

The Premier: The cathedral site has gone forever.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no monopoly in that, because there is a church alongside.

Mr. Latham: There is a monopoly of electric light in the city.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That might be justified; the public have the right of control. The railways are a monopoly, but Parliament retains the power to direct the policy of the railways. There is no power under this Bill to direct what the grain growers shall do once the right is handed over for a definite period. They will be sheltered from all competition, and be able to pursue a policy which will be of advantage to those they particularly represent. I have opposed exclusive rights for pearling and for the taking of dugong and other marine products. These proposals mean giving away the right along a big frontage of our seaboard to a company for a long period, and no one else will have the right to come in and make a living. The promoters of the company should realise that if they deliver the goods within 10 years, the people of the State would not elect a representative who would disturb the good work they were doing. If we fix the term of 25 years, the people will be powerless to make a change. It is the duty of Parliament as the custodian of the public interests to protect the public rights.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: You have bulk handling on the Labour platform.

Hon. P. Collier: Bulk handling by the State.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: That is a monopoly.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The member for North Perth knows how many beans make five, and is able to distinguish between a private monopoly and a State monopoly.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: The State monopoly would not be operated for the benefit of the farmers.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Give an individual uncontrolled power, and he will misuse it; give a group of individuals uncontrolled power, and they will misuse it. The finest argument can be put up in favour of what are called "department stores," as tending to reduce prices; but avarice and greed step in, and prevent the attainment of that object. Here, in a thin House, it is proposed to give a monopoly to a private company, a monopoly which cannot be curbed if a few years later the private company seek to injure public interests. In the case of the Railway Department, rates and conditions are subject to the approval of Parliament; but that is not the case with the Midland Railway Co., who render almost any sort of service they like. We have given away our coast line for fishing purposes; we have given away our timber country; we have given away our midland country; we have given away our pastoral lands. As for exclusive rights and monopolies, if the public were given the opportunity to vote on the question, they would turn all such things down as a general principle. In exceptional cases a monopoly may be necessary. During the early days of South Australia J. H. Angas took up a huge territory, but the influx of population compelled the unlocking of those lands. What have the people of Western Australia to gain, by giving away rights and privileges for 25 years, as proposed by this measure?

Years ago I introduced into this House a Bill compelling timber companies to carry goods and passengers over their lines at Government railway rates. The measure passed this Chamber, thanks to the support of the Premier of the day; but in the Upper House the attorney of the timber companies successfully moved "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months." Where the desires of the people are in conflict with the power of privilege, privilege wins every time, because the voice of the people cannot make itself heard in another place. The Opposition would be justified in opposing every line of the Bill. If after, say, 10 years the company was able to demonstrate to the grain growers of the State that they had been able to render good service to them, a fair-minded Parliament would tell the company to go on with the good work. If the company could not show such service and had another 15 years to run, Parliament would have no right to interfere.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12-12 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 17th November, 1921.

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes, Bill re-committed for the purpose of further considering Clause 1.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title and commencement:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:— "Provided that such proclamation shall not issue before the 1st day of July, 1922."

The Bill does not affect my Province very much, but throughout the Chamber there is a feeling that it may possibly become a taxation measure. It is at the request of several members I am moving this proviso. In respect of all machinery now in force the charges have, I understand, been paid until the 30th June next. If I am wrong, the Minister will correct me. The carrying of the amendment will not cause matters to be held up at all. The Act will be proclaimed on the 1st July next, and Parliament will meet shortly after that date, and, the regulations having been laid on the Table, members will be able to see what the charges are to be, before the department have an opportunity of getting hold of the money. It is generally acknowledged that the department should be self-supporting, but not profit making. The House does not want to see the industries of the State taxed by this becoming a taxation measure. The right way of getting over the difficulty would have been to append to the Bill a schedule showing the charges proposed by the departmental officers. We can rely upon the officers seeing that the charges fixed will bring in sufficient revenue to cover the expense of administering the measure, and the public will have the protection that the proposed charges must run the gauntlet of Parliament. I desire to stress that, so far as I can learn, the whole of the charges for the current financial year have been made, covering the period until the 30th June, 1922.

The Minister for Education: Where did you get that information?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am not supposed to tell the Minister where I get my information. I make the statement believing it to be true.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This proposal was not brought under my notice until a moment ago; consequently I have had no opportunity of inquiring into it. I am not prepared to dispute Mr. Holmes's statement that the fees have been collected till the 1st July, 1922; but I fail to see how that can be the case, notwithstanding the hon. member's assurance. Certificates under the Inspection of Machinery Act are not like the registration certificates of shops, which latter are for a specific period. In respect of machinery, fees are paid when the work of inspection is done. I take it there are just as many inspections during the period from January to June as during that from July to December. When the inspection is made, a fee is charged and a certificate issued.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The certificates do not all terminate at one period of the year.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That is so. A certificate may be for a period from one week to not more than 12 months. I do not ask that Mr. Holmes shall disclose the source of his information; but the fee is payable upon inspection and upon issue of certificate, and the certificate remains in force for such period not exceeding one year as

to the officer may seem fit. The work of inspection goes on all the year round; consequently just as many certificates fall in during one month as during any other month. During last year, and during many preceding years, there was a considerable loss on the working of the department—a loss greater than that suggested by the hon. member last night, a loss at any rate exceeding £1,000 per annum. The Government have no intention whatever of making this a taxation measure; they intend only that it shall pay its way, that the people who own and operate boilers and machinery shall pay the piper in respect of this measure. The carrying of the amendment will mean that no attempt can be made to recover the position during the current financial year, that last year's loss will have to continue during the whole of this financial year. I appeal to Mr. Holmes to look into the point. Is he satisfied now that these fees are all charged to the end of June? Can that be the case? If the amendment is not carried, there will be some amendment of the fees early in the next year to some extent reducing the loss incurred on last year's working of the department.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If all our measures were considered with the care that has been devoted to this one, Western Australia would be in a much better position than it is in to-day. We are now getting, little by little, information which we ought to be able to turn up for ourselves without any difficulty, or which ought to be readily supplied by the department. Mr. Lovekin last night quoted certain official figures; but, as so frequently happens when official papers are cited, we were told that the figures were all wrong, or out of date, or meant something else.

The Minister for Education: What was quoted last night was only portion of the information.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: What I want to get at is the exact position on this question of the expenses. The Minister says the loss is nearly £1,000 per annum.

The Minister for Education: It is over £1,000 per annum.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As I said yesterday, I am entirely with the Minister that the cost of this department should be defrayed by the owners of machinery; and Mr. Lovekin agreed with that. But I support the amendment because it seems to me a very sound and proper method of putting a very small business on right lines. It will give the department time to carefully frame their estimate in respect of the inspection of machinery, and will also give the owners of machinery time to understand the position; while it will afford Parliament an opportunity for discussing the matter, if it is found to be out of order. To say that the amendment will upset the financial position of the country is simply grotesque.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I ask hon. members to compare the remarks of the Minister this afternoon with those he made when moving the second reading. Then let members read

what was said on the second reading in another place by the Minister controlling the department. Already many amendments have been made in the Bill, which has now to go back to another place. I will support the amendment.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I, too, will support the amendment, for the reason that I think the advantages it will confer are very considerable, while it threatens no disadvantages. The existing Act will remain in operation, and whether the amending legislation comes into force immediately, or in six months' time, will not matter very much in comparison with the advantages that will accrue from delay. The Bill will mean the creation of a big department, and in order to meet the increased cost high fees will have to be imposed. It is desirable that Parliament should have a check upon those fees.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Mr. Sanderson said that whenever he quoted official figures he was told they were wrong. Of course, if hon. members will pick up a document and determine that it means so and so, I cannot help it. On pages 74 and 75 of the Estimates will be found provision for salaries. Amongst those salaries are salaries attached to the Department of Inspection of Machinery. The Estimates are always divided into two sections, namely salaries and incidentals. On page 77 will be found "incidentals," amounting to £8,522. It is clearly stated that those incidentals apply to all branches. Obviously a large proportion of the travelling expenses must apply to the inspection of machinery. If hon. members had wanted the exact information, they had only to ask how much of the £8,522 applied to inspection of machinery, and I could have got them the figures. The loss last year was over £1,000. That statement is perfectly consistent with the published figures.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is absolutely competent for the Minister to say that the figures quoted on page 8 of the Estimates do not include the whole amount.

The Minister for Education: Page 8 deals with revenue.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Where are we to look in these Estimates for the cost of inspection of machinery? The Minister says they lost £1,000 on the inspection of machinery. I can quite imagine that it might be a difficult matter to give the exact figure for the inspection of machinery.

The Minister for Education: Not at all difficult.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Then why have we not had it?

The Minister for Education: You have never asked for it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The question was brought up last night. I should be the last to throw on the Minister any more work than he has already, but it is the business of his inspector to have that information at his finger tips. I do not for one moment believe that this is a taxation measure, and I agree that

the department should collect sufficient revenue to cover expenses.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I would not bind myself to say that the fees are payable from July to June of each year. I only know that my firm has paid fees for the year.

The Minister for Education: Your next door neighbour's certificate might be entirely different in point of dates.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On page 8 of the Estimates, under the heading "Inspection of machinery," the Government estimate that they will receive this year £4,700 from fees. On page 75 the amount for the inspection of machinery is given at £4,804, which leaves on that head a deficiency of only £104. On page 75 we find "Incidentals £8,522." Obviously a portion of those is applicable to the inspection of machinery.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member might argue without referring to the Estimates, which have not yet been before the House.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Very well. If there has been a loss of £1,000, a fair percentage of incidentals is being charged to the Inspection of Machinery Department. Therefore, it cannot make much difference whether the Act comes into force now or in July, because all the inspections to be made between now and July will not rob the revenue of much.

Hon. T. Moore: Only of half a thousand.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It will make very little difference, and it will be a great convenience to machinery owners to know what they have to pay.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The question is really whether the Act shall come into force on a date to be fixed by the Government or on a date to be fixed by the House. Reasons why the House should fix the date have been supplied, chiefly by the Minister himself. I was under the impression that the measure sought to secure greater safety for the lives and limbs of those engaged about machinery, but we have the admission of the Minister that there was a loss on the working of the department for last year. I have been told on good authority that the loss amounted to about £1,900. The Minister has said that the loss must cease in part, if not in whole, on the proclamation of the Act. There are several ways in which it may be made to cease. The first way in which the Minister desires that it should cease is by the imposing of increased charges. The users of machinery should know to what extent they are to be taxed in future. Economics can be effected in the Machinery Department. It should be housed with the Mines Department and the Chief Inspector of Machinery could be done away with, his office being turned into one of mining engineer. Instead of economies being effected additional imposts are going to be made.

The Minister for Education: It is intended to re-organise.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Leader of the House has said it will be some time before

the Bill comes into operation. Before the Bill can be put into effect the necessary scale of fees has to be drawn up.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And attached to the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The probabilities are that the Bill would not be proclaimed an Act until the end of March. As I represent the mining industry, I will support the amendment. There are not as many boilers in operation in the State and there is not as much machinery in operation as was the case four or five years ago. Despite that fact, these further imposts are being placed upon those who are still using such things. The fairer way would be to levy a tax on the profits of those who use machinery. Apparently what is intended is to raise more revenue so as to enable the department to pay its way.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I suggest there will have to be a terminal date if we desire to give justice to all sections of the community. That date might be the 30th June, and any certificates issued under the old Act might terminate on that date. By the beginning of July every owner will be paying practically the same charge, which would be quite equitable. If certificates were issued to-day terminating in 12 months, and the Act came into force next week and new certificates issued, a man might be penalised to the extent of paying 100 per cent. more than another man.

The Minister for Education: Whenever this Act does come into force that will happen.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: By postponing the proclamation of this Bill as an Act until the 1st July there will have to be six months given in which to come into line. Some better method must be devised for making the department pay. It should make a fresh start, and I suggest the date for this start should be the 1st July next. There is contained in the Estimates information dealing with all the departments, but one requires to be an expert in public accounts in order to arrive at it. I hope the Committee will agree to this reasonable suggestion.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	6
Majority for	7

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. H. Panton
Hon. E. H. Harris	(Teller.)
Hon. G. W. Miles	

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

Bill again reported with a further amendment.

BILL—LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 9th November.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [5.14]: The discussion so far as it has gone has been from an altogether wrong point of view. Mr. Sanderson should not have taken up the attitude he did. He pointed out that last session he forecasted what would happen when this Bill became law, and has now told us that what he forecasted has actually happened. The Chamber of Mines refused to let any tributes under the Act. I regret that the necessity for the Bill has arisen because, if the Minister for Mines had adopted the attitude which he said he would take when he introduced the Bill in another place, he would not have brought forward the present measure. We would have had a Bill to amend the Mining Act giving him the right to go on to the leases and do the tributing himself. We have to deal with the Bill as we have it presented to us, however, and it should be discussed from the point of view of the necessity for tributing in mines at all. Listening to the speech by Mr. Sanderson and the letter which he read from Mr. Black, it appeared to me that Mr. Sanderson was under the impression that tributers were on the mines for the purpose of exploiting the State and the mining companies. In the first place, the leases held by the mining companies are the property of the Crown. The ground is only leased to the companies under certain conditions for a certain period so that the companies may obtain the mineral wealth from the area covered by the lease. Past experience will show—I do not think it can be contradicted—that, almost without exception, tributers will not be found working in mines until such time as the companies themselves are unable to successfully operate those mines. Mining companies start work on a lease and having reached a certain stage in their operations, either because of the fact that their overhead charges have become too great, or the amount of gold in the ore has become so small, they find it is impossible to carry on operations successfully. The next step is to either close down the mine altogether, or let it to tributers. That, in the first instance, is the reason for the tributers participating in the mining industry. It is not a question

of putting men on piecework or of tributers endeavouring to exploit the country. It is merely a question of obtaining low grade ore under the cheapest system possible, only after the mining companies find that they are not able successfully to mine the ore. I want to deal with the matter from that point of view because, in my opinion, the mining industry will depend upon the tributers for the next few years. When mining propositions reach the stage I have indicated, they must either close down or be worked by the tributers. There are tens of thousands of tons of ore in most of the big mines in the Eastern goldfields areas which go from 15 dwts. to 40 dwts., which will remain underground forever unless the leases are worked by the tributers. Notwithstanding what Mr. Black wrote in his letter to Mr. Sanderson, in which he said that if the Bill goes through as it stands, it will mean the end of tributing, I am in as good a position to say that the reverse will be the case. During last week end, I met the representatives of the two sections of tributers on the Eastern goldfields. They are equally emphatic in their opinion that if the Bill does not go through as it stands, tributing cannot go on, as it will not pay the tributers.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Was that contention supported by evidence before the Royal Commission?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I have gone through that evidence very carefully and applied what ability I possess to the consideration of that evidence. The conclusion I arrived at regarding this Royal Commission—I do not know if it is characteristic of all Royal Commissions—

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: We have had no opportunity of