ourselves through this piece of legislation. That opinion was concurred in by the Premier, the Minister for Lands, the Leader of the National Party, and the House. On reading the Act through, I agreed that those opinions were well based. One would think that the Government, knowing that the proceeds of an indebted farmer under the In-

dustries Assistance Act are the property of the Crown, must know that the decision rendered these farmers mere serfs. It rendered them mere producers of wealth without giving them any rights.

In New South Wales under the Farmers' Relief Act it is provided that 10 per cent. of the proceeds of the farm are hypothecated to the farmer and his family for personal needs, not for the carrying on of the farm but for medical attention, clothing, etc. In this State the Legislative Assembly has ruled in the direction I have indicated, and the Government evidently persists in its attitude in re-enacting this law, with the full knowledge of the fact that the proceeds of the farms are, under the Industries Assistance Act, the property of the Crown. We, members of the Country Party and other members, know that over £400,000 was advanced by the Commonwealth for drought relief under certain conditions. The Commonwealth Government gave the State Government seven years in which to repay the drought relief advances. Inside two years the State Government took 75 per cent. of those advances by means of the Industries Assistance Act. I know of many instances of farmers with good crops who had the whole of their proceeds taken. They were immediately placed under the Industries Assistance Act, and allowed £7 per month on which to sustain themselves, and 2s. 4d. a week or 10s. a month for every child. We are asked to re-enact a measure of that kind.

Let us go back to 1915, when this Act was first passed. We find that under a regulation made in accordance with the Industrial Assistance Act farmers were allowed 9s. per day, or three guineas a week. In 1942 the farmer and his wife are allowed 35s. a week. We have been told on good authority that a pound today is not worth more than 10s. compared with its value in 1914. Senator Cameron, a member of the Commonwealth Government, has expressed the opinion that compared with its value in 1914 a pound is only worth 8s. today. Instead of farmers being on the three-guineas-a-week rate as was the case nearly 30 years ago, those whose proceeds have been taken are now allowed £7 per month, and interest at 5 per cent. is charged on that amount. Bear in mind that the Crown has meanwhile taken everything that the farmer produces! As the Minister has said, thousands of farmers have

been brought under the Act. He further remarked that in seven years approximately 1¼ million pounds had been advanced to farmers, and that of this amount £788,000 had been collected.

The Minister went on to say that there had been an accumulation of uncollectable moneys, or bad debts, approaching £250,000 since the original Act was passed in 1915. If we take the loss of £250,000 since 1915, we find it compares very well with the losses incurred by other people who have been brought under another section of the Industries Assistance Act. The Act is one under which the Government may grant assistance to the mining industry, the farming industry, and to business interests. If we turn up the report of the Auditor General, page 49, we find a list of those businesses which have been assisted under the Act, but which are under no obligation to place their proceeds in the hands of the Agricultural Bank, which administers that legislation. All they are required to do is to render annual statements to the Treasury. What different treatment is exhibited to businesses that have been assisted under the Act and to farmers who have been brought under it! Reference is made in the Auditor General's report to concerns that are no longer operating. They have gone out of business, but they represent a loss to the State of £504,024 10s. 5d., compared with £250,000 which has been lost to the State as a result of the assistance given to farmers since 1915. Without any fuss whatever the businesses that have been assisted under this Act have shown a loss of £504,000.

I will not weary the House by detailing the various businesses referred to by the Auditor General but will cite a few examples. The Avon Butter and Bacon Factory showed a loss, in round figures, of £13,000. That money was lost to the State. The Auditor General says that the amount outstanding is a loss, as the assets are of insufficient value to meet other advances by the Agricultural Bank, which is in possession of the property. The Calyx Porcelain Works owe £45,000 to the State. The Auditor General says that the premises have been leased and that, if the arranged purchase option is exercised, the major portion of the amount outstanding will represent a loss. The North-West Meat Works owe to the State £61,752. The Government took possession of the works some years ago and they have been dismantled.

The amount outstanding represents a loss, although £25 was received during the year from the sale of material. The W.A. Man-ganese Coy. owed the State £143,691 2s. 9d., which apparently represents a total loss.

Mr. Cross: How many millions have been written off, representing farmers' debts?

Mr. BOYLE: Nothing is written off under the Industries Assistance Act. That Act has nothing to do with the bank except that the Commissioners have been made into a board on account of transferred activities. I am taking the Minister's argument. He says the Act must be re-enacted for a further 12 months. He pointed out that since 1915 the loss that has been incurred through farmers brought under the Act has been £250,000. I have quoted the Auditor General to show that the losses incurred by businesses assisted under the Act represent more than twice that amount, but the businesses have not been required to submit to anything but the furnishing of an annual balance sheet. I take it that where losses are made not even a balance sheet is brought down, and the amounts concerned must be written off. The Government should separate the operations concerning assistance to farmers and agriculturists from those associated with other activities. The industries are quite separate from each other, those connected with the land and those connected with commercial pursuits.

We are now told that the assets of the farmers who are in debt according to the Industries Assistance Act are the property of the Crown. That is a bad thing to have to say in any part of the British Empire. It is not right that thousands of farmers should be working in this State on an allowance of £7 a month. It does not matter what the proceeds are. If farmers have a good year, the proceeds are taken over by the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank, acting as an Industries Assistance Board, and the farmers receive back a miserable £7 a month. I and those associated with me are expected to vote for a continuance of this legislation. How can I face the farmers, and how can any other member of the Country Party face them, knowing that we have re-enacted a measure that confirms the servitude of the farmers and the handing over of their proceeds to the Crown? That ruling, however, has been given in this House, and in the light of subsequent events I have to agree that the ruling was

correct. I regret that the Government has not brought down a Bill to place permanently on the statute-book a measure that will afford some real assistance to farmers. The Minister went on to say that if the Bill under discussion is not passed, it will be very difficult for many farmers who now depend upon it. I challenge that assertion. Let us turn to the Agricultural Bank Act. There is power in it already to grant assistance to farmers under Section 38 dealing with applications for advances. After detailing what the Commissioners can do in the way of making advances, the Act, in paragraph (e), states—

For any other purpose where, in the opinion of the Commissioners, it is necessary or desirable to make an advance in order to conserve or protect any security of the Commissioners.

Would it not be conserving and protecting the security of the Commissioners if they kept the farmers on their holdings? The Agricultural Bank Act already permits that. If this paragraph is used at all, how can it be used for anything else? Otherwise, why is it embodied in the Act? Is it not put there to enable the Commissioners to carry on the farmers? According to the Minister, it is apparently a handy thing, this Industries Assistance Act. It ties the farmers hand and foot and puts them under the control of the board, by simply saying that they have received assistance under the Industries Assistance Act, and under Section 15 all their property, their crops and everything else, must come in as security to the board. Assistance is then rendered to the farmer on the meagre scale I have mentioned. I have remarked in the House before that an allowance of 14s. a week is made to an illegitimate child.

Under the Industries Assistance Act, however, the allowance to a farmer's child under the age of 16 is only 2s. 4d., a week, and after that the child has to fend for himself. The farmers can touch none of their proceeds. If they do, they can be sent to gaol. I have recounted instances where farmers have been charged with appropriating to their own use the crops they have grown, and they have been sent to gaol. I quoted the case of a farmer at Southern Cross who sold £20 worth of his own wheat to buy spare parts to enable him to take off the balance of his crop. Under the penal clause he was sent to gaol for five months. A farmer of Lake Grace was given six months

for converting some of the proceeds of his farm to his own use. There are penalties everywhere, penalties of £50 and £100! We are now asked to re-enact this law. The Minister says that without it we cannot carry on, that no advances can be made to farmers if we refuse the re-enactment. Marginal farmers receive special treatment. The member for Mt. Marshall has in conversation referred to this matter. I have pointed out that, according to the report of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners, a sum of £228,000 has been spent on those men. It is competent for the Minister to apportion some of the £417,000 that is available to carry on some of those farmers who are suffering through the grasshopper pest. Because the Agricultural Bank Act and the National Security Regulations are now in force in connection with resettlement, there is no reason why farmers should be left in the lurch.

At any rate, it is worth while attempting to alter the opinion of the House that the proceeds of the farmer are the property of the Crown. I do not think that in any other part of the world this would be considered to be ordinary fair treatment. Not to my knowledge do similar provisions appear in any law in a British Dominion, and certainly not in any other part of Australia. In New South Wales the farmer works on a declining scale. He receives 10 per cent. of the whole of his proceeds up to the first £1,000. Then the declining scale operates. If he has a return of £3,000, he would probably get £200 a year, not to carry him on in the following season, but to provide for personal needs. I do not think that this House, in justice, is entitled to condemn the farmer to another 12 months of legislation of this sort. It is not too late for the Government to bring down some other proposal. I understand that we shall be meeting again in January. If the House rejects this Bill, it will be incumbent on the Government to find other means of carrying on these farmers.

I have not much more to say. The issue is a simple one. It is that the farmer, his wife and family are working under the Industries Assistance Act. What for? To pay off debts and interest on advances! Whilst doing that, they receive this meagre allowance. Is it any wonder that they are finishing with the whole business? I have districts that six years

ago had 40 farmers and now have only four or five.

