

that any good will be done by price fixing as long as big associations of middlemen are tolerated. The sooner this is brought home the sooner will we have co-operation, and that or Government supervision is the only means whereby cheaper living can be obtained. I am satisfied, if the Bill is passed, that after it has been in operation 12 months the people will be so disgusted that the co-operative societies that are struggling to-day will be organised on the lines of the Farmers and Settlers' Association, and we shall then have two co-operative organisations, that of the Farmers and Settlers' Association for the producers and the other for the consumers.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th November, 1919.

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

QUESTION—MINES FLOODED, WESTONIA.

Mr. HARRISON asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has his attention been called to the following paragraph, which appeared in the "West Australian" of the 5th inst.:—"Water Trouble at Westonia.—Westonia is beset with another serious water trouble owing to the inability of the Central company to cope with the heavy inflow from the adjoining Edna May mine, which closed down a week ago. Reports from the field state that a total cessation of both mining and treatment operations at the Central is threatened, and that the Consolidated and Deep Levels mines may also be affected by the flooding. The position is viewed with much alarm locally and the Government has

been appealed to for help?" 2, If so, what action does he contemplate?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, An officer of the Mines Department proceeded to Westonia last night to investigate and report fully on the matter.

QUESTION—FLOGGING OF PRISONERS.

Mr. ROCKE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has he received a report relating to the flogging of an inmate in the Fremantle prison, alleged to have been administered illegally? 2, If so, is it his intention to place the report upon the Table of the House?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, No; but hon. members may see the report.

QUESTION—MINERS' DISPUTE, RELIEF FOR WOODCUTTERS.

Mr. ANGELO asked the Premier: As the Government supplied rations to the Kalgoorlie miners whilst the woodcutters were on strike, is it the intention of the Government to be consistent and now supply rations to the woodcutters whilst the miners are on strike?

The PREMIER replied: There has so far been no need to consider the matter.

QUESTION—ELECTORAL, COUNCIL ENROLMENTS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Attorney General: 1, What method does the Electoral Department adopt to ensure enrolment of electors for the Legislative Council? 2, What is the cost of same?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Prior to every biennial election for the Legislative Council, the records in the Lands Titles, Taxation and Mines Departments, relating to owners and occupiers of land, and also municipal and road boards electoral lists, are availed of. Comparisons are made with existing Legislative Council enrolments, and claim forms posted to persons who are apparently qualified, but not already enrolled. Claim forms are also delivered through the post to all occupied dwelling-houses within letter carrier delivery for the purpose of enabling householders to claim enrolment if qualified but not already enrolled. 2, The cost varies from time to time. During the financial year 1917-18 the cost in wages, postages, and material was approximately £360.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Stubbs leave of absence granted to Mr. Thomson (Katanning) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is set out very shortly in the title. It is to provide for the compulsory enrolment of electors of the Legislative Assembly, and I am taking the opportunity at the same time to rectify certain clerical errors which appear in the Act of 1907. The second clause of the Bill repeals Section 38 of the Electoral Act. This section now reads—

New rolls shall be prepared in the manner specified in the proclamation or prescribed by the regulations.

It is proposed to repeal this and to enact in lieu thereof a similar section with alterations. The new section will provide for the framing of regulations under which any person entitled to enrol as an elector for the Assembly shall fill in and sign a claim card and forward that card to the registrar. He shall also do the same when he changes his address. The Bill does not interfere with the powers in the Act to have an electoral census taken, but it does provide for compulsory enrolment by the electors themselves, as hon. members will see if they look at the third clause. The third clause provides for the insertion of a new section after Section 44 in the Act. Under this, every person who is entitled to have his name placed upon the roll must fill in and sign, in accordance with the Act, a claim as prescribed by regulation, and deliver it to the registrar of the district. There is also a similar requirement where a person entitled to have his name placed on the roll changes his address. Hon. members may think that that is throwing too much on the electors.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is adopted under the Commonwealth Electoral Act.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: We cannot work with the Commonwealth until the boundaries of the electorates become the same. Were we to follow that procedure there would be hopeless confusion. At the present time a good deal of expense is incurred in the preparation of the Assembly rolls, and a great deal more expense would be incurred if those rolls were always kept up to date by the officers of the department. Members will realise that we cannot at this juncture incur the expense of a permanent staff large enough to devote the whole of their time to the correcting of the electoral rolls throughout Western Australia. If we are to have every change noted in order to have a perfect roll it will certainly tax the financial resources of the Electoral Department and it is doubtful also whether we would be justified in incurring expense so as to have electoral rolls ready in a moment and complete in the sense of being perfect. Hon. members will also realise that when it comes to making rolls as complete and perfect as possible for an election, we must go

outside the permanent staff in order to get persons to make a house to house canvas in an electorate. A house to house canvas is possible perhaps in a town, but it is hardly possible in the country, and in addition to that there is always a difficulty—I think hon. members will appreciate it, too—in getting suitable people to undertake the work. It is quite obvious that it will not do to employ partisans of any political party, and it is difficult of course in these days to find anybody who is not more or less connected with one of the political parties in the State. However honest a man may be and however willing he may be to carry out this work, we will always find someone who will say, "Why did you not put Jones on?" You did not put him on because he did not belong to your party." Also it is not advisable to employ people who are very much concerned in the management of and canvassing for elections to do this work. There is always a difficulty in getting suitable persons. It is also an expensive matter, and it appears to me that unless we are content to have a roll which is good and complete when the ordinary general elections take place at the expiration of Parliament, and shut our eyes to the fact that it is almost impossible to have those rolls complete in the same way as when a by-election occurs, the present system must be continued.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not think this will improve it.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Then I shall be pleased to accept any suggestions which will improve it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The only suggestion is the Commonwealth system.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not see how that is possible until we can make the boundaries of our districts coterminous. It will mean a Redistribution of Seats Bill, which is impossible at this stage of the session, and it will be difficult to get the Commonwealth to fall in with the proposal. When the hon. member talks of this, he should remember that it is not what we want which will be passed, but what the Commonwealth want.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Their system of enrolment.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Commonwealth adopted the system of compulsory enrolment and we hear individuals complaining that they have been fined or that something they did not like has happened, but the Commonwealth system of compulsory enrolment works better than our electoral system.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They use the post office; you have not the opportunity to do that.

Hon. P. Collier: The address on the Commonwealth roll would, in some cases, indicate to our electoral officers what constituency an elector should be placed in.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It would be some guide.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be almost a complete guide.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Considerable trouble is caused in the preparation of the rolls owing to people changing their address. If we compel a person to notify any change of address, we shall overcome a big difficulty. Anyone who has had to fight an election in the metropolitan area will bear me out when I say that much time is lost in chasing up supposed absentee voters and on finding them, discovering that they are not living in the district. My desire is to get the rolls in a better state than they are in at present, and to avoid what would be unjustifiable expense in view of the present financial position, namely, the keeping of an army of permanent officials in order to have the rolls perfect at any moment that a by-election or a general election might take place. Members will find the clerical errors which the Bill proposes to rectify set out in the schedule. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. C. Angwin, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to continue for another year the Licensing Act Amendment Act passed in 1914. In that measure, special powers were given to the Governor in Council by which we could proclaim any licensing district or any portion of a licensing district for the time being one in which liquor could not be sold. It also gave similar power to limit the hours during which liquor could be sold. The balance of the Act was machinery for carry-out these two objects. When the Act was passed, the idea was that we were living in abnormal times and that it might be advisable for some authority to have power to say that, for a certain period, short or long, in a certain district, hotels should be closed. It was contemplated that some emergency might arise when it would be desirable to suspend the licensing laws for the time being, and to prohibit within a limited area for a limited time the sale of liquor. This Act has been of advantage on one or two occasions. I think the first object to prevent the sale of liquor in any district has been availed of on very few occasions, but the second one as regards restricting the sale of liquor for a few hours was availed of on several occasions before the Federal Government obtained the power under the War Precautions Act. It is still desirable, until times become normal, at any rate for another period of 12 months, to continue this measure, and the object of the Bill is to continue

it for a further 12 months and no longer. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.54]: I oppose the re-enactment of this measure because I object to the further enactment of war time legislation. This Bill was passed in 1914 or five years ago because of the state of war then existing, and the possibility of trouble arising as a result of which it would be wise for the Government to have power to close licensed houses in a district or any portion of a licensing district during any hours thought desirable. So far as I can recollect, this Act has only been brought into operation on one occasion. I believe that was on the occasion of the peace celebrations at Gwalia when a number of Italians took a holiday and refused to return to work, and the Government closed the hotels for a day or two.

The Attorney General: At Kalgoorlie, too, some months ago during the woodlines dispute.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was in Kalgoorlie during the woodlines dispute and I do not recollect the Act having been availed of then. The war has been over for 12 months and it is time we got back to pre-war conditions and to the freedom and liberty we enjoyed before. There is absolutely no need for this Bill. There is not likely to be any need for it at any time during the next 20 years. In 10 or 20 years hence, circumstances may arise in some district or other and it may be considered prudent for the Government to close the hotels. Either this Act should be repealed or abandoned or it should be made a permanent measure. It is no more likely to be needed within the next 12 months than in the coming years. It may be argued that conditions may arise at any time, owing to industrial troubles and so forth, when it would be wise for the Government of the day to have legislation of this kind but, unless the Government propose to make it a permanent enactment, it is time the measure went by the board altogether with other war legislation.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [4.57]: I support the second reading.

Hon. P. Collier: I shall win now.

Mr. ROCKE: It is necessary to have a measure of this kind on the statute-book.

Hon. P. Collier: If it is necessary at all, it should be a permanent measure.

Mr. ROCKE: We have passed through a period of unrest and we are not yet entirely free from that period or to an extent which would make the removal of this law from the statute-book an act of wisdom. It has been pointed out that two occasions have arisen when the Government found it necessary to utilise the Act. On other occasions, the Federal Government have stepped in, but there may be occasions when the

Federal Government would not be cognisant of the conditions and would not put into operation their measure under the War Precautions Act. In Fremantle recently, we have had several instances of people coming into collision with the police. On each occasion, I think we can say it has been due in a measure to over-indulgence in liquor.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: After the pubs were shut.

Mr. ROCKE: Certainly after the men were full of liquor.

Hon. P. Collier: This Bill would not affect that.

Mr. ROCKE: I object that the general body of workers in Fremantle are being blamed for lawlessness. They are not guilty.

Hon. P. Collier: That is an argument against all hotels and not in favour of this Bill. That is an argument for prohibition.

Mr. ROCKE: This measure will help in the direction of keeping control of that which particularly concerns the people.

Mr. Willcock: They will have to be good boys or the hotels will be shut up.

Hon. P. Collier: They will break out somewhere else.

Mr. ROCKE: I am opposed to the War Precautions Act in many respects. I look forward to the abolition of the Act, when people will get back to the freedom they enjoyed before the war. Until the conditions of unrest pass by, and while we still live in a period of uncertainty, I think this measure is a wise one and I will support it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.2]: This measure is useless at present. The Attorney General tells us that it has been used twice—once at Gwalia, where there is a State hotel, the doors of which can be closed at any time, and once by proclamation at Kalgoorlie, where no notice was taken of it. Only on those two occasions has any necessity arisen for the use of this power. The war is over, and I do not see any further necessity for this legislation.

Hon. P. Collier: Unless it is made a permanent measure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This was brought in, in the first instance, at the beginning of the war because no one knew what was going to happen. It was found necessary, too, at that time and Parliament gave its approval under the special conditions. It speaks well for Western Australia that only on those two occasions has the Act been availed of.

Hon. P. Collier: We can do that in peace time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Only in one place was the Act put into operation, and in that instance it was a State hotel which was closed, the doors of which could have been locked at any time.

The Premier: Surely it is a wise provision to have on the statute-book.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If it is a wise provision, let it be made a permanent one.

Hon. P. Collier: It is wanted as much in normal times as it is now.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There are many things in the Licensing Act which I should like to see amended. This may be one direction in which it should be amended, but I see no necessity for it at present. The affair at Fremantle took place when the hotels were closed.

Mr. Roche: When the men were full of beer.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I was there and I saw nothing of a riot, and knew nothing of it until I saw it in the paper the following morning. The Government would be wise to let this matter drop for the present.

Mr. LUTHEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [5.5]: I take up the same attitude as the leader of the Opposition. If it is necessary to have this Act on the statute-book, it should be made a permanent measure, instead of being re-enacted year after year. The member for South Fremantle (Mr. Roche) seems to imagine that because the hotels are open and a row occurs, the men implicated must have been full of beer. It may be a surprise to him to know that in Boulder we had the record of being the greatest consumers of beer in the British Empire, for our population, and he may also be surprised to know that in Boulder there is the most respectable community known in the British Empire. Statistics can prove that there is less crime in Boulder than in any other portion of the Empire, according to population and size. They know how to drink up there and drink with self-restraint. There is a good deal of talk about what is going to happen through the hotels being kept open. It may be that if the people are interfered with in this respect, they will break out in other ways. Perhaps we are becoming so inured to this continual cry on the part of those who are opposed to liquor consumption that it is a very good thing occasionally to offer them some statistics of this sort.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.6]: I oppose the re-enactment of the Bill.

The Premier: Do you want it made permanent?

Mr. MUNSIE: No, I do not think there is any necessity for it now. The Bill was placed on the statute-book because there were so many foreigners in positions on the goldfields. It was brought into operation to prevent liquor going to the woodlines on the goldfields.

Hon. P. Collier: For fear of a clash between the Austrians and the Italians.

Mr. MUNSIE: It was not brought in to control Britishers in Perth, Fremantle, Kalgoorlie, or Boulder, or anywhere else. We never had any doubt as to their conduct during the war, and there was never any necessity for special legislation to prevent riots during the war. There was, however, some doubt about the conditions which prevailed

on the goldfields and with regard to the community there, and it was necessary to have a Bill of this kind in 1914 when war broke out. These conditions are now gone. Why, therefore, re-enact legislation of this kind year after year? If the Government do want to make a permanent measure of this, why are they not game enough to bring it in in that way? There are one or two other directions in which the Licensing Act might be amended. I would remind hon. members that there was a special train put on to bring the Austrians, who were employed on the woodlines, down to the capital, in order that they might be interned. They were there when the Bill was first enacted, and that is the reason for the law being made. This was done on the advice of those who were controlling the district in which these foreigners lived. We are given to understand that, although the law prohibited "bum-boats" from going on to the woodlines, it did not prevent any woodcutter, who had a camp on the woodline, from ordering a dozen bottles, or a case of beer, and having it delivered to him. All that was required was to show the order. This measure was designed to give the authorities power to prohibit the liquor going through under any consideration, irrespective of whether it was ordered or not. This cause for the law has now been removed. If it is desired to make it permanent, and alter the Licensing Act accordingly, let us have the whole of the Licensing Act before us and amend it in the direction that is required.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Mitchell—Northam) [5.10]: Most hon. members appear to be willing to have this power inserted in the Licensing Act.

