

right of appeal from decisions of the State Transport Board. Appeals are set up in nearly every walk of life from the decision of some court or other. If an engine-driver in the Railway Department gets the sack, or is disgraced, or is fined a day's pay for some offence which the Commissioner considers he has committed, that engine-driver has the right of appeal. As regards nearly everything that comes before any tribunal for decision nowadays, provision is made in some form or other for appeal to a higher tribunal. If appeal is provided in all the instances I have mentioned, surely there is ample justification for the provision of appeal in a case where the very existence of a child may be at stake. Therefore I support the Bill.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd October, 1936.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, WATER CARTAGE.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Railways: What has been the cost of carting water for the railways in consequence of the failure of the water supply at Katanning during the financial years 1935-1936, 1936-1937 (to the 30th September, 1936)?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1935-1936, £945; 1936-1937 (to the 30th September, 1936), £309.

QUESTIONS—ABORIGINES.

Chief Protector and Political Influence.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the inquiries into the alleged statements of the Chief Protector of Aborigines relating to political influence been completed? 2, If so, will he lay the papers upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes, if desired by the House.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ENDOWMENT LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Lands) and read a first time.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco - in reply) [10.27]: I desire to thank all hon. members who have supported the Bill. When moving it I felt quite sure that it would get the support of every member of the House, because it is so very simple and so very humane. I trust that the Minister will change his mind and vote for the Bill. If the hon. gentleman does not do so, I hope he will be just as lonely as was the Minister for Justice when he sat there and a Bill was carried against him.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act Amendment.
 - 2, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.
 - 3, Child Welfare Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to continue the operations of the Lotteries (Control) Act 1934-35 for a period of one year. It is hardly necessary for me to speak in support of the principle embodied in the control of lotteries under this measure. I would like to refer briefly to the operations of the Commission during the past year. There have been nine consultations, ending with the No. 44 consultation. The total amount subscribed by the public was £169,163. The prize money allocated was £84,579, or 49.99 per cent. Expenses totalled £24,839 15s. 10d., which includes 10 per cent. paid to commission agents. The profit realised was £59,744 4s. 2d., which has been available for distribution. A balance of £63,679 13s. 9d. was carried over from last year, making a total of £123,423 17s. 11d. Bank interest at the 30th June last, £1,136 13s. 11d., and a refund on account of a refrigerator which was subsequently not needed, further brought the total to £124,598 3s. 10d. Of this sum £62,980 14s. 11d. was paid out in donations. There are commitments amounting to £59,912 9s. 8d., leaving a balance for further distribution of £1,704 19s. 3d. The Commission has endeavoured to supply the urgent needs of country hospitals as far as possible. Twenty-five refrigerators have been supplied to the hospitals of the State at a cost of £2,258 5s. 5d. This is proving to be a very great boon, particularly in places where, prior to the operations of the Commission, it was not possible to provide the food necessary for very many of the patients. X-ray plants have been installed in two hospitals at a cost of

£438 11s. 8d. Hospitals in the State, besides receiving assistance in the way of the provision of refrigerators and X-ray plants, have been assisted financially to the extent of £34,154 4s. 4d. The operations of charitable organisations have been assisted. In this connection 2,008 pairs of blankets, and 1,198 pairs of sheets, have been given to the indigent and needy through the relief committees. Besides this bedding, a sum of £1,505 has been spent for the relief of distress through the same agencies. Also a sum of £250 has been provided to enable furniture to be purchased for the homes of widows with children, who have had a very hard time. This money has been distributed through the Child Welfare Department. In connection with hospital social service, which was introduced by the help of the Lotteries Commission, £1,650 has been distributed this year. Orphanages have been assisted to a material extent, and donations amounting to £6,722 2s. 6d. have been made, the following orphanages having received sums from that donation:—Anglican Girls', Swan Boys', Castledare, Clontarf, Parker-ville Homes, St. Joseph's, Subiaco, St. Joseph's, New Norcia, and Sister Kate's Cottage Home at Queen's Park. In view of the reports following each consultation, which have been made available to the House immediately following each consultation, there is very little necessity for me to mention further the particulars of the disbursements. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.43]: It is useless for us to oppose a Bill of this nature, for it represents one of the means by which the Government collect their revenue for carrying on the services of the year. In consequence, it does not require a very great deal of comment. However, there are one or two features to which I would refer. I should like to ask the Treasurer to give consideration to the apportionment of the revenue collected from land tax and make some of it available to the Minister for Agriculture for the purpose of supplying the deficiency that occurs in the vermin fund.

The landowners of this State, pastoralists and agriculturists holding property of a greater area than 160 acres, are taxed for the purpose of providing funds which are pooled for the destruction of wild dogs, foxes and eagle hawks. During the last few years the fund has been insufficient for the purpose, and recently it has been found necessary to reduce the amount paid for a fox from 5s. to 2s. 6d. This is causing a great deal of dissatisfaction in country districts, because the foxes are playing a big part in the destruction of lambs. I do not say they are wholly responsible for the loss of lambs, but certainly a great deal of depredation is clearly associated with the fox menace.

The Premier: It is a pity they cannot be cleaned up.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have cleaned up practically all the wild turkeys in country districts. As a matter of fact, the most important birds in this State, birds that live on the ground and feed on insects, are being depleted by the foxes. They eat not only the birds, but the eggs as well, and they are creating a great deal of trouble. So I suggest that the contributions to the fund should not be restricted to pastoralists and agriculturists, for we might well ask that all people paying land tax should contribute to the fund. The people on the land, the farmers and pastoralists, had nothing whatever to do with bringing in the fox and the eagle hawk and the dingo. Those people long ago were anxious to create a fund, and to that end they permitted themselves to be taxed. It was at their instigation that the vermin tax was first imposed. The fund created has served a useful purpose in regard to dingoes, but has not been very beneficial in the destruction of foxes. I would point out to the Minister administering the North-West Department, and also to the representative of the Chief Secretary in this House, that I cannot but think that we are feeding a lot of natives, giving them sustenance when they ought to be able to get a good deal of money from the destruction of dingoes and foxes. The natives seem to have a natural adaptability for the hunting and securing of wild animals and they ought to be able to get from these sources nearly enough to keep themselves going, especially since the Minister for Agriculture told us that 33,000 foxes were paid for last year. In the agricultural districts

the fox is usually the worst pest of all, and so I think we ought to assist the vermin fund to some substantial extent. I would ask the department in control of natives if it is not possible for the natives to provide some revenue for themselves in the way I have suggested. I am thinking more particularly of the natives at the Moore River Settlement. In the old days the natives used to scatter about the country a great deal, but these times they do not seem to move far from their local habitat. I hope the Minister will give consideration to the suggestion that some portion of the land tax should be made available to the Minister for Agriculture for the purpose of keeping down various pests. It is better to tackle this problem now than to leave it till later. It is only a very few years since the first fox was discovered in this State, yet the Minister for Agriculture has told us that 33,000 foxes have been paid for in one year. One thing in the Bill to which I would draw the attention of the Treasurer is contained in Clauses 5 and 6. It is provided that there shall be a rebate of income tax where part of the income is received from dividend duties. The amounts have been altered from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 5¼d. I have tried to find out what was the idea of the alteration. Apparently it has been a mistake that has occurred and persisted over quite a number of years. In looking back over the records I find that in 1920 the dividend duty, which was then 1s. 3d., was increased by 15 per cent., which brought it up to 1s. 5¼d. in the pound. Since then, instead of a rebate of 1s. 5¼d. in the pound being allowed on income derived from dividend duties, it has remained at 1s. 3d. It was very indefinite. As the Bill states, the taxpayer is entitled to a rebate of the amount actually paid in dividend duties. I hope I have made the right point, but the Premier will be able to inform me if I am wrong. This has occurred each year since 1920. From the 1st July, 1919, the 15 per cent. increase took place, and no rebate has really been allowed by law, except in the terms of the clause referred to. In consequence of reduced revenue through the reduction of the Commonwealth grant, the Premier will have his work cut out to make ends meet. If he controls the finances properly, however, I consider that he will have sufficient money because he is collecting increased revenue month by month. On the financial emer-

gency taxation collected to date he should receive £1,000,000 from that source this year, and almost all sources will produce an increase. Consequently the Premier will have sufficient revenue if he handles the finances carefully. I ask him to exercise control over his Ministers who are spending a lot of money. Expense is being incurred which is unnecessary. I have mentioned this before, and I do not propose to go into details at this stage, but I shall probably have something more to say on the Estimates with a view to bringing Ministers to a real sense of their responsibility. The Premier should say whether we are justified in entering a protest, and if we are, refuse to permit that unnecessary expenditure to continue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. J. C. Willecock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.52]: As to the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition that portion of the land tax should be allocated to swell the revenue obtained from the vermin tax, it is immaterial whether the money comes from land tax or income tax. It has to come out of Consolidated Revenue, and that leaves so much less to met other expenditure of the State.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: But the other comes from the land tax.

The PREMIER: Very little of the land taxation is derived from agricultural land, so we should be taxing the city and suburban landowners through the medium of the land tax to assist rural people with their vermin tax.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Those landowners should bear their share.

The PREMIER: I cannot see why city and suburban landowners, who are in a different category from rural landowners, should be specially selected to be taxed in order to boost the vermin tax. If the vermin tax, owing to the difficulties which people engaged in the agricultural and pastoral industries are suffering, is not high enough to meet the necessities of the situation, there is no need to say that the landowners of the city and suburbs should be the only ones to contribute. If contribution must be made, it should come from general revenue, and all should contribute. If it is possible to divert some portion of the revenue to assist the vermin fund, that point will have to be considered without earmarking any particular source of rev-

enue. If, as previous to 1930, a considerable proportion of the land tax were derived from agricultural land, there might be something in the suggestion, but the people who pay the vermin tax contribute a very small amount by way of land tax. The Leader of the Opposition is quite right in his assumption regarding dividend duties. As far back as 1920 the Dividend Duties Act was amended by increasing the rate from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 5½d. in the pound, an increase of 15 per cent. Apparently the Treasurer of the day was concerned only about getting the increase of revenue in that he amended the Dividend Duties Act only and did not follow it up in all its implications as regards exemption under the Land Tax and Income Tax Act.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Where was the Legislative Council at that time?

The PREMIER: I do not think the oversight made much difference. I understand that the principle that taxpayers in receipt of an income lower than the amount received in dividend duties should not be assessed has been observed.

Mr. Patrick: They do not pay twice.

The PREMIER: That is so. Evidently somebody overlooked the point, and from that time onward the annual Bill has been accepted as being similar to that of the previous year. The same wording has been adopted, but without disability to anybody. The matter came under notice more particularly when the question of adopting uniform land and income tax assessment legislation was considered at conferences of representatives of all the States. Unanimity has been reached on the principles of assessment, but when the question was under consideration, it was discovered that the Land Tax and Income Tax Act did not conform with the provisions of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act in regard to dividend duties. I repeat that nobody has suffered any disability. The error having been discovered, it is well to rectify it by enacting the proper provision.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2. Grant of Land Tax and Income Tax for the year ending 30th June, 1937:

Mr. SAMPSON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "business" in line 12 of paragraph (c) of Subclause 1, the following words be added:—"or for any business combining two or more of such purposes."

This Bill controls the Assessment Act, and the conditions expressed in it must conform to Section 9 of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act. The proposed amendment will make it clear that even if a producer is engaged in pig-raising and poultry farming, or pig-raising and grazing, or fruit-growing and pig-raising, or in any two or more industries of the kind, the exemption in respect to land tax will apply. The department may read into this Bill a provision whereby if a producer is engaged in the production of more than one of the commodities set out in the Bill, that person would not be qualified to receive an exemption under the Act. My desire is to bring the Bill into conformity with the Assessment Act.

The PREMIER: I am assured by the Parliamentary draftsman and the Commissioner of Taxation that this amendment is unnecessary. So far as the procedure is concerned, the Commissioner always deals with the matter in the way suggested by the hon. member. It is no use delaying the passage of the Bill for a day or two for the insertion of an unnecessary amendment. This is only an annual measure, and if at some later date some Commissioner of Taxation places the extravagant interpretation upon it, that the hon. member thinks he may, the Act can be amended.

Mr. WATTS: Whilst what the Premier says may be correct, and the Taxation Department might not take the extravagant views suggested by the member for Swan. I must point out that the department has in the past, and no doubt will do so in the future, take an extraordinary view of certain sections of the Act which the Commissioner is called upon to administer. As the amendment can do nothing worse than clear up the position, and make sure there can be no element of doubt and no possibility of an extravagant ruling being given by the Commissioner, I will support it. The hon. member wishes to provide that the tax shall not apply in the circumstances mentioned to a person who is engaged in only one of the industries referred to, and to make sure that if a person is engaged in two or more of such industries, the provision shall apply also to him. In the past we have seen extravagant rulings on certain matters, and from

time to time there has been criticism in the Press regarding them. The inclusion of the words contained in the amendment can do no harm, and should be embodied in the Bill.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am positive that the Premier is quite sincere in what he says, but we have to take the position as it stands. Already people engaged in pig and poultry farming have been deprived of the consideration which Parliament intended them to receive. Now there has been introduced into the phraseology of the complementary measure the word "business"; and I fear that unless this Bill is in consonance with the Assessment Act, there will be further difficulty. If the amendment is carried, there can be no possibility of misunderstanding on the part of the Taxation Department, who, it will be recalled, last year advised this Chamber incorrectly.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: I am not able to follow the reasoning of the member for Swan. The adoption of the amendment will rather injure than benefit the Bill. If a man happened to be a pastoralist in one part of the State and a pig raiser in another part, he would be exempt under either qualification, either as a pastoralist or as a pig raiser. The Bill is quite plain as regards any of the industries mentioned in it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I fear the member for Irwin-Moore has not read the Bill. A perusal of the proviso shows that there is reason for the amendment. The proviso speaks of land being used solely or principally for one of the businesses mentioned. It provides not for two of the businesses, but for only one. Thus the exemption would apply only where merely one of the businesses was involved. The assessment measure speaks of "one or more of those purposes."

The PREMIER: I do not want to labour the point. Probably most members will agree that the man who has two qualifications for exemption is in a better position than the man who has only one. Sixty or 70 per cent. of our farmers are now using portion of their areas for grazing sheep or cattle and another portion for wheat-growing. The Commissioner has never ruled that because a taxpayer uses his land in those two ways, he is not entitled to the exemption. This provision has appeared in the Act previously, and there has never been a refusal of exemption because of what I may term the hon. member's pedantic interpretation. There is no need whatever for

the amendment, and the passage of the Bill should not be delayed.