Mr. North: Would those farmers be expert farmers?

Mr. BOYLE: They are not only competent but they are entitled to a margin for skill. In the main no fault is found with them by the authorities.

Mr. Berry: Some of them have been there for 27 years.

Mr. BOYLE: Yes, and he must be a fairly good waster who could stick out the period of the depression and of the miserable prices we have had for a number of years. But there is a better opportunity now. For 3,000 bushels there is a guaranteed price, but that arrangement was immediately countered by another action on the part of the Commonwealth authorities which I will not discuss now.

Today the Government does not seem able to do better than bring down a miserable Bill of this sort asking that the year 1943 be altered to 1944. That is the contribution of the Government to this problem. I admit that in previous years there was some excuse for the Government. Perhaps it was thought that the farmer had some interest in his own proceeds. But the Government cannot believe that now because Parliament has ruled that those proceeds are the property of the Crown. If, as the Minister said, we have thousands of farmers in that category, we are in duty bound to reject this continuance Bill. Let us leave to the Government the responsibility of devising other means.

The Government is entitled to recover the money it has advanced. The Government is entitled to protect itself. That is ordinary business. It is also entitled to eject a farmer who is not playing the game. I have never objected to this being done. While I was the leader of a certain organisation, we always insisted upon getting definite proof and considering both sides. In all these years surely it has been discovered whether certain farmers are worthless and whether they should be carried on under this so-called Industries Assistance Act. I object to the differential treatment. If I started a jam factory, which would be handling a primary product, and received assistance under Part III. of the Industries Assistance Act, I would not have to pay the whole of my proceeds into the Treasury, and I would not have inspectors running around to see what

I was doing. I would be required once a year to furnish a balance sheet, and that would be all. If the balance sheet was not too satisfactory, apparently there would be no very heavy follow-up. Yet £504,000 is the loss under the trading concerns compared with £250,000 against the farming community. I oppose the second reading and hope the House will agree with me.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall): There is much in what the member for Avon has said, much that can be borne out by the farming community and those who represent it, but I am not sure that by following out the hon. member's desires and rejecting this Bill, the farmers will be in a very happy position. I believe that the Act continues in operation until the end of March next. By that time, the whole of the proceeds for this season will have been taken by those who have made advances to the farmers.

The Minister for Lands: Have you ever suggested that they get any back?

Mr. WARNER: I could suggest many things with which the Minister would not agree. If the Act is discontinued, the powers-that-be who hold the liens would have the opportunity to take over the farmers' properties. The wool and the wheat will have been taken off the farms, and who would carry on the farmers for the next season? Who would help them to put in another crop, or who would grant the miserable pittance of £7 or £8 a month that they have been receiving? Before we abandon this, we must make some better arrangement. I represent a district containing quite a lot of marginal areas and, through the grasshopper plague and the bad season, many of the settlers have very little to carry on with. If they were left without the assistance of this Act, they would not be in a position to finance themselves next year. I should like to see some parts of the Industries Assistance Act and of the Agricultural Bank Act dispensed with, but I cannot agree to voting away something that is going to help quite a number of farmers in my electorate to carry on.

In my district are some farmers who will get nothing at all this year. Their crops have been eaten by grasshoppers or they have suffered from the bad season. It may be said that those farmers will constitute a minority, but I point out that the large pro-

portion of those who would suffer are in my electorate. I am not prepared to see any man there suffer or see him with his family walk off his holding through lack of assistance under this Act to carry on next year. I know what is happening in my district, but I will not lay myself open to a charge of having deprived those farmers of their only opportunity to carry on, miserable pittance though it is. Possibly in the long run it might prove better if we adopted the suggestion of the member for Avon, but meanwhile there are too many people in my district who are affected and, unless the Minister can assure us of some other means of carrying on next year, I cannot support my colleague.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore): While I admit that the eloquence of the member for Avon was very persuasive and though I appreciate the position obtaining in the country, I have definite leanings towards the view taken by the member for Mt. Marshall. If we could be assured that all these indigent farmers—and there is quite a number of them—who are receiving this pittance would have it and perhaps more provided in some other way, I would say there was no need for continuing the Act. But have we any such assurance?

Mr. Boyle: When will we get it?

Mr. BERRY: How is the hon. member going to get it? If the member for Avon or the Minister could assure me that we were going to get it, the hon. member's argument would be sound but, if we are going to leave a number of farmers stranded in the country with no assistance at all, we shall have a great sin to answer for. The member for Avon told us that this legislation had celebrated its silver wedding, and that a continuance Bill recurs annually, and he wants to know the reason why. I assume that the Government is alive to the fact that the Act has to be continued annually.

I know several farmers who have no one to carry them on—farmers without a bank overdraft and absolutely clear of debt—but who find themselves unable to carry on because they have neither the money nor anyone to back them. They have reached an impasse. I have tried everywhere to get someone to carry them on but no one wants them. They are nobody's baby. I think the member for Mt. Marshall fears that other farmers in his electorate may be placed in

a similar position. If we dispense with the Act, as has been suggested, we shall have many farmers who are nobody's baby. When this House is in a position to discontinue this legislation, there will be a period when the indigent farmer will be nobody's baby. I should be loath to see that happen. My counsel to the member for Avon and to the House is to leave well alone. Instead of fiddling about with this sort of thing, we should tackle the big problem—the permanent debts—but this legislation must continue for the benefit of those who need it. Instead of fiddling with this matter I hope members will take a broad view and, before our boys return from the war, deal with the permanent debt structure which overhangs not only the farmers but the whole community of Australia.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (in reply): This afternoon we have had still another example of wonderful mock heroics from the member for Avon.

Mr. Boyle: That is not argument.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I will give many arguments before I have finished. It is unfortunate that one having the talent of the hon. member does not confine himself, in an analysis of this subject, wholly to facts and give substantial arguments rather than a repetition of instances that have been recounted in this House ever since he joined it. The hon. member desires to oppose the continuance of the Act, which all impartial people will admit has made possible the carrying on in this State of hundreds of farmers from year to year over a period of many years. The hon. member has again dragged in the question of the monthly sustenance paid to farmers whose circumstances are so poor as to compel the Agricultural Bank to give them special assistance. I invite him to analyse that remark.

The hon. member once again produces the comments of the Auditor General. In his recent remarks on the Auditor General's report, the hon. member refused to come back to the point whether the Auditor General suggested something to the Government or demanded something. When the hon. member was challenged on that point, he endeavoured to get out of it by burlesquing. He said "What would I do if a policeman asked me to move on or suggested that I should move on?"

Mr. Marshall: He would run.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: He said, "I would certainly consider I had better move on in case he demanded that I do and imprisoned me." This matter is much too serious to be side-tracked by an evasion of that sort. It certainly was a clever play on words. The hon. member cannot possibly suggest that he was ignorant of what the Auditor General meant, because what he meant is very clearly expressed on that particular page of his report. Firstly, the Auditor General makes no demand; secondly, the Government has not refused in any way to act on any demand of the Auditor General. The hon. member knows full well that the Auditor General's opinion is that because this particular money was advanced to the State apart from any provisions of the Financial Agreement, it did not come within the ambit of that agreement. That is the sole point. The acceptance of that money as an advance or as a loan to this State should be ratified, the Auditor General says, so that this and succeeding Governments will be responsible for the authorisation of its expenditure. The hon. member knows that. But what did he pretend? He pretended that the Auditor General meant the Government should introduce legislation setting out the terms and conditions on which this loan money should be made available to farmers. The hon. member knows that the Auditor General meant nothing of the sort.

Mr. Boyle: I did not say that at all. "Special legislation" were the words I used.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The hon. member used many words. He said the Government was defying the Auditor General. Very clever, too, but it will not go down!

Mr. Boyle: Stick to what I said.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I will read what the hon. member said.

Mr. Boyle: Do so!

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The hon. member said—

The Government of Western Australia is defying the Auditor General and evidently refuses to comply with his request in regard to the legislation necessary.

Then he goes on to say that the Government in refusing so to comply, takes no notice at all of the Auditor General's demands. When he was asked to stick to the truth and it was pointed out that the word "suggestion" was used what did the hon. member say?

Mr. Boyle: You have interpolated a lot I did not say.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have interpolated nothing. Those are not my methods. I know it is difficult for the hon. member to appreciate that there are many members in this Chamber who know all the story and that they are not impressed, as the audience which the hon. member had would suggest to him if he would take it as an example. Those members were not impressed by his endeavour on that occasion to handle the particular responsibilities of the Government and the passing on of those responsibilities.

Mr. Boyle: Are you condoning the absence of members from the Chamber?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was in the Chamber the whole time.

Mr. Boyle: But the other members?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not responsible for the members of the hon. member's Party.