Mr. Munsie: I do not want that.

The PREMIER: When the Licensing Act is next brought down, I have no doubt it will be inserted if the House desires. In the meantime there are other places besides the goldfields woodlines where this Act may be required to be put in force.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no other place where it is required.

Mr. Roche: It is required at Fremantle.

The PREMIER: It may be that the reason for the introduction of the measure originally was because of the facts set out by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie).

Mr. Munsie: There is no question about that.

The PREMIER: It is a very useful provision, and the powers that it gives are essential to the Government. There are other places where we have a mixed population.

Mr. Munsie: I admit that.

The PREMIER: I may mention Broome, for instance, where it may prove to be very useful legislation. The House should grant this power to the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: The people there would be wiped out before you could issue a proclamation.

The PREMIER: I think we would surprise hon. members if they knew how quickly

a proclamation was got through by wire to the police at the centre affected. It takes very little time to wire either to Broome, Kalgoorlie, or Wyndham.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The trouble would be all over by the time we received a telegram down here.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may speak for himself. That position will not arise with this Government. The power will not be abused, and will only be utilised in the interests of the people. We ask the House to re-enact this power, which has not proved harmful to any portion of the State or any people in the State. No one can object to these provisions. The power will be carefully exercised, and the House should have no hesitation in supporting the Attorney General in this matter.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [5.18]: I intend to support the re-enactment of the measure, notwithstanding the fact that the war is now over. Unfortunately, we are going through a stage in which we are suffering from the after effects of the war. Although it has not been found necessary on many occasions to take action under this Act, the occasion may still arise at any time.

Hon. P. Collier: That is true during peace time.

Mr. MULLANY: It may be found necessary, notwithstanding that the Federal Government have power under the War Precautions Act, for the State authorities to put this into force for the maintenance of order and for the public safety, because it might not be possible to communicate with the Federal authorities in time. It is interesting to hear the remarks of the member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey). I quite agree with him. I know that at one time the residents of the goldfields generally, not only at Boulder, were recognised as being amongst the greatest beer drinkers in the world. I also agree that they are amongst the most law-abiding people in the world. But the speech of the hon. member sets one wondering whether perhaps they put in so much time drinking beer that they have no opportunity to commit crimes. In this connection an interesting item appears in this afternoon's "Daily News." We all know that there is an industrial difficulty at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and it is reported that some trouble occurred this morning amongst the miners.

Hon. P. Collier: That occurred at seven o'clock in the morning.

Mr. MULLANY: The "Daily News" reports that the hotels in the district have been closed by proclamation.

Hon. P. Collier: That is panic on the part of the Government. To say that the industrial trouble is due to drink is to cast a reflection upon the citizens.

Mr. MULLANY: The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe and the leader of the Opposition will, I think, agree that at times when

passions run high it may be advisable to curtail the supply of liquor, if possible.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not fair to connect that trouble up with drink. The trouble occurred at seven in the morning.

Mr. MULLANY: I agree with the leader of the Opposition on that point. But undoubtedly passions have been running high, and it may have been considered necessary to curtail the supply of liquor during the day.

Hon. P. Collier: The Government may keep the hotels closed for a week, but there will be clashes all the same, and perhaps more severe clashes.

Mr. MULLANY: To refuse to re-enact the measure at this juncture would be unwise, and therefore I support the second reading.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.18]: I presume this measure fixes the trading hours of hotels.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is done under another measure.

Mr. PICKERING: In view of the fact that the powers under this measure have been exercised only three or four times, there can be little danger in keeping it on the statute-book. As regards the closing of hotels, I have personal knowledge that the hotel-keepers have on various occasions voluntarily closed their establishments when there was danger of excess. I do not know whether the Bill has a bearing on Federal affairs, but in view of the fact that transports are still returning we should pass the measure, if only for the reason that hotel-keepers may not always be so well guided as they have been in the past.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth—in reply) [5.19]: I quite endorse the view of the leader of the Opposition that extraordinary legislation passed in view of war conditions should be brought to a termination as soon as practicable. The present Bill merely gives the Government a power to be exercised in the case of emergency; and without reflecting on anybody or any section of the State I say unhesitatingly that any Government that may be in office ought to have this power to close hotels. That is a matter of common sense, and not a reflection on anyone. If there were an amending licensing Bill before the House, I would not hesitate to ask for the insertion of this power as a permanent provision; and if hon. members opposite were sitting on the Treasury bench they would, I feel sure, consider it desirable to have this power. And if it is desirable that the power should be given as a permanent power, where is the argument in saying that it should not be given for twelve months? I ask hon. members to pass the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING.

Returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

BILL—INEBRIATES ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 2:

Hon. T. WALKER: The whole Bill is practically included in this clause. Sub-clause (1) repeals the present definition of "institution"—

A place established by the Government for the reception, control, and treatment of inebriates.

That repeal amounts to a very clear and emphatic declaration that the Government propose henceforth to shirk their responsibility. It throws the position as regards treatment of inebriates back to that which obtained before the Inebriates Act was passed. That is to say, the treatment of inebriates was, and if this clause passes will be, anybody's business, and everybody's business, and therefore nobody's business. The Government publicly declare that they will not have anything more to do with the treatment of inebriates. Henceforth institutions for that purpose may be started by anybody. It is a complete forfeiture of our responsibilities. I admit that the existing Act has been almost a dead letter, at all events since the death of Dr. Montgomery. That gentleman did put some zeal and some heart into his work. Whitby is now devoted to some other purpose, nor do I know that it has ever been adequately used for the treatment of inebriates. In the meantime we are violating the most sacred part of the Act by making it almost impossible to send patients for treatment. It is a return to the old order, when drink was looked upon as a vice and even as a crime. It is urged that the Government have no money for these institutions. To my mind we should spare money for this purpose, whatever else we neglect. This is an admission by the Government that the last thing they intend to do is to look after those unfortunates. It is just leaving the matter where it was before we had any legislation for the treatment of inebriates. The cost of this disease to the community is incalculable. The drunkard not only helps to fill the gaols, the asylums, and the hospitals, but he takes away from us the energies necessary for the creation of wealth and the safeguarding of the

health of the community. I have no objection to offer to the Salvation Army or any other body of the sort doing its utmost in the direction of reclamation, reform, and prevention. But that is not what we require. That is purely a voluntary, spasmodic experiment. We want State recognition that intoxication is a disease and not a crime. Properly administered, this clause would save the State hundreds of thousands of pounds per annum. If we could cure every drunkard in Western Australia by proper treatment the State would save in wealth more than was ever dreamed of by the most incorrigible miser. Why hand this cause over to private enterprise? I do not say that the Government are guilty of moral cowardice over this measure, but certainly they are seeking their own ease. They do not want the trouble. It is another bother, another tax upon their time. We have lost energy, we cannot keep in mind our responsibilities, and in a state of pitiable exhaustion we hand this thing over to outsiders.

Mr. Harrison: Is that how you feel?

Hon. T. WALKER: No, the hon. member knows it. No man who is worth his salt, if he knows the facts, if he has studied the subject at all, can feel like that in face of this Bill. I did my best when I helped the original Bill through, and afterwards co-operated with the then Colonial Secretary and the late Dr. Montgomery and others. However, from that time forward nothing has been done. There has been no sympathetic administration of the Act. The magistrates have not attended to it, for they have known that there was no institution. The clause is a subterfuge for getting rid of the Act. Let there be no more Government institutions, but let anybody else start an institution and the Government will gratefully approve of it. Is it a serious evil, is it one we can shut our eyes to, is it one that is causing this country to lose money, character, pride, and energy? That being so, is it wise, just, humane, and in line with the spirit of progress to cast the Act overboard and let everybody and anybody—and that is nobody—deal with the matter? I will vote against the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am quite willing to admit that drunkenness is not a crime, but a disease. But the hon. member knows why at the present time the Government are not building an inebriates' home. If he follows the finances of the State, he must be well aware of the real cause. When the inebriates' home is established at Whithy it will cease to be part of the asylum, and very properly so. No doubt the suitability of the site and the surroundings had a good deal to do with the selection by the Government of Whithy for the home, but we are in the same difficulty about the inebriates' home as we are about the reformatory, and as we are also about the conditions which it is frequently stated are necessary to the asylum. We have not the funds and we are compelled under the circumstances to do the best we can. We have

now an offer from the Salvation Army to manage and build or provide at Claremont an inebriates' home. In considering that offer the Government of course made inquiries and it was found on looking into the matter that the Salvation Army in New Zealand had been eminently successful in their treatment of inebriates, and further than that, that they had established institutions in New South Wales and Victoria. The Salvation Army here will bear the responsibility of the building and the Government will pay the Salvation Army a capitation grant per week for each patient who is admitted. I will admit that this is a temporary measure but in the present position it is a wise course to adopt. We cannot accept the offer of the Salvation Army unless we amend the Act in the manner indicated in this Bill, because there is no provision in the Inebriates Act, 1912, for any institution to be used as an inebriates' home except a Government institution. Now this is not a Government institution, but it is an institution which this Bill, if passed, would enable the Government to approve, and therefore it would become an approved institution within the meaning of the Act and subject in all respects to the provisions of the Act. Ample precaution is taken as regards the institution. The hon. member for Kanowna says he wants a recognition that drink is a disease and not a crime. What better recognition could he have than the action of the Government, who, frankly admitting that they are unable to build such an institution, but that there should be one, are asking the House to pass the Bill? No matter which Government is in power they have to do, not what they desire, but what the finances of the State permit, and in the circumstances I confidently say that it is desirable that the Bill should be passed and that the Government should be enabled to avail themselves of the offer made by the Salvation Army.

Mr. ROCKE: So long as our laws permit of the manufacture of the inebriate, I think it is the moral obligation of the Government to take control of these people and endeavour in some measure to give them relief. It has been recognised on all hands that alcoholism is a disease and not a crime, but hitherto no proper provision has been made in this direction. Every encouragement should be given to the Salvation Army to take this work up. This branch of the Salvation Army's work has been a great success. I have known men and women to be absolutely cured of alcoholism and the method has been by sympathetic dealing. The work of the Army is so well known in many respects that it recommends itself to everybody who cares to look into that organisation. I do not know of any organisation that is doing better work for children or for inebriates. I think the Army can be trusted with the work.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 5—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1919-20.

In Committee of Supply

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair.

Department of Mines, Woods and Forests, and Police (Hon. J. Scaddan, Minister).

Vote—Mines, £59,992.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [6.0]: I approach this subject with the same optimism that has been shown by most members of this Assembly. We all feel pleased that this, our greatest industry in Western Australia is about to be delivered out of the depression from which it has been suffering for a considerable time past. We all feel pleased to know that the discoveries at Hampton Plains, and at other places are likely to prove of immense value. The discoveries which have been made 60 miles south of Boulder, I have been informed by a man of considerable experience, may possibly turn out to be another Golden Mile. At the present time when a large number of men are returning to the State, and when, as we know, the Eastern States are suffering from the effects of a drought, Western Australia is likely to attract considerable attention, and we may have a rush similar to that which took place in 1896, when this State got its first lift from the virile spirit of those who came from the Eastern States. At the north end of Kalgoorlie and in fact in other parts of the goldfields we find that the prospecting spirit is abroad and that there is a feeling of optimism which is encouraging numbers of our miners and others to go out and prospect for gold. The Minister for Mines stated that the industry had experienced a rather rough time through there not being a sufficient number of miners. It is a fact, as he said, that a large number of miners went to the Front, and many of them, unfortunately, never returned. There is another side, however, and it is an equally unfortunate one. Many of our best miners on the eastern goldfields have contracted miners' phthisis whilst engaged at their work. I know of quite a large number, many of them former companions of mine and comparatively young men, who I am sorry to say are ending their days at the Woolooloo Sanatorium through having contracted this disease. Not only that, but during the recent influenza epidemic a number of our identities became affected with that complaint and passed away, mainly on account of the conditions under which they had worked for years past. In 1911, Dr. Cumpston, during the course of his inquiries into the existence of miners' disease on the goldfields proved at that time that of the men working on the ma-

chines 33 per cent. were suffering from miners' phthisis, while of those who were working on the dry crushing plants 27 per cent. became affected. But if Dr. Cumpston had examined those who were only working on dry crushing he would have found the percentage to be even higher than the percentage he gave in connection with the machine working. The figures were given together and naturally the percentage was reduced. That was in 1911. I consider that the Government should make an early examination of the men who are engaged in the industry, and for those who are affected provision should be made similar to that which exists in connection with the repatriation scheme for returned soldiers. The men who show signs of being affected should be assisted to go on the land and make a new start in life. Of course we say that men are fools to continue their work when they find that their health is beginning to give way, but those of us who have had experience know that most of the miners have their families with them on the goldfields and it would be a big break to have to remove their families and their all to make a start in a new sphere of life. It is almost an impossible task, and for that reason the Government should make an early examination of the miners on the goldfields and assist those who are affected in the direction of starting them on the land in a manner similar to that which is being done for the returned soldiers under the repatriation scheme. There should be set apart first class areas of land, and sympathetic assistance should be given to these men to enable them to make a new start in life under different and better conditions. Such a course would be of economic advantage to the State. The position is so serious that the examination of the physical condition of the miners should be made an annual one, and immediately any trace of the disease showed itself the affected men should be given the opportunity to strike out for themselves in another direction. The Minister referred to the system of prospecting, I would suggest that this work be carried on particularly in abandoned districts. The Broad Arrow district, for instance, is revealing that it is far from being worked out. As a matter of fact good discoveries have been made there by those who have stuck to the district. Now we find that a new discovery has been made right alongside where they were working previously and that it is turning out trumps. It will be of greater advantage to assist prospectors to search for gold in the abandoned and the partly abandoned districts close to railway communication and water supplies. It is of no use sending prospectors hundreds of miles out into the country, because even if they did come across anything of value they would be severely handicapped by lack of transport facilities and water supplies. Refer-