Mr. Sampson: In view of the Taxation Department's attitude, the amendment should not be termed pedantic. It is merely cautious.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Rate of income tax:

Mr. HUGHES: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 1, the figure "7" be struck out, with a view to the insertion of another figure.

The fact that the Bill comes down in its present form is a matter of great importance to a large section of the community I happen to represent.

The PREMIER: Mr. Chairman, I would like the hon. member to indicate what he wishes to insert in place of the figure he proposes to strike out, because if he proposes to insert a larger figure he will be distinctly and entirely out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the hon. member indicate what figure he proposes to substitute?

Mr. HUGHES: Not unless I am compelled under the Standing Orders to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing to compel the hon. member to state his reason now.

The Premier: To state the alternative?

The CHAIRMAN: At present there is nothing to prevent the hon. member from moving to strike out the figure "7," but there may be something to prevent him from moving the insertion of another figure later.

Mr. HUGHES: This clause is the basis on which the taxation needed to carry on the country is levied. The incidence of taxation recently appears to be moving from what are recognised as sound principles. Possibly it is not worth while to continue the progressive rate. Possibly, in justice, the rate ought to be increased. The annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation for the year ended the 30th June, 1936, includes the customary analysis of income tax assessments in which there appear the usual groupings according to total income. Taking the highest group for 1933-34, the table shows that the number of people whose income was £5,001 and over was only 23 and the amount paid in taxation was £20,004, with an average payment per

person taxed of £869. For the purpose of comparison, the average tax is of no value for obvious reasons. During 1934-35 those in receipt of the highest income mentioned in the table increased from 23 to 52 and the amount of taxation paid by them aggregated £51,646. For 1935-36 the figures are incomplete, but the number in receipt of the highest salary was 37. If we take the lowest salary group for 1933-34—that refers to persons in receipt of from £101 to £200—the number taxed totalled 15,461, whereas for 1935-36 the number already taxed totalled 10,554 and a reasonable estimate is that only two-thirds of the taxpayers have been taxed, the figures being incomplete. On that basis the number for 1936-37 will show at least an increase of 50 per cent. If my memory serves me aright, in pre-depression days those in receipt of £5,000 and over numbered from 50 to 65. The Commissioner's analysis shows that in 1933-34 the number of persons in the second highest salary grouping, namely from £1,501 to £5,000, numbered 382, whereas in 1934-35 the number increased to 599. The incomplete figures for 1935-36 show that in that salary group 417 persons were taxed, and on that basis, allowing that two-thirds of the assessments were issued, the final figures for the year will exceed the total for 1934-35. In the group from £1,001 to £1,500, in 1933-34, 578 persons were taxed, in 1934-35 693, and the incomplete figures for 1935-36 show that 542 persons in that group were taxed. The whole story disclosed in these figures is that the people in receipt of the higher salaries have materially increased their net taxable incomes during the last two years. The income tax is the most fair and equitable form of taxation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I thought the land tax was the most equitable.

Mr. HUGHES: If I had my choice between the two, I would select the income tax as the fairer.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It should be perfectly obvious that the land tax is the fairer.

Mr. HUGHES: I can remember, when the member for Guildford-Midland was first elevated to Ministerial rank, that one of the planks of Labour's platform was the non-alienation of Crown lands.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But land that is alienated must be taxed.

Mr. HUGHES: Unfortunately most of the members of Cabinet went in for farm-

ing, and in due course the non-alienation plank fell off Labour's platform.

Mr. Marshall: It is still on the platform.

Mr. HUGHES: Not much is heard about it in these days.

Mr. Marshall: There is quite a lot that you do not hear of.

Mr. HUGHES: I agree with the member for Guildford-Midland regarding the fairness and efficiency of taxation on land values, but I think the income tax is recognised, even by those who do not agree with the land tax, as a sound and equitable form of taxation, because, before arriving at the assessable income, deductions are allowed with the object of placing all taxpayers on a basis of equality. If we are to adhere to sound methods of taxation, we should provide for a review of the rates of taxation. Although there has been an increase in the number of people enjoying the higher rates of income during the past few years, the total amount of income tax collected does not show anything like a commensurate increase. In fact, only a slight progressive increase is disclosed in the returns. Unfortunately, we have established a new incidence of taxation, which was originally instituted to meet unemployment and financial depression demands. That form of taxation has pressed exceedingly heavily on the people in receipt of the lowest incomes. It has had that effect because no deductions are allowed as with the income tax. The returns show that for 1933-34 £411,000 was collected under that heading, and during 1934-35 the tax amounted to £684,000, which showed more than 50 per cent. increase. For 1935-36 the tax amounted to £827,000 or more than 100 per cent. increase compared with the receipts for 1933-34.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the clause. He is dealing with the financial emergency tax, whereas the Bill deals with the land tax and income tax.

Mr. HUGHES: I desire to show that the incidence of taxation is being shifted. The people I represent are more concerned with the tax levied on those in receipt of the lower salaries than with that imposed upon people enjoying a salary of £5,000 or over. As a matter of fact, the figures disclose that more revenue was derived from this particular source than was originally anticipated. I suggest that that extra tax-

tion is paid by those in receipt of the lower incomes and is largely because of the increase in the basic wage. The figures show that for the last three months a largely increased return has been taken from the people on the lowest rung of the salary ladder.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You cannot argue that way.

Mr. HUGHES: The bringing in of all the people in receipt of £3 10s. and who got an increase of 1s. 6d. has accounted for the bulk of the increase in the financial emergency tax. We are slipping away from the incidence of income taxation and shifting it from those in a better position to pay, on to those who are not. We are told we have lost £300,000 from the Commonwealth grant, and if that amount is now to be taken from loan funds it will mean that there will be less work available for those on relief and on sustenance to the extent of that £300,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is getting away from the amendment, and in addition is making a second reading speech.

Mr. HUGHES: These questions are so interlocked that it is difficult to refrain from referring to them. We should take the opportunity now of removing the rate that appears in the Bill so that at a later stage the Committee might consider whether the figure should be increased or decreased. It may not be necessary to delete the figure, in view of the enormous amount that is coming from the emergency tax, and on the other hand the Committee might increase the figure. However, the Standing Orders preclude my discussing the figure that I propose to substitute.

The Premier: No, they do not. You must give some indication of what you want.

Mr. HUGHES: Will the Premier quote the Standing Order that will allow me to indicate what I desire to put in the place of the figure I suggest should be struck out?

The Premier: You can indicate what you want to substitute.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is in order first in moving to strike out the figure "7."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You can indicate what figure you propose to put in.

Mr. HUGHES: What I want to do is to remove the figure "7" so that we can decide

whether the time has arrived for putting another figure in its place. I submit the amendment

The PREMIER: I have never heard such an extraordinary attitude taken up with regard to amending a Bill. The hon. member comes along with the idea of amending the clause, and he says, "I have no possible idea of what I want; I will get the information from someone if he will be good enough to give it to me." Then the hon. member who must have something to say, tries to drag in matter that is entirely extraneous to the Bill in the hope of cajoling someone to get up and make a speech, and thus give him an opportunity of saying something more. It is entirely unusual for anyone to submit an amendment to delete a figure without indicating what it is proposed to substitute for that figure. If the hon. member had told the Committee what he intended to insert in the place of the figure he desired to delete, the Committee might have agreed to strike out that figure; but he did not. He is merely going up a blind alley, and people who go up blind alleys sometimes come down in an ambulance. I have no intention of following him up that blind alley. The hon. member also tried to make the Chairman of Committees say that he could not discuss the figure that he proposed should take the place of that which he wished struck out. The Chairman of Committees ruled that the hon. member could move to strike out the figure and that he need not give any reason. I think the hon. member was afraid to indicate the figure that he intended to substitute, because if he did so, he might have been ruled out of order. It is not my intention to give any member a blank cheque without knowing what the intentions of that member are. We are not justified in removing the figure "7" from the Tax Bill, or any figure from any other Bill, without having some indication of what it is proposed to put in its place.

Mr. HUGHES: Seeing that the Premier will give consideration to the matter if I suggest a figure that should take the place of "7," I will tell him that if "7" is struck out. I propose to substitute "8."

The Premier: Under the Standing Orders, you would not be permitted to do so.

Mr. HUGHES: Now the Premier wants to get out of it by raising the Standing Orders.

The Minister for Employment: They raise themselves.

Mr. HUGHES: If the Premier wants to give consideration to my suggestion, there is nothing to prevent him doing so. He is in the position to deal with the matter, and if necessary he can bring down another message from the Governor; that is, of course, if he wants to give serious consideration to increasing the rate. He could withdraw the present Bill and bring down another with the figure "8" instead of the figure "7."

The Premier: I will give to the hon. member's suggestion the same consideration that I would give to anything coming from him, and that would be unfavourable.

Mr. HUGHES: I know, and it does not trouble me in the slightest. I did not bother to take exception to his remark to the effect that he would not go up a blind alley except with somebody of good character. I did not object to that because he has made similar remarks in this House about me, none of which cuts any ice. My character is as good as his, and will stand a test anywhere. Of course it is a strange attitude for the Premier to take when he declares that any suggestion put up by me will be received unfavourably.

The Premier: In the light of my experience of what you have said?

Mr. HUGHES: In the light of experience of what I said? If the Premier made outside this House the statements that he made inside—

Mr. Marshall: Is the hon. member in order in carrying on this personal discussion with the Premier?

The CHAIRMAN: It is competent for the hon. member to reply to the interjections made by the Premier. I ask the member for East Perth to get back to the amendment.

Mr. HUGHES: I am sorry that this diversion has taken place. I will not view the suggestion of the Premier unfavourably. I will adopt his suggestion and name a figure so that he can give consideration to it as he said.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 and 5—agreed to.

Preamble, Short title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Minister for Employment, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clauses 5, 8 and 10.

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair: the Minister for Employment in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Trade Descriptions Compulsory in certain cases (as amended):

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move—

That Clause 5 be struck out with a view to a new clause standing on the Notice Paper in the name of Mr. McDonald being inserted.

That amendment stands on the Notice Paper in the name of Mr. McDonald. I understand that the member for West Perth discussed this clause with the Minister in charge of the Bill, as a result of which there was a mutual agreement that the member for West Perth should move to strike out the clause and insert the provisions appearing on the Notice Paper. I do so in his absence.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that Subclause (1) be struck out.

Hon. N. Keenan: The whole of the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: You cannot do that. On the Notice Paper it says Subclause (1).

Hon. N. Keenan: There is no Subclause (1).

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that the clause stand as previously amended.

Question put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The clause and its amendments having been struck out, I will ask the Committee to accept the new clause appearing on the Notice Paper in the name of Mr. McDonald. I move—

New clause:

That the following new clause, to stand as Clause 5, be inserted in lieu of the clause struck out:—

(1) No person shall sell—

- (a) any goods of the nature or description set out in the Schedule to this Act; or
- (b) any goods which are declared by proclamation to be goods for the purpose of this Act,

unless there is conspicuously applied thereto in such manner as may be prescribed the full name and the complete address of the manufacturer and a trade description of the goods containing such details as may be prescribed.

Provided that—

- (i) in respect of any of the kinds or descriptions of goods specified in the pre-

ceding paragraphs (a) and (b) the Governor may from time to time by proclamation suspend the operation of the Schedule or of any proclamation declaring any goods to be goods for the purpose of this Act either generally or in relation to any particular kind or description of goods named therein;

- (ii) in respect of any goods or classes of goods to which this Act applies it shall not be necessary to state the name and address of the manufacturer where it is impracticable or inconvenient to do so and the regulations made under this Act make provision to that effect;
- (iii) before making any proclamation for the purpose of paragraph (b) of this subsection the Governor shall give at least one calendar month's notice in the prescribed manner for the purpose of enabling manufacturers, traders, and members of the public an opportunity to be heard either in opposition to or in support of the proposed proclamation and may delegate to some person authority to inquire into the matter and make a report to him for that purpose;
- (iv) this section shall not impose on any person a duty to disclose a trade secret of manufacture or preparation except in cases where in the opinion of the Commissioner of Public Health such disclosure is necessary for the protection of the health or well-being of the public and the said Commissioner issues a certificate in writing to that effect;
- (v) the Governor may revoke, vary, or amend from time to time any proclamation made for the purpose of this section.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Surely the Minister is going to indicate the effect of the proposed alteration. I do not doubt the statement made by the member for Nedlands, but he is only a secondhand authority with regard to it. He was not present during the negotiations, if they took place. He has simply related to this House what the member for West Perth conveyed to him. We do not know whether what the member has stated is absolutely correct or not. I suggest that the Minister explain what took place.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: It is true, as stated, that the subject matter of this clause was considered by the member for West Perth who desired that the wording should be altered to make it less strict in its operation. I imagined when I did not rise to deny the statements and assurances given by the member for Nedlands, that it would be taken for granted that those statements and assurances were true.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is not conveying anything to "Hansard" for record purposes.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I thought the member for Guildford-Midland was concerned as to whether or not the assurances and statements given by the member for Nedlands could be accepted.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I want to know why the alteration has been made.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Those traders likely to be affected by the clause as it previously stood put forward certain arguments to show that the clause as previously worded would create a number of difficulties in the application of the necessary particulars to the goods that would have to be dealt with, and asked for some easement of the provisions, not for the purpose of enabling them to avoid the operations of the Act, but to make it easier for them to carry out the provisions. They desire that this provision, which is indeed the main provision in the Bill, shall be made as reasonable as possible. An altered wording has been arranged, and is acceptable to me and, I understand, to the traders, because it makes the observance of the obligation put upon them much easier. Those are the reasons which have led to the amendment moved by the member for Nedlands on behalf of the member for West Perth. I can assure members on both sides of the House that the effectiveness of the provision is in no way affected by the new wording.

New clause put and passed.

Clause 8—False advertisements:

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: I move an amendment—

That a further paragraph be added at the end of Subclause 2 as follows:—"or (c) broadcasted by radio."

This point was discussed on the second reading and it was suggested that an amendment should be provided to bring under the control of the measure the broadcasting of advertisements by radio. This amendment has been brought down to meet the position.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SAMPSON: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 4:—"Provided that such withdrawal shall not include catalogues, books, or publications in which such advertisements are purely incidental and which are not newspapers or periodicals

within the meaning of the Act, and which have been amended, with the approval of an inspector, by the insertion of a statement containing such additions and/or alterations as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with this Act."