Mr. Boyle: You appreciated their absence, evidently.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There certainly was a lot of them. I think the hon. member had two listening to him. So that the hon. member's statement that the Government had defied the Auditor General is entirely incorrect. On the subject of drought relief money—the £570,000—let us not cloud the issue by trying to assume it is a gift. It is money for which all the taxpayers of the State are responsible; and if the State, by Statute No. 42 of 1940, does not ratify that agreement, and if that is the only point at issue with the Auditor General, well, it should be ratified simply and only because the money advanced is outside of and distinct from moneys obtained under the Financial Agreement. Since the advance was made under a special arrangement, the Auditor General suggests the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State should be ratified. That is quite distinct from the hon. member's contention that the Auditor General suggests that this or that condition should be passed on. That is entirely beside the subject. The Auditor General, quite contrary to that view, is anxious about the repayment of all moneys, whether lent to farmers or others. In the past, the Auditor General has made some pertinent comments.

Mr. Patrick: He must have had a few headaches.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, many, as has the Government, because of

the non-payment of moneys advanced under this and similar statutes. Let it be clearly understood that the Auditor General is particularly interested in demanding that farming clients, as well as other clients, of the Government should live up to their obligations. The only point he raises in his report is that on constitutional grounds the money advanced for drought relief—not having been advanced under the Financial Agreement—should be ratified by Parliament. The hon. member suggested that had the Government done what he said should have been done in 1940, none of these difficulties would have arisen. Let us examine what he suggested in 1940. It is interesting to check up in these matters, not to ascertain whether the hon. member suggested this or that, but what he wished us to do. On the 28th November, 1940, when speaking on the amendment to the Industries Assistance Act, the hon. member said—

Western Australia's share of that money was £1,300,000 and that money was handed to the trustees under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act, who also were appointed trustees under the Rural Relief Fund Act. If we turn to the latter Act, we find it provides an almost perfect structure for the distribution of drought relief.

That is not quite in line with what the hon. member said was his suggestion at that time. He continued—

We want the farmers to be able to go to the trustees of the Rural Relief Fund Act in order to get whatever assistance they require from the drought relief fund.

The hon. member considered then that that was the ideal way to overcome this difficulty we are now in.

Mr. Boyle: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This, as the hon. member knows, was not possible under that legislation. Today he suggests his ideas are along entirely different lines. I suggest to any member who desires to vote against this Bill that he certainly should record his vote. It would be a very interesting position indeed—if not a difficult and dangerous position—if this Chamber threw into chaotic conditions not only the farmers' finance but the finances of the State. Suppose we said that there was no necessity for this continuance Bill, I wonder what would happen to the hundreds of farmers who have received advances this year amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds! How would they get on? The hon. member knows full well that some farmers

could not possibly have received assistance from big financial institutions, such as banks and insurance companies. Hundreds of farmers have received seasonal assistance from the Government and have been glad to get it. They appreciated it and repaid the advance. It is wrong to allow an impression to be created that all the farmers who have been assisted under this Act are in a state of penury, and that the condition of all farmers in the State is such as the hon. member would lead us to believe by his speech this afternoon.

Mr. Boyle: Did you not suggest the millennium?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I suggested that when every farmer is satisfied and there is no need to make seasonal advances, the millennium will have been reached.

Mr. Boyle: How long are you going to continue this Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not even the member for Avon can forecast what might be necessary a year or two hence. But let us, in all good faith, fairness and honesty, approach this position and admit the serious difficulties of the farmers, and the serious difficulties of the Government in trying to do the fair thing by them. Let us also accept with the fullest responsibility the words we utter in this connection. I can foresee, when the millennium does arrive and the members of the Country Party take their places on the Treasury bench, what kind of position the member for Avon will be in.

Mr. Needham: The millennium is a long time from now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be interesting to see the position he would be in had he to accept the responsibility of the position of Minister for Lands and Agriculture.

Mr. Boyle: Do not prophesy.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In trying to give effect to some of the views which he has endeavoured to sponsor from the opposite side of the House, I am afraid his difficulties would be even greater than they are today. I wish to deal for a moment with the question of the £7 per month sustenance allowance. Members would be led to believe that, under the Industries Assistance Act, as soon as a farmer has sold his produce, this awful ogre of a Government institution—the Agricultural Bank—steps in

and takes the whole of the proceeds, that because the bank takes a first mortgage over the property and a lien over the crops, the proceeds are attached by the bank. One would think there was something wrong in the Government making arrangements for the repayment of moneys advanced and having that repayment secured by a lien over crops and a mortgage over the farmer's property.

Mr. Boyle: Is there not an all-proceeds clause?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Of course there is, and also Section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act about which we are not hearing quite so much these days. In spite of there being an all-proceeds clause the member for Avon knows from his own utterances that in Mukinbudin, outside his own district, £10,000 worth of sidelines such as pigs, left that district in recent years. It might interest the hon. member to know that in spite of Section 51 not one pound's worth of that money was taken from the farmer, nor has it ever been mentioned in the consideration of his annual arrangements.

Let us be fair in the matter; let us analyse what is represented in this £7 a month. That is not all the farmer gets; that is not all he has to live on. What is it equivalent to? There are nearly 4,000 clients of the Agricultural Bank in the wheat and sheep districts of this State. Several hundreds of them are in receipt of drought-relief funds for various purposes. Many are in receipt of funds to augment their income so as to permit them to carry on. Their sideline, unless it is a substantial part of their income, is not interfered with, and that is how the £7 a month works out. Over 2,500 of the 4,000 clients in the wheat-belt are known to carry sidelines, the earnings from which are converted to the settler's own use and not interfered with.

Mr. Boyle: That is the wives' industry.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never mind about the wives' industry. I am suggesting that the pigs and other sidelines forming a substantial part of the farmer's income are not interfered with. There is no need to be sidetracked by the suggestion that the eggs and other things belonging to the wives should be brought into this discussion. In making a comparison with the city dweller, we arrive at a

position like this: The city dweller enjoys many amenities not available to the country dweller, but he has many advantages as against the city dweller, in regard to wood and other things. A married couple with three dependants would receive sustenance to the extent of £102 per annum. The average earnings from sidelines, according to the Bank's own knowledge through its branches, would be about £60. The total earnings including sustenance, sidelines and allowances, as against the city dweller, would be equal to £258.

Mr. North: That sounds like the new order.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Never mind the new order! I am expressing a view opposite from that of the member for Avon.

Mr. Boyle: You had better make that statement where the people are living.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I would make it anywhere.

Mr. Boyle: I invite you to do it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I challenge the hon. member to allow me to accompany him when he is to make some of his statements.

Mr. Boyle: I give that permission willingly.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is very well for us to indulge in a presentation of part of the story. If we are to analyse any matter and to get a clear understanding of it and to see these points, we must have the whole story. The hon. member is not entitled to express an *ex parte* case. It would not be accepted in any court of law. Both sides of the case must be heard. I venture the opinion that in all instances where a monthly sustenance allowance is necessary the bank gives every consideration to much more than £7 a month; this mere pittance that the member for Avon pretends to be their total income and on which they have to live! That is wrong. When introducing this Bill I mentioned that many hundreds of thousands of pounds had been advanced during the years for a variety of purposes. Nothing but chaotic conditions could emerge from its discontinuance. The hon. member knows that. He made no suggestion for a substitute workable arrangement, either permanently or seasonally for the farmers of this country.

Mr. Boyle: Why not adopt the New South Wales scheme?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have examined all similar legislation operating in the different States. The member for Avon knows, too, that the New South Wales scheme coming under the control of two or three officers, one of whom is from the New South Wales Rural Bank, is almost identical with what obtains in this State. I know those gentlemen well. I have exchanged not merely conversations, but have received communications setting out clearly what they have done under these circumstances, and I tell this House that this Government is no less considerate than is any other of the farmer's welfare and well-being. The hon. member used this phrase—"It is a miserable Bill and represents the only contribution of this Government to the problem." Those are easy words to utter, but they do not constitute much of an argument. I suggest to the hon. gentleman that when he presents his case on this and similar measures, he should not merely endeavour to express the unusual, but the usual and the fullest possible part of the case.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 26th November.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.25]: This legislation has now been in operation for 11 years. All that one needs to say about the Bill for continuance is that it has rather falsified the original Title, because, according to the Bill, the emergency has continued for 11 years and shows no signs of terminating. Although the Minister has not endeavoured to change the Title, he is justified in providing for the continuance of this measure, for the reason that there are still many securities which provide for rates of interest out of all proportion to what is fair and equitable today. This Bill is necessary to give fair treatment to those who have

securities which were in existence at the 31st December, 1931. It provides that they shall pay a reasonable rate of interest. I do not think the Minister or the Government could have done otherwise than bring down this measure to continue the present legislation for the coming year.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE AND AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS [4.30] in moving the second reading said: This year the Bill is something more than a continuance measure. Since 1931 the legislation has been re-enacted from year to year. Originally the measure was introduced because of the serious financial position obtaining in 1931 and the necessity at that time to restrict the rights of mortgagees in many ways. The present Bill represents a departure from the ordinary practice in that regard. The Act passed in 1931 was regarded as a temporary measure but has not since been amended, in which respect it is perhaps unique. The time has arrived—possibly it is long overdue—when consideration should be given to the rights of some mortgagees. In this Chamber for years we have heard from the member for Nedlands in particular the suggestion that consideration should be given as quickly as possible to the hardships that the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act of 1931 imposed on many mortgagees, who were not in much worse position than the mortgagors to whom the money was originally loaned. That can be readily understood.