ence has been made to boring plants. I referred to this matter the other evening as the hardy annual. The subject has been brought before the House year after year, and yet we are in the same old position—nothing has been done, particularly in the direction of diamond drilling. I admit that a little has been done in the way of diamond drilling at Southern Cross, but no comprehensive scheme has ever been taken in hand to test particular districts. I hope that something definite will be done and that the plant will be put into operation without any further delay. The Minister referred to the question of cleaning the slate in regard to many shows which in the past received assistance from the Government. In the Bulong district there is the Maggie mine against which there is an old account outstanding. A lot of the old hands are confident that if the amount owing were wiped out, and if they were able to start with a clean slate, something of advantage might be done in the direction of locating the lode. I merely mention this particular lease, but there are others in the State which have received assistance from the Government and which would be taken up again if the claim of the State were wiped off. The Federal Government are not doing much in the way of assisting returned soldiers to prospect on the goldfields. I understand that a sum of £5,000 has been advanced for this purpose, but that amount is a mere bagatelle and hardly worthy of mention. Nothing better can be done in the way of repatriation than to assist returned soldiers to go out prospecting. The open air life in itself is attractive, and I know of no other occupation which would tend to a greater degree to restore many of these men to their normal condition and make them contented citizens. If the amount provided by the Federal Government had been nearer £100,000 something might have been done for the returned men. Even that sum would be barely sufficient to spend on prospecting. At any rate the Government should not relax their efforts in the direction of seeing that returned soldiers are given the greatest help in that particular direction. Last year we voted £50,000 for the assistance of mining, but of that sum only £6,000 has been spent. It was not possible, however, to do very much with such a small expenditure of money, and as the amount voted must still be in the coffers of the Minister for Mines I suggest that he should use it at this juncture to assist in prospecting. At the north end of Kalgoorlie some time ago there were very good prospects. The Golden Zone and other shows only needed some capital to permit of deeper sinking to prove that the lodes were permanent and valuable at depth. I am sorry, however, that the public syndicate which I attempted to form to develop the north end of Kalgoorlie was not a success. If it had been possible to raise the necessary money we would have had 100 feet to sink and 100 feet of backs. That would have given such encouragement to the

industry in that particular locality that the whole of Kalgoorlie and Boulder would have derived great benefit. However, it was suggested that a public syndicate was not for the purpose of enabling a few individuals to make a profit. The people of our goldfields are unlike those of Bendigo in the early years of gold mining. There they were known to pay calls for 20 years without receiving a dividend. In this State, however, the people want to see profits and dividends straight away.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. LUTEY: Before tea I was urging upon the Government the necessity for doing everything possible to assist the mining industry. Those who know the State well are agreed that it has only been scratched in a few places and that there are wonderful possibilities ahead. It is necessary to impress this upon the whole of the people, not only in this State but in the Eastern States and the Old Country. I believe there are great opportunities before this State, and in our Premier we have a man of wonderful optimism, who is not afraid to back the country. If he continues to do so, I am satisfied the State will turn out trumps, and will make a great step forward. I have noticed for a considerable time that, at each new rush, there has been no organisation. Take the Kurrawang woodline, where a dispute occurred some time ago. The country was pegged for something like 10 miles by a width of a mile, and prospectors and others who went there had to make exhaustive inquiries, extending over days, to ascertain the lay of the land.

Mr. Foley: Most of them motor car prospectors.

Mr. LUTEY: A number of business people took a day or two off to go there, and it would have been of great benefit if there had been some arrangement by which they could have utilised their time to the fullest advantage. There should have been someone to tell them where the pegging had been done, and where they could peg. The Government should appoint a lease ranger, preferably a prospector with initiative, to be on the spot officially representing the Government. He should have notes of the peggings and keep rough plans, and be able to officially supply visitors or prospectors with reliable information. Such an official would be able to prevent a lot of dummy pegging and pegs would not be put in here, there, and everywhere, just on spec. Such a lease ranger should be sent to the new find to keep in touch with the pegging and to save the time of prospectors and visitors to the field. Even the despised motor car prospector, the business man who takes a day or two off to inspect these fields, should be able to ascertain reliable information, instead of being compelled, as at present, to wander aimlessly about the bush, especially in the heat of summer, wasting his time. It would lead to more genuine work

on new finds than there has been in the past. I hope the Minister will consider the matter and make an appointment. East of Lake Lefroy, 60 miles south of Boulder, the country is pegged for some distance. It means big expense to go there and, when a man has made the trip, he should be able to obtain the necessary information about the pegging without delay. The Minister referred to the high cost of mining requisites. Although there has been an enormous rise in the cost of gelignite, it is noticeable that there has been very little agitation among the mining companies on that account. If there is a request by the miners for a rise in wages, the companies are up in arms at once and are prepared to fight to the last ditch rather than grant an increase. But there has been little agitation against the increased cost of explosives, although it has meant an additional outlay of £75,000 a year. I have wondered why the mining companies have taken things so quietly. With the operation of the law of supply and demand since the war, there should have been a decrease in the cost of explosives; but since the signing of the armistice Nobel's have amalgamated in Great Britain no fewer than 37 companies manufacturing explosives. I do not know whether any of the mining directors are interested in Nobel's, but when we hear of the ramifications of other combines throughout the world it is logical to suspect that some of the directors may be interested in Nobel's, and that is the reason there has been no outcry. The additional cost of explosives is coming out of the pockets of a number of small shareholders in the Boulder and other mines, but I suspect the real heads of these companies, the directors, of being interested in Nobel's. I am of opinion that what they cannot get in the merry-go-round they are determined to get in the swing-boats. They will get their profits, whereas a large number of small shareholders have to bear the loss. What does the State or Commonwealth intend to do to grapple with the question? The manufacture of explosives locally should be seriously considered. Some years ago the Australian explosive known as rackarock was put on the market, but it seems to have gone right out of use. Nobel's have the sole run of the market at present. The Government should consider the question of manufacturing explosives for mining purposes.

Mr. Foley: They could not use rackarock on the ore they are breaking in the deep mines at present.

Mr. LUTEY: I saw rackarock experimented with, but I do not think it was given a fair chance. However, we are not tied to rackarock. We have analytical chemists and mining schools and students and, if the Government offered £1,000 to anyone who could produce gelignite to replace Nobel's explosive, it would be of great advantage to the mining industry. This would be an incentive to students to achieve something in the interests of the State. If the law of supply

and demand were operating, we should be getting explosives more cheaply to-day than for some years past. Check inspectors in the back country have large tracts to cover and should be supplied with a motor car, motor bicycle, or other efficient means, in order that they might carry out their duties to the best advantage. At present they reach a mining centre by train and probably have to wait two or three days before they can get a train to take them on to the next centre. The Government should supply them with adequate facilities so that they can do their rounds expeditiously and beneficially to those whose interests they are expected to serve. The Gold Producers' Association are getting an increase of something like 5s. per oz. for gold. The companies are seizing almost the whole of that increase and the real producers, namely, the tributers, who have won the gold from the earth, are getting practically none of it. The Government should stand behind the tributers and see that this rise is shared by those who really produce the gold. The Minister should endeavour to assist these men. The companies should not be able to demand more than a fair royalty from the tributer. The tributers are being robbed by the exorbitant royalties and battery charges on the Golden Mile. For several years past the labour conditions have been fulfilled by the tributers, but the companies are the people who are grabbing the extra return resulting from the increased price of gold. Something should be done to relieve the position for these tributers who are doing so much for the industry. Another thing I wish to deal with is in regard to the supervision of mining in its early stages. Inspector Greenard, who is one of the best public servants in the State, has already done very good work. He has prosecuted the company at Hampton Plains for not having supplied a proper ladder in their shaft. There are many of the shows about the Eastern goldfields which have not provided adequate means of this description to enable the men to reach the surface. He has done his duty well in this respect. I hope the Government will see that there is better supervision in the early stages of mining than there has been in the past, so that those engaged in the work can get the benefit of improved conditions. There was very lax supervision on the Golden Mile in the early days, and this has made it difficult for the inspectors who have come on later to see that the mines are rendered safe for the men working in them. The ventilation is certainly not as good as it might be. I hope the Government will encourage the inspectors to see that mining is carried out in a way that will be for the benefit of all concerned. I am pleased that these discoveries have been made and believe they will be of great benefit to the State. At the same time, when one con-

siders the large number of miners who have gone to an early grave as a result of bad ventilation in mines, of a bad system of mining, and of the dust difficulty, one wonders whether it is worth while making these discoveries. We should certainly make every effort to minimise the risks attached to mining, and make it as safe as possible for those who engage in that occupation.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [7.47]: I congratulate the Minister for Mines on his speech. It had a ring of optimism as well as a touch of caution in it. He has come into office at the right time. We do want someone with a little activity in that position. I also notice that the Premier in a very brief manner referred to the hardships endured by the mining industry during the war period, more particularly as to the high cost of mining requisites and stores. I am pleased to see that the restrictions on the importation of the much talked of explosive, that is nitrate of sodium, have been removed. I fail to understand the action of the then Minister and the Chief Inspector of Explosives in attempting to perpetuate an old and ridiculous regulation. This regulation conferred a monopoly on the German manufacturers, and I defy anyone to say that the manufacturers were not German. The biggest supplies of nitrate of potassium are found in Strasburg which is near Berlin. Nobel's of Glasgow are only an offshoot of Nobel's of Hamburg; consequently if we were to see the true share list of that particular company we would find that the shareholders were German. A week after it was announced that this embargo was to be placed on explosives we heard of the combine, which the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) has told us about, of 37 companies which included Nobel's, these having combined to produce this article. Yet in opposition to the mining fraternity the mine owner, the leaseholder and even the working miner, the then Minister for Mines, backed up by the Chief Inspector of Explosives, made every endeavour to reimpose this restriction after the end of 1919. What would it have meant if the embargo had been allowed to continue? It would have meant that our low-grade propositions would never have had a show. Unfortunately, although the embargo was removed six months later, it will have its reflex on next year's supplies. The firms who were supplying nitrate of sodium gelignite were not able to enter into contracts in the way that the other firms with which Nobel was connected were able to do. Speaking as a mining man, because I represent three companies which have been injured by the imposition of this embargo, as much as any other mining companies, I assure the Minister for Mines that he will receive the best thanks of the mining community if he will make every effort to re-

duce mining costs, more particularly of explosives. It is one of the main requisites that are so costly to the mining industry. Every mining man would advocate a free and open market for explosives. As to the deleterious effect on the health of miners, I say that could be proved by professors or by the Chief Inspector of Explosives after the explosive had arrived.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would it not be too late after the miner had suffered?

Mr. DUFF: A sample of the explosive should be sent to the Chief Inspector for testing purposes. We do not want to keep every explosive out in order to keep the price of gelignite at that which it is to-day.

Mr. Hudson: It has not been reduced since.

Mr. DUFF: No, because the people who are manufacturing nitrate of sodium gelignite could not get into the market and were deprived of their contracts. Their product could not come to any of the Westonia mines, for instance, which I represent, because they were not allowed to supply after 1919. The consequence was that a monopoly was created. I do not think any hon. member can say that any other industry has been hit so hard during the war as the mining industry. Even to-day the purchasing value of a sovereign is only half its pre-war equivalent. The mining outlook to-day is particularly bright, but every effort should be made to reduce the cost of these explosives and of mining requisites. I am sure the matter is deserving of the utmost attention of the Minister for Mines who is the person to deal with it. I congratulate him on the excellent and up to date arrangements that have been made in the Mines Department in Perth and Kalgoorlie. I have had occasion to call at both places at different times, and on every occasion I have found the offices full of activity. Much credit is due to the Minister for putting such life into the department. Even in the Perth office the officials were inclined to fall into a state of apathy. Much credit is due to the Minister for the present improved position.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Minister for Works is responsible for that.

Mr. DUFF: The Minister for Works was responsible for providing much improved accommodation. Last year I advocated that a Mining Commissioner should be placed in charge of the department, and I congratulate the Minister upon the step that he has taken in that direction. The Mines Department is one which has much detailed work to deal with, and the fact of the Minister being able to hand over to a board certain matters which need to be carefully inquired into will be one way of expediting the work of the department. We ought to see if we cannot create mining boards in the outback districts. We know the success which has followed in the train of the efforts of the Repatriation Board, who have been dealing with returned soldiers.

This should be an object lesson to the people of the State, and might well be applied to our mining and prospecting. If we had mining boards which could be closely in touch with the Mines Department and the prospectors, to the end that they might be supervised in their work and, in the case of the prospectors, that the wishes of the department were carried out, much good would result. I do not know that this would require very much organisation. If good men were appointed to go around the districts they could talk matters over with the prospectors, and arrange for information to be sent to the Perth or other branches of the department. The Minister ought to take this matter into consideration. No doubt gold is a great magnet. It is our very best immigration agent. The immigrants that come to Western Australia to our gold rushes are of the very best type of manhood. We know that from experience. We well remember that when the Eastern goldfields first broke out the cream of men from the Eastern States were amongst those who came to Western Australia. They were men who had pluck enough to tackle the hardships of bush work without having as much water as could be put into a billycan to last them for a day. These are the men who follow our gold rushes and they are the men we want in this State. How are we to get them here? We want the Government first of all to enter upon a good scheme of publicity. We want our great resources made known and everything that is illuminating made public in the Old Country. I should like to ask the Minister for Mines how many cables he sent to London in connection with this very important discovery at Hampton Plains. If he has not made a practice of sending all the best of the news he ought to do so. The people in London are the people who ought to know the latest information, because it is to them we look for the support of our industry and they should receive information from the most reliable source. Inspector Greenard is a reliable man. I have been in contact with him for many years. He has been supplying the Minister with information. It certainly goes to the department. I do not know that it can be regarded altogether as private information once it goes to the department, unless it is divulging values of a private mine; but when the Minister gives us the figures he gave us last night we can see how wonderful the Hampton Plains discovery is when the length and width of the reef concerned is considered. He ought to inaugurate a vigorous publicity campaign.

Hon. P. Collier: He will soon find himself in trouble if he does that.

Mr. DUFF: If he does not give us information I do not know where it will come from.

Mr. Nairn: As long as he delivers the goods.

Hon. P. Collier: You do not know what the goods are in mining.

Mr. DUFF: I have made inquiries about the London Agency and find that officers there still retain the old antiquated methods. We should be more up to date. Only to-day I perused a special number of the "British Australasian." This contained an article by our present Agent General. Not one reference was made in that article, which occupied a column, to mining in this State. If that is the way we are going to advertise our mining in the Old Country I say we are not going to get very many immigrants. The answer to a question whether the Minister was going to appoint a mining representative in the Agent General's Office was that the matter was under consideration. I hope that the matter will be considered soon, and that the Minister will select a live and capable man, with a thorough knowledge of this State's mining resources. I do not wish him to send a departmental officer covered with the barnacles of office routine, but one who will be able to answer inquiries in a manner suggesting that he knows something of what he is talking about. Let a man be selected from outside the Public Service. I hope the suggestion that out of date mining records should be removed from the Agent General's Office has been carried out. Owing to the industrial and economic conditions now prevailing in the old country, thousands of people there are thinking of emigrating. By wide advertisement of our gold discoveries we ought to be able to attract a good many of those self-reliant and adventurous men who are the kind of immigrants that we require. I do not know what steps the Minister has taken to advertise Hampton Plains, Red Hill, Broad Arrow, the north end of Kalgoorlie, and other late discoveries. The hon. gentleman told me that he had sent Home one cablegram on this subject. I hope he has sent many cablegrams to advertise these highly important discoveries.