Actually, it would be, not the printer, but the merchant who had issued the catalogue who would be concerned. Catalogues frequently are very costly, comprising as they do a number of pages and sometimes being printed in three colours. If no protection were provided, it would mean a great expense, inasmuch as under Subclause 4 they are required to be immediately withdrawn. My amendment would give full protection from the point of view of both the legislation and the merchant.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: Although somewhat in sympathy with the principle contained in the amendment, I am afraid the wording of the amendment is not sufficiently satisfactory to enable me to accept it. I suggest that the amendment be withdrawn and the hon. member confer with the parliamentary draftsman, with a view to having it redrawn in more effective language. An effort could then be made to have the amendment inserted when the Bill is before another place.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is difficult to refuse a request couched in such polite terms, though I can assure the Minister that a good deal of consideration was given to the drafting of this amendment. To meet the Minister's wishes, I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10—Powers of inspectors:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of paragraph (c) of Subclause 1 the words "or to have been within the preceding six months" be struck out.

The paragraph provides that an inspector may obtain information as to any matters arising out of this measure, matters obviously with a view to prosecution, from persons who are employed by the business man concerned or have been so employed by that business man within the preceding six months. It seems to me unwise to allow an ex-employee to be utilised as a pimp—I think that is the word—against his late employer. Not infrequently the departure of an employee from the service of his employer does not leave the employer and the

employee on the best of terms. It would be improper, therefore, to give opportunity for the inspector to seek information from the ex-employee. It is reasonable enough to allow the inspector to visit the premises to see what is going on there. The retention of the words I propose to strike out may lead to unfair treatment of an employer through no fault of his own, but only through some past trouble with an employee.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: The deletion of the words would seriously weaken the possibility of sheeting home offences. Evidence might be required of a person who at the time of the prosecution was not an employee of the firm concerned. It would not always happen that the employee had been dismissed; conceivably he might have left of his own accord for good and sufficient reasons. If there was a danger of a dismissed employee giving false evidence, there would also be the possibility of a firm who had deliberately committed offences dismissing an employee through fear that he might give information. The words should be retained in order that evidence which is available might be used in a prosecution. Experience of similar legislation in other States has demonstrated the difficulty of proving offences, although it has been known that offences have been committed. We should not weaken the avenues by which offences might be proved.

MR. WATTS: If we retain the words we shall be losing sight of an important element of British justice. It would be highly undesirable to allow an ex-employee to be a pimp. If an inspector cannot get a conviction without resorting to methods of the kind, it will be better to forego the prosecution. It is reasonable to take all decent means to obtain evidence and secure a conviction, but it would be entirely wrong to adopt this course.

THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: If a person is available to answer questions, why prevent an inspector from obtaining the information? The question whether the information was truthful would be decided by a magistrate. If an employee had been dismissed in unfavourable circumstances, the magistrate would give full consideration to that fact. In order that the task of making inquiries and gathering the information necessary to warrant a prosecution should not be rendered more difficult, the amendment should be rejected.

HON. N. KEENAN: I cannot follow the reasoning of the member for Katanning that the provision would lead to any great injustice. It would enable an inspector to require a certain person to give evidence, but there is nothing to prevent an inspector getting the evidence when required at present. If an employee were dismissed, and, by reason of spite, were inclined to tell a false story concerning his former employer, he would breathe that story into the ear of the inspector who, in turn, would produce it as evidence. If a man were not inspired by spite, he would probably not even appear before the inspector. It seems certain to me that if a man is spiteful, he will not require any compulsion to cause him to come forward.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: This is an extraordinary paragraph to embody in any Bill. Surely there is already sufficient power to compel witnesses to attend the court and give evidence in the usual way without having this very unusual procedure embodied in the measure. There can be no need for all this machinery. The ordinary court procedure should be quite sufficient to meet all the circumstances. The principle contained in this paragraph is wrong, and we should not put this class of thing into our legislation. If we do, it may mean setting up one section of the community against another section. We should in every way discourage anything like antagonism between one section of the community and another. At this rate we might even have legislation compelling employers to give evidence against their employees. The Minister has all the power he needs in the ordinary court procedure.

The Minister for Employment: This has nothing to do with court procedure.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: It enables an inspector to go to an employee and say, "You have been in this man's employment for so long. Do you remember such and such a thing happening?" As a rule, people do not remember what has happened on a particular day, if that day is some little time in the past, and they require to be prompted before they can remember. On the statement that an employee may make to an inspector, in answer to the questions the latter may put, the inspector may lay a charge against the employer, and though the charge may be disproved, his business may be seriously affected. This principle is something entirely

new. I know of no other legislation containing such a provision.

Hon. N. Keenan: You object to the whole paragraph?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. It contains a principle which ought not to be found in our legislation. It is exceedingly difficult for anyone to remember what took place on a certain day six months before.

The Minister for Employment: If a man does not remember what took place, he will say so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But an inspector might prompt the employee and suggest a reply to his mind, and upon that reply may take action against the employer.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the member for Katanning will withdraw the amendment. If he does, I shall see what can be done in another direction.

Mr. WATTS: The arguments put up against my amendment have almost convinced me that the Bill would be better without it. I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (e) of Subclause 1 be struck out.

The principle embodied in the paragraph has not previously appeared in any of our legislation, I believe. We seem to be going back to the dark ages in this proposal. The Minister already has all necessary powers.

The MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT: This amendment is far more dangerous and objectionable than the previous one. The greatest difficulty connected with the administration of such legislation is the gathering of the necessary evidence, firstly to justify prosecution, and secondly to succeed with it. It is unlikely that any employee of a firm under suspicion would voluntarily give information about a suspected offence. Therefore some power is needed to enable inspectors to require persons to give information. The object of the paragraph is not to increase the number of prosecutions but to avoid the launching of prosecutions without reasonable certainty of their being justified and successful. The deletion of the paragraph would mean greatly increasing the number of prosecutions launched, because inspectors would be compelled to launch

them and to bring persons believed to be in possession of information before the court by subpoena.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	21

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Mr. Boyle
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Hill
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Latham
Mr. North

Mr. Patrick
Mr. Sampson
Mr. Seward
Mr. Warner
Mr. Watts
Mr. Welsh
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cross
Mr. Doust
Mr. Fox
Mr. Hawke
Mr. Hegney
Miss Holman
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Lambert
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington

Mr. Munroe
Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Rabbael
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Styants
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Troy
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Mann
Mr. Stubbs

NOES.
Mr. Collier
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Needham

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported with further amendments.

BILL—JUDGES' RETIREMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 20th October.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [7.40]: This is a measure that fixes the maximum age at which any qualified person may be appointed to the Supreme Court bench and the maximum age at which such person must leave the bench. It differs in that respect from the Bill that was introduced during the previous Parliament, which simply fixed the retirement age, but not the maximum age at which any person could be appointed to the bench. When that Bill was discussed during the last Parliament, I objected to it on two grounds. The first was, speaking generally, that it was a wrong principle to apply, in my opinion, to have a fixed age at which to compel certain officers to retire. It is quite a different thing to say that in

the Civil Service there must be a retiring age, because in that service there is a continual flow, an upward march from the very lowest ranks to the top. If at any point that flow is checked, it interferes with the due course of promotion. There is no such application in connection with appointments to the Supreme Court bench. There are no persons waiting, or entitled, to be placed on the bench on the retirement of any present occupant of that bench. Again, I raised objection to a legislative provision that would compel certain action to be taken, even when it was entirely against the public interests, as, for instance, when an occupant of the bench who was in full possession of his physical strength and mental capacity, was compelled to retire. Indeed, for some strange reason, it would appear that in the case of those who are appointed to the bench not only locally but also in all parts of the British Empire, we find the most distinguished judges, those most learned in law and most capable in the administration of it, who have the greatest grip upon that administration and have evidenced the greatest study of human nature, are those who have been on the bench for a long period of time. Particularly is that to be found at Home, where the most distinguished jurists are almost invariably the oldest members of the judiciary. The Minister, when moving the second reading of the Bill, referred to a matter I mentioned during the course of the debate on the Bill introduced in the last Parliament, in connection with the late Mr. Justice Avory. I think he misunderstood what I said on that occasion. Having refreshed my memory by reading "Hansard," I find that what I stated was that the present Lord Chief Justice of England, when pronouncing a panegyric on the occasion of the funeral of Mr. Justice Avory, pointed out that an attempt had been made by some to compel judges to retire at 70 years of age, which was similar in effect to the provision embodied in the Bill then under discussion. The Lord Chief Justice remarked that if that had been law, the country would have been deprived for 14 years of the services of Mr. Justice Avory, services of such a distinguished character that they lasted to the day of his death. At the age of 84, Mr. Justice Avory conducted the trial of one of the most difficult cases that had been heard for a great many years in England, and conducted it successfully.

I refer to the celebrated libel action brought by Princess Yousopoff against the American film company of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In that case there were, of course, very large damages claimed because it was alleged that the character of the princess had been destroyed by the film, which purported to tell the story of the life of Rasputin. Questions of law were first raised in court as to what is the nature of an action brought in respect of a talkie. Was it slander or was it libel? That made a very considerable difference in regard to proof because the law that applies to slander and that which applies to libel are very distinct. This man of 84 years of age delivered a most learned and unchallenged judgment on the points raised before him, and there has never been an attempt to question or qualify that judgment since he pronounced it. On that occasion I quoted from a newspaper that had been given to me by His Honour the Chief Justice of Western Australia containing a reference to that speech, and also to the Chief Justice of England. In that extract the Lord Chief Justice pointed out not only was the loss the country would suffer from the compulsory retirement of a judge on attaining 70 years of age illustrated in the case of Mr. Justice Avory, but, in his opinion, it was just as absurd to compare a rule applicable to the Public Service with a rule that should be made applicable to the Supreme Court bench, as to talk about a "4 o'clock tea" as being the same as "4 lbs. of tea," because there was the "four" mentioned in each case. I find myself in this position, not only as regards the bench but all important offices that the State is called upon to fill, that I would hesitate to apply a compulsory retiring age, because we are aware that not only on the bench but in other important offices there are men in complete possession of their full physical strength and mental faculty, who would be driven out of the service of the State by the application of such an arbitrary rule. It particularly applies to the bench, and I hope a Bill of this character will not become law because it is not a matter of scandal, at any rate in Australia—I have not heard of it being a scandal in the Old Land—that judges cling to their offices when they are physically or mentally unfitted for the discharge of their duties. We have not had that experience in this State, and we have nothing to fear

from the absence of a provision regarding a compulsory retiring age.

The Premier: They have in another State.

Hon. N. KEENAN: There is one single instance I know of in the whole of Australia, and we are asked to legislate because of that single instance. On the other hand, we may lose the services of a very valuable judge in seeking to avoid a repetition of the one single instance that has happened in the whole of Australia. I hope the Bill will not be pressed by the Minister, but if it is pressed, I trust it will not be acceptable to the House.

On motion by Mr. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1936-37.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from 20th October. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair:

Vote—Mines, £150,528 (partly considered):

Mr. STYANTS: There is one matter under the administration of the Minister for Mines with which I wish to deal and that is the School of Mines. I notice that in the Estimates there is a proposed expenditure of £1,222 in excess of the expenditure for 1935-36. I assume that portion of that will be utilised to restore the salaries of the teaching staff which were reduced under the financial emergency legislation, but I am hopeful that there will be additions to the teaching staff. The number of students in the school in 1929 was 128. As a result of the mining revival, the number has risen until this year, including the correspondence students, there are well over 700. I want to quote from the Statistical Register for 1934 and previous years. Part X. gives the amount of money expended for the College of Agriculture, the School of Mines and the University of Western Australia. In 1925-26 £3,377 was spent on the College of Agriculture and in 1934-35 £8,066 was spent. On the School of Mines for 1925-26, when the mining industry could not be said to have been entirely on the up-grade, £5,689 was expended and in 1934-35 after the revival had taken place, only £3,798 was expended. The subsidies and grants to the University rose from £20,000 in 1925-26 to £25,674 in 1934-35. We do

not have any objection to the grants to the College of Agriculture and the University having been raised, but in view of the enormous increase in the number of students attending the School of Mines, we feel that some additional expenditure is justified in providing extra teachers and further facilities for the education of those students. In 1931 the staff was equal to five full-time lecturers, consisting of four lecturers and four part-time lecturers or demonstrators. In 1935 there were equal to nearly eight full-time lecturers and demonstrators. In a report submitted by the Minister in another place it was set out that there were 21 teachers at the School of Mines. This is somewhat misleading. While there are certainly 21 teaching from time to time, the majority put in only a very small number of hours per week. It may be well to quote the difference in the receipts from students' fees from 1925 to 1934. The figures for the respective years were as follows:—1925, £164; 1930, £283; 1931, £406; 1932, £455; 1933, £539; 1934, £709. It is reasonable to assume that for 1935 and 1936 there will be a corresponding increase in the amount received in fees. It is essential that facilities for successful study should be provided. Those facilities are totally inadequate at the present time. The school is grossly overcrowded. I was taken down there by the Students' Association to see the classes at work, and I am satisfied there is not sufficient accommodation. In one room—I think it was the internal combustion class—there was seating accommodation for 40. There are over 130 students in that particular class. The unsatisfactory conditions both for the instructor and the students can be imagined. The instructor is not able to keep the attention and interest of his students and the students are not able properly to see the demonstration given by the instructor. As far as the engine room is concerned, the Minister has been sympathetic and. I understand, has given instructions for the room to be enlarged. It is certainly needed.

The Minister for Mines: For a new one to be built altogether.