There are numbers of instances of people having saved up for many years. They have perhaps got together £600 or even as much as £1,000; they may own the little cottage in which they live, and they may have loaned all the available cash to someone, with security over a house. Because of the application of the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction

Act, they have been unable to recall their money so as to enjoy the spending of it on necessities in their old age. For some time I have been trying to find an equitable way of tapering off, even to a small degree, the effects of that legislation. I read recently with very great interest all the contributions to the debates when the continuance Bills have been introduced year by year. The member for Nedlands must know of specific instances of hardship judging by his remarks from time to time, respecting which he urged that consideration should be given to means that would provide relief for mortgagees who were suffering because of the application of the legislation. As a first attempt in that direction, and appreciating that the release of mortgages up to £1,000 might meet the requirements, while at the same time realising that under the National Security Regulations loans in excess of £1,000 were prohibited, I took the opportunity some months ago to telegraph to the Commonwealth Treasurer to ascertain whether my efforts would be valid if I attempted to achieve what is outlined in the Bill. My telegram to Mr. Chifley read as follows:—

Our Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act, 1931, restricted action by mortgagees with respect to calling up of capital and also limited interest rates. Quite understandable that some hardship developed against mortgagees whose life savings represented in mortgages which were considered temporary when invested and capital involved being provision for old age. To ease burden in some necessitous cases our Government considering tapering off the effect this legislation and granting to mortgagees whose individual interest might not exceed £1,000 the right to approach court to have moneys released. Such action would obviously necessitate other mortgages being entered into by mortgagors who are compelled to find money. Would such action as contemplated be prevented by any existing National Security Order, and if not, would it meet with any objection from you?

A day or two later I received the following reply from the Commonwealth Treasurer:—

Thanks for your telegram. Am discussing matter with Commonwealth Bank and will advise you further.

A little over a month ago I received the following final telegram from Mr. Chifley:—

Reference your projected legislation amending mortgage restrictions, Commonwealth Government has no objection to proposals set out in your earlier telegram.

The first essential seemed to be to have that particular point covered. I then interviewed the General Manager of the Commonwealth

Bank in this State to ascertain whether he had received advice on the matter. He confirmed the information expressed in the Commonwealth Treasurer's telegram that not only had the head office of the bank been conferred with, but also the banks in the respective States. It was necessary to take that precaution because if there were the release of mortgages to the extent that might be contemplated, there would have to be more money available to the mortgagors to replace the mortgages that had been called up. I have been much concerned regarding one or two instances—not known to me directly but mentioned to me—of aged people who had little homes of their own, insurance policies with mortgages of from £500 to £600 and so on, who yet had great difficulty in living reasonably. They secured a return of about 10s. a week from their investments. They did not wish to convert their insurance policies into cash, and they desired to retain their homes without encumbrances—but they could not get any money with which to carry on. They could not recall their own capital; they were barred by statute from doing so. The possibility was explored of approaching the court in necessitous cases, but it was found that any such approach would cost from £12 to £20, so we had to cast about to find whether other means were available to secure the desired end.

I have had the benefit of discussing the principle embodied in the Bill with eminent King's Counsel, and took the opportunity to secure the views of the member for Netherlands whose advice in that regard I deeply appreciate. The Bill, as presented to the House, provides that any person can secure relief upon satisfying the Commissioner of Titles by affidavit that his total assets do not exceed £2,000—I have fixed that figure because it will enable the individual to own a small house to live in as well as to have mortgages that may represent £100, £200 or £300—that he is not in receipt of an income exceeding £5 a week, that the term of the mortgage the subject of the application has expired, that the transfer is bona fide and he has not been entered into an arrangement to enable the transferee to take advantage of other sections of the Act. There is also another provision that no firm or corporation shall have the privilege of approach set out in the Bill.

The Commissioner of Titles is thought to be the person with whom such affidavits should be lodged because he holds all the mortgages, which are registered with him. I conferred with the Commissioner of Titles who was very sympathetic and stated that he could see no reason why the affidavit should not be lodged with him and that he would undertake the whole business without charge. Therefore where there are individuals whose circumstances bring them within the prescribed requirements of the Bill—I have outlined those requirements—they will be able to proceed by way of affidavit and have their position considered by the Commissioner of Titles. The only other clause in the Bill deals with the continuance of the Act on the annual basis as prevailed in past years. I commend the measure to the House. Members will realise that it would be wholly improper at the present juncture to discontinue the legislation. It would mean that there would be an avalanche of money available, which would be irreplaceable from any other source if mortgages were called up *holus bolus*. Many people would be adversely involved and that would be a sad state of affairs, seeing that vast sums of money would be affected. The keen desire and only intent of the Bill—apart from the continuance of the Act—is to provide a tapering off effect of the legislation, thereby enabling a number of people to recall their money, provided at the same time that arrangements can be made for the continuance of mortgages. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McDonald, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 19th November.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.43]: My inquiries over the week-end did not disclose any reason for opposing the Bill, which aims at legalising the raising of overdrafts for paying interest on loans floated by local governing bodies. Usually overdrafts have been used for that purpose for a number of years past. Nevertheless Section 286 of the Road Districts Act indicates that the practice is, strictly speaking, not allowable. Normally loan charges are debited against the loan rate, but in actual

practice they become payable before the rate has been collected. In those circumstances, quite naturally it has been easy and in no sense corrupt, compulsorily to charge the amount to the overdraft. If the Bill is agreed to, the course that has been adopted will now be quite legal, and will no longer involve road board secretaries in those mild disputes with their auditors that have been customary for quite a number of years. For the reason that I can see nothing wrong with the proposals and, on the contrary, that I regard them as desirable, I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

RESOLUTION—RAILWAY FREIGHTS AND FARES.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read requesting the Assembly's concurrence in the following resolution:—

That in the opinion of this House the all-round increase of 12½ per cent. in railway fares and freights—as suggested by Mr. Raynor, Deputy Secretary of the Railway Department—would be an unfair tax on mining, agricultural and pastoral producers; and further, that no increase in railway charges should be imposed without submission to Parliament.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1942-43.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 26th November; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Mines, £117,991:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES [4.50]:

In presenting the Mines Estimates, I believe the Committee will agree with me that mining was the one industry which until recently was very flourishing. Owing to the necessities of war, however, as expressed in the form of manpower regulations especially, the industry is now being carried on under great disabilities, and at the moment is at a particularly low ebb. During 1941, there were 4,210,744 tons of ore treated for a return of 1,105,477 fine ounces of gold. This was equivalent to an average of 5.25 dwts. of

fine gold per ton; and, incidentally, it was the lowest grade of ore ever treated in the State. The tonnage treated was 81,000 tons less than in 1940, and gold production shows a decrease of 49,366 fine ounces. The value of the gold in Australian currency was £A11,811,989, compared with £A12,306,816 in the previous year, and showing an equivalent of £2 16s. 1d. per ton of ore treated as against £2 17s. 4d. in 1940.

Owing to manpower restrictions, the mining industry has slumped to such an extent that this Government has had to appeal to the Federal authorities to save the industry from a total shut-down. Most members of the Committee are aware that a delegation went from here to the Eastern States, and succeeded in prevailing upon the Commonwealth authorities to allow the goldmining industry to continue here, conditionally on the number of men employed in it being a maximum of 4,500. We have not quite got down to that maximum of 4,500 yet, but it cannot be long before we arrive there. At the time the deputation went to Melbourne, about 9,000 men were employed in the industry. There is an interesting point in regard to Wiluna, where the goldmine is reserved in order that production of antimony and arsenic may continue. Gold is a vital production now. As regards the maximum of 4,500 men specified, we are now having quite a discussion with the Federal authorities and the Director of Manpower in particular as to whether the number of men at Wiluna should be included in the 4,500 maximum. We claim that the men at Wiluna should be excluded from the allowance for reserved occupations.

The reduction of the employment figure to the level of 4,500 will result in the closing-down of many large mines. So far Youanmi, Triton and Gladiator, Cox's Find, Beryl, Three Boys, New Callion, and Yilgange Queen, all large and regular producers, have been forced to cease operations. Other mines reported to be closing are Spargo's Reward, Yellowdine Gold Development, and Edna May Amalgamated; and unfortunately the entire populations where these men are located were solely dependent on goldmining. Today 2,456 men are employed on the Golden Mile as against 4,349 in September of 1939; and men are still being withdrawn in large numbers. The manager of the Big Bell mine was in my office two days ago, and he informed me that with another re-

duction of 20 men his mine would have to close down. He further stated that he had already cabled to his principals in America to that effect.