Hon. P. Collier: Mining has not yet recovered from the cables sent home about the Bullfinch discoveries. Those cables did the greatest harm to Western Australian mining.

Mr. DUFF: I think we can trust the Minister for Mines. Next as to boring. Boring is not always reliable, but mining men say it is the next best thing to certainty. When we have lodes of the width of the Edna May lode, boring is absolutely the best means of prospecting, because the ground is too difficult for the ordinary method of prospecting. The lode in question is very wide, and if the bore does divert from its course a little, that does not matter. In such circumstances we are not locating or testing a small reef, but a very wide ore channel. Just before Christmas of last year a mining board comprising some 40 members representative of the workers and of the mine managers and others interested in mining at Westonia met and passed the following among other resolutions:—

That the Government be approached for the purpose of getting a boring plant sup-

plied to bore the eastern extension of the Edna May group.

Everyone knows the richness of that group. The return to the Government from those mines is well worth consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the rich companies who have made big profits there doing a bit of boring?

Mr. DUFF: I am speaking on behalf of the prospectors, not on behalf of the rich companies. I approached the Minister with a view to securing a boring plant, and my application was backed up by the 40 members of that board. The Minister sent along a representative of the Mines Department, who reported against the proposal. I am told the representative was Mr. Blatchford. At all events, the Mines Department's representative spent a few hours at Westonia, and then decided that boring should not be undertaken. On behalf of one of the companies I represented, I made an offer that if the Government put down a bore and discovered only the gneissic rock, which has been proved to contain very rich lodes in the Edna May group, the company would pay the Government the cost of the boring operations. However, we were refused the bore, and to-day Westonia is in the same position as it was in 12 months ago with regard to prospecting. The ground is too deep for ordinary methods of prospecting. After producing something like three-quarters of a million pounds' worth of gold, the Edna May group—

Mr. O'Loughlen: What were the dividends?

Mr. DUFF: About £300,000.

Hon. P. Collier: The discreditable part of Western Australian mining is the fact that the rich companies who have paid millions of pounds in dividends have never spent a pound in prospecting.

Mr. DUFF: I say again that I am speaking on behalf of the prospector. The bore should be used also at the north end of Kalgoorlie and between Kalgoorlie and Hampton Plains. If a good system of boring were inaugurated it would save a lot of work and expedite the finding of rich lodes. At all events, I hope the Minister will take into consideration the need for establishing a system of boring. I must again refer to the niggardly fashion of the spending of the vote passed by this Committee last year for mining development. The spirit in which that vote was passed was that the money should be used to assist prospecting and mining development. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munzie) a month or two ago asked the Minister for Mines how much of that vote of £50,000 had been spent, and the answer was, "About £8,000." If that is carrying out the spirit in which the vote was unanimously passed by this Committee, I do not know what is the use of passing a vote at all.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you know what the deficit is.

Mr. DUFF: Why pass the vote if we are to consider the deficit? More liberal con-

ditions ought to be given to the soldier prospector, and I think it is the duty of the Minister for Mines to bring to the attention of the Commonwealth Government the fact that 6,000 miners went to the war from the Golden Mile alone, and that many of them have come back gassed and unable to go underground. The Minister should represent to the Federal authorities that there is no better or healthier occupation for these men than to go out prospecting. The Commonwealth Government might well grant a little money for that purpose. The Mining Association of Perth are to be congratulated on having brought about the removal of the embargo on the sale of gold, which has resulted in an increased price of 15s. 9d. per ounce. That increase means a great deal to Western Australian mining and more particularly to the low grade shows. I am connected with a company which has not paid a dividend though it has gained a considerable amount of gold—all the gold won has been put into the development of the mine—and the £1,200 which that company received as extra price for its gold was welcome indeed. I observe that no mention is made in these Estimates of North-Western mining. The Minister should, I think, have made some reference to that phase of our mining industry. Some of our northern fields have been merely scratched for copper, gold, tin, and even mica. Tin in particular would be largely produced in the North-West if railway facilities were provided for the encouragement of prospecting. In the North there are hundreds of thousands of square miles of auriferous country which have not yet been touched. The gold bearing area extends right to the Leopold Ranges. In my opinion, the Government should send out prospecting parties to explore that country, and those parties might have the aid of a geologist. The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) and other gentlemen qualified to speak say there is rich auriferous country in the North, and the question of exploring that country should receive the most serious consideration of the Minister for Mines. The Minister made reference to lifting the embargo on abandoned leases. If that were done, I am sure a good many men would go on those abandoned properties, some of which have been lying idle for 20 years. Good shafts have been put down by English companies, but the values obtained did not at the time warrant their going on; or in some cases the mines may have been thrown up by people who did not know exactly what they were doing. The Minister would be acting wisely in wiping off the embargo and throwing such mines open in the ordinary way. Other countries have offered big rewards for syndicates and small companies to follow up the prospector. I suggest that a reward of £10,000 be offered for the discovery of a field that would produce 100,000 ounces of gold. It seems a big errand to send a man upon; but, after all, little Westonia has already produced a few

hundred thousand ounces of gold. The result of offering such a reward would be to stimulate prospecting immensely. Now we find it is very difficult for anyone to go into the Terrace and get £10 for a syndicate. In 1895 or 1896 one could form a syndicate in 10 minutes, but now it could not be done in a week. The business men of the City are lacking in their duties by not assisting the prospector. Sandover's and the other big firms have never come to light in the formation of a syndicate to send a prospecting party out. Yet they made their profits out of mining.

Hon. P. Collier: We ought to make a levy on them.

Mr. DUFF: I should like the Minister for Mines to take into consideration the offering of a fairly large reward, say £10,000. It seems a big amount, but what is it if we could make a discovery? It will take years to earn, but the incentive will be there. I do not say that we should offer it to private companies making discoveries on their own areas, as in the case of the Hampton Plains Company.

Hon. P. Collier: What about the Great Boulder?

Mr. DUFF: It is a pity we could not levy on the Great Boulder.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would never do to make you a colleague of the Premier's.

Hon. P. Collier: We should be throwing millions all over the State then.

Mr. DUFF: I wish the Premier would take a little more interest in mining. By the brevity of his references to mining, I doubt whether he knew there was a find at Hampton Plains. I hope the Minister for Mines will not be niggardly in assisting prospectors. The prospector deserves all that he gets, and even though we provide him with equipment I think the Government should not be sparing if he asks that his tucker bag be filled as well; because he is prepared to have a charge levied on anything that he finds. I am pleased to say the present Minister for Mines has assisted two or three parties by filling their tucker bags as well as finding their equipment. We require to encourage the prospector. It is the only way in which to bring the State into affluence again. If we encourage the prospector we will assuredly bring about a return to prosperity.

Mr. WILSON (Collie) [8.20]: In common with other members, I wish to congratulate the Minister for Mines, the Government, and the country at large on the revival in mining, especially gold-mining. I hope to see the find at Hampton Plains develop into better conditioned mines for the toilers there. Most of the men on the Golden Mile have been suffering for many years under certain hardships, particularly miners' phthisis. I hope the condition of the new mines will be made such that the work will be done under healthier conditions and the men have a better time generally. It is dreadful to see young men practically dying as the result of bad ventilation and

other distressing conditions in mines. In talking of further finds, the Minister mentioned the question of discoveries of coal as did also the member for Geraldton. I am not provincial enough to say we should not go to any place where we can get better coal. I hope the Minister will take an opportunity for boring for coal in the Midlands or on the new field at Wolgar. Personally I have always looked upon coal as being the foundation of commerce. Without coal no country can be fully prosperous. I think it is up to the Government of this State and also of other countries, especially the Imperial Government, to nationalise coal. In Collie alone we have something like 500 or 600 years' supply of coal in sight. Yet I suppose a quarter of a million pounds would buy the lot to-day. One of the best assets the Government could acquire would be the Collie field. It would pay the Government to buy up the Collie field lock, stock, and barrel, and have for themselves a great national industry. A good deal has been said about the exploitation of coal mines and of the attitude of the mine owners. When I was in France last year there were sent to me a copy of the "West Australian" and a copy of the "Sunday Times." It was stated in both papers that the Collie miners and owners and myself had broken faith with the Government. I give that a flat denial. In all my dealings in Parliament and with Ministers I have ever been actuated by the highest motives. I desire to put before the Committee my view of the state of affairs at that time. In March, 1915, the then existing contracts with the Railways for Newcastle and for Collie coal terminated. I then thought with many others that the industrial peace down there was not going to last for many years, and I suggested that instead of having industrial trouble during the war we should try to get an agreement covering the war period and three months afterwards. I sent a letter to the then Premier, Mr. Scaddan. Let me say that I desire to abide by the rules of fair play. I have not had fair play from that or successive Governments up to the present time. They have sneered at me and said that I used underhand methods. I have here cuttings from the papers I received in France, showing the statement supplied by the then acting Premier, Sir Henry Lefroy. I do not think that gentleman was fully apprised of the facts; otherwise he would not have made such a statement. He was practically told by his departmental officers that the Collie people had broken faith with the Government and were trying by unfair means to increase the output and so get an enhanced price. On the 6th March, 1915, I wrote to Mr. Scaddan as follows:—

Re coal supplies for railways. Re my recent conversation with you on the above question, I herewith place before you the following particulars: The con-

tract for Newcastle coal supplies, Colliery supplies, and the industrial agreement between the Colliery coal companies and the Colliery miners' union all terminate by effluxion of time on or about 31st March, 1915. Viewing the question from every standpoint of interest and utility to the State, the Railways and the community generally, I believe it would be beneficial and wise at the present juncture to extend if possible the operations of the present contract, and arrangements with the various contractors, as to the prices paid, etc., during the present European crisis, or until two months after the cessation of hostilities. I shall be pleased to get your opinion on the above, and will, if you desire, attend on you to further discuss the situation.

I wrote that to Mr. Scaddan on the 6th March, and on the 1st of the following month, April fool's day, I got the following reply:—

In reply to your letter of the 6th ultimo, re supplies of Colliery coal for the Railway Department, I have to advise you that I have discussed this matter with the Commissioner of Railways and, as a result, am prepared to agree to existing conditions that the various contracts as to prices paid, etc., shall continue during the present European crisis and until two months after the cessation of hostilities.

In all fairness to Mr. Scaddan I must say that I believe he was honest in the matter. He met me on the 4th April and told me that he had sent the letter, and that it was a good thing to go on with the existing conditions. I said, "That is all right, but have the new tenders been accepted?" In the meantime tenders had been called for Newcastle coal returnable on the 26th March. On the 1st April I got that letter from Mr. Scaddan and I asked Mr. Scaddan had they opened the tenders for the supply of Newcastle coal. He said, "No." I believe he then knew nothing definite. I said, "If you were to open the tenders it would be unfair to me and to the Colliery miners." He said the better plan would be to go to Mr. Short and discuss the matter with him. I saw Mr. Short on the 9th April, and Mr. Short told me he had discussed the matter with Mr. Scaddan and that it was a good thing for the coal miners and owners to do. I said, "Yes, but have you opened the tenders for Newcastle coal?" I said, "In the event of your opening those contracts and finding an increase in price is demanded for Newcastle coal, will you send for me so that the Colliery people can get the benefit of the rise or fall under the contract?" He said he would do so. I was then sent by the Government to look after some ships to carry timber to South Africa. The contract was given to Newcastle in June at an increased price of 3s. 2d. per ton, and the Colliery people got nothing.

Immediately on the meeting of the Assembly I asked that the papers be placed on the Table, and I then found that despite the assurance by Mr. Scaddan—who, I believe, was honest in the matter—tenders had been opened on the 26th March, five days before he sent that letter. If there was a breach of faith it was in the office of the department and not with the Colliery miners, who were deprived of their share of 3s. 2d. per ton on the price of Newcastle coal. Now I come to the next point. After I found out that the price had gone up I approached the then Minister for Railways in the succeeding Government. I pleaded with him that the Colliery coal people should get a fair show. As a result of that interview, out of 3s. 2d. increase paid to Newcastle they paid to Colliery a niggardly sixpence instead of the 1s. 10d. per ton as it should have been. In the following January the coal miners in the Eastern States came out for an increase of wages and Judge Edmonds gave them 3s. per ton increase. I then approached Mr. Mitchell by letter and asked him to discuss this with us so that Colliery should not be deprived of its rights again. Mr. Mitchell met the deputation on the 10th January, 1917, and told them that he could do no more in the matter. The miners in the Eastern States have got an increase of 4s. in wages. As far as I am concerned I will never be backward in getting a fair deal for the miners in Colliery. We went to Melbourne. There was nothing under the lap about what we did. Judge Edmonds gave the coal miners 1s. 7d. a day increase, and raised the price of coal 1s. 11d. per ton. If there was any breach of faith it was on the part of the Railway Department, and not on the part of the coal miners. Anything concerning which I put my hand to paper I will abide by. If anyone tries to hit me below the belt I am out for fight every time. That was the case with the miners. The miners got their advance three months after the Newcastle men got their increase. We have had sneers from some members about the coal miners exploiting the Government, and about the profiteering of the companies. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hardwick), who knows nothing about coal except when he sees it in the fire, was very loud in his denunciation of this profiteering. I do not think that he knows anything about the hardships of miners. I would tell him that coal mining is not work that is only done in the daytime.

Mr. Hardwick: They receive more than members of Parliament receive.

Mr. WILSON: They are entitled to receive more, because they do a better and a harder day's work. I do not see any reason why the coal miners should not get just as good wages as are drawn by any other section of the community. If any man deserves the best on God's earth it is the miner, whether he be a coal miner, a gold miner, or a lead miner. He works hard and works too long. His hours should be reduced, and the time is

not far distant when six hours below ground will be the maximum amount, and I am going to do my best to see that he gets it.

Mr. Hardwick: Quite enough too!