Mr. STYANTS: I am satisfied that the machine shop would never pass the regulations of the Factories and Shops Act. I was very cautious in going through it to see that some of the overhead wheels did not fall on me or that I was not caught in the indiscriminate belting running from different

pulley wheels throughout the length and breadth of the shop. There are not sufficient model instruments. Many of those at the school are antiquated and some are quite useless. One of the instructors told me he had about 24 students in the surveyors' class and he had two theodolites with which to give them instruction. He said it was an absolute impossibility to give them correct instruction. There is also a lack of seating accommodation in the shape of forms and chairs. As I said, the Minister some months ago paid a visit to the school, and he was so impressed with the necessity for extra teachers and accommodation that he did provide a lecturer to take a class of study in mining which had been entirely abandoned because they had not sufficient accommodation nor a tutor for it. The Minister overcame that by providing both. He also appointed two or three extra part-time demonstrators. That to some extent overcame the difficulty, but it is not sufficient to appoint two or three part-time demonstrators with a view to coping with the largely increased number of students. I am not going to pass an opinion of my own as to the control of the school, but the students are certainly not satisfied with the present control. The school is under the supervision of the Superintendent of Technical Education, whereas the students claim it should be under a director who should be stationed in Kalgoorlie. At the present time, every request for equipment or redress of any kind has to go to the Technical School Department, and then back to the Mines Department. The original function of the school was to provide for prospectors by giving free assays and in the determination of mineral assays. That job was done very well, but now the school's activities have so extended that it is actually a bureau of mines. And, as the School of Mines has always been recognised as the mining school of Western Australia, it is claimed that the work of the Technical School on the mining side should be placed under the control of the principal of the School of Mines, who should be resident in Kalgoorlie. The students contend that the scope of the tuition given in the School of Mines is so much in excess of that of the mining section of the Technical School that it becomes the tail wagging the dog instead of the dog wagging the tail, in that the mining section of the Technical School should be under the direction of

the Mines Department, not under the direction of the Superintendent of Technical Education. Every member must realise that it is essential that adequate facilities and accommodation should be provided for giving the necessary tuition to those prepared to pay fees and study to acquire the knowledge successfully to carry out mining operations. Skilled men must be made available in the future, and it is to the School of Mines we have to look to provide those skilled men. There is a scarcity of skilled men for mining operations almost throughout the length and breadth of the State. The principal of the School of Mines informed me that there are vacancies, if they but had the skilled men to supply, in almost all departments which are taught by the inspectors at the School of Mines. I am merely making a rough estimate from what I saw, but I should say that if the Minister could provide another £1,000 per year, probably it would suffice for all that is required for equipment to put the institution on a reasonable basis. I know the Minister really has sympathy and that he particularly admires the work that has been done by this school in educating the young men in the mining industry. I hope he will be able to provide this money and see to it that those young men are given reasonable facilities for pursuing their studies.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.5]: I very much regret that I was not present to hear the introductory remarks of the Minister on this Vote, for mining is not merely an industry to which this State at present is looking to pull it through its troubles, but it is one in which I personally take a great deal of interest. So had I known that the Minister was about to introduce his Estimates at the last sitting, I should certainly have made it my duty to be present. But in the absence of knowledge of what the Minister said, I may possibly discuss some matters that the Minister has already dealt with efficiently. The mining industry to-day is a prosperous industry, and all the more prosperous by comparison with other industries that are suffering through natural causes a disaster, as, for instance, our wheatgrowing industry and our pastoral industry. Even apart from a comparison, the mining industry is undoubtedly in a flourishing condition. But we have to bear in mind that we have reached a stage where there may be not many more discoveries to be made. To-

day new mines are not being found or, if they are, they are not being successfully financed, because of a change in public favour. Even if to-morrow I were to become possessed of a fortune in the shape of a really sound proposition in mining, I do not believe I should be able to obtain, by appeal to public investors, sufficient support to develop it. That is an important consideration, because a few years ago the wild-est of wild propositions easily found public support, with, of course, an inevitable swing of the pendulum owing to the disappointment and, in many cases, the disgust that investors experienced. Now, if one possessed a sound mining proposition he would find the greatest difficulty in getting the support of the public who, after all, are the only real judges. For any of these big mining houses would never touch anything if they were not certain the public would come in. It is only because they are going to pass it on with a profit to themselves that they are prepared to venture into the industry. The Big Bell is undoubtedly a big proposition which will be handled by large shareholders, and no doubt if they realise their expectations there will be many prepared to come in and relieve them of their financial engagements. But speaking generally it can be said that almost all those who represent big mining houses intend to hand on their proposition when they have carried out some exploratory work. And of course if the public are adverse to taking risks such as are so frequently taken in mining propositions, then these big mining houses are also adverse to carrying out preliminary work. So it is that to-day we have a slack period in the additions to the volume of the industry. The mines existing to-day, which obtained capital when capital was easily obtainable, are undoubtedly progressing satisfactorily, so far as my knowledge goes. That is one reason why I regret not having been present when the Minister introduced his Estimates on Tuesday night, because no doubt he gave figures to show the extent of that development.

The Minister for Mines: This year we shall nearly reach in value the maximum period of production.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Although that is a matter upon which we can legitimately congratulate ourselves, we have also to recognise that, at the present moment, there is no considerable addition to the volume of

the industry. To my knowledge there has not been a flotation of any mine for a great number of months. We killed the goose that laid the golden eggs by not having provisions in existence that would prevent the exploitation of the public. We could easily have kept, or, at any rate, with some effort on our part we could have kept the public favour for this industry if we had only successfully prevented the public from being grossly exploited in many instances. As in the mining industry there occur periods of depression and periods of great prosperity, which alternate with the most extraordinary regularity, we may legitimately entertain the hope that there will again be a recrudescence of public interest in the mining industry. It seems to me that now, in this interval of time available to us, we should take those precautions which should have been taken before the last boom started on its career and came to its end. I have previously suggested in this Chamber that one ready means to stop the exploitation of the public and the enrichment of a number of undeserving individuals is to require, in all cases where a mining proposition is offered to the public in the form of a public company, the disclosure of every person who was at any time connected with the ownership of the property; also, that before the transfer of the property to the company is registered, the price of it, the money value for which the interests were acquired and the money value at which they were disposed of, should be disclosed in some regulated form to the Mines Department, not necessarily for publication, but for use if publication is required, as for instance, if any question arose as to the bona-fides of the transaction. The mere fact that that information was in the possession of the Mines Department would act as a great deterrent to this class of company promotion. All of us who have been on the goldfields know perfectly well that the first individual who pegs out the ground, which, in this case, I assume has little or no value, is only too glad to give an option to any man who comes along and undertakes to find a buyer for it. He places no limit on the profit that the individual may make on the transaction, provided he gets his figure. He gives an option over the property for a mere nominal figure, 5s., or half-a-crown, in some instances, and the individual, having obtained the option over the ground, proceeds to sell it at a very inflated figure. Often the individual who takes the

option passes it on again, and once more the figure is added to. If we could only trace back to its original source what is sometimes offered to the public, we would find that many persons had handled the proposition under different forms of option agreements for various periods, and that all of them had added to the purchase price a considerable sum destined ultimately to go entirely into their own pockets. There is never a genuine sale until the public come in. The transaction begins with the man who holds the ground granting an option, for which he gets probably five shillings.

Mr. Marshall: Not that in many instances.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The option is for a period of time, and the individual who acquires the option passes it on for a nominal consideration of £5,000 for himself.

The Minister for Mines: Sometimes for more than that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes. The second individual who gets the option passes it on again with a nominal consideration added. Nothing is paid until the unfortunate public are hooked in. They are the only people who put up the money, and then the cash begins to travel back along the whole rotten chain, being spread gradually and surely through all the option holders. No industry that can be conceived could stand those conditions successfully, except the mining industry, and the mining industry can stand them successfully for only a brief period of time. Therefore I suggest that in this interval at present prevailing, when business in the promotion of public companies to work mines is slack, we should seriously consider what means should be adopted to prevent a repetition of that which occurred when the last mining boom took place. There is another matter also which I would like to see cleared up before the new era, for which we all hope, of new public interest in mining begins. This is that the system of making large grants of mining areas to certain individuals or to certain individual companies should come to an end. Those reservations were made in two forms: One was for a small enclosed reservation, which meant that the person in whose favour it was made was the only person entitled to carry out mining operations on the area of the reservation, and the other was an open reservation on which anyone having a right to carry on mining operations as a holder of a miner's right could enter and explore for the purpose of finding, if fortunate

enough, a mining proposition. Whilst it might appear that only the closed reservation is objectionable, let me point out that that is not so. Even in the matter of an open reservation, the man who holds the reservation has a pre-emptive right to buy anything found on the area of the reservation, which kills entirely the market for any person who has found anything on the reservation.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate it did not pan out in that way.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have been told that it did. I am speaking entirely from communicated knowledge, because it is many years since I have been on the goldfields.

The Minister for Mines: One or two people who found something offered it and it was not taken and they are successfully working it to-day.

Hon. N. KEENAN: One can easily appreciate the enormous difficulty of selling something when somebody else already has a right to buy it. Immediately that bars out other buyers. If I want to buy a mine, what is the use of my going into an open reservation to deal with a man there if, before that, he has to deal with the person holding the reservation? I would not go at all. It is the same thing in other avenues of life. Where one person has the right to buy, other buyers are barred off by that right, and they are not there to compete. I am told that those who did get a mining lease or prospecting grant of any value in an open reservation were unable to find any buyer, except the holder of the reservation was himself prepared to buy. These reservations were granted to attract capital to Western Australia. I have always admitted that it is possible, and even more than possible, extremely probable, that they did so. They did so, however, at a price which I hope we will not readily pay again. I have a few observations to make on the reference by the member for Kalgoorlie to the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. I endorse heartily what has been said by him in his request for a greater measure of support for that school. Western Australia easily stands first amongst the States of the Commonwealth as a gold producer. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say we produce as much gold as the rest of the States put together in the heyday of their prosperity, and much more so than they produce to-day.

The Minister for Mines: In the aggregate Victoria produced a marvellous quantity of gold in the past.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Year by year our output exceeds the best years of production in the Eastern States. I am taking our years that have gone to the 30th June last and comparing them with the most successful years in Victoria. We have left behind us some years which enormously exceeded in value all the gold that we are now producing. At one period one single mine in Kalgoorlie was producing a ton of gold per month. We stand pre-eminently in the forefront as a State-conducting mining industry. Our School of Mines, therefore, should be equally pre-eminent in Australia. It should be the leading school in the Commonwealth so far as gold mining is concerned. It may indeed be the leading school of the kind as regards many other parts of the world. To me it has always been a matter of great regret that, for the purpose of conducting our industry, we have had to bring into it so many people from outside the State. It is unfortunate that the managers of our principal mines, and some who are under them, especially the skilled and highly trained men, have had to be brought to this State, and it is a pity they could not have been men that we had produced here. It is to be regretted when we have so many years behind us in this industry, and where we have had an opportunity of producing men of equal merit from amongst our own people, that this should have been so. It is true that, owing to the limited measure of finance that has been available, the school has been more or less starved. This has been no fault of the department but has arisen because the money has not been available. And yet the money might have been made available with great benefit to the State. The men who enjoy the reputation of those to whom I have recently referred are men who are drawing large salaries, and those who draw large salaries are always valuable to the country in which they live. I hope the Minister will be sympathetic towards the appeals made by the member for Kalgoorlie. As an old goldfields resident myself, and as one who has an intimate knowledge of the work of the School of Mines, I support him. I happen, in my professional life, to have been mixed up recently in a matter concerning metallurgical problems. I found that the only really safe

course to pursue was to invoke the aid of the staff of the School of Mines. This is a matter which has appealed to me ever since I have known the school. If that institution were only pushed to the extent it deserves to be pushed, it would not only reflect no small credit upon the State, but earn very considerable profit for it.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.25]: Whatever anxiety may be felt by the Minister controlling the Mines Estimates concerning the other department which he also controls, he will have very little to worry about in respect to the mining industry. The fact that the industry is experiencing a period of great prosperity relieves him of all those worries which his predecessors have experienced in fostering, fathering and maintaining it over the years that have passed. I do not think there is a single primary industry that absorbs the same amount of labour as does the mining industry. Tonight the member for East Perth quoted figures with regard to increased taxation. To a degree his figuring may have been correct, but I would remind him that much of the increase he spoke of has been shouldered by new men who have come into the mining industry. Fairly large numbers of men are daily finding very lucrative employment in mining. Notwithstanding all the scientific methods which have been introduced of late, it goes without saying that every gold mine and all gold mining companies are obliged to absorb a great amount of labour in the production of gold. I congratulate the Government on having fostered the prospecting scheme which they put into operation some years ago. It is here I find myself at variance with the Minister on one or two matters. I cannot agree with him that it is logical on the one hand to supply prospectors with sustenance and equipment to prospect for gold, and on the other hand to lock up a large area of country from their searches, and make the treatment of their ore in some respects almost prohibitive. These questions are some to which the Minister would do well to give immediate consideration. I agree with the previous speaker, and also with the member for Kalgoorlie, that there should be no shortage of funds to foster the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. It is doubtful to what extent experiments will go in the scientific assessing of the value of Western Australian ores. The

better educated our mining men become in the science of mining and treating ore, the greater the benefit to the State. The result will be to enable us to deal with grades of ore lower yet than those being treated now. However, what is the use of having technically educated men if prospecting is not to be encouraged? It is useless to grasp at the shadow and disregard the substance. It is foolish to cut down the tree if one wants shade in summertime. While we should make every effort to ensure that Western Australia produces scientifically-trained men in all phases of mining, we should not overlook the still more important aspect that prospecting must not in any way be neglected, but in every way encouraged. So far as I am aware, no Western Australian gold mining company has ever done any initial work in the providing of a gold mine to work. Bearing in mind the amount of capital put into the industry here, the actual pioneering always has been and always will be left to the old prospectors. We have even now to import large numbers of scientific mining men, remarkable though the statement may seem. Those of our youths who are now taking up mining as an occupation are learning much from those men. Western Australia's auriferous belts are practically unlimited. I have been on most of the goldfields in the world, and I doubt if on the planet there is another country with the same auriferous area and the same possibilities of gold production as Western Australia possesses. To develop our mining resources, we must give first consideration to the prospector. Is that being done? Next as to reservations. I hope that after the discussion of that subject here, the Minister will—

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should read the file dealing with the Yampi Sound reservations.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Kimberley knows much more than I do about that subject, and I shall leave it to him to elucidate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not know that the Minister for Mines had a soft spot about him until I read that file.

The Minister for Mines: I have a soft heart.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: I thought the Minister ere this would have asked those who have held reservations over long periods

more especially, to decide upon the areas they actually require within those reservations, and would have instructed them to take up those areas in 24-acre blocks, in the same way as companies and individuals are obliged to do under the Mining Act. That decision would have been fair and reasonable. However, the Minister seems obsessed with the idea that without reservations no capital would have come into this country for the development of gold mining. I must dissociate myself from the Minister's argument.

The Minister for Mines: That is not my argument. You said that. I never said it.

Mr. MARSHALL: But the Minister implied it.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. MARSHALL: The other evening the Minister put up the argument that the two companies which had been granted reservations were employing so many men and had invested so much capital. The hon. gentleman went on to say that had he not granted reservations, about 1,700 men now employed in the industry would not have been employed in it and so much money would not have been invested in it. I adhere to my opinion, however. I again tell the Minister and the Chamber that it would not have mattered a tinker's curse if never a reservation had been granted. That is where the trouble arose. Had there been no reservations, there would have been no stampede on the part of the persons referred to by the member for Nedlands—the carpet-baggers. There is no limit to the area any company can hold under the 24-acre lease tenure. A company can get 20 miles square so long as the area is taken up in 24-acre blocks. The companies are asked merely to be on all fours with the poor old prospector. If the companies have so much wealth, surely they can afford to pay as much for the country they hold as does the struggling prospector. There could be no truer example of pouring oil on the fatted pig than this proceeding: the fatted porker is indeed being greased. On the other hand, the unfortunate man who struggles through the country pioneering the industry has to pay £1 per acre for his land. A wealthy company can get large areas, called reservations, for a very low annual premium. In direct refutation of the Minister's argument in favour of re-

servations, I again quote the case of Wiluna. The Wiluna company came here when gold was at the standard price, less than half the price of to-day. The company put 1½ millions of money into the Wiluna proposition before they saw an ounce of gold. They never asked for a reservation, nor was there one in existence for them. Yet there was no difficulty in a vast amount of money being provided for that proposition. I tell the Minister that had a reservation been granted at Wiluna, he could then have advanced the same argument that he used a night or two ago. The company at Wiluna, he could have said, through being granted a reservation, had spent £1,250,000 before seeing the colour of gold, and were employing 1,500 men. He could have gone on to say that had he not granted that reservation, not one of those men would have been employed nor would any of that capital been brought into the country. His argument then would have been just as logical as was his contention that the Western Mining Corporation would not have put a penny into mining in this State or employed a single man had it not been for the reservation granted to them. No reservation was granted at Wiluna, and yet that capital was introduced into the State, and a great number of men are being employed. I reiterate emphatically my statement that had no reservations been granted, there would not have been the numerous requests for reservations that are on record. Nothing has acted more detrimentally against the interests of prospectors in outlying portions of the State than this practice adopted by the Minister. I will mention one instance in support of my statement. There are huge belts of auriferous country between Meekatharra and the North-West. Two of the finest prospectors in the State at present came to me and asked if I would guarantee that if they took three months' supplies and went out to the Naberu country, the Minister would not grant any reservation over that area while they were absent looking for gold-bearing channels. The point is that although before they had gone out those men had ascertained at the mining registrar's office that the country was open for selection, as soon as they left to explore the auriferous possibilities of the section they desired to examine, some one could have walked into the Minister's office in Perth and asked for a reservation, and the application would have been granted. Those prospectors were

intimidated because of the practice that has been followed by the Minister and, of course, neither I nor anyone else could give any guarantee as to what would happen while those prospectors were in the back country. While it is possible for people to get the Minister to approve of reservations over large areas, we cannot expect prospectors to rest content when they are pioneering the back country. I understand that the reservation granted to the east of the Big Bell mine has now been cut up into leases, and that is the proper course to adopt regarding other reservations now in existence. The Minister has always stressed the virtue he seems to attach to open reservations. I want to give the Committee some knowledge of what has been happening in recent years. I thought the Minister would gradually refuse to grant any more reservations, and would ask those who hold reservations now to select what they really require and allow the rest to be available for the attention of prospectors, thus getting rid of reservations altogether. Instead of that course being adopted, the Minister has granted further reservations. Early in the session I asked questions with a view to ascertaining the number of reservations in existence at the expiration of each of the financial years 1933-34, 1934-35 and 1935-36. The Minister replied that the numbers for the three respective financial years were 66, 83, and 72. A night or two ago the Minister told me that everyone of them is a closed reservation. The only class of reservation, according to his own argument, that has any virtue is the open reservation; yet all these reservations I have referred to are closed. In consequence, prospectors cannot operate in any of them. I would like to know what area these reservations actually comprise. From time to time, enormous concessions have been granted under that heading. I have explained the position in this Chamber so often that I am tired of doing so. I will mention one reservation between Nannine and Meekatharra that was 25 miles by 14 miles in extent. That area was greater than that of the pastoral lease through which it ran. That reservation was held for two years, and the point of a pick was never put into the ground. I would like to know what area the 72 reservations now in existence actually comprise. Later on I will have complaints to make about the charges imposed at the State batteries. Quite apart from the fact that

State batteries are public utilities and are provided for the purpose of developing the all-important goldmining industry, the Minister's arguments regarding costs will not hold water while there are 72 reservations covering an enormous area and held at peppercorn rentals. The Minister will never satisfy me that he can justify the charges that are levied at the State batteries in order to prevent a loss on operations while such huge areas are held by companies that, he says, are highly capitalised.

The Minister for Mines: Not all of them.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then the Minister did not grant the reservations in order to induce the introduction of capital!

The Minister for Mines: Yes.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then where is the capital? The Minister cannot have it both ways. If the reservations have been granted to induce the introduction of capital, I want evidence of that capital. I am going to tell the Minister I will never be satisfied until there is a reduction of the charges to prospectors in State batteries, and until every owner of these reservations is paying £1 per acre, the same as the prospector. If he does that he can get the money to reduce the cost.

The Minister for Mines: That will not go to the Mines Department, but to the Treasury.

Mr. MARSHALL: It does not matter to me where it goes to or where it comes from. It is very little use the Minister painting a glowing picture of the prosperity of the mining industry when his own actions or the actions of his own Treasurer are damning the prospects of further development and pioneering. I say that these two factors are most detrimental to prospecting, firstly the charges on State batteries, and secondly reservations.

The Minister for Mines: Tell me anywhere else where they get the treatment as cheaply as in Western Australia.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not arguing at the moment on the actual cost. Can the Minister name any State in the Commonwealth, or any country in the world, that carries wheat and super over their railway system for farmers at the same loss as does Western Australia? He cannot. Nor do we expect the farmer to pay any more. We look upon the railways as being a developmental public utility for the purpose of establishing men on farms. State batteries should be looked upon in the same way.

They have been so looked upon for years, but there has been a change, and now State batteries are to be a paying proposition. They are to stand on their own legs. There is to be discrimination between what we have been used to calling public utilities. I disagree entirely with the Minister when he says that because gold is £8 10s. an ounce prospectors should stand on their own feet financially.

The Minister for Mines: I never said that. Don't put words into my mouth.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, I will withdraw. The Minister says so much that I do not think I am wrong in accusing him of anything.

The Minister for Mines: Well I am not going to let you accuse me of saying things I never said.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know the Minister's predecessor very frequently made that remark after the price of gold had increased. I respected the late Mr. John Scaddan as being a fine administrator; but the price of gold only concerns the prospector who gets it in payable quantities. If the prospector, merely by going out and prospecting, could get payable ore, we would not have to be finding 15s. a week and equipment.

Mr. Patrick: The finding of it is the trouble.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is it—the number of years, the energy, and the sacrifice to be expended in finding it, and then probably never finding it. It is no good the Minister talking about 15 dwt. crushings, and 15 oz. crushings. It is on record that men have had 20 oz. crushings and lost on the transaction. I think we could go further and say that we have known men to get ore valued at 50 ozs. per ton, and they have still lost on the transaction because they never got enough of it, and it was too difficult to get. The value of gold implies nothing to prospectors except those who are getting it in payable quantities, and constantly getting it. When all prospectors are enjoying that standard we can talk about them standing on their own feet. This is the time we should be encouraging prospecting as vigorously as we can, even at the expense of the taxpayer. There is no commodity in this Commonwealth for which there is such a worldwide demand as there is for gold. There is a ready market for it in any big quantity, and at its present price, produced in a mass, it is wonderfully profitable. The indirect return to the Government through the

medium of employment on the mines and in other directions is enormous, and we should not do anything that will act detrimentally or discourage in the slightest degree those who go out prospecting. There is no section of the community that make greater sacrifices than these men. They give up all the enjoyments of life and live under the most difficult conditions, leading a very hard and disagreeable existence. They deserve all they get. What they should get from the Government is encouragement in every direction, and the taxpayers should be glad to see they get it. They are returning many hundreds of thousands of pounds to the Treasurer in the way of income tax and other taxes. I do not want to say any more about reservations; I am tired of doing so; but I hope the Minister will take warning and reduce them immediately. As their permit expires let him inform the holders that they have to take out what land they want and forfeit the rest. I will challenge the Minister to show me any one holder of a reservation—either an individual or a company—who has expended any capital in any great quantity on any reservation held, that is not on a well defined ore line—that is to say, outside old abandoned mines. These people have never prospected in virgin country inside the reservation they hold and, like a dog in a manger, they will not allow anybody else to do so. Let me come to the sacrifice that is being made in order to develop the industry. There is a very sad side to it as well as a very bright one. The mining industry calls for big sacrifices in regard to the loss of life and the serious and minor accidents to which those who follow the calling are subjected. I am pleased to say that this year shows a decline in fatal accidents, but unfortunately serious accidents have increased. While that increase has not been very great, there are altogether too many accidents in the industry. All these accidents make new men very timid about following up the occupation of mining. It could be argued that the increase in serious accidents this year may have been due to the increase in the number of men employed. For a year or two accidents were ascribed to inexperienced men, but that theory cannot be accepted any longer. I suggest to the Minister that he gives further consideration to these accidents, for I think they are due largely to the principles now being

introduced into the mining industry on the one hand, and to the lack of strict supervision on the other. The Minister, when introducing these Estimates, mentioned that they are now taking drastic action against any individual committing a breach of the Mines Regulation Act. That is so, but in my electorate I find that, while they are very ready to inflict a penalty on an employee for a breach of the Act, the authorities do not so strictly enforce the Act against the employer. That is the trouble; the employer can get away with it.

Hon. C. G. Latham drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and quorum formed.

Mr. MARSHALL: As I was saying, the Mines Regulation Act is not so strictly enforced against the employer as it is enforced against the employee. I am not complaining about the employee being made to comply with the law. I know the Minister will give immediate consideration to the new principles which have been introduced into the industry, because we shall have another big producer operating very shortly and unless we have numbers of efficient officers and strict supervision, and the Mines Regulations brought up to date to meet the contingency now arising due to the new principles introduced, we are likely to have a long list of accidents during next year. It is all very well for us who live and labour in a healthy environment, but the men in the mines are called upon to take all sorts of risks, and so it is not too much to assert that every legislative action possible should be taken to assist in protecting the lives and limbs of those who are employed in the industry. I hope that in the near future we shall have an up-to-date Mines Regulation Act and a sufficient number of efficient inspectors to see that it is enforced against the employers as well as against the employees. Now I desire to say a word or two about the State batteries. As one who has had a lengthy experience of treatment plants, I contend that the State battery system as a whole is verging on being a disgrace to all those associated with it. I have never seen such ramshackle, coffee-pot, patched-up portions of machinery in all my existence. No one who knows anything at all about batteries could believe the deplorable state of disrepair into which the State batteries have been permitted to drift. I can-

not understand the policy of the superintendent of State batteries.

Mr. Patrick: Improvements have been made during the last couple of years.

The Minister for Mines: We spent £19,000 last year.

Mr. MARSHALL: And if you were to spend another £19,000 it would not be nearly enough to bring the batteries into anything like decent repair. The superintendent of State batteries takes up a remarkable attitude. He is immovable. He has no fear. He rides the high horse. On one occasion I reminded him that the Cue battery, which was practically a new mill a few years ago, was in a deplorable state of disrepair. He laughed and said it was only a new mill. As I left his office I told him that that mill would be down within a few months' time. Of course I was exaggerating, but my prophecy was ultimately realised, because it did come down, it collapsed. The department had to spend a thousand pounds to put it into a state of repair again. That officer visited Cue on several occasions. As Superintendent of State Batteries, he supervised that battery. I followed in his wake a few weeks afterwards, and when I spoke of the condition of the battery, he laughed at me. That was in September and from February the mill was held up for three months for repairs. It had collapsed. The Tuckanarra State battery was leased to a private individual. I admit that it was an obsolete plant, but it was allowed to drift into such a state of disrepair that I understand the whole battery was sold for £150.

Mr. Lambert: Dozens were sold for that.

Mr. MARSHALL: The hon. member wades in with his usual budget of edifying interjections, but I am quite aware that hundreds have been sold.

Mr. Lambert: I did not say hundreds.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, any number of them. Plants that were erected years ago were out of operation for a long time. They were pawned and mortgaged and they belonged to nobody. This was a State battery crushing for the public, and such was the state of disrepair into which it had been allowed to fall. I understand that £150 was the value placed upon it and that was all it was worth.

The Minister for Mines: How long is it since the State ran that battery?

Mr. MARSHALL: Many years.

The Minister for Mines: It was condemned.

Mr. MARSHALL: The point is that the system of managing the State batteries is no system at all. I do not care whether they are State run or leased. If the batteries belong to the State and are leased, they should be cared for.

Mr. Patrick: Is that battery running today?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, in a way. The stamps move up and down and the noise they make can be heard, but the stone goes through a little in a long time. The Mt. Sir Samuel battery has been leased. Those plants have never been kept in a decent state of repair.

The Minister for Mines: That battery has been leased.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not concerned about that; it is State property. What is the superintendent doing to allow it to get into a state of disrepair? Does not that indicate that he is not exercising the supervision that we have a right to expect for the salary paid him? We have not only the superintendent, but an inspector of State batteries, and until the last 12 months, even the Cue and Meekatharra State batteries were in a deplorable state. Latterly they have begun to look and sound like batteries.

The Minister for Mines: They are good batteries.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, they are fairly good, but it should not have been necessary to replace the Cue battery.

Mr. Patrick: It has been running for a long time.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the superintendent had done his job, it should not have fallen into such a state of disrepair. Yet when I told him about its condition, he laughed at me. The salary of that officer is £900 a year, and he laughs when useful information is given to him. He was at Cue only a week or two before my visit.

Mr. North: Would not he have to submit reports?

Mr. MARSHALL: He is the man; he reports to no one. If he does report, it is only to the Minister. I do not know whether he has to report to the Under Secretary. The Peak Hill battery is a rattle-trap at best, obsolete and in a bad state of disrepair, though it is probably better now than it had been for a long time. I told the superintendent that the table was in three parts and needed to be replaced. The prospectors do not know as much about these plants as I do—I have had 20 years' experi-

ence of them—and probably quite a lot of amalgam is lost through the plate being in three parts. I suggested that he replace it with a table in one piece, and he replied that it was a matter of cost. That is an illustration of how that officer looks after the interests of the prospectors. I tell the Minister and the Minister can tell the superintendent that if he will give me the three pieces, I will pay the cost of a new plate, because I could get greater value from the gold I could burn off the three pieces than a new plate would cost. Instead of the superintendent keeping the batteries in a decent state of repair and asking the Minister to provide money for that purpose, he flouts one. Anything is good enough. I can understand his position. For years an idiotic policy has been adopted of pulling one battery to pieces and using the parts to keep others running. If all the batteries were available in the centres where they were originally erected, they would be of untold benefit to-day. The Mt. Keith battery is an instance. The stupid policy of tearing batteries asunder in order to patch up others has been adopted until now there are no batteries in places where they are urgently needed and we have only apologies for batteries in many parts of the State. The superintendent endeavours to keep his costs down, as did his predecessor, by tearing some batteries to pieces and using the parts in others, and consequently the batteries are in a deplorable state. Is it any wonder that we have to charge prospectors 2 dwts. 8 grains for treatment of the sands? Obsolete ideas are still entertained; no desire is shown to bring the batteries to a state of repair. Anything will do. I know that the superintendent will reply that the duty per stamp is comparable with that of other people's batteries. So it is, but the classes of ore crushed are not comparable. He crushes garden loam as compared with the hard stone crushed by established companies. I know where he gets his stamp duty; I know as much about it as he does. It is time the Minister brightened up some of his officers so that the prospectors might get a reasonably good deal, which they are not receiving at present. When the State pays officials high salaries, we have a right to expect efficiency. If I were in the Minister's place and did not get efficiency, I would soon replace that officer with a man who was efficient. The State Battery Department falls

far short of giving satisfaction. Last year I appealed to the Minister, and I repeat the appeal, to make some reduction in the treatment cost of sands. Of course the Minister will argue that any private company makes a similar charge, but the private company operates for a profit. Our chief consideration should not be to make a profit; it should be to develop the industry. The new proposals for the carting subsidy will never receive my sanction. If there is one reason above all others why I adopt that attitude, it is because the circular distinctly stated that the carting of ore of 4 dwts and under is discouraged.

The Minister for Mines: Not that.

Mr. MARSHALL: Well, about that. Neither the Minister nor the Superintendent should do anything to discourage the carting of ore from a mine. What appears to be 3 dwts. or 4 dwts. ore may turn out to be 4 oz. ore. No one can say what the gold contents are going to be until the ore is crushed. Ore at a given spot may appear to be unpayable but may, if taken from a few feet further away, prove to be rich in gold. To discourage prospectors from handling low-grade ore is to discourage prospecting entirely. We cannot all get on to rich veins. If the low-grade propositions are big ones, they are the propositions we want to encourage. The circular to which I have referred was undoubtedly discouraging. It discouraged the carting of low-grade ore, and I immediately disagreed with it. I will discourage no man who is game to try his luck at prospecting. In connection with the charges at the State batteries I would point out that a deduction is made of 2 dwts. 8 grs. That is not the only deduction the prospector has to contend with. The battery system also takes 10 per cent. for wastage and losses incurred in the tonnage crushed, so that the prospector is paid on only 90 tons out of every 100 tons crushed. Furthermore, the prospector gets only a 75 per cent. extraction, which is a pretty mean low rate. The ore treated at State batteries is of a free milling nature, and under the processes used, a better extraction than 75 per cent. should be secured. The prospector is the sufferer all round. Because of the deductions and other things, he has to pay 30s. on the present value of gold for every ton of ore crushed. and then he loses the 10 per cent. and gets only a 75 per cent. extraction. I admit that the department cannot do much

more than it does, and make the State batteries pay, but would point out that these batteries are a State utility. If we are to develop and promote the interests of this industry, the charges at State batteries must be reduced. At present reservations are granted at a peppercorn rental to wealthy companies. It would be easy for the Minister to get a greater rental, as he does in the case of 24 acre leases, so that by using the money to reduce charges at the State batteries the prospectors might be given a more reasonable deal. Outside the State Batteries Department, I do not know of more efficient officers than we find in the Mines Department. The Under Secretary is very obliging, courteous and efficient, and his assistant, Mr. Telfer, is a credit to the department. He is a wonderfully fine man. In the main they are all good officers. I frankly say, however, that the State Batteries Department falls short by a great deal in giving efficient service from my point of view.

MR. LAMBERT (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [9.25]: After the storm comes the calm. The member for Murchison has seen fit to criticise the working of the State Batteries Department. I would point out, in fairness to the officers concerned, that until five or six years ago there were only one or two State batteries in operation. The two main batteries were at Coolgardie and Cue. It was deemed to be impossible to operate State batteries elsewhere. Practically every other State battery had been closed down. They were rusting out, and no one wanted them, and they could only be looked upon as scrap. Now the State battery at Coolgardie has been rebuilt and is highly efficient. Generally speaking, the battery managers are more efficient than the managers of batteries on private shows. I sharply disagree with the member for Murchison in his statement regarding the Superintendent of State Batteries' lack of efficiency. He is one of the most efficient mechanical and technical men in the State. If he cared to go elsewhere, he would probably earn to-morrow 50 per cent. more than he is now receiving. The hon. member, of course, has a right to draw attention to the Peak Hill battery. I know it well. It was closed down for years. The same thing occurred with the Laverton, Siberia and Leonora State batteries, and the last two were not only closed down but sold.

There was no ore to crush then. The only battery on the eastern goldfields that was operating for the last few years was the State battery at Coolgardie.

Mr. Nulsen: And at Norseman.

Mr. LAMBERT: That was closed down for years.

Mr. Nulsen: No.

The Minister for Mines: It did not work full-time.

Mr. LAMBERT: I know the manager of the Coolgardie battery operated it for a few days when there was a little stone to crush. With the money at their disposal the Government have done a good deal to bring the batteries up to date. The Ora Banda battery is running almost continuously, and has been most beneficial to prospectors. It is easy for a private member to talk about the deductions that are made. Every day I receive complaints of the manner in which the private batteries cater for prospectors, and what is done with regard to the extraction and residues. I should like to see the crushing costs reduced and the efficiency of the batteries increased. That can only come about at the expense of the revenue of the department. I understand that all the profits of the State batteries go into the carting subsidy to assist prospectors in carting low-grade ore. I assure the member for Murchison that in Coolgardie people prefer to crush at the State battery rather than at any other. Naturally, mistakes have been made; but probably they are not the fault of the present superintendent.

Mr. Marshall: I have been to him, and I know what I have stated to be exactly true.

Mr. LAMBERT: Whenever I have spoken to him about a matter, that officer has carried out his own policy.

Mr. Patrick: Your battery did not fall down.

The Minister for Mines: It got pretty close to it.

Mr. LAMBERT: But it had operated for a quarter of a century. It is the most important State battery in Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Not now.

Mr. LAMBERT: Possibly not now, though I was referring to the aspect of production. In the years of depression and decline of the industry the battery was highly beneficial to Coolgardie. Every pos-

sible concession was granted to prospectors in order to keep the battery going.

Mr. Marshall: It is a central battery.

Mr. LAMBERT: The then Minister for Mines had a pivotal battery erected when other batteries had to be closed down.

Mr. Marshall: Nothing of the sort. Not one of our batteries has ever been closed down. It is true that our batteries have worked part-time.

Mr. LAMBERT: The whole of the State batteries were practically closed down, or working only three days a week. Their working was, in fact, uneconomical. It was uneconomical to send a manager and a staff to a battery to work it for just a few days. The Coolgardie State battery is meeting with greater demands now than ever before. I agree that it is the duty of the department to reduce crushing costs, if possible, for the encouragement of the industry; but there is no occasion to indulge in tirades against a professional man who probably could walk out to-morrow and get from private employers an income enhanced by 50 or 100 per cent.

Mr. Marshall: I do not know that he would be a loss to the department.

Mr. LAMBERT: In the course of his scathing remarks the member for Murchison did say that he had no fault to find with the excellent officers in the various branches of the Mines Department. Now as regards the Government Laboratory: Our University is training young men as chemists, who should be fitted into the industrial and economic life of Western Australia. Unfortunately, however, there is little encouragement for them to remain here. Pretty well every chemist Western Australia trains is snapped up by Eastern Australia. We should have first call upon their services, but there is little local appreciation of their technical knowledge and valuable training. They simply go away. Some of our chemists who have done excellent work elsewhere might well have been encouraged to remain here by greater remuneration. A chemist who has been trained at our University and has passed his examinations is offered £250 to £300 a year in Western Australia. He finds more remunerative employment in the Eastern States. I know that one private concern offered an official mentioned by the member for Murchison a 25 or 30 per cent. increase in salary; but that official preferred to remain

at his work for the State. The chemist, Dr. Simpson, and Mr. Bowley and other chemists under Dr. Simpson, are highly efficient and helpful. We should explore some of the non-metallic minerals in Western Australia, as suggested by the member for Claremont. To-day those minerals are lying absolutely untouched. Our mineral deposits should not be left to the blackfellows. I have several times referred to one company which spent a quarter of a million in a legitimate effort to develop an extensive mineral deposit. What return did the company get? Miserable vilification and every kind of insinuation.

Mr. Hughes: Some of your pals are leaving gold and going in for diamonds.

Mr. LAMBERT: I daresay the hon. member interjecting is more intimately acquainted than I am with the people in question. I must add that I do not know to whom the hon. member is referring. While it is within the province of the member for Murchison to detail defects existing in one of the State batteries, he need not be so scathing in regard to the personnel of the department. There have been many changes in mining conditions during the last three or four years, especially as regards goldmining. Those changed conditions have called for an altered attitude on the part of Mines Department officials. I join with the member for Murchison in expressing great pleasure at the courtesy which characterises the attitude of the officers in almost every activity of the department throughout the State.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [9.38]: I am pleased that there has not been a great deal of criticism of the Mines Department. I do not expect, and never have expected, that the department, or the Minister, or individuals in the department would escape without some criticism on the Estimates. The Minister who had such expectations would be most unreasonable. As to the complaints made by the member for Kalgoorlie concerning the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, I acknowledge that the accommodation is inadequate for the present number of students. I hope there will be a possibility of extending that accommodation. With regard to the engine house and machine shop, which evidently were one when the hon. member visited the school, a new and complete engine

house has been established, and the whole of what was engine house and machine shop combined is now the machine shop alone. In my opinion there is now ample accommodation in both the machine shop and the engine room. That increase, however, is not all that is required in the accommodation at the School of Mines.

Mr. Patrick: In the Eastern States many such institutions are heavily endowed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The hon. member concluded his statement by saying that if £1,000 per year could be provided, the necessary facilities could be furnished.

Mr. Styants: I said that amount would provide reasonable facilities.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I secured an estimate and for one section of the extension of the School of Mines building the cost would run into about £3,700 for one year. If money could be found, I admit at least twice the class room accommodation should be provided, and there should certainly be a lecture hall. Under that heading the expenditure would not be less than between £4,000 and £5,000.

Mr. Styants: Can we not get some of the Commonwealth grant?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The School of Mines is already getting about £2,700 a year from that source.

Mr. Styants: Well, we want some more.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps the hon. member does not know that he is getting more because during the last three years I have nearly doubled the staff.

Mr. Patrick: I think it would be a good thing if some of the big mines were to endow the School of Mines.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some of the big mines are doing excellent work in assisting that institution.

Mr. Patrick: It is for their own benefit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is for their benefit that the School of Mines exists at Kalgoorlie, as well as for that of the students and the State generally. Had I not held that opinion, I would not have been interested in securing the start of what I hope will expand into a school of mines at Wiluna. If I did not think it was in the interests of the industry and of the State generally, I would not encourage young men to become students at the School of Mines. After all, this is a question of money. Another complaint

made by the member for Kalgoorlie was that the School of Mines should be established as a separate entity and should not remain under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of Technical Education. As Minister for Mines, I believe we get better administration and better service by having that branch of the educational facilities of the State under the one head. In justice to the Superintendent of Technical Education and Director of the School of Mines, (Mr. J. F. Lynch), I want to point out that he is just as highly qualified to direct the School of Mines as is Dr. Moore, the present superintendent of that institution. I will not create two technical branches for the training of mining students in this State. It is possible for young men to obtain training at the Perth Technical College that is quite equal to that obtained at the School of Mines in Kalgoorlie. I know there has been a demand from various sources for the School of Mines to be placed under the direction of one individual.

Mr. Styants: There must be some reason for it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am quite aware of that.

Hon. N. Keenan: What is the position regarding the Ballarat institution?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know the conditions there, so I shall not attempt to answer the hon. member. While dealing with the School of Mines, I desire to reply to a statement made by the member for Nedlands. I deplore, just as much as he does, that some outsiders are in charge of some of our big mines to-day. It is not correct to say that we have not men trained in our own country who are capable of doing that work. We have such men who were trained at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines and are capable of managing any mine in any part of the world. In Western Australia we have two very large mines that are to-day managed by ex-students of that institution. I undertake to say that the hon. member could not go to any mining field in any English-speaking country to-day, whether it be America, South Africa, West Africa, or any other country where gold is produced and find that the heads of technical staffs do not include ex-students of the Kalgoorlie School of Mines. To my mind that speaks volumes for the tuition received by students in this State. I do not say that we

should ask lads who have the benefit of that tuition not to leave Western Australia, for I would not be so narrow-minded as to do that. I am pleased that young men trained at the School of Mines are able to command salaries in any part of the world in competition with all comers. On two of the largest mines in Western Australia, the general managers and supervisors are ex-students of the Kalgoorlie institution. The member for Nedlands said he hoped something would be done to prevent snide flotations. I am prepared to admit that many flotations have done considerable harm from the standpoint of the raising of capital in this State. The hon. member, however, did not make any definite suggestion as to how that could be accomplished other than that the Mines Department, by some means, should be able to ascertain the names of those who have been interested in connection with such flotations from beginning to end. That might have some effect, but I think I know a better scheme than that. I, as well as officials of the Crown Law and other departments, have given consideration to this matter. I know of a better scheme that would do more good so far as protecting shareholders or those willing to subscribe to gold mining flotations in the future is concerned. That would be to introduce some law which would require that, irrespective of what gold mining company was floated in Western Australia, and irrespective of its capital, a given percentage of the total of that capital should be set aside as working capital. If we had such a law as that, it would prevent to a very large extent what the member for Nedlands is desirous of having prevented. I would go so far as to say that allowing for reasonable flotation expenses—which are pretty high in London; they are set expenses there and cannot be avoided—not less than 75 per cent. of the total capital should be working capital. If we did that we should cut out a considerable number of the snide companies that have been floated. But it is pretty dangerous to attempt to interfere too much with the flotation of gold mining companies.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You won't do much more harm than the snide companies have done.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition. But I want to impress this point upon members. There might be a hole in the ground at a

certain spot called a mine on a prospecting area or lease and crushings might be obtained of three or four dwts. With further development 10 feet along the line of lode there might be three or four ounces, and it might be condemned because a shaft had been sunk and driven probably 30 or 40 feet and the values were still low. It might be condemned altogether whereas with further exploration it is probable that it would eventually be a mine. One of the leading mines in Western Australia to-day was unquestionably floated as a ramp. There was nothing to offer the shareholders when the mine was floated, but that mine has produced thousands of ounces.

Mr. Patrick: Originally the Kalgoorlie field was floated as a ramp.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Care is needed. The gold mining industry is a speculative industry and if the incentive to speculate is killed, the gold mining industry will be killed, that is except for those mines already in existence. I have not much to say in reply to the member for Murchison. We differ. I do not propose to try now or at any time to get the member to come to my way of thinking. I realise it would be impossible to do it.

Mr. Marshall: We pull together, you and I, but in opposite directions.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to try to convince the hon. member. He mentioned that I said that no capital would have come to this State but for reservations. I did say, in introducing the Mining Estimates, that so far as the Western Mining Corporation was concerned, if there had been no reservations, there would have been no Western Mining Corporation. I did not grant reservations to the corporation, but have always said that I never made any complaint against nor disagreed with the man who did. Not one penny piece of the £1,278,000 spent in Western Australia by the corporation would have been spent, and not one of the men employed would have been employed if there had not been any reservations, because the company would never have been here without reservations.

Mr. Doney: Are there any open reservations?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not one. The member for Murchison mentioned the huge area between Meekatharra and Nanine, but that has been cancelled for 15

months or more. Not one of those huge areas to which he referred is in existence today, nor has it been for over 12 months. What induced the corporation more than anything else to give up the rest of their reservation? I know of no more humane man than the man who is at the head of that corporation. He came straight from his trip North into my office and he said, "You can have the whole of it. I do not think it is fit for any man to work there in the summer time. Therefore, I will not have anything to do with the rest of it." The one aim of that man is to give as good conditions as possible to the people he employs.

Member: Who is he?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. W. S. Robertson, one of the most humane men I have met. If it were possible for him to do everybody a good turn he would, and in no circumstances would he willingly do anybody a bad turn. The member for Murchison went on to say that there were reservations which had been held for years and on which a pick had never been put. I want the hon. member to come down to my office to-morrow and tell me where those reservations are. I will admit that there are three reservations of which I know and which men have held for years and on which a pick has not been put. The only three I know of are well up North.

Mr. Marshall: For how long has work been carried on on the reservations at the Great Fingal?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Since about nine months ago.

Mr. Marshall: Over 12 months ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, it is not.

Mr. Marshall: There is one reservation that has not been worked.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not for the last eight months. The holders of the reservation have spent £32,000 there, and because they have interests in one or two other places and are spending money there, I am not going to cancel their reservation until they have had a chance to see whether there is anything in it. They have proved their bona fides, and I want to help them to help the State. I admit that there are three reservations which have been held for over two years without a pick being put into them, but I will undertake to say that nobody beside myself, the principal registrar, the Under Secretary and the man who has

them knows that the reservations exist. They have never been asked for by anybody else, nor has anyone ever gone near it. It is no use saying that there are huge reservations idle, and that in consequence hundreds of miles of auriferous country are held up. Of the three reservations I speak of, two are dredging propositions, the third being a reefing proposition. The hon. member went on to deplore the number of accidents that have occurred. So do I. But I am rather disappointed with his statement that the Mines Regulation Act is being administered more strictly against the employee than against the employer. I do not believe that. Our present inspectors are perfectly sincere, and would just as soon recommend the prosecution of a manager as they would recommend the prosecution of a workman.

Mr. Marshall: But the boss himself sends men up to the surface every day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know of one instance where a mine manager went down and caught the shift boss arguing with a man who had broken the regulations by tamping a hole with an iron scraper. The manager asked what was wrong, and the shift boss said he had just caught this man red-handed tamping a hole with an iron scraper. The manager said, "And you were arguing the point with him." This the shift boss admitted, whereupon the manager said he had no time for either of them, and told them both to go up and take their time. He held that it was the duty of the shift boss not to argue with a man caught red-handed, but to report him immediately. It is a great pity we have not a few more general managers like that.

Mr. Marshall: Yes, but they are punishing the workmen all the time by sending them up, and so the employer is getting away with it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It may be all right to say that. I am not saying it is not true, but I would be much more satisfied, and it would give me a chance to alter that sort of thing if, when it does happen, it was brought under my notice.

Mr. Marshall: You would be kept busy.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I could not be much busier than I am now. I encourage no manager to penalise a man; but if this sort of thing is occurring, as the hon. member said, it may have this effect, that instead of bringing the delinquent be-

fore the court and having him fined 5s. or 10s., if he loses a couple of days' work it will make him realise that he must not break the regulations. The last complaint made by the hon. member was in connection with State batteries.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have not yet reached the State Batteries Vote.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, but the hon. member referred to them, and I think I have the right to reply. As a matter of fact, every time I have introduced the Mines Estimates, I have dealt with State batteries. I did so again last night. The so-called deplorable condition of some batteries is probably due to the policy adopted by the Mines Department some time ago in taking spare parts from one battery to another battery. When that was being done, there was no alternative, for there was not a shilling to spend on State batteries, and we had 15 of them lying rusting without a wheel having been turned for months. Naturally the department, when a spare part was wanted, instead of purchasing it at top price, went and took it from a battery that was doing nothing. That, I think, was a reasonable and sensible thing for the department to do. It is remarkable that the hon. member should be still criticising State batteries. I remember that last year on these Estimates he criticised the State batteries, and when I asked him to which he was referring, he definitely mentioned two. I am pleased to say that those two batteries are now in good order and condition, showing that his complaint has had some result. I have no objection to his complaining about State batteries if by complaining he can get the matter remedied.

Mr. Marshall: I wish to God your superintendent would do it, instead of my having to bring it here and fight it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member had first gone to the superintendent and had not got satisfaction, and had then come to me, I would have had a word with the superintendent.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And then we could get home in decent time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: You may be here to-night for some time yet. Knowing the experience the member for Murchison has had of batteries and ore treatment, I certainly would have taken seriously any statement made by him in regard to State

batteries. I want to thank the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie for his defence of the employees of the State Batteries Department.

Mr. Marshall: But he is not reliable.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If he had not done it, I would have had to do it myself, but as it is I am prepared to accept his word.

Vote put and passed.

Department of Minister for Public Health
(Hon. S. W. Munsie, Minister).

Vote—Medical, £35,500:

Hon. C. G. Latham rose to speak.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [10.10]: The Leader of the Opposition was complaining just now about being kept here late, but when I give him an opportunity to go home, he objects. I shall deal with both the Medical and Public Health Departments on the general discussion, because little that is new can be said of either department. The best venture of late has been the altered conditions of the medical service in the North and the establishment of the flying doctor service. The department estimated that by the appointment of fully paid medical men in the North the public there would get better service, but that there would be a little extra cost. We have put the idea into operation at Wyndham, Derby, Broome, Port Hedland and Roebourne at an added cost over the old scheme of only £800. I am perfectly satisfied with the results. There is not the slightest doubt that the people in the North are receiving far more efficient medical service as a result of the change. We do not permit these doctors to occupy their posts longer than two years, and when we called for applications a condition was inserted that the doctors must be prepared at any time to use the aeroplane for medical service. Consequently nearly every applicant is a young man. I am delighted with our experience of the system so far.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Have you fixed up that matter of the certificate for airworthiness of the plane?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Any plane used has had a certificate of airworthiness. The hon. member is evidently thinking of Dr. Benson and his plane in the Northern

Territory, but that has nothing to do with the North of this State. The Vote for Public Health shows an increase of £3,174, due principally to reclassification and annual increments, and this year we will have three school medical officers on full time, instead of, as last year, having three for only one and a half months. That will absorb almost the whole of the £3,174 increase. Everything that the department and I as Minister can do to encourage the preventive side will be done. I have always been a firm believer in maintaining health instead of waiting until people fall sick and then spending the money. A good deal could be said about the maintenance of hospitals and the hospital fund. The Leader of the Opposition asked me some time ago when the report on the hospital fund would be available. Unfortunately it was not available until to-day. However, I have tabled the report of the auditor, together with his comments and the replies to the comments. Is the Leader of the Opposition still satisfied that £15,000 a year from that fund has been used for the Wooroloo Sanatorium?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, except in one year.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member has the auditor's statement classifying the expenditure. The total amount of money for the three years is accounted for, and not one penny piece of it is going to the Wooroloo Sanatorium. The Auditor-General says it is not right that the forms being supplied should be incorrect and I agree with him. Unless we can come to an understanding on the matter which has continued for 2½ years, the existing arrangement will continue. I will not sign a warrant for any amount of money from the hospital fund for the support of the Wooroloo Sanatorium. Not a penny has been paid from the fund to support that institution; the money has come from the Treasury.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are wrong.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member persists in saying I am wrong despite the statement of the auditor. I do not intend to argue with him. I shall leave the report to speak for itself, and members can say whether I have spent any money from the hospital fund for the maintenance of the Wooroloo Sanatorium.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [10.17]: I have the auditor's report before me. Year

after year the Minister introduces his Estimates but will not understand them.

The Minister for Health: You will not understand them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The report of the Auditor-General states—

Due to the lack of a Parliamentary appropriation to cover the maintenance of the Wooroloo Sanatorium for the financial years 1933-34, 1934-35, and 1935-36, the Treasury charged expenditure and credited receipts during the period to the hospital fund.

The Minister for Health: Of course, but read on.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Surely that is definite enough. No provision has been made on the Estimates for 1933-34, 1934-35, and 1935-36, for any charge against the revenue for the Wooroloo Sanatorium. The Treasury charged expenditure and credited receipts during the period to the hospital fund. That refers to the revenue received from patients in the sanatorium. The money has been credited to the fund and there has been taken from the fund the whole cost of running the sanatorium. No other construction can be placed upon the report. The next paragraph refers to the £15,000—

Except that a grant of £15,000 from revenue to the hospital fund in 1934-35 was shown in the department's accounts as applicable to expenditure of a similar amount incurred in the upkeep of Wooroloo Sanatorium, the Minister has not authorised any of the cost of maintenance as a charge to the hospital fund, and the entries made by the Treasury have not been responded to in the accounts kept by the department.

The Minister for Health: There you are wrong.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What right have the Treasury officials to operate this account?

The Minister for Health: None. I have that right.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister has not prevented the Treasury from operating it, and the officials have operated it every year.

The Minister for Health: They have not.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have, every year. On one occasion the Minister evidently got on the right side of the Treasurer and obtained from him £15,000, which is approximately the annual cost of running the institution.

The Minister for Health: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I drew the attention of the Committee to this at the very beginning. I told members there was no provision for this money. The Treasury can-

not spend money illegally like this. Where do the officers of the Treasury get the money? If they can spend money illegally, there is hardly any necessity for the Estimates. The Minister has not told the people that he operates on this money and not the Treasury.

The Minister for Health: I have told them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They have taken very little notice of it.

The Minister for Health: I have taken very little notice of them either.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Auditor General points to the lack of parliamentary appropriation. He shows that £15,000 was paid by the Treasury for one year, and that the hospital fund has been charged with the whole of the cost of running the Wooroloo Sanatorium.

The Minister for Health: By the Treasury? They have not got the money.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Minister has not got it.

The Minister for Health: Yes, I have.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No. This is kept as a trust fund at the Treasury. It is operated by the Minister, but the Treasury got in ahead of him.

The Minister for Health: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about you two going down to the Treasury and discussing it? We can then go home.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: "It is not contended, apparently, that the Wooroloo Sanatorium is not a public hospital as defined by the Hospitals Act." This is according to the Auditor General, who goes on to say— . . . but that it was never contemplated treating it as such and meeting the cost of maintenance from the fund. These divergent views have been reflected in the balance of the fund as shown by the public accounts, and the balance as indicated by the statements of the fund submitted by the Medical Department for audit. The difference at the 30th June each year was as follows:—

	Public Accounts Overdraft.	Hospital Fund Statements. Credit Balance.	Difference.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1934 ...	7,414 19 2	6,808 11 10	14,223 11 0
1935 ...	648 19 6	14,766 1 3	15,415 0 9
1936 ...	23,021 9 6	8,814 1 8	31,835 11 2

The Minister has an overdraft at the Treasury.

The Minister for Health: What do the accounts show as the surplus?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They show that there is an overdraft at the Treasury. I will now show the Minister what the actual position is.

The Minister for Health: I know what the position is.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Dealing with the reconciliation accounts, the Auditor General says—

A statement setting out the reconciliation of the two accounts at the 30th June, 1936, is attached:—

	£	s.	d.
Credit balance as per departmental account	8,814	1	8
Wooroloo expenditure (net) not charged in departmental account	31,835	11	2
Debit balance as per Treasury account	23,021	9	6

That is clear enough.

Wooroloo (departmental account).

1933-34 expenditure:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Contingencies ...	8,995	19	5			
Salaries ...	10,669	7	11			
	19,665	7	4			
Less Collections	5,385	19	4			
				£14,279	8	0

The Minister for Health: Not paid by the hospital fund.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The next year is where the £15,000 comes in. The Auditor General continues—

1934-35 expenditure:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Contingencies ...	10,438	8	7			
Salaries ...	10,874	5	4			
	21,312	13	11			
Less collections	5,177	1	2			
Balance ...	16,135	12	9			
Less Treasury grant ...	15,000	0	0			
Debit balance ...				1,135	12	9

The Minister for Health: Does the report say that the Treasury gave a grant?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, it is less the Treasury grant of £15,000. The report goes on—

1935-36 expenditure:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Contingencies ...	10,345	18	2			
Salaries ...	11,935	2	5			
	22,281	0	7			
Less collections	6,061	17	6			
				16,229	3	1
Total as per departmental account				£31,644	3	10

That is what the position is. The accounts have been set out very clearly for the Minister to see. He has allowed the Treasury officials to operate the trust account.

The Minister for Health: They have not operated one penny piece.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say they have.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Would you settle it outside?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Of course they have.

The Minister for Health: They have not. Why does the Auditor General take me to task for not signing the voucher for Wooroloo?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The amount has been taken out of the fund at the Treasury and debited against the Minister. The Treasury put a gun at the Minister's head and said, "sign this," and he did so. The Minister said the other evening that he wished the hospital tax had never been introduced. He is better off now, but he has no knowledge of his accounts. These papers were laid on the Table of the House only this evening and I have not been able to go carefully into them. In the second paragraph on page 2 of the report upon his own department, the following occurs:—

It is of course true that prior to the advent of the hospital fund, Consolidated Revenue and the entertainments tax provided about £104,000 per annum towards the maintenance of hospitals and that, from loan funds, an average of about £23,000 per annum was also made available for hospital buildings.

I want the Committee to note that it is stated that £104,000 per annum was made available for the maintenance of hospital buildings, and £23,000 from the Public Works Account.

The Minister for Health: The £104,000 was from revenue.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: And the entertainments tax.

The Minister for Health: That was extra.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think in this case the Minister is correct. The report goes on to say:—

When the Hospital Fund Act of 1930 was introduced, it was clearly stated on behalf of the Government of the day that previous contributions by the Treasury, as above referred to, would cease, and that in future hospitals would have the benefit of the whole of the proceeds from this fund. The cessation of loan money from loan funds for building purposes was at the time due to the drastic curtailment of such moneys, a condition of affairs which still to a large extent prevails. From the summarised statement above, it will be seen that the contributions have steadily risen year by year, from £133,885 in 1932 to £206,529 in the year just ended. As a matter of fact, when the scheme was first devised it was estimated that a contribution of 1½d. in the pound would produce a little over £200,000, but the Act came into operation almost coincident with the financial depression and the latter wrought havoc with the Estimates. It is noticeable that the contributions to the fund are now approaching very closely to the original estimate.

The report goes on to show there has been a falling off of contributions, in the way of special efforts and donations, of about £20,000 per annum. If I am not mistaken, reference is also made to Wooroloo, though I cannot trace it at the moment. The papers have been made available to the Press, and therefore I have not been able to peruse them during the whole of this evening. However, I know sufficient about the accounts to be able to raise the two or three points I have touched upon. I will tell the Minister what has been and is the financial position. I quote the figures which have been laid on the Table relatively to Medical and Health:—

MEDICAL AND HEALTH.

	Expenditure.	Entertainments Tax.	Hospital Fund.	Hospital Fees.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1927-28	200,893	34,943	...	...	235,836
1928-29	212,292	36,631	...	...	248,923
1929-30	211,657	38,595	...	...	250,252
	<u>£624,842</u>	<u>£110,169</u>	<u>...</u>	<u>...</u>	<u>£735,011</u>
1930-31	143,231	...	64,834	15,247	223,312
1931-32	78,658	...	133,884	24,809	237,351
1932-33	75,648	...	146,042	27,346	249,036
	<u>£207,537</u>	<u>...</u>	<u>£344,760</u>	<u>£67,402</u>	<u>£709,699</u>

MEDICAL AND HEALTH—continued.

	Expenditure.	Entertainments Tax.	Hospital Fund.	Hospital Fees.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
1933-34	60,420	...	154,237	29,583	244,240
1934-35	64,560	...	183,398	33,493	281,451
1935-36	69,095	...	206,539	40,442	316,076
	<u>£194,075</u>	<u>...</u>	<u>£544,174</u>	<u>£103,518</u>	<u>£841,767</u>

Total amount for period 1933-36 £132,000 greater than that for period 1930-33—£44,000 per year.

Lotteries Commission is now providing money to assist in the building of country hospitals which were previously financed from loan funds.

Those figures show that during the last three years, in comparison with the previous three years, the Minister has had an advantage on the average of £44,000 per annum. During those three years he received approximately £132,000 more than he received during the preceding three years. It is not for him to tell this Committee or the House that he is not better off because of the hospital tax.

The Minister for Health: I still say that. I say further that if you call certain figures which you have quoted hospital fees, you do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have taken the whole of the figures because this year's Estimates contain practically nothing for hospitals. The vote for Medical Services for the current financial year is made up principally of salaries to departmental officers, subsidies to doctors and nurses, and subsidy to the Australian Aerial Medical Service. The balance is for the Old Men's Home and the Old Women's Home. I have taken the total figures in the same way every year. The figures for the homes are practically the same every year.

The Minister for Health: Ever since the hospital tax has been in operation, not a penny from the Medical and Public Health Estimates has gone to hospitals.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have given the total expenditure from the Estimates for each of those three years, and for this year.

The Minister for Health: Why quote expenditure for this year when there is nothing allotted for this year? There has been nothing allotted since the hospital tax was introduced.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am taking it that approximately the figures are the same each year. The cost of the Old Men's Home and Old Women's Home amounts to ap-

proximately £21,000 a year. It has been approximately the same every year. If the Minister wants me to take out the exact figures for hospitals, I will take them out and give them at some time. I tell the Minister definitely that during the last three years he has been £132,000 better off than he was during the preceding two years. Before sitting down I wish to ask the Minister why so much money is being lost on the drug stores. Why cannot the drug stores be made to balance expenditure and revenue? There is a loss of about £1,000 a year on the stores. That loss should not be; there is no justification for it. I presume the hospitals are charged up with the cost of supplies issued to them by the drug stores. I cannot make out why there should be a loss. Perhaps the Minister can explain the matter. Probably he will say we have no right to discuss the matter, because it represents a charge against the hospital fund. However, he is far better off to-day in regard to hospitals than ever he was. In addition, he has the benefit of contributions from the Lotteries Commission, which body has provided quite a lot of money for hospitals. The Minister told us to-night the amount of assistance given to hospitals by the Lotteries Commission. Plainly, he is far and away better off now than ever he was previously. It is of no use his saying that he is not. Recently there have been additional charges against the hospital fund by reason of industrial awards for nurses and hospital attendants, which previously were not in operation. The difference represents about £23,000 annually.

The Minister for Health: It is £30,000 for the two.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is £23,000 in one item, and £9,000 in another. On the Estimates, however, there is no provision

whatever for the Wooroloo Sanatorium. In addition, the lepers housed at Wooroloo are presumably a charge against the hospital fund. The Treasury officials must be told that they have no authority whatever to operate on that fund. If the keeping of the trust fund at the Treasury means that Treasury officials operate on it as they please, it is time the Minister transferred the trust fund to the Commonwealth Bank.

The Minister for Health: If they had taken a penny-piece of the fund, it would have been removed. They have never touched a penny-piece of it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We do know that the Treasury officials operate on trust accounts. They take them and use them. In this case they have charged the total expenditure on the Wooroloo Sanatorium against the hospital fund. They have credited to the hospital fund the fees collected from patients. That is exactly what they have done, irrespective of what the Minister says or desires. It has been done ever since he took over the Health and Medical Department. I know it has been going on; and although I have pointed it out, the Minister has contradicted me.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [10.40]: I would like to know what precautions the Minister intends to take to safeguard the health of men employed in connection with the bulk handling of wheat. So far those operations have not been undertaken on a very extensive scale, but in future a great deal of the wheat will be shipped in bulk. Such operations will start at Geraldton shortly, and later on will be conducted on a larger scale at Fremantle. Recently a number of members of Parliament had an opportunity to view bulk handling work at Fremantle, and everyone acknowledged that the men in the ships' holds particularly, as well as those on shore, were working under uncomfortable conditions. The dust nuisance was found to be very bad. Every member who saw the men at work in the holds must have been satisfied that they could not continue there for many years without their health being impaired. Recently you, Mr. Chairman, asked that papers regarding the dust problem in connection with bulk handling should be placed on the Table of the House. I have had an opportunity to peruse the file, and I find that in America between 1919 and 1925 there were a large number

of explosions in silos, resulting in the loss of 133 lives. In addition, 130 men were injured and about 12,000,000 dollars' worth of damage was done. Some explosions have also been recorded in New South Wales.

Hon. C. G. Latham: With any loss of life there?

Mr. FOX: No.

Mr. Patrick: There have been explosions in flour mills in Australia.

Mr. FOX: That is all the more reason why precautions should be taken to safeguard life in connection with bulk handling. The Minister will be lacking in his duty if he does not give attention to the ill-effects on the health of men engaged in this industry.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Did you read about the effect of arsenic on the miners at Wiluna?

Mr. FOX: No. I have met a number of men affected by arsenic at Wiluna, and I know that once it gets into their systems, the men find it difficult to get work on the mines.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They are put off for a week, and then sent back. You read the file.

Mr. FOX. Another reason why the Minister should look into the dust position is disclosed in a report on the file from Dr. Badham, Medical Officer of Industrial Research, who investigated the matter in connection with the silos in New South Wales. In the course of his report he pointed out that the fine, sharp particles affect the throat and lungs and men predisposed to tuberculosis were likely to have that disease accelerated. It has been pointed out that men should wear respirators in the holds of ships, but many men are not able to do that, because they have trouble in breathing through the nose.

Hon. C. G. Latham: How do they get on with sulphur?

Mr. FOX: All that is necessary in connection with sulphur ships is the wearing of glasses because the sulphur is harmful to the eyes. It is not injurious to health.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Of course it is.

Mr. FOX: Not so much as dust. I know from my own experience that many men would work in a sulphur ship rather than in a ship handling wheat in bulk. I would prefer not to work in a bulk wheat ship.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You had better not make it too attractive, or you will have the

Minister and not have to put them through various channels. I was under the impression that the Minister would have said something in his opening remarks about his intentions concerning the requests of the old men. There is also the small matter of the restoration of the tobacco which was taken from them when the depression was at its height. These are perhaps trivial matters to us, but to the old men they are of great importance. I particularly want to press for consideration of the request for an advisory committee. That committee would not be desirous of running the institution, but would merely seek to place before the Minister direct any complaints which otherwise it becomes necessary for me to worry about.

MR. McLARTY (Murray-Wellington) [10.57] I understand that the department insists upon money raised locally for hospitals going towards general maintenance funds. Most country towns have been used to raising money locally with a view to improving their district hospitals. If they have to find money for maintenance purposes, I am afraid their activities will be greatly restricted. Unless we raise some money locally we cannot get help from the Lotteries Commission, who insist on local effort, very often on a pound for pound basis. The Minister will not agree to help us unless we make some effort ourselves. Mr. Huelin, I understand, is insisting upon some of the money thus raised being used for maintenance purposes generally. Country districts find it very difficult indeed with the hospital tax in operation to raise as much money as they previously raised. I hope the Minister will not insist on money raised by local effort being used for general maintenance purposes.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.58]: I would like to know whether the Minister proposes to give consideration to privately owned hospitals, the only hospitals which exist in many of the outer suburban districts. The maintenance of these hospitals is essential. They perform a service which is equal to that performed by Government hospitals in other centres, and consideration should be given to enabling the best equipment, or at least equipment equal to that of other hospitals, to be provided. When the Minister is replying on Tuesday perhaps he will let us know—

The Minister for Health: I will reply on Tuesday from Adelaide.

MR. SAMPSON: On the air, I suppose? Whether on the air or by wire or by letter it will be a pleasure to hear the remarks or read the decision of the Minister. There should be equal consideration for all hospitals. I often feel there are hospitals in the country which do not receive consideration which the hospitals in the big centres receive.

The Minister for Health: Which hospitals are they?

MR. SAMPSON: Hospitals in country centres. I did not wish to refer to them. I can do so, however. I hope the members in whose districts they are will not think I am committing a breach of etiquette by referring to them. Take, for instance, the Kellerberrin hospital, one of the very finest. It is supported very largely by the people of the district, amongst whom the hospital conscience has been greatly developed. It seems that because a hospital is located in the country, that hospital ought to be more self-supporting than if it were in Perth. Leonora provides another instance where the people give special help to the hospital. Of course the exercise of that help is very good for the people themselves. The residents recognise that it is their duty to help maintain the hospital, but that duty is not so insistent in certain other centres. It is difficult to understand why a different policy should exist in different centres.

MR. TONKIN (North Fremantle) [11.4]: A large number of men are employed in sewerage and drainage works, and we have definite information that silicosis can be contracted as a result of working in the sewers. I should like to know if the Minister has given attention to that matter, and if so, will it be possible to declare a district in which a man shall receive compensation if, unfortunately, he should contract silicosis? I have heard it stated that there is no silicate in the sand around Perth, and therefore a man could not contract silicosis, but we now have definite information that at least one man has contracted it. If it be possible for a man to contract that disease in the sewers, it is only right that he should be able to claim compensation, the same as the silicotic man in the mines.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans—in reply) [11.5]: Regarding local efforts for the maintenance

of hospitals, neither country nor metropolitan hospitals can go on spending indefinitely without attempting to collect hospital fees, and then expect their deficits to be made up from the hospital fund.

Mr. McLarty: They make every effort to collect fees.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Some of them do not. So much has been admitted. The same reply can be made to the member for Swan. There is not a committee hospital or a district hospital that does not get a subsidy.

Mr. Sampson: But private hospitals in small districts?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No private hospital ever has had or ever will have such assistance, because under the Act it cannot be done. And why should we subsidise private hospitals? The Leader of the Opposition said there was a loss of £1,000 a year on the drug stores. If he had read the report he would have seen that the deficit last year was £143, and that previously it had exceeded £1,000. From the hospital fund point of view it showed a profit last year of over £6,000, money saved which otherwise we would have had to spend. If we had had to call tenders from the quotes that we get locally, we would have had to pay £6,000 to supply our hospitals with the necessary drugs.

Mr. Sampson: Do country hospitals get that advantage?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, every one of them. In regard to silicosis, I have taken action. I have done everything I can to persuade those interested in that man's case, and the man himself, to go to Kalgoorlie. I have offered to pay his fare up and his expenses while there, in order that he may be examined at the laboratory, which in Western Australia is the only authority on silicosis. But neither his companions nor he will go. He refused point blank. I offered to send three men to see if we could get any trace of silicosis in them at the laboratory, but they will not go.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You cannot do more than that.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £37,415—agreed to.

House adjourned at 11.9 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 27th October, 1936.

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ABSENCE OF PRESIDENT.

The ACTING CLERK: It is my duty to announce that the President is absent from Perth on public business, and it is therefore necessary for members to elect one of their number to fill the office, perform the duties and exercise the authority of President during the absence of Sir John Kirwan.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Hon. J. Cornell be elected to fill the office, perform the duties, and exercise the authority of the President during the absence of Sir John Kirwan.

Question put and passed.

The Deputy President took the Chair.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have to announce that I, on behalf of the President, have received the Auditor General's report for the year. I now lay it on the Table of the House.

QUESTION—MINERS' RELIEF COST.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What amount has the Miners' Phthisis Act cost the State? 2, What amount has been contributed by the State to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund since its inception?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, £437,324. 2, £139,776.

BILL—PEARLING CREWS ACCIDENT ASSURANCE FUND.

Further report of Committee adopted.