Minerals, other than gold, produced in 1941 were valued at £566,392. Included in this figure was coal produced to the value of £389,278; arsenic, £70,938; silver, £37,648; antimony, £12,593; feldspar, £12,190 and gypsum, £10,245. The coal output shows an increase of 17,000 tons, compared with 1940, and this increased rate of production is being maintained. Mechanical improvements are being introduced still further to step up production owing to the increased demand for coal. This State possess deposits of many minerals of strategic importance, and we have been busy investigating the possibilities of tin, tantalite, copper, scheelite, alunite, asbestos, mica, emery, wolfram, and iron. The Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. A. H. Telfer, has been appointed by the Commonwealth as its Deputy Controller of Mineral Production in this State. Funds have been made available for development. Already an amount of £1,750 has been granted for plant to speed up production of blue asbestos at Roebourne. An amount of £15,000 has been advanced to the Blue Spec Gold Mine at Nullagine, which is now producing antimony concentrate known to exist in this mine in large quantities. The Wiluna Gold Mine, as already mentioned, and also the Moonlight Gold Mine, are protected from further withdrawal of manpower in order that these mines may continue the production of antimony and arsenic.

An amount of £1,000 has been provided for further testing of the tin lodes at Greenbushes. Eleven tons of tin oxide have been sent away this year from this field, and regular production has been established. Assistance has also been granted to produce mica from Yinnetharra deposits. Mica of first-class quality is now being produced. The Commonwealth is in urgent need of emery hitherto imported from overseas, and recently this State's deposit at Richenda River has been opened up, and a parcel of good quality emery is about to be shipped to the Eastern States. I want the Committee to understand that mineral production generally is chiefly in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, which has appointed Mr. Newman, of Queensland, Controller General of Production of Minerals. As already stated,

Mr. Newman has appointed our Under Secretary for Mines, Mr. Telfer, Deputy Controller of Mineral Production here, and has given him authority to expend up to £1,000 without further application to Mr. Newman or to Canberra. For amounts above £1,000, however, Mr. Telfer has to obtain authority. Actually, the mineral position here is in the hands of Mr. Newman.

Up to date our production of coal, as I have already stated, has increased, but owing to greater railway requirements and shortage of firewood, efforts are being made to increase the output further. There is a general increased demand for coal. The railways seem to be wanting more, and so do some mines. In regard to scheelite, deposits at Comet Vale and Higginsville are being operated by goldmining companies with the department's encouragement, while other deposits at Yalgoo, Coolgardie, Yilgarn and Cue are being explored. A supply of high-class emery has been located in the North-West, and a tonnage has already been produced for immediate munition purposes. This will take the place of supplies that previously came from Turkey. It has been very difficult to get emery. A big supply has now been located in the North-West. Already some has been sent to the Eastern States, and the authorities are very satisfied with it. Feldspar is being produced in large quantities from Coolgardie, and in smaller quantities from Balingup. The Wodgina and surrounding deposits are now being reopened on a large scale for tantalite, as the mineral is required for use by the Allied Nations. A certain production is also proceeding at Greenbushes.

Tantalite is wanted by America, but everything depends on shipping and how much we can get rid of. The department has despatched a party to the main north-western deposit of mica, and has already received the first output, which looks promising. A Mines Department expert and a Commonwealth Government technical man are visiting the deposit at the present time. Considerable exploration work at Greenbushes at Government expense has been and is being undertaken for tin, and every effort to revive this centre is being made. Tin and tantalite are being produced from there at the moment. Soapstone is being produced from Bridgetown and Balingup. It is used mainly as a refractory for war industries. Vermiculite is now being regularly produced from the

Phillips River district, and a substantial order for munition purposes has just been obtained. At our instigation, the Commonwealth Government undertook a boring campaign at Whim Creek for copper. Final results are not yet to hand. Another smelter has been completed and sent to Ravensthorpe, where it will be operated for the benefit of small producers. Suggestions for the expenditure of a large sum at this centre have also been placed before the Commonwealth but no decision has yet been received. Exploratory operations are proceeding at other centres.

Hon. N. Keenan: Where is the smelter being erected?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: At Ravensthorpe. It is a small prospector's smelter, and we erected two or three of them for prospectors. Glauconite, a water softener, is being consistently produced from Gingin, and supplies the Australian and English markets. This State's deposits of phosphates are now being thoroughly examined by representatives of the department and the Commonwealth Government. Gypsum, magnesite, clays and glass sand are all now being produced. Graphite, spodumene—used for flares—and quartz crystals—all strategies—are now being mined for war purposes. Our production of silver is approximately 250,000 fine ounces per annum. This mineral has in time of war certain uses other than as currency, and the continuance of output is valuable. There is no occasion for me to deal with alunite, which has been discussed comprehensively by my colleague, the Minister for Industrial Development. Our iron deposits are extensive and, with the erection of a smelter, some of these deposits will be utilised. Pyrite is a source of sulphuric acid and mainly used in the manufacture of superphosphate. It is now being produced in large quantities at Norseman, and the deposit is capable of filling the local superphosphate company's requirements for many years.

Members will see that our minerals are fairly comprehensive, and are spread all over the State. It is known where deposits of the minerals required up to date are to be found, and the Commonwealth Government is anxious not so much to prospect for minerals as to work as quickly as possible to produce those in known localities, particularly where they can be got at reasonably easily. We hope that although goldmining

is declining, we shall be able to assist in regard to our other minerals. The health of miners engaged in the industry, particularly goldminers, is of the utmost importance, and it is pleasing to note from the examination conducted by the Commonwealth Health Laboratory that the percentage of normal men in the industry is being maintained around such a high level as 96 per cent. Strict supervision is exercised by the department's inspectors in regard to ventilation and other matters affecting the safety and health of miners. The number of men under the State prospecting scheme has been reduced to 60, and all men now under the scheme are above military age and too old to obtain wages jobs on the mines. Three or four years ago we had 600 under the scheme. The Commonwealth tax on gold production continues to operate, and since its introduction on the 1st January, 1940, to the 30th June, 1942, a period of 2½ years, gold tax collections by the Commonwealth Sub-Treasury in Western Australia amounted to £2,170,923.

There has been slight relief granted to prospectors and companies mining low-grade ores by the incidence of the Gold Tax Act Amendment Act and the Gold-mining Encouragement Act. Refunds of tax obtained to the 30th June, 1942, totalled £229,070. During the year the Government Mineralogist and Analyst carried out a large amount of work for the Fighting Services and the Defence Department in addition to the usual work done by that branch. This branch of the department has had a terrific amount of work during the last 12 or 18 months, particularly from the Forces. On account of the necessity for strategic minerals, samples of such minerals are being received in large quantities for analysis. The transfer to the newly-erected laboratory has not yet been effected owing to delays in obtaining equipment, but it is hoped to move at least one section before the end of the present year. Field work in the search for new mineral deposits and the furnishing of special reports concerning the development of deposits now opened up have continued. The geological field staff is carrying out special investigation of industrial minerals, and of those minerals brought into special demand for war requirements.

In 1941, State batteries crushed 72,807 tons of prospectors' ore for a yield by amalgamation of 39,988 fine ounces of gold,

compared with 100,455 tons for 44,419 fine ounces in 1940. Further reduction in production since January, 1942, has resulted in two batteries being closed down for the duration of the war, the remaining 20 plants operating only when required. There is now only one battery crushing continuously. Arrangements have been made to put through test parcels of scheelite from Comet Vale, and special arrangements have been made at Coolgardie State battery for this purpose. The Schools of Mines at Kalgoorlie, Wiluna and Norseman, continue to function efficiently. Owing to both Wiluna and Norseman mines devoting attention to mineral production, and on this account being protected, enrolments have not been seriously affected. More than 50 per cent. of the students are below military age, and the number should be maintained. A local advisory committee has been appointed at Kalgoorlie, and has been of great assistance. There are now 270 individual enrolments at Kalgoorlie, as against 295 at the beginning of the year, which is quite satisfactory considering the times. The workshop has been extended and further equipment installed to accommodate additional students in the fitting and turning classes. The school is providing efficient training for Air Force mechanics and munition workers. Quite a number of men are joining the Air Force. They are trained as munition workers before being sent to camp.

Unfortunately the gold industry is not in that flourishing condition in which we would like to see it. It is one of the big industries stricken by the war, but I am hopeful, and the department is hopeful—as I am sure is every member of the Committee—that the war will not last long, and that there will be a return of the gold industry to the position it held prior to the war. From my knowledge of the industry I am satisfied that we can rehabilitate some 25,000 to 30,000 men in it when the time arrives, if that is not too long.

Mr. Patrick: How many mines actually closed down?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite a number. The biggest were the Youanmi, and the Triton. Cox's Find was closing and would not have lasted many months. Then there is the Beryl, not very big, at Ravensthorpe.

Mr. Patrick: The Kalgoorlie mines are still working.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, with very reduced staffs.

Mr. Patrick: Considering the reduced staffs, the output is marvellous.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: They had millions of tons of ore in reserve and are breaking that. Unfortunately there is no development work going on, and once the reserves are worked out, there will not be any output. If we are not able to come to some arrangement with the manpower authorities, there are other mines outback that will fall through. It would be disastrous to see the Sons of Gwalia go out. It has been a wonderful producer for years. I regret that I have not been able to paint a brighter picture of the industry. The only minerals of any value are those used for strategical war purposes, and the Commonwealth Government, and Mr. Newman particularly, insist that those minerals must be got out quickly.