Mr. WILSON: When I came back from Franco I found that the Newcastle miners had received another increase in wages. There has been an increase given to coal miners all over the world, and the Collie miners decided that they would have an increase. It is not fair to state that the Collie miners entered into an alliance with the Collie companies. What was done was only done at my instigation. I said that if the companies could not pay it was not to be expected that we could get blood out of a stone, and that the men would have to go to the proper place to get an advance, just as the Newcastle coal miners did. For the past 20 years only two companies have paid dividends on the Collie coalfield out of eight or ten companies which have been promoted, and most of those that have been promoted have been launched on the capital of the workers. With the two exceptions I have mentioned none of them have paid anything in dividends. I know that to be the case from my own bitter experience. I have not only put some of my own money into this industry, but my boy's as well, and I have never drawn one single penny. I do not expect to draw anything for many years to come, if I am lucky enough to get anything then. Everything I have done has been above board. I approached the Minister for Mines and put a letter before him. I had several interviews with him on the matter also. I wish to put it clearly to the House and to the public that we did nothing underhand in this matter. I sent this letter to the Minister for Mines on the 19th June of this year—

Wages in the Collie coal industry. Addressing to our conversations of the 11th inst. and even date, I herewith submit for your consideration the following particulars:—(1) The Collie coal miners' union have submitted to the Federated coal owners' union certain proposals for an agreement with higher rates of wages. (2) The federated coal owners' union have notified the Collie coal miners' union that they will refuse to discuss the proposals until such time as an increased price per ton is given them by the consumers. (3) As member for the Collie district kindly allow me to place before you some facts and figures, and to respectfully request you for your opinion and decision thereon. In 1914 the price paid for Collie coal to the Railway Department was 11s. per ton, and the price for Newcastle coal for the same period was 20s. 7d. per ton. The present price for Collie coal is 13s. 5d. per ton as against the price of 35s. 8d. per ton paid for Newcastle coal. Last month (May) the price of Newcastle coal was further increased 2s. 9d. per ton by order of the Commonwealth Coal Comptroller. In 1914 the f.o.b. price for coal at the port of Newcastle was 11s. per ton—at the present

time the price is 17s. 9d. or an increase of 61 per cent., without taking into consideration the enormous increase in shipping freights from Newcastle to Fremantle. May I also point out to you that the price of coal has risen in Great Britain from 9s. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in 1914 to 24s. 10d. in 1918, with a further increase in March, 1919, of an additional 3s. per ton. It has always been understood that the price of Collie coal rises and falls with the price of Newcastle coal to the Railway Department. So far this has not been done, and the workers of Collie are chafing under this misunderstanding. Their fellow-workers in the same industry in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Tasmania have received better wages and conditions lately and they (the Collie miners) are only asking to be treated in the same spirit. In passing I want you to know that, fearing industrial trouble in Collie, I wired to the acting Prime Minister and it is the intention of the parties interested to accept the suggestion contained in the acting Prime Minister's reply. This is absolutely necessary in order to get uniformity in prices to consumers. The Minister for Mines put up a case to the Chief Mechanical Engineer and both he and the Chief Mechanical Engineer subsequently advised us to go to Melbourne. We went to Melbourne, and we got an increase in wages. Nothing could be more honourable than the attitude we took up. The only fly in the ointment is that it is thought that the Collie miners are making too much money. I cannot see the force of that argument, and find it hard to believe that coal miners or gold miners can make too much money for all the hardships that they have to put up with. During the war the country was well worked, and the engines and locomotives went well with Collie coal.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And there were no bush fires.

Mr. WILSON: No. We were in the fortunate position of having an adequate supply of coal for our services. I now find that Collie coal is being competed against by Newcastle coal, and that last week the orders for Collie coal were practically decreased by 1,000 tons. That, in my opinion, is due to the fact that Newcastle coal is being used in the farming districts. There is nothing more easy than to use Collie coal in the farming districts. Two months ago I travelled on a locomotive from Brunswick to Perth. This locomotive was fitted with a patent spark arrester made by a man in the Railway Department. I say advisedly that from the time I left until I landed in Perth I did not see a single spark leave the funnel. I was on the engine all the time. The engine-driver told me that for six nights he had been on the engine, and that no sparks had come from the funnel on any of those nights. The only complaint he had to make was that sufficient time was not allowed him in which to run from Bunbury to Perth, with the result that he took about a quarter of an

hour longer than he should have taken. If he had taken half an hour longer through the use of an appliance which has enabled Collie coal to be used in the farming districts, we should have no cause for complaint.

The Minister for Mines: From the experience we have had lately, if he had taken half an hour longer he would not have arrived at his destination at all.

Mr. WILSON: I believe that the Minister for Mines is sympathetic towards the Collie coal industry, and I hope he will see that every effort is made to use Collie coal exclusively during the whole year, not even excepting the summer months.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They promised to do that.

Mr. WILSON: I know that there has been a reduction in the orders. I am informed by the Cardiff Company that orders have fallen off by 100 tons during this week. There are six companies, and one of these gets about double the orders that all the others do. This practically means 1,000 tons less a week, and this sort of thing will not help the returned soldier. I also wish to deal with the question of spontaneous combustion. When a ship has taken fire as a result of combustion in Collie coal, we find big headlines appearing about it in the paper. It has come under my notice that two or three fires have occurred with other coal, but very little has been said about them in the paper. During last June a ship came from Calcutta with about 6,000 tons of black coal on board. It came in having a fire in two of the hatches. The lumps had to be paid double rates in order to clear out the coal. Nothing, however, appeared in the daily Press about that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A fortnight ago there was another, but nothing was said about it.

Mr. WILSON: Yes.

The Minister for Mines: It did not come to our order.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it is not Collie coal. If it had been you would have seen it mentioned in the Press.

Mr. WILSON: Here is a small item which appeared in the Press about five years ago—

The steamer "City of Winchester" which left Waitara the other day for Melbourne developed a fire aboard. The vessel reached Wellington to-night. The captain reported that when 300 miles from Wellington the coal on the top bunkers of No. 2 hold was found to be overheated. The crew was put on to remove the coal and discovered a fire in No. 2 hold. It was decided to make for Wellington. The hold had not been opened up, the temperature being kept normal, but nothing further is known in the meantime.

This shows that the very best coal of New Zealand and the best coal of Newcastle will catch fire, just as readily as the coal we have in this State. The coal we have here is the best we can get, and we should make the best use of it. If it is good enough for

the Government to use it is good enough for the Government to see that every pound of coal they use is Collie coal. The price for Collie coal at present, instead of being 16s. a ton at the pit's mouth, should, it appears, be 22s. per ton. There cannot be too much profiteering in these companies when they are serving the Government at 6s. per ton below the values as they may be compared with Newcastle coal. It is true that the Collie miners are making good wages.

The Minister for Mines: You must not lose sight of the fact that our railways have to bear an additional cost while the New South Wales railways do not bear that cost for Newcastle coal.

Mr. WILSON: If Collie coal had not been here the railways would have to pay a great deal more.

The Minister for Mines: I realise that, but we are not getting the same benefit from the pounds shillings and pence point of view for our coal as the New South Wales railways are getting from their coal.

Mr. WILSON: Newcastle coal to-day has gone up from 11s. f.o.b. to 17s. 9d., and it has advanced 61 per cent. during the war. In the old country coal costs have gone up from 9s. to 24s. with an additional 3s. during this year. With the exception of a few places in New South Wales, Collie coal is supplied to the Government of this State cheaper than coal is supplied to any other Government in the world. The Government here get it for 6s. per ton less than its real value, which is a fair concession for the companies to make to the Government.

The Minister for Mines: From a railway point of view, Western Australia is paying more for its coal than the New South Wales railways are paying for the coal got in that State.

Mr. WILSON: Everything has gone up, except members' salaries. By yesterday's newspaper I saw that there is a coal famine in South Australia, and I say the Western Australian people are blessed with having coal at Collie. Now a very few words on the question of royalty on coal. The Minister has thought fit, and as I think justifiably, to put a royalty on coal; but I hope he will not impose such a royalty as will kill the small mines. It is intended, I believe, to charge 6d. per ton royalty. But as that royalty will kill most of the mines, I hope the Minister will reconsider the matter.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [8.47]: I have pleasure in complimenting the Minister responsible for these Estimates, and also other members on the prospects of a revival of the gold-mining industry, more particularly as the result of the Hampton Plains discoveries. I agree with the Minister in expressing regret that the Hampton Plains discoveries are not situated upon Crown lands. However, the new field is within the State, and if it turns out as

present prospects indicate, it will undoubtedly prove of very considerable benefit to Western Australia in the near future. The mines in the Hampton Plains area will not come directly under the control of the Mines Department, or at all events not to the same extent as mines situated upon Crown lands. But one very important part of the mining laws of this State will apply to the Hampton Plains mines. I refer to the Mines Regulation Act, which deals with the conservation of the safety and well-being of the miners. I wish particularly to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that, occupying his position to-day, he has a tremendous responsibility resting upon him. Our experience of the working of deep mines here and in other States has shown that dire results ensue to the working miners. We know that the Wooreloo Sanatorium is crowded with worn-out men suffering from miner's phthisis. The Minister now has an opportunity, which I trust he will not fail to grasp, of preventing a continuance of that terrible state of affairs. While a gold mine which promises to be of any size is still in the early stages of development is the time to get to work and see that it is opened up on such lines as will be conducive to good ventilation and good working conditions for the men employed underground. Hon. members who were in this Chamber some years ago will recollect that when an amendment of the mining law was introduced by the then Minister for Mines, the present leader of the Opposition, and there was a proposal to do away with the underground night shift—

Hon. P. Collier: Nearly all the mines have done away with it voluntarily.

Mr. MULLANY: The main objection stressed against that proposal was that the development of the big mines underground had been with a view to the working of three shifts underground, and that the surface plants had been designed and laid out with a view to working three continuous shifts. This is the time to get right down upon that system and endeavour to induce the people who will be developing mines in the new area to lay their plans so as to obviate any need for an underground night shift. Every practical miner knows that a breathing space of eight hours during the 24 is one of the best means of improving ventilation and working conditions underground. I hope the Minister will take a note of this point, and do all he possibly can to have the new field worked under improved conditions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This is a big question, and I call attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. MULLANY: I trust that the Minister for Mines, with his knowledge of mining and of working conditions, will particularly stress the point I have urged. Undoubtedly, here

is a unique opportunity for the Minister for Mines to do something that will be remembered in the years to come. I regret that the Minister has not seen his way clear to introduce during this session a Bill dealing with the tributing question.

Hon. P. Collier: Hear, hear! The position is terrible.

Mr. MULLANY: I have always taken a great interest in this very difficult and very important question.

Hon. P. Collier: More important now than ever, because many of the Golden Mile mines are being worked on tribute.

Mr. MULLANY: It is an unfortunate fact that in Western Australia, as also in the Eastern States, tributers as a rule come into the big mines only when those mines are approaching their end.

Hon. P. Collier: Tributers are now in four of the big Kalgoorlie mines.

Mr. MULLANY: There appear to be no rules or regulations under which tributing is carried on here. Tributing companies and mining companies seem to fix up some sort of agreement between themselves, and the whole business is worked on a most haphazard system, if on any system at all. I believe the Minister has given the matter some consideration, and I wish him to give it further consideration so that next session a Bill may be brought in to deal with the question. I do not intend to-night to suggest many features which that Bill should include, but there is one basic rule which should be observed in the drafting of the measure—that no tributer should be asked to pay any royalty whatever to a mining company until he has received the rate of wages ruling in the district. That would be a fair basis, and I am sure the mining members of this Committee will be only too pleased to assist the Minister in framing legislation on such lines. That legislation is necessary to-day on the Golden Mile and elsewhere in this State, and as the years pass it will become increasingly necessary. I feel sure Parliament would receive a tributing Bill sympathetically. I congratulate the Minister on his decision, announced last night, to write off many of the amounts standing against abandoned gold mining leases. Those amounts represent advances made to prospecting parties in the past, to assist them in developing mines. The properties having been abandoned, these debts now stand in the departmental books against them. The debts undoubtedly act as a bar against small parties taking up abandoned properties. I know the objection from the departmental point of view, that the writing off of the debts might open up a possibility of collusion between parties who had received subsidies, and other people. It is suggested that the subsidised party might abandon a lease, with a view to its being taken up collusively by another party, the former thus avoiding the payment of their just debt. The difficulty is one which may possibly exist, but I suggest that at this juncture, with a view to giving a new start

as nearly as possible, the Minister should wipe off all accounts which have been outstanding for a period of not less than five years. By that means the risk of collusion would be obviated, in my opinion, and protection would be afforded to the Mines Department against dishonest parties, if such exist, attempting to defraud the Government. But to continue year after year recording a load of old debits is quite useless. There is no possibility of recovering any of that money, and the debits represent an absolute bar to prospecting in many parts of the State to-day. There is one particular centre that I desire to say a few words about. It is in my district and it is known as Comet Vale, and as many hon. members are aware, it has been one of the most solid gold producing centres in a small way for a considerable number of years past. I regret to have to say that the position of affairs there to-day is very unsatisfactory indeed. Briefly it is this: Two mining companies have been operating there for a number of years. One is the Gladstone Gold-mining Syndicate and the other is the Sand Queen Gold-mining Company. They have been producing a considerable quantity of gold during the past eight or 10 years and they are working one reef on adjoining leases. The Sand Queen Company have employed 65 or 70 men for many years past while the Gladstone Company have employed from 25 to 40 men. The Sand Queen Company attained a depth of 800 feet, and in March last they were unfortunate enough in sinking a winze to meet a strong inflow of water, which had the effect of hampering their operations to such an extent that they closed the mine down altogether. They have since made a statement that the mine is of no further use to them and as a mining proposition they have abandoned the lease, and are at present applying for a tailings lease of the surface area of that piece of ground. Through the Sand Queen Company discontinuing their operations, the water has risen to such an extent that it is now overflowing the Gladstone Company's mine and is interfering with their operations so much that they have had to apply for exemption. As the Act stands to-day this exemption must be granted and if it is—and there is no doubt that it must be granted—it is going to have the effect of compelling 25 or 30 men, nearly all of whom are married and have made comfortable little homes for themselves there, to leave the district and find employment somewhere else, which, of course, means making a new start in life. Hon. members know what that means to men who have endeavoured to make comfortable homes for themselves. Unfortunately on the goldfields this has often happened through mining operations in a particular centre having become unprofitable. That kind of thing, of course, cannot be avoided, but the position to-day at Comet Vale is that through the

action of the Sand Queen Mining Company or through the water finding its way into that mine, (these people have abandoned, on their own showing, the area they hold as a gold-mining proposition, but they are not prepared to allow their neighbours access to the shaft from which the water is coming. The idea, of course, was to check its flow. I would like to quote some statements made by the manager of the Sand Queen Gold-mining Company at the Warden's Court in Menzies about a month ago, when an application was being made for the surface rights of the Sand Queen lease to be used as a tailings area. Their representative, Mr. Paton, made this definite statement—

I do not consider that the Sand Queen mine can be worked at a profit, but a few tons of ore can be taken out by tributaries above the water level.

He also said—

When I took the mine over it was being run at a considerable loss owing to the low grade ore and the necessity for the removal of a considerable quantity of hard country rock.

Later the same gentleman representing the company made this statement—

I am professionally of the opinion that the Sand Queen mine cannot be worked at a profit, and it is only the surface rights that we require. We do not intend to use the main shaft.

That is the position of the Sand Queen Company. The definite statement is made that they do not require this piece of ground, yet a month ago they made an application to the Warden's Court for a tailings area, comprising the whole of the surface of the lease. I am endeavouring to bring under the notice of the Minister the position exactly as it stands at Comet Vale to-day. The Sand Queen Company have made a definite statement that they do not require this ground as a gold-mining proposition. On the other hand, the manager of the Gladstone gold-mining syndicate, Mr. Wright, says in evidence that if it were not for the water coming from the Sand Queen he would go on developing his property, and that he is prepared to take the water out by installing a pump, and that if the Sand Queen lease were still open for pegging he would be prepared to take it over and seal up the water at the 800 feet level. The Sand Queen Company seem to be deliberately permitting the water to go from their property with the view of hampering the operations of the Gladstone syndicate, their object being to eventually put up a proposition by which they will be able to amalgamate the two companies and work them as one. As to whether this is actually the case, I am not going to express an opinion, but we do know that there is sworn evidence that the Sand Queen people have abandoned mining operations on

their lease. This also appears in the evidence of Mr. Paton, the manager—

Owing to an accident in May last I discontinued baling and I communicated with my directors on the subject. I received certain instructions from them and in consequence of such instructions I approached the manager of the Gladsome and suggested an amalgamation between the two companies.

Just imagine a man in the course of his evidence making a statement that in his opinion the Sand Queen mine, of which he was then the manager, could not be worked at a profit, and that the property was worthless as a gold-mining proposition, and yet almost immediately afterwards saying that he had on behalf of his directors approached the owners of the neighbouring mine—the operations on which were being hampered by the water from the Sand Queen—and suggesting the amalgamation of the two properties. To-day the Gladsome syndicate are employing 30 men. During last year this small syndicate treated 5,300 tons of ore for a yield of 4,426 fine ounces of gold and up to the end of September this year they had treated 3,450 tons for 2,100 fine ounces. They are prepared to go on working their own proposition and keep these 30 men employed if they can be permitted to have access to the workings of the Sand Queen, which their owners declared to be valueless, the object being, as I have explained, to check the flow of water from the Sand Queen to the Gladsome.

Mr. FOLEY: What is to stop them from taking possession if the lease is abandoned?

Mr. MULLANY: The trouble is that the Sand Queen people are keeping enough men employed on the surface to comply with the labour conditions. There should be nothing to stop the Sand Queen company from abandoning their lease if the statements of the manager are correct. I want to know why these people are not prepared to abandon the lease if, as they say, the property is worthless. They desire the whole of the surface of the lease. The Inspector of Mines in reporting on the application of the Sand Queen people for a tailings lease made this statement—

I recommend most strongly that the area applied for be not granted on the ground that it is half as much again as is necessary. I suggest that if a tailings area be given it should be not more than eight acres and that no opening or connection from the mine workings be included in this area.

If that recommendation from the Inspector of Mines were carried out, it would be satisfactory to the owners of the Gladsome mine, but it is doubtful whether the department can take any action in the matter as the Act stands to-day. I have no interest in either of these properties more than to see that the interests of the working miners at Comet Vale are protected. As I have stated, those men have their homes at Comet Vale and the

syndicate by whom they are employed are ready and willing to continue to employ those men and to continue to produce a considerable amount of gold if their request is acceded to. The law as it stands to-day permits the Sand Queen Company to evade the labour covenants to such an extent as to hamper the operations of the neighbouring property. I appeal to the Minister to give this matter serious consideration. I do not know of any parallel case. It may be of advantage if the department were to step in, because if the exemption be granted to the Gladsome Company, between 30 and 40 men will have to go elsewhere to seek employment. Whilst the gold is there, however, and whilst the owners of the Gladsome are prepared to go on working their mine, the department should make every possible effort to see that they are assisted to carry out their object without being hampered by the attitude adopted by the owners of the Sand Queen. I want to stress this matter to the Minister and tell him frankly that whether or not the application for exemption by the Gladsome Company is granted they cannot continue to work the mine. If the application is granted they will close down, and the men will have to leave. If it is not granted they will be forced into the position of closing down just the same, maintaining just sufficient work on the surface to comply with the labour covenants; and so the once prosperous little town will go out of existence before its time.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [9.15]: Like most other mining members, I find very little opportunity in this House of voicing an opinion as to how best mining can be fostered. Whenever the Mines Estimates are under consideration very few members representing other industries take the least trouble to understand the discussion. In my opinion it is the duty of all hon. members to manifest an interest in this important industry. Just at present there is a slight flutter in mining. That is all very well. We are glad to know it, but we do not want anything in the nature of a boom. We have had quite sufficient mining booms in this State. The new find at Hampton Plains is apparently going to be something better than we have had for many years. A large area of land has been pegged out up there. A Government desirous of fostering mining should do something to regulate new gold-fields during the rush period. Particularly ought they to see to it that no man who refuses to do the work shall be permitted to hold the ground. There are many prospectors and others on the new field, the presence of the "others" being utterly prejudicial to the prospectors. Those others are in close communication with the mining experts in the Eastern States, where in stock exchange circles nothing but the Hampton Plains find is being talked of. In my opinion mining in this State can only be encouraged by the sending out of the prospector. What we learned of mining in the

Eastern States we had to unlearn on coming here.

Mr. Duff: We only want one discovery.

Mr. FOLEY: And it will be the chemist who will make it. I notice there has been a further decrease in the number of field geologists from five to four. If we get the geologists out and let them be assisted by the mining chemist, they will discover for the prospector the most likely places for the obtaining of gold. Dr. McLaren, who was here a few years ago, told the mining community there was a big possibility of many of our mines cutting out. He also proved conclusively that in the formation of our auriferous areas were certain greenstone and schist formations, and that where these are found there is gold in every instance. The test has never failed in this State. We should certainly have more chemists out doing exploratory work, and showing the prospector where he can most profitably ply his calling. Costs are a most important factor in the industry to-day, not only the cost of materials but the cost also for railway freights on mining requisites. These costs have been steadily rising ever since the beginning of the war, and to-day they are higher than ever before. Every mining requisite has to be carried over our railways, and there is no escape. Various brands of fractureur have been referred to. This question has had the consideration of succeeding Governments for the past few years. As one with a knowledge of fractureurs, I believe that if the Minister will bring the grade up to 60 per cent., and have the fractureur tested before it goes into the mines, and stop it as soon as a complaint is made, we shall have a good fractureur which will not be inimical to the health of those working it.

Mr. Duff: Has not the ventilation of the mine anything to do with the deleterious effects of fractureur?

Mr. FOLEY: The position the mines are in to-day is this: they have to make their contracts for five years ahead. That term is almost up. When they were negotiating for new contracts for fractureur there was every possibility of their getting it at a reduced rate if it had been allowed in. But the experts of the Mines Department advised their Ministerial head that it was wrong to let in a certain class of fractureur. The fractureur they object to is being used in every other mining centre in the world. With all due deference to the knowledge of the experts, I say that Nobel's fractureur can be procured in Victoria and that one can there purchase fractureur with "Nobel" on it, or fractureur with "Victorian Munition Factory" on it, whichever one likes. If the buyer does not like the one he can take the other.

Mr. Duff: That is what we want here.

Mr. FOLEY: Well, I do not want it. However, Western Australia buyers can get it, just the same as Victorian buyers. If that has been blocked by a number of companies combining to the disadvantage of

those using the fractureur, the Government ought to do all they can to put a stop to it.

Mr. Duff: What companies have blocked it?

Mr. FOLEY: The munition company in Victoria. The member for Claremont does not know, and I am endeavouring to enlighten him a little. It is up to all the Governments in Australia to put a stop to that, but no one State can do it alone. If the whole of the States collectively can find out that there is collusion with the intention of keeping up the price of fractureur, they will be lacking in their duty if they do not combine with the Commonwealth to bring about an alteration.

Mr. Lutey: What alteration? Do you suggest that they manufacture it themselves?

Mr. FOLEY: No; I suggest that the combines be done away with, but I am told there is no power under the Federal laws at present to deal with them. I believe it is the intention of the Federal Government to seek that power and, if it is obtained, the combines will not last long.

Mr. Lutey: That is only kidstake.

Mr. FOLEY: I am dealing with this from the point of view of its effect on the mining industry and am not making any political capital out of it.

Mr. Lutey: That is the serious side of it.

Mr. FOLEY: Many people are making it a party question, but I am not going to be drawn into a discussion of that kind. The question of base metals is another matter affecting mining in this State. The Minister attended a conference in Victoria recently and representatives of the base metal industry in this State, who have just been to Melbourne, have made arrangements—notwithstanding that there is a bit of an autocrat at the head of the Metal Exchange—for this body to permit the producers of lead at Northampton to sell in London, because the metal is going to British sources. If we keep hammering away, I believe, it will be only a matter of time before these restrictions are abolished, and the whole of the mining products of this State will be released from the embargo. Such release would mean a great deal to this State. The producers of lead have the right in 1919-20, or until works are erected in which the various base metals can be treated, to ship their metals to London. Works are to be erected to treat lead, copper, and other minerals.

Mr. Troy: Who will erect them?

Mr. FOLEY: The Federal Government backed by the British Government. As a mining man, I say it is impossible to put up works in any one locality to treat the various classes of base metals successfully. Most of the lead will come from the Geraldton and Northampton districts. Most of the copper will come from Whim Creek and Ravensthorpe. The other metals will come from various parts of the State. The Government should give earnest consideration to the question, so that they will be in a position to advise the Commonwealth Government whether it will be

better to erect works in three different centres, where the metals are produced, or whether it will be more economical to cart the ores to one centre for treatment.

The Minister for Mines: The refinery will have to be at one point. We cannot have half a dozen refineries.

Mr. FOLEY: Then how can we deal with the low grade ores? We have to consider the question of freight.

The Minister for Mines: By concentrating it, instead of sending it overseas.

Mr. FOLEY: That will mean that the man producing lead ore in the Northampton district will be able to send down only a very high grade of ore to Fremantle, because the charges are so great.

The Minister for Mines: That is because the smelter is not up to date.

Mr. FOLEY: It does not matter what result is obtained from the smelter; the same freight is charged for railway carriage and all the overhead charges have to be paid.

The Minister for Mines: They have contracted to send away 30,000 tons overseas from Northampton during the next two years. If they can send it overseas, they can send it here.

Mr. FOLEY: It will mean that only a very high grade of copper can be worked profitably in this State. Cheap refining is an important question. The refineries must be worked under the cheapest possible scheme, and here the question of a low grade of coal comes in. I trust the Government will consider the question of the coal supply to produce gas which must be used in the refining of these ores. I am pleased that the embargo has been lifted to some extent, and I believe this State will gain more from this concession than if the ores were sent to the Eastern States. I hope the Government will bear in mind the question of the refinery for the treatment of base metals and will give sympathetic consideration to any application for assistance for prospecting, be it an application from a poor man, a small syndicate, or a big company. There is another question which should occupy the early attention of the Government. The water difficulty in mines is no new one. In Victoria, certain conditions must be observed in respect to the ground to be left for water safety. With the big bodies of ore and the improved conditions under which they are being worked, this cannot be done here. But this House will have to consider the fact that many of the mines, especially those recently discovered, will have to cope with much more water than the earlier discovered mines, and the Government should consider whether the flooding of one mine shall be allowed to settle a whole district, or whether they will step in early enough, so that if flooding does take place, certain conditions shall be complied with, or the offending company pay the penalty. Failing compliance with the regulations, the Government of Victoria step in, pump the mine out and charge the cost to the companies concerned. If something on these lines were done here,

there would be a greater sense of security in our mines at Westonia and Hampton Plains. We know that when these mines are carried a little deeper down, they will have the water of the lake to contend with. The mine at Redhill is one of the wettest in the State and I believe others are in the same strata, if not the same belt.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [9.42]: With the Minister, I am pleased that the outlook for mining is a little brighter than it has been for a good number of years. Seeing that the brighter prospects are due practically to a new discovery, I emphasise the remarks and warning of the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany), that the Government should see that mining companies, starting on the new field, begin on a better basis with regard to the underground employees than was the case on the Golden Mile. The companies on the Golden Mile were allowed to develop their mines under very adverse conditions from the employees' point of view.

Mr. Mullany: There was no system at all when they started.

Mr. MUNSIE: No. The late Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Hudson, who has taken up a position in Tasmania, did a fair amount to alter the conditions for the underground employees on the Golden Mile. Unfortunately, the Mining Act and regulations would not permit him to go as far as he desired. That being the case, he did not press his objections quite so far as our present inspector, Mr. Greenard, has done. I want to give a little credit to Mr. Greenard, as Chief Inspector of Mines but, at the same time, I do not forget what has been done by our workmen's inspectors. While Mr. Greenard has done good work on the Golden Mile as Chief Inspector, in trying to improve the conditions of the employees underground, he has been ably assisted by the workmen's inspectors, without whom he could not have done half so well. While the Labour Government were in office the then Minister for Mines (Mr. Collier) introduced an amendment to the Mines Regulation Act. He endeavoured as far as possible to make the conditions for the employees underground better than they were. As we had a majority in the House we were successful in passing the measure. Unfortunately, however, the local House of Lords did not see eye to eye with us, and the Bill went into the waste-paper basket. The Minister has no need to wait for the Upper House to pass a Bill. If as Minister for Mines he instructs the Chief Inspector to insist on the conditions contained in our present regulations being carried out in this new field he will cause vast improvements to be made in the manner in which mining is carried on there. If sulphides are not opened up in this new field the Celebration will not do much good for Western Australia.

[Mr. Piesse took the Chair.]

Mr. Harrison: Sulphides are already there.

Mr. MUNSIE: If the sulphides and the gold values are there the present holders of the lease will have a good proposition. It will not, however, lift Western Australia out of her difficulties unless the gold does go down into the sulphides. Already, although the mine is only down 100 feet the Chief Inspector has had to force the position upon the manager. He prosecuted him and had him fined £2 for not having proper ladder accommodation in the mine. I hope he will insist, when the second level is opened up, on the mine being fitted up with travelling ways to the very bottom. On some of the mines on the Golden Mile the position is scandalous. I worked on the Lake View Mine. At the 1,800ft. level we were dependent on one shaft. If anything had happened to that shaft from the 1,100ft. level downwards every man below the 1,600 feet level would have been caught like rats in a trap, and would have had no hope of getting out. That is a scandalous condition of affairs. No man should be permitted to work underground trusting to one main shaft out of which the whole of the ore is hauled. The main shaft is liable to collapse at any time. It is not of great disadvantage to the company to make this provision. They sink their winzes for development work, and should be compelled to connect each level as it is driven up to the winzes, and to put a ladder-way in the winze for the escape of the employees. This would also be of benefit from the point of view of ventilation. If the Minister will speak to the Chief Inspector and the inspectors generally on the Golden Mile, and tell them that he wants the conditions improved, as well as it is possible to improve them, for the employees on the new field, they will carry out his instructions. The Minister said a good deal of the difficulty experienced by mining companies of late had been due to the inefficiency of the practical labour available. I admit that a considerable number of good men went to the war, but I do not believe that the difficulties they have are due to the inefficiency of the present employees. That is borne out by the reports of the Mines Department.

The Minister for Mines: I did not say that.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister said one of the chief difficulties in mining in Western Australia of late had been that of getting sufficiently practical miners, and that they had to employ men who were not as efficient as they were in the past.

The Minister for Mines: I merely said we had suffered from a lack of experienced miners.

Mr. Foley: That report does not verify what you are stating.

Mr. MUNSIE: It shows that the men have worked harder and produced more than was the case in the previous year.

Mr. Foley: I say it does not.

The Minister for Mines: I do not question that.

Mr. MUNSIE: If we are to believe the report of the department, that is the case. I will read the paragraph—

The average value of gold produced per man employed above and below ground was £471 in 1917, and £476 in 1918.

Mr. Foley: What about development work. How much development work was done last year as compared with pre-war times?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am talking about 1917 and 1918. There was more development work done in 1918 than in 1917.

Mr. Foley: Take the pre-war figures.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not talking about them. The companies have not suffered because, even though the men have not had the experience, they produced more in 1918 than they did in 1917. This report shows that the value of their production was greater.

Mr. Foley: It proves nothing of the sort.

Mr. MUNSIE: I say it does.

Mr. Foley: There is no development work done so far as these figures are concerned.

Mr. Lutey: You are assuming that there has been development.

The Minister for Mines: Read the next paragraph—"The average tonnage raised per man was 223 and in the previous year 229."

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit that. It proves my argument and disproves that of the member for Leonora.

The Minister for Mines: No; the figures are 223 against 229, a falling off of six tons per man.

Mr. MUNSIE: And the reason was that there was more development work done in 1918 than in 1917. One cannot expect men to produce as great a tonnage when doing development work as when only doing stoping. Men on the eastern gold-fields for years before the war produced just on £800 worth of gold per man. They have done it for years and development work as well.

Mr. Foley: They went to the war, and the other men did not do it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am showing the difference between 1917 and 1918, and my statement is correct.

The Minister for Mines: That does not disprove my statement that we have suffered from a lack of experienced miners.

Mr. Foley: The same report shows that there were 952 fewer men employed.

Mr. MUNSIE: That is throughout Western Australia. The report is contradictory. In one place it says 952, and in another 954. That is the reduction in the number of men employed above and below ground. I am glad to hear that the Government are considering the advisability of wiping out the old liens that are held over abandoned shows. I hope the Minister will go further and wipe them out altogether. When that statement was made in the House earlier

in the evening someone interjected "Why not wipe out the whole of the liens on farms?"

Mr. Harrison: We are wiping out some.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is absolutely no analogy between the two.

Mr. Duff: Quite right.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is no analogy between money advanced to develop a farm and money advanced to develop a gold mine.

The Minister for Mines: None whatever.

Mr. MUNSIE: If it is a question of arguing as to whether money owing to the Agricultural Bank on a farm could be wiped out when someone abandoned it, and someone else applied for it, I will discuss it when the proper time comes. In the mining industry there are many shows that men will refuse to take up and work while they know that before they go there and start work they have to sign an agreement that, if they strike rich or payable ore, they will have to repay what is owing to the department.

Mr. Harrison: They do not have to meet that until they have got payable ore.

Mr. MUNSIE: Quite so. If the Government insist on the old lien being made up, it is only fair for the new men to say to the Government, "We are prepared to give six months of our lives and labour to work that proposition. If we find payable gold we will pay you what is owing to the previous party. If we find nothing you pay us £4 a week wages."

Mr. Foley: We can put that into the Tributers' Act, if we get it.

The Minister for Mines: You would have a try.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Minister does not think the lien is holding up many shows. The money lent to some people on mining properties is holding up a good number of old shows. The "West Australian" has got a little extra advertising through the fairly rich finds on the Hampton Plains and also at Broad Arrow and on Crown lands between Hampton Plains and Great Boulder. I trust that while that air of prosperity is here the Government will make the best use of a golden opportunity, but not on the lines suggested by the member for Claremont, in advertising and booming it.

Mr. Pickering: Not in an immigration policy?

Mr. MUNSIE: No. I have had an opportunity of comparing certain figures to show the quantity of gold won from various abandoned properties in Western Australia, the last crushings taken, and what these averaged. If the people who invest in mining, particularly in Great Britain, knew the possibility of many of these old shows they would be prepared to put capital into them to reopen them. It is only fair that the Government should compile data, which would not be difficult, regarding these old shows and submit a proposition to the Commonwealth Government. I believe the Common-

wealth Government should be asked to assist our mining industry. The State Government should go further and approach the British Government to assist in the same direction. We have just grounds for doing so. The Minister himself stressed the point that although our mining industry had been hard hit during the war, no one could really estimate the value which the Western Australian mines represented to the Allies in the winning of the war. That being so, it is only a fair proposition that the Home authorities should be approached. I believe they would sympathetically co-operate with the Government of the Commonwealth and of this State, and that thus a revival of mining in our old centres could be brought about. Broad Arrow was worked for 21 or 22 years, but for the last two or three years it has been practically abandoned, except as regards Borland and Rudd's show.

Mr. Duff: There is Erickson's, too.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. Even as regards Borland and Rudd's show, the property had been abandoned for four or five years. They happened to come along on a wet day and to prospect for gold on the old dump. Four men out of two leases have since divided about £40,000. One could have pegged a lease adjoining those shows anywhere, either north or south, until the Hampton Plains discoveries were made. The men have got gold 130 feet down, and I believe the Hampton Plains finds have had a good deal to do with inducing Mr. Doolette to take his option for £25,000. Now one cannot get a lease within a mile of the place. I again suggest to the Minister that if he wants information on abandoned shows, if he wants facts and figures relative to leases on the East Coolgardie and North Coolgardie fields, he can get them, in such form as will satisfy the most severe critics, from his present head inspector, Mr. Greenard. That gentleman can supply the fullest information. Week in, week out, month after month, and year after year, we hear in this Chamber about the value of the agricultural industry to Western Australia. I shall say nothing against that industry. Undoubtedly it is a fine industry; and I believe that, properly handled, it will turn up trumps for Western Australia yet, though it has not done so up to date. Countries in the pioneering stage of agriculture have seldom made the industry pay from the start. But with all the booming of the agricultural industry, and with all the outcry that the mining industry is in its decline, gold mining is still the greatest industry that Western Australia possesses. For many years before the outbreak of war, the value of the gold produced in Western Australia was just on 50 per cent. more than the value of all other Western Australian products.

Mr. Harrison: One industry is advancing, and the other declining.

Mr. MUNSIE: A good deal of the decline in mining is due to unsympathetic treatment on the part of Western Australian Governments towards mining. Even last year our gold-

mining industry produced 59 per cent. of the total gold output of Australasia, including, of course, New Zealand. The Minister dealt pretty exhaustively with the question of explosives. I acknowledge that particularly during the war there has been difficulty in obtaining supplies of first grade explosives. Probably the highest grade explosives were needed for war purposes. It may be said that the men carrying on the mining industry of Western Australia during the war period were waging war at both ends. I could walk up Hannan-street or Burt-street, Boulder, and simply from their appearance pick out the men engaged in development work on the Golden Mile.

Mr. DUFF: Has not ventilation something to do with that?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. We have never had good ventilation on the Golden Mile. But the fractureur being used is the principal cause. In my opinion it is a crying shame that men should have been asked to use in development work the fractureur that was employed during the war period. The Minister has said that the regulation bearing on the point has been cancelled. When the member for Canning was Minister for Mines, I interviewed him two or three times to urge an amendment of the regulation which allowed this explosive to come in. I was not so much concerned with the actual cost as with obtaining a test of the effects of the explosive on the health of the men using it. The then Minister for Mines informed me that tests had been made and that the nitrate of sodium had been found less harmful to health than the nitrate of potash.

The Minister for Mines: The reverse, surely.

Mr. MUNSIE: No. I questioned the then Minister for Mines particularly on the point, and he stated to me that his information was that the inferior explosive being used in Kalgoorlie and Boulder was less harmful to health than the good explosive formerly used. It was rather a remarkable statement for him to make. Speaking on the Address-in-reply last session, I urged upon the then Minister for Mines a repetition of the experiments made on the Golden Mile some eight or nine years ago. I give all due credit to the Government Analyst who makes tests of the explosives, but I contend it is utterly useless to test the explosives in the open air. The only proper test is one made in the conditions that attend the use of the explosives in actual work; and the test should be made immediately after the charge has been fired.

The Minister for Mines: That was done.

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes; about nine years ago.

The Minister for Mines: I was with the Government Analyst on such an occasion only about three years ago.

Mr. MUNSIE: What sort of a test did he make?

The Minister for Mines: A very good test, at a dead end.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not think many people on the Golden Mile know that test was made.

Some of the inspectors do not know that it was made. It must have been kept pretty secret.

Mr. DUFF: What was the result of the test?

Mr. MUNSIE: I have not been able to find out. Although I asked time and again that that experiment should be made, all I got was a promise that the matter would be considered. If the test was made two or three years ago, that is news to me.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Mann went in immediately after the firing of the charge. He wore a mask.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am sorry the Minister has not made that information known generally. I do not think a very exhaustive test was made.

The Minister for Mines: I think Mr. Mann has made more practical tests with explosives than any other chemist in Australia, or perhaps in the world.

Mr. MUNSIE: I agree with the Minister there. But that statement refers to the time Mr. Mann put in on the Golden Mile making tests from all standpoints. He spent about six weeks there, experimenting with regard to sand blasts and the results of explosives in open stopes, closed stopes, winzes, rises, and indeed everywhere where fractureur was liable to be used. As president of the Miners' Union, I spent two or three days with him on the occasion of those tests. Mr. Mann issued a report containing some very useful information, and that is why I have urged a continuance of the tests. I do not put myself up as a critic of the Government Analyst. I know nothing about his subject. Some hon. members do criticise him, and say that he knows nothing about his work. However, I will not yield to any man inside this Chamber or outside it as regards experience of practical mining. I speak on behalf of the men who work underground, and I want the tests made again. It is only because I was so satisfied with the thoroughness of the tests made by Mr. Mann eight or nine years ago, that I urged the testing of the new fractureur under the altered conditions. I hope the Minister will, later, give particulars of the more recent tests, and give the names of the mines in which the tests were made. In conclusion, I wish to say a few words on an old topic of mine, a topic which on the goldfields to-day yields first place only to the new discoveries. I refer to the tributing system. Personally I do not believe any set of regulations can govern the tributing system. In my opinion, a tributing Bill is necessary, and has for some years been necessary. With the progress of time, such a measure will become more and more necessary. The Minister said to-night, by way of interjection, that this is an exceedingly difficult matter to deal with. I agree with him that it is fairly difficult, but it is not so difficult that it should frighten the Minister from introducing a tributing Bill.

The Minister for Mines: It does not frighten me in the slightest.

Mr. MUNSIE: I believe all the difficulties can be overcome; but I want to say right here that the Minister will never overcome the difficulties if he intends to allow a mining company to make more profit out of a mine on tribute than was made when the mine was worked by the company. I want to impress on the Minister the fact that the companies always put up the same proposition whenever they let a tribute. They charge royalties which are extortionate, while their other charges are just as excessive. I can quote an instance where four men took a tribute, and in six weeks they raised ore the gold contents of which were worth £422. It took them practically the whole of the six weeks to get that, and the company collared £298 out of that sum.

The Minister for Mines: That was not entirely for royalties.

Mr. MUNSIE: A Tribute Act would regulate charges and royalties. The companies which let tributes always demand their pound of flesh, and they get it too. The Perseverance Mine at Boulder for the past four or five years, before being let on tribute, has been worked on a bare margin. Some months showed a profit up to £1,000, while in the next month it would be behind to the extent of about £1,000. At the present time, however, it is an exceptional month indeed if they do not show a clear profit of anything between £4,000 and £7,000. This is the result of the work of tributers, and the company have no responsibility at all. I call that robbery.

Mr. Harrison: Are the tributers not getting the advantage of the development work done by the company?

Mr. MUNSIE: Here is the old Tory idea coming out. Of course they are getting that benefit, but if the tributers were not there to assist the company to make these profits, all the development work would be thrown away. The company cannot work the mine themselves, and they are making a profit out of it by letting it on tribute. I have no desire that companies should let tributes for nothing. I do not desire that because a party of men go down a mine, carry on development work, and strike gold which happens to go two ounces to the ton, the company should be able to say "We will charge you for every possible thing and in addition take 40 per cent. of the total amount of gold won." If a tributing party on the goldfields to-day has the good fortune to strike ore worth two ounces to the ton, the company owning the property will grab 40 per cent. of the gross yield and in addition impose charges for everything. That is a scandalous proposition, and it is no good mining matters. In the event of a tribute being let, I do not care what may be the value of the ore struck, that value should not be counted. The questions that should be taken into consideration are how long it has taken the tributers to reach that ore and how much it has cost them to get it.

The ore may yield ten ounces to the ton, but it may have taken ten years to reach it. On the other hand a man may be working a 20ft. lode and he may be extracting ten tons of ore a day. At least, a man should be permitted to earn the ruling rate of wages.

Mr. Mullany: That should be the basis of a Bill.

Mr. MUNSIE: I do not care what the value of the ore may be, no company should be permitted to charge a tributer more than five per cent. royalty. Even then, the company would be getting a substantial sum as a result of the work of the tributers which would never have been obtained otherwise. If the Minister cannot see his way clear to introduce a Tribute Bill this session he should during recess investigate the matter and submit the measure as early as possible next session. If the Government want any information on the subject I can supply a good deal which I assure the Minister will be reliable.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [10.23]: I regret that I have to rise at this late hour to make a few remarks on the subject of the mining Estimates. I have no desire to inconvenience hon. members, and I will address my remarks to the Minister who to-day controls the activities of the Mines Department.

Mr. Lutey drew attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and a quorum formed.

Mr. TROY: Most hon. members who have spoken have addressed themselves to that aspect of the mining industry represented by the large companies and the people employed in the industry. I propose to address myself to that part of the industry which claims the attention of the prospector. In my constituency particularly, mining is carried on very largely by the prospector, the man who undertakes the initial development. Last year a sum of £50,000 was voted for the purpose of the development of mining, but I regret to say that only a very small proportion of that sum was spent. . . . Mr. Chairman, I regret that I cannot continue my remarks on account of the conversations which are being carried on by hon. members all around me. No one appears to be taking an interest in the debate. I therefore move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and declared carried.

The Minister for Mines: Divide.

Mr. TROY: The Minister for Mines cannot call for a division. He allowed an interval to elapse between the time the Chairman gave his decision and before making up his mind to call for a division.

Mr. Munsie: Besides, there was only one "No."

The CHAIRMAN: I am satisfied there was more than one "No."

The Committee divided, with the following result:—

Ayes	7
Noes	16

Majority against	..	9
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AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willson
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Munsie	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Hudson
Mr. Broun	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Foley	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Mullany
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. TROY: I regret, Sir, that you took the division, the vote having once been definitely given on the voices. I hope you will now keep order while I continue my remarks. Last year there was on the Estimates a vote of £50,000 for the development of the mining industry, and although repeated applications were made for assistance only a very small quota of that vote was expended. We have in the House the spectacle of no less a person than the late Treasurer, a gentleman responsible for caution and economy in the care of the finances, repudiating the late Minister for Mines for refusing to expend the full amount. It is of no use the Treasurer providing a large sum on the Estimates for the development of the industry if the Minister's intention is not to utilise that money; because it is only a pretence of encouragement when the figures indicate at the end of the financial year that but a very small portion of the vote has been expended. Although this Committee is not aware of the amount that will be provided on the Loan Estimates I hope it will be equal to, if not greater than the vote of last year, and that the Minister who now controls the Mines Department will see that it is expended; because it is absolutely necessary if the industry is to recover itself. I understand the Minister proposes to introduce an amending Mining Bill which will contain provision for relieving the industry of some of the burdens that militate against its progress, and at the same time confer advantages on the prospectors engaged in the initial development of the industry. A little while ago I had an opportunity for discussing it with the Minister, and I had hoped the Bill would be introduced this session. I do not for a moment think the Minister has lost sight of the necessity for the measure, and I believe that early next session we shall

have an amending Bill comprising some of the provisions I am noting here to-night. The member for Canning (Mr. Robinson) when Minister for Mines delivered a speech at Coolgardie in which he suggested certain reforms in connection with the industry.

Mr. Harrison: He was a live wire.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Mr. TROY: It is true he was a live wire. I had much to do with the member for Canning whilst he controlled the department, and I can say I always found him very sympathetic and that whenever I brought a bona fide application under his notice he gave it favourable consideration. I wish to express my appreciation of the work done by the member for Canning when Minister for Mines. Had he remained at the head of the department, he would have been a sympathetic administrator and the industry would have flourished under his administration.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He had a second shot at it.

Mr. TROY: I am in a better position than most hon. members to speak of the sympathy shown by the member for Canning, because I represent the prospecting part of the industry, where the administration of the Minister is brought prominently into operation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Was it practical sympathy?

Mr. TROY: It was. The member for Canning, when Minister for Mines, proposed a reduction in the lease rent. In my opinion this is a very urgent reform. I have always held that it is unjust to ask a prospector to pay £1 per annum rent for a gold mining lease for every year he holds it, seeing that the agriculturist who takes up land can, by the payment of 10s. per acre, purchase his lease outright. I am further of opinion that it would be far better for the country if the miner were allowed to hold his lease at a peppercorn rental conditionally on his lease being worked. It is immaterial to the State whether or not we receive a few pounds per annum as lease rental. The most important thing is that the holder of the lease should work it. I have always held the opinion that the best way to encourage the industry is to give the prospector the lease at a peppercorn rental conditionally on its being worked. Also there is need for reform in respect of the treatment at public batteries. For some considerable time there was an agitation, not always very loudly expressed, against the cost of cyaniding. I hope this is one of the matters that the Minister will take into consideration. The present charge for crushing at State batteries is 10s. per ton. The cyanide treatment also costs 10s. per ton, which is admitted by the Mines Department to be more than is reasonable. I wish to draw the Minister's attention to this aspect: In the first place there is deducted from the tonnage crushed through the mill 20 per cent. as moisture. A prospector will put through the battery, say 100 tons of stone. A deduction

of 20 per cent. is made for moisture, a very large deduction, much greater than is necessary. Then the department pays only 75 per cent. of the assay value of those sands, and in addition deducts three weights for treatment, representing nearly 12s. per ton. In the opinion of mining men, this is an excessive and unfair imposition which bears particularly hard on the man who has a mine from which the crushings from the battery are poor, and where the values in the sands are high. A prospector whose sands are worth 20s. to the ton, as frequently happens, loses a very large percentage of his gold owing to the deductions in the cyanide process. Such a man is harshly treated because, when the values in the sands are high, the values in the mill are generally low. The Minister should give earnest attention to this question as I am satisfied that, if he can make the charges less costly and give the prospector a fairer deal through the public batteries, he will assist towards the working of a great many propositions in the State. The loss in the cyanide process is really the difference between profit and loss on the mine's operations, and a large number of mines could be worked at a profit if the cost of the cyanide treatment were more reasonable. I do not think the Minister is unsympathetic, and I hope he will inquire into the matter. Even if it means a small temporary loss to the department, the gain to the industry will be very great. We ought to regard the public battery system as a concession to the mining industry, just as we give numerous concessions to the agricultural and other industries. Superphosphates for farmers are carried over the railways at a loss. We carry other commodities and make concessions to farmers, which concessions are regarded in the light of a subsidy to the agricultural industry. The public battery should be regarded as a subsidy to the mining industry. I am satisfied that, with more reasonable charges, the system would give a great fillip to prospecting, and a large number of additional properties in this State would be worked. This is my conviction, born of knowledge and long association with the industry in the outback areas of Western Australia. I am glad to note that there is a prospect of a prosperous time for the mining industry in the near future. Not only are there signs of renewed prosperity on the Eastern Goldfields, but I am happy to say that, in the prospecting areas on the Murchison—the part where probably most prospectors are engaged to-day—the industry is also on the upgrade. I was at Mt. Magnet a few days ago and found that from both there and Boogardie, where prospectors have been operating for 20 to 30 years, there is more stone at the battery than can be treated during the next 12 months. In fact, a request has been made to the Minister to increase the capacity of the battery, to enable the stone to be crushed for the prospectors. A number of mines, which have been under a cloud for the last couple of years, are again being worked with good

results. The same applies to Payne's Find, Cue, Tuckanarra, and other portions of the Murchison. If the Minister, under the new Mining Act, can provide for more liberal conditions for the men engaged in the pioneering stages, and provide reasonable charges for the State batteries, there will be very promising times ahead in other fields, apart from Kalgoorlie. I am pleased to hear the Minister has given instructions that, for the future, no reserves or commonages adjacent to any mining district shall be leased. The leasing of these commonages and reserves has been a serious handicap to the prospector. I have had evidence from the Murchison of how the leasing of these commonages and reserves has hampered the prospectors. I have been assured by prospectors that when they came to wells, with the object of prospecting a certain area of country, they were unable to stay because all the feed had been eaten out by the sheep owned by pastoralists leasing the land from the department. In my electorate, particularly, the greed for pastoral areas is such that people are squabbling for land which, a few years ago, would have been ignored. A little while ago, I visited a portion of my electorate where, until recently, the people considered it quite unnecessary to hold any commonage, but the rush for pastoral country is so great that people will take up 500, or even 100, acres which they would have despised a few years ago. Pastoralists who already hold large areas, have applied for the lease of commonages and reserves. They have utilised the Government wells by putting up windmills and troughing, and sheep have eaten out every vestige of feed around the wells so that, when the prospectors or Government parties visit the localities to camp and prospect, they are compelled to move on. I have already brought this matter under the notice of the Minister and he has decided that, immediately these leases are up—I believe they are annual leases—they shall not be renewed. The Minister has acted wisely in coming to that decision, and I am sure it will be highly appreciated by prospectors in the outback areas. Some little time back, acting, I believe, in conjunction with a scheme by the Repatriation Department, the Minister arranged to supply certain sustenance to prospectors. I am glad this was done because I believe that care is taken by the department to see that the prospectors who receive sustenance are bona fide men. I do not pretend that these men are such as people in respectable society would call reliable men. They may be a little addicted to drink occasionally, as many back country men are. They are reliable prospectors, and have given great service to this country for many years. Many of them also have been instrumental in finding fields in the past. They deserve well of the country, and the few months sustenance given by the department is help that is badly needed, and has gone in a good cause. With the assistance of the Repatriation Department in the matter of sustenance a number of deserving

prospectors might be enabled to give greater service to the country by opening up other new fields. The subject of the restrictions imposed by the Federal Government in connection with the treatment of base metals has already been fully gone into. I understand from the Minister and the Press that the Federal Government have removed the embargo, and that there is a prospect of relief being given to the State in future. That embargo has materially affected the development of the molybdenite metal in Western Australia. I understand that at Warriedar there is one of the largest deposits of molybdenite in the world. Had it not been for the Federal Government I understand that the Moonta people would have gone in for the production of the metal on a large scale. The late Minister for Mines (Mr. Robinson) assured me that the department was satisfied with the prospects of the molybdenite proposition. When the member for Yilgarn was Minister for Mines he promised to make alterations at the Warriedar State battery in order to provide for the treatment of molybdenite there. He provided no less than £2,000 on the Estimates for the necessary plant. Unfortunately he hesitated from day to day, and in the end did nothing. Had he done something at the time the industry would have been in a more flourishing condition than it is to-day. Is the present Minister for Mines prepared to do anything to assist in the exploitation of this metal? I understand that Mr. Blatchford, of the Geological Department, is satisfied that the big hill at Warriedar is one of the largest molybdenite propositions in the world. The percentage of molybdenite in the rock is also very high.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Morgaus made that statement.

Mr. TROY: I do not set the same store by Mr. Morgan's statement because he holds the leases under option, and is in the position of vendor in that he has endeavoured to float the proposition into a company.

Mr. Lambert: We have the plant in the State to prove it.

Mr. TROY: Will the Minister say whether the department will do something in connection with the industry? There are many prospectors who have been holding on to the proposition for three years, and are living in hopes of the industry turning out well. On my last visit they said to me "Let the department test the proposition. If it is no good we will get out of it." It is unfortunate that the then Minister for Mines, the member for Yilgarn, could not have been prevailed upon to take active measures in this direction. Indeed, I regret that I did not force the hands of the Minister at the time. I did not want to push him against his better judgment or to push him hastily into something from which he could not retreat, but it turns out that I should have taken action in the interests of the prospectors and endeavoured to have some finality reached on the question. The Minister for Mines is, we are informed, creating an ad-

visory board to decide on the merits of certain propositions that may come before the Department. The board, I believe, is comprised, inter alia, of representatives of the Mining Association, the department, and returned soldiers. I have no objection to the Mines Department being represented on it, for the responsibilities that it has to take in connection with the industry. I have no objection to returned soldiers being represented on it provided the representative is a bona fide prospector and stands for the interests of prospectors. What, however, entitles the Mining Association to representation on the board, over and above the people who are engaged in bona fide mining operations in the State? I do not want to make a personal attack upon that association, but ask whom they represent, and in what activity in mining development they are engaged? They are for the most part comprised of city men, engaged in floating ventures and in prospecting the prospector. I know one or two of the members well, but I know of no particular service that they have ever given to mining. If the Minister wants assistance why does he not set about forming mining boards in certain mining localities? I do not mean that there should be a mining board in every mining locality, but one, say, at Kalgoorlie, to represent the prospectors in the central portion of the fields, another at Leonora to represent the prospectors in Mt. Margaret and the northern goldfields, and another at Cue and Mt. Magnet to represent the Murchison prospectors. There would thus be mining boards representative of every large field, and comprised of people who are actively engaged in the industry, and who have spent their whole lives in it. In my opinion, these are the men who can give the best advice. These are men who have had a personal association with the industry extending over many years, who make their living by working in the industry, who day by day toil in the industry, whose time is not employed in walking up and down St. George's terrace and initiating schemes for their own particular benefit. The Minister would do well, in framing the amending Bill, to make provision for the appointment of mining boards in the various localities. The cost would not be great, and the Minister would have the satisfaction of knowing that he was dealing with men interested in the industry, men who win their daily bread by their toil in it. These are the men who are most competent to advise the Minister in mining matters, and who should take precedence of all other members of the community in this respect. The worker, the prospector, the man who goes out to find mines, the man who opens up mines, and the man who goes to work in the mines—they are the men who are entitled to be consulted by the Minister. It is time that in this country, and in all other countries, the worker came into his own; and I object strongly to men who live by exploiting the industry being made the advisers of the department, whereas the

genuine worker should be the adviser. I trust that the optimistic remarks of the Minister on the new discoveries will be fully justified by developments in the near future. To some extent I rejoice when a promising new field is to be opened up, but with that rejoicing is mingled a little regret that with every new development of the industry, with the opening up of every new field there must come to the men actually working in the industry a certain degree of ill health. I cannot forget that about 70 or 80 per cent. of the men engaged in the Western Australian mining industry, young men who should be in the prime of life, are to-day in very bad health, are ageing rapidly, and in many cases are, unhappily, dying from miner's phthisis. When I hear the vast possibilities of a new field proclaimed, I cannot help feeling a measure of regret that all those possibilities or riches should be attended by conditions that are inimical to the health of the men engaged in the industry. I look back now over a period of 23 years that I have spent on the goldfields, during which I have been associated with thousands of young men. I can say that 90 per cent. of the young men who were on the Murchison field when I arrived there, and whose time was contemporary with my own, are to-day either dead, or in declining health, or in sanatoriums. Therefore I naturally hope that if there is going to be a large development in the mining industry, action will be taken in good time to ensure to the men engaged in the actual working of the industry healthy conditions. At present there is in control of the Mines Department a Minister who ought to know the work of the men affected. He comes of a family who for generations, I suppose, have spent their lives in mining. He has been engaged in the mining industry himself. From this side of the House he has frequently urged upon Mr. Gregory, a former Minister for Mines, the need for establishing healthy conditions in the industry. I hope that if the development takes place which he hopes will take place in the Kalgoorlie district, he will take prompt action with a view to ensuring that from the beginning proper methods are adopted for making the ventilation of the new mines what it should be. Then the old excuse will not be open to the mining companies, the excuse that the time is too late and that proper ventilation of the mines will involve them in too heavy expense. Without the assurance of healthy conditions for the miners, members on this side, and indeed members of this Chamber generally who have a regard for the health of the miners, cannot be unduly optimistic. I repeat, I hope the Minister's optimism will be justified by events. I trust that both the State and the men engaged in actual gold production will have a very good time. In my opinion, no one is better entitled to such a good time than the men who produce the wealth of the country. In

travelling I have often felt resentful, or else amused, by statements made by superior persons that the worker ought to get a fair deal. As if there could be any question about it! When I read in the speeches of gentlemen like Mr. Lloyd George that the worker ought to get a fair deal too, I cannot help asking myself why there should be any question whatever about it? The worker ought to be the very first consideration. The man who does not work should get a fair deal after the other man has had a fair deal. I trust that in the mining industry, and in every other industry, the worker will be the first consideration, and that other people will receive consideration later on. As regards the mining industry, therefore, my hope is that the prospector will receive a fair deal, that the worker will receive a fair deal, and that the man who puts money into a mining proposition will receive a fair return.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 11th November, 1919.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- (1) Slaughter of Calves Restriction.
- (2) Pearling Act Amendment.