Mr. Patrick: Is any development taking place in base metals?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, all over the State.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet): I regret that the account of the mining industry given by the Minister on these Estimates should be so extremely dull. This is the first time for many years that mining has been in such a bad state. This, of course, is due to the effects of the war. As was pointed out by an interjection from the opposite side, the tonnage is not being developed. That is regrettable. The ore reserves at Kalgoorlie are being depleted, and once they have been depleted it is more than likely that some of those important mines will become of secondary importance.

Mr. Patrick: Development work is not being kept up.

Mr. TRIAT: Only one mine is doing development work to a sufficient extent to warrant its drawing on the ore reserves. There are mines at Kalgoorlie that could operate for three years without breaking another ton of dirt, simply by drawing on their ore reserves.

Hon. N. Keenan: You mean the broken ore.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. Instead of finding new ore bodies and opening them up to replace the ore already taken out, they are drawing

on their reserves. I hope that in the near future the mining industry in Kalgoorlie and in other parts of the State will be in full swing again. I am of opinion that gold will not only continue to hold its present price but will go much higher. A report in "The West Australian" today states that South Africa is maintaining its output of gold. Thus the greatest gold producing country in the world is maintaining its output at the highest possible level. The only fear entertained there was that the native labour might not be able to stand up to the strain, but it has now been found to be sufficient. However, the mines are manpowering their white labour to ensure that the output is maintained. This shows that the future for goldmining is rosy, and I am satisfied that the future for the industry in this State is bright because we have deposits that can be exploited even if the price of gold remains at the present level.

Many men who were employed in the industry have enlisted in the Fighting Forces. They were earning fair wages in the industry and working conditions were reasonably good, and the ventilation has been improved until the dust menace has to a large extent been removed. Many of those men will look to return to the industry when the war is over. The present, however, is the time for the department to take up the question of developing base minerals and metals required for war purposes. This morning I asked the Minister to advise the House, in view of the national importance of minerals for war industries, what steps had been taken to exploit our minerals now that oversea and Commonwealth moneys were available. I call at the Mines Department frequently and am in touch with the officials, whom I have found bright and accurate. There is no department in Western Australia in which the officials are more accurate in their work than are those of the Mines Department. But even with the activity displayed, the department does not appear to me to have struck the right idea. As a worker from the back country, I realise that many things are going on that are not appreciated in Perth.

Consider some of these minerals! If they are so important for war purposes and the Commonwealth is so anxious to have the deposits worked, and buyers are coming here from the United States of America to purchase them, the Government should be only

too ready to exploit those which are already being worked. There are various deposits—high grade valuable deposits of scheelite and wolfram which have been known for six months, and nothing has been done to work them. Only for the duration of the war and six months thereafter will these deposits command their present high values. As much as £550 per ton is being paid for scheelite and tungsten, and after the war the price will probably drop to £150 per ton. The Allies are paying enormous prices for copper and other minerals. I know of a copper deposit 5ft. wide containing 27 per cent. of copper, $4\frac{1}{2}$ dwts of gold and $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of silver per ton, and it has never been touched.

Hon. N. Keenan: Is that due to some treatment trouble?

Mr. TRIAT: No.

Mr. Patrick: Where is it?

Mr. TRIAT: At Goongarrie. It is shocking to see such a valuable deposit lying idle.

Mr. Patrick: That is a very high content.

Mr. TRIAT: It is. It has been proved down to a depth of 34 ft. This mine is in the hands of a man who has not much money, but he is not anxious to approach the Government for assistance. He wants to sell the mine. This is certainly a deposit that should be exploited, and it is only one instance that I could mention.

I stated in the House a few months ago that I knew of a wolfram deposit going as high as five per cent. Thirty tons were taken out and treated at a State battery. This deposit is right on the surface and the deepest shaft is 12 ft. The lode is 21 ft. wide. Then we have a deposit of scheelite at Comet Vale. The deposit was worked during the 1914-18 war. It also contains a reasonable percentage of gold, about five or six dwts. per ton. But to put scheelite through a State battery is ridiculous because the plant will not give any scheelite. This mineral is so friable that, when it is struck with a hammer, it breaks into very minute particles. There are special means for treating scheelite and we should obtain the necessary plant. We have men capable of treating these ores. Dr. Moore, of the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, is a most capable man. He has told me that to crush scheelite in a State battery is purely waste of time. By crushing in the ordinary way for producing gold, it is impossible to get any

scheelite. Why should we waste time on carting 30 or 40 tons of the ore to a State battery and then not get any scheelite? It is only two weeks since I spoke to Dr. Moore and he told me there are methods of treatment that could be adopted. According to him the basis of the treatment is the same as for lead. The ore is crushed by rollers in series, and this produces a very fine grade from which the scheelite can be recovered. Why should plant of that sort be lying idle when it might be utilised? Northampton is not the place for it. It should be taken to some important centre where small parcels of scheelite and wolfram could be tested. I recently came into contact with the Under Secretary for Mines and learnt that some of the plant had been sold as scrap metal. I understand that an inspector is going north to examine the mica deposits beyond Meekatharra, and that he will make a survey of the plant and if possible have it brought down and utilised for the treatment of these ores.

The Mines Department of this State has nothing to fear from any other part of the Commonwealth in the matter of the treatment of gold ore. We are better situated to handle gold ore than is any other State of the Commonwealth, but when it comes to the treatment of base metals, we are faced with a task of building up something new. I hope that within the next three months the department will be in the happy position of being able to say that we can compete more than favourably with any other State in the treatment of base metals. Only by pressing our requests shall we succeed in getting anything done. Enough jigs could be manufactured in Western Australia in the course of a month to supply all the requirements of the Mines Department. There should be a jig in the Murchison district, one at Coolgardie and possibly one further north. Why concentrate everything in one place? If we had facilities at four or five centres the necessary tests could be made. To have to bring ore from Yalgoo to Coolgardie would be an expensive business. I hope the Mines Department will achieve the honour of becoming the cock-of-the-walk in the treatment of base metals as well as of gold.

Let me now draw attention to the position regarding scheelite. Both the big deposits are in my electorate. The one at Comet Vale is being handled by the Australian Gold

Development Company, while the other one at Yalgoo is owned by prospectors and will probably be taken over by a company starting on Monday next. The company is bound to start operations immediately and must not cease. There must be no question of securing exemption, which is a good idea. The scheelite deposits at Yalgoo are on the surface. They were known many years ago and were worked as alluvial. Tests were made, and the values ranged from 1.3 to 4.27 per cent. of scheelite per ton. The tests were made by Lemprières of the Eastern States and the values represent those on rails at Yalgoo. Seventy-nine per cent. tungsten is valued at £417 to £429 18s. per ton. This shows the value of the ore obtainable at Yalgoo today, but it is lying idle. There are no means for treating it. If men broke the ore out, it could not be treated except at a State battery and that treatment would give no return of scheelite. Why not endeavour to establish a plant where this valuable mineral exists and see whether we cannot exploit it? What is wrong with having one of the furnaces mentioned by the Minister sent to Goongarrie?

Mr. North: Has application been made for it?

Mr. TRIAT: No. The application by the other prospector was for someone to work his mine. The furnace for small prospectors' shows might be worth 27 per cent., so why not offer to operate it and give the prospectors the proceeds after deducting the working costs? Why have this valuable stuff lying idle? Now is the time to exploit it. The Press informs us that buyers from the United States of America have arrived in the Eastern States to purchase supplies of these minerals. There is foreign capital in the country and the Commonwealth Government is prepared to assist in providing treatment plants. Seeing that the Commonwealth Government in 2½ years has taken 2¾ million pounds in taxation from the goldmining industry of Western Australia, it should not be too much to ask it to return one million of that sum for the opening up of these base metal deposits. It would not be much to ask the Commonwealth Government for £1,000,000 for the exploitation of these minerals. Grants could be given to assist men to prospect for them. It is unfair to ask a man to go out

prospecting now at £1 a week when the cost of living is so high; give him £2 a week; that would not be too much in view of the hardships he has to put up with. The member for Nedlands is aware of those hardships, because he, when a young man, was prospecting also.

Mr. Marshall: We paid our men £2 a week to go out prospecting.

Mr. TRIAT: We paid any man we were backing half wages; that is, we paid him £2 10s. a week. Why should not the Commonwealth be asked to assist these prospectors to the extent of £2 a week? If they do not find the minerals, at least they have done their job. I am not saying that the State Government could make such advances; I know it cannot, at least so I am told, and I believe the members of the Government to be truthful. Now is our opportunity to try to make good our mining industry. I believe there would be no difficulty if the matter were put forward to the Commonwealth authorities in the right light. They should be asked to assist by providing treatment plants and furnishing all necessary information as to the prices of the various minerals to be prospected. In addition, the Commonwealth should be asked to give the prospectors a reasonable advance in addition to the £1 per week which would be paid by the State Government. Should any fields be held up because they are under lease, the prospector should be allowed to work them. No mineral country should be reserved at this particular time. If these suggestions are carried out, Western Australia's mining industry will again be on the map. We have enormous quantities of tin in both the north and the south of the State.

Mr. Berry: Have we the water to work it?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. I saw a deposit of tin in the South-West that astounded me. One could put a dish down and get 5 lbs. to 6 lbs. to the yard.

Mr. Berry: That tin would be worth a lot of money.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. The deposit is in the district of the member for Nelson. It is about 17 miles from Bridgetown.

The Minister for Mines: We have done a lot of prospecting in that area, but have not found such deposits.

Mr. TRIAT: The trouble is that the Government is not looking in the right place.

I visited that deposit with a very old miner. I may mention that I worked tin in the North-West in 1907. When I heard the member for Nelson talk about that mine, I was sceptical. I said, "Here is another story," but when I went down and made an examination, I was astounded. I could not believe it was true.

Mr. Berry: Is it a lode or a lens?

Mr. TRIAT: It is a lode. Tin is on the surface all through the gravel, anywhere one likes to go. One can put a dish down and get 5 lbs. or 6 lbs. to the yard. On the top of the hill one can get a dishful of tin from 14 lbs. to 15 lbs. per yard.

Mr. Berry: Do you know the difference between a lode and a lens?

Mr. TRIAT: I believe a lens is a small part of a lode.

The Minister for Mines: You will soon be rich now that you have got that lode.

Mr. Berry: This is a matter of national interest.

Mr. TRIAT: I understand tin is worth £500 a ton and that it is required in big quantities. That is not the only deposit of tin in the South-West, but there are no treatment plants on the spot that I know of. The man of whom I spoke would have to erect his own plant. That is something we should not tolerate. We should say, "If you have the tin, we will see that you can work it." I read the Mines Department's report of many years ago on this particular area, when it was examined by the Government Geologist. In his report he said there was no tin in that district. I do not think a geologist has examined the locality recently, but tin is there and plenty of it. It is well worth the Government's while to investigate it. There is one company there now exploiting this mineral. But there are other minerals also, among them kyanite. I understand this is the only deposit of that mineral in Western Australia. There are boulders of it up to half a ton in weight. This mineral will stand a temperature of 2,000 degrees centigrade. I understand that, although very valuable, it is not being worked. Then we have mica and graphite in the South-West. That district is commonly regarded as an apple-growing and dairy district, but it is also valuable mineral country. There are deposits of tantalite, a mineral which the American Government is anxious to obtain. The South-West should be exploited for its minerals and so

should the Murchison and the North-West. In fact, we should exploit every part of the State where the minerals can be obtained while prices are high. If we start those industries now, we shall probably carry them on after the war. If we neglect them, however, six months after the war they will be of very little value to the State.

Mr. Berry: The price of tin will come down.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, because it will be obtained from Malaya, where the deposits are worked by Chinese labour. White labour in Western Australia could not hope to compete with that cheap labour. Then we have deposits of copper and tungsten, the latter being worth £429 per ton. Those minerals can be worked in China at very low cost. After the war, the wolfram deposits in China will again be worked, and we shall find that we cannot exploit our deposits of scheelite because our costs will be too great in competition in the open market. The Allied Nations now fighting with us will be only too eager to buy from the cheap markets after the war, as they have done in the past. I strongly urge the Government and the Mines Department to miss no opportunity to exploit the minerals I have mentioned.

I have not much more to say on the question of mining, except to draw the Minister's attention to the men who have been taken from the mining industry by the Allied War Council, or whatever the name of that body might be, to do work in the construction of roads and aerodromes. Some of those men will not be able to return to Kalgoorlie to be examined under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. They will be in Perth during Christmas time, however, and it might be advisable to have them examined by x-ray in Perth, so that they will be complying with the requirements of the Act. It should not be difficult for a doctor in Perth to take an x-ray of the men's lungs, and they would be within the period of examination prescribed by the Act. Otherwise it might be necessary for the men to lose four or five days in journeying to Kalgoorlie to be examined. I hope the department will give consideration to this suggestion and arrange for the men to be examined at the Perth Hospital.

The Minister for Mines: Are you referring to men engaged by the Allied Works Council?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. These men must be examined periodically. I have nothing but gratitude for the Mines Department for the way in which it looks after the interests of the men in the back country. I am confident the department will continue to do so in future. The officers are courteous and always willing to place at the disposal of inquirers all the information in the possession of the department. It is not too much trouble for them to investigate and make inquiries. I hope that by this time next year we shall find the mining industry much brighter than it is at present.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson): I was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister about the Mines Department and its activities in endeavouring to find base metals in Western Australia. We all realise that the goldmining industry is at a low ebb; it is not in the position that it was 12 or 18 months ago. Today, however, Australia is crying out for base metals, the principal of which is tin. I have been interested in tin-mining for nearly 40 years. I started my life in this State at tin mining in Greenbushes, and since then I have been constantly prospecting the South-West not only for tin but other minerals that might be of advantage to the State and, of course, to myself. I suppose that during that period I spent thousands of pounds on prospecting. As the member for Mt. Magnet said, we have a very fine tin deposit about 20 miles south of Greenbushes and about 18 miles south-west of Bridgetown. The show in which I was interested was originally named the Smithsfield—about 35 or 36 years ago. Then we located a deposit near Willis Springs, and still another which the Donovans worked and in respect of which the Mines Department assisted us about 30 years ago. In any spare time I had I would go out with another prospector looking for minerals. We pegged out leases.

The member for Mt. Magnet said he was astounded at the tin deposit south-west of Bridgetown; but I would point out that I got not merely 7 lb. per yard, but 70 lb. per yard. I have seen tin go 700 lb. to 800 lb. per yard. What we require is a big plant, and we are trying to secure one now. The Mines Department has done a wonderful job; it gives prospectors all the advice and assistance in its power. If a prospector is not certain of the mineral he has discovered, all he has to do is to send a sample to the

Mines Department and it will be analysed for him. He will get a return in a very short space of time. I was assured by the Under Secretary for Mines that the State Government or the Commonwealth Government would only be too pleased to assist us to erect a plant; but that is not what I want. I want the industry to be developed on a big scale. Once that is done, the erection of an enormous plant will be justified and large quantities of tin will be produced. It may not be generally known that Greenbushes has been a somewhat flat place for some years. It was in my electorate until the last redistribution, and, in fact, I go right round it now.

During its life Greenbushes has produced over £1,000,000 worth of tin. The Government, during my term as a member and since, has assisted in every way. During one period Mr. Munsie, when he was Minister, tried to prove the lodes and depth, and we spent something like £7,000 or £8,000. But the big part of that area, as the member for Irwin-Moore says—although I do not know where he gets his information—seems to run in lens to a large extent. Seams of tin are discovered going through the lodes, and they are very rich, but of course alongside of the seam and in the lode we find the lenses. That is what applies at Greenbushes. I saw 10 or 12 tons of tin taken from a little pocket at Greenbushes. The Government has given considerable assistance at that centre and, in the last three or four years, has lost a certain amount of money. Prospectors and practical men like myself knew that the bucket dredge would not be a success, and that the people who put their money into it, together with the Government which assisted, would lose their capital. I saw the dredge and said to the man running it, "The dredge will never do any good." There was a big red-gum log in the face in front. He said, "The buckets will shave that log to pieces." On the contrary, it shaved the buckets to pieces. However, they may recoup some of their money.

I am in hopes that Greenbushes will go ahead. In my day we used to work runs, not the lodes. I am satisfied that there are lodes where that rich tin came from, and they will ultimately be found, the same as they will where we are. I may not be lucky enough to make a fortune out of them, although I hope I do, but someone will even-

tually make a lot of money there. The whole of the South-West country will be found to be teeming with mineral wealth, such as tin which we badly want today. We have mica there although it does not compare with the deposits of the North-West. We have worked our deposits and sent samples away. We have graphite deposits, and we have also sent samples of that mineral away. There is, too, a form of tantalite with the tin, and we have a mineral called kyanite of which we are holding leases and are working them today. The South-West has great possibilities so far as minerals are concerned. I am grateful to the Mines Department for the assistance and advice it gives. If one goes to the officers of that department they refer to their geographical plans and make available all the information they have pertaining to one's question. We could, perhaps, alter the method of taking up leases and p.a.'s. Unless a field happens to be a proclaimed field, everything has to be done through the warden's office in Perth, whereas at Greenbushes one need only go to Bridgetown where all the data and information are available. We would be glad if the Minister could see his way clear to allow us to make our applications to the warden on his monthly visits to Bridgetown instead of having to go before the warden's court in Perth. It does not affect me because I am in Perth, but it affects many other people.

Let us develop the basic minerals of this State. We can only become a great country through our primary industries and metals. We should develop them no matter where they are. I am interested in another show concerning a type of porcelain clay which takes the place of the sandstone. When we were children we used to cut our sweethearts' names in this soft stone. Those inscriptions can still be seen on the stone at the back of where I am living. If the company concerned does not go on with this proposition I may have to go to the Commonwealth or State Government for assistance. We intend to go on with it. We know that we can, by the old orthodox methods of mining, carry on at £10 or £15 per week, at a few isolated places, but we want to go ahead on a big scale. If the company does not go on with this we propose to instal our own gravel pump, which will cost a few thousand pounds, and to do that we will have to seek the assistance of the department.

In conclusion I say to the Minister and his department, "Carry on with the work; you are doing a good job."

Progress reported.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES (RESERVE FUNDS).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it did not insist on its amendments Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [5.49] in moving the second reading said: This is simply a short Bill providing for the continuance of the Lotteries (Control) Act. It has been agreed to in another place and forwarded to us for our concurrence. There is not much one can say on the second reading of this measure. As members know, larger sales and prizes have resulted from the measure agreed to last session. The lotteries are going off much more quickly and a greater distribution of funds is resulting. I do not know that the expenses have been cut down since last year, but the annual report of the Commission has been tabled, and members can see from that just how the lotteries have been conducted and the amounts distributed to the charitable institutions, together with the large reserve available for the Perth Hospital. This is the usual Bill to continue the Act and there should be no need to speak at further length. If any information is desired, it can be provided in the Committee stage. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall): Over the years another place has put up suggestions for the discontinuance of this legislation. I have read some of the statements made in support of that view and cannot agree with them. I am satisfied that the Act should be continued. Undoubtedly the Lotteries Commission has been doing excellent work. Of course some people would like to see the lotteries abolished. They are opposed to all forms of gambling and class the lotteries under that heading. I support the second reading.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I cannot let the opportunity pass without recording my protest against the continuance of the Act. I feel that the Lotteries Commission has been very fair in distributing the funds. Nevertheless I am of opinion that all the activities to which funds are distributed should be supported by the State. If there is one thing likely to induce people to vote in favour of the Federal issue, it will be the fact of our passing certain Bills such as the one before us. Many people are disgusted at the knowledge that our charities are dependent almost entirely upon the proceeds of lotteries.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Not so many.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: A great many.

Mr. J. H. Smith: About 20 per cent.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: However, I have recorded my protest. I know it will not mean very much, but I shall continue to protest so long as I occupy a seat in the House.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison): I compliment the member for Subiaco on her persistency. We must agree that from her point of view her remarks are justified. There is much in what she has said. This is a measure that relieves the State directly and the Commonwealth indirectly of a financial obligation. In a country capable of producing such wealth this should not be so, because the function of turning liquid assets into liquid wealth is a simple process and there are plenty of possibilities of doing so provided the Commonwealth will use the powers conferred upon it. We should not have Bills of this sort coming before us. Still, we have to face the facts, and until the people of the State fully appreciate the possibilities of the nation providing the wherewithal to give a reasonable standard without such a measure, we are in duty bound to support it and relieve the distress that exists. We are really coerced into doing so. For years this form of raising money has been beneficial to some families who were dependent upon the money for warmth on cold nights, and for food in hot as well as cold weather. It is a deplorable state of affairs, but we should face up to it. We should educate our people to the point of realising that, under the Commonwealth Constitution, the central Government could make ample money

available for the purpose and so render the passage of this measure unnecessary.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Why the Commonwealth? Do you propose to give away more power?

Mr. MARSHALL: No; the Commonwealth has always had power under the Constitution. The Commonwealth took the power from the States. I have some sympathy with the member for Subiaco, but she should realise that it is our responsibility to educate the people to the point of calling upon the central Government to undertake this obligation. When that is done there will be no need for measures of this sort. Pending our reaching that stage, however, it should not be necessary to present a Bill annually for the continuance of this legislation. The Act should be made permanent until we are in a position to repeal it. To introduce a continuance Bill each year is a waste of time. We talk about austerity and yet we have measures of this sort, involving waste of labour, paper, printing, and everything else, brought up every year.

I support the Bill because, if we do not continue the Lotteries Commission, institutions such as our hospitals and individuals in lowly circumstances—of these there are many notwithstanding the improvement in conditions brought about by the war—who are dependent upon these funds will suffer hardship. The State Government could not possibly find the money to replace the funds raised by the Lotteries Commission. A very large sum is raised by the Commission every year for these worthy objects. If we abolished the lotteries, the Commonwealth would not feel any obligation to make extra money available to fulfil the needs that the Lotteries Commission now supplies.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I have some sympathy with the views of the member for Subiaco and the member for Murchison. This is a very unsatisfactory way in which to provide for very worthy causes, namely, hospitals and people who are underprivileged. It is proper that the matter should be brought up annually to remind us that this is a far from satisfactory means of raising funds, dependent as it is upon the propensity of the population to indulge in what is perhaps the mildest and most innocuous form of gambling. Like the member for Murchison, I hope the day will come,

and that it is not far distant, when we shall be able to find from other sources the money now raised by this means. I always feel a deep regret when I see the advertisements of the Lotteries Commission.

Mr. Marshall: I detest them!

Mr. McDONALD: If we have a State lottery, then if people wish to of their own volition, they can subscribe; but to go out with go-getter methods to induce the people to put their money into lotteries is very undignified and very unworthy of this State, and of the duty which this State owes to its people and their welfare. From the report laid on the Table this session, I find that we spend in advertising as much as 2.7 per cent., getting on for 3 per cent., of the total subscriptions. That is a very considerable expenditure, and to me it always seems a pity when I read the advertisements and think of the effect they must have on young people, who otherwise might not be tempted to commence their gambling through a State lottery. The other matter of which the member for Murchison reminded me is the question of commission. In a statement of five lotteries I find that the gross subscriptions from the public totalled, in round figures, £3,100, and that the commission on the sale of tickets was £2,987, or almost £3,000. From the figures given in the Lotteries Commission's reports, it appears that the selling commission on tickets runs to about 9½ per cent. of the gross subscriptions to lotteries. I have no objection to a selling commission going to the little shop-keeper and perhaps some of the smaller agencies, but I would like to know what is the total sum of commissions received by some of the larger agencies.

Mr. Marshall: The selling of tickets is well distributed now. There is not much of a monopoly anywhere.

Mr. McDONALD: If the sale of tickets is well distributed, then perhaps one's doubts about the amount of commission paid would to a certain extent be dissipated. But I should be interested to learn, and I may have an opportunity later to inquire from the Minister, the income from commissions received in the large agencies. For while I suppose we should give fair remuneration for the work done in selling lottery tickets, the same as for any other work, I would not like to see too big a dip into the proceeds by people who are getting possibly large incomes from the lotteries. In any case, it seems to

me—and I say this with deference because I do not know much about the Lotteries Commission—that this business has now been going so long that the commission rate might in some cases be reduced, or at any rate that there should be a maximum sum which any one agency or business can receive by way of commission on sale of tickets. There might be a certain commission up to a certain figure, perhaps £100 a year, and the rate might be 10 per cent. up to £100 a year and thereafter 7½ per cent. to 5 per cent. I would like to limit the total of the commission payments received, and increase the amounts going to subscribers and charities.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Friday, 11th December, 1942.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS (3).

WIRE AND WIRE NETTING ACT.

Agricultural Bank Interest Charge.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, What rate of interest is charged by the Agricultural Bank on moneys advanced to settlers under the Wire and Wire Netting Act? 2, If the settler is unable to meet his interest payments when due is that sum added to his total indebtedness on which interest, at the rate stated

in answer to question No. 1, is charged? or, 3, Is he charged a different rate of interest on the unpaid interest, and if so, what is the rate charged?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Wire netting advances are dealt with under special agreement with the Commonwealth. The agreement provides that liability of the settler to the State shall be discharged if the settler pays to the State half-yearly for 25 years:—Sinking Fund contribution at the rate of 2 per cent. per annum of the amount of the value of the wire or wire netting supplied to the settler and interest at the rate of 5 per cent. for each £100 advanced over a period of 25 years. 2, Five per cent. and 2 per cent. for sinking fund are charged. If unable to pay full amount, moneys received first go towards liquidating interest charges. Collections have been insufficient from farmers to the extent of £56,800 and these liabilities to the Commonwealth have been met from General Revenue. Up to the end of October we have written off settlers' accounts £49,867. 3, Total interest rate and 2 per cent. sinking fund rate still apply on unpaid balances.

HEALTH.

Venereal Disease Effects, etc.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Health: 1, Regarding the list of diseases tabled by him on the 27th August last as directly or indirectly traceable to venereal disease, will he enumerate those which are directly traceable to V.D.? 2, Are medical practitioners obliged to report all cases directly traceable to V.D.? 3, Are chemists allowed to sell drugs for the alleged cure of V.D. and are they obliged to report such sales, with names and addresses of the purchasers? 4, If no reports are obtained from medical practitioners and chemists, by what means can the department compute a percentage of those suffering directly or indirectly from V.D.?

The MINISTER replied: 1, In the list tabled on the 7th August of diseases directly or indirectly traceable to venereal disease, the term "directly" referred to those conditions which occur relatively early in the disease or as a complication, and the term "indirectly" referred to later and more remote effects which can be referred to pre-existing venereal disease, and are known to result therefrom. Some of these remote conditions may arise also from causes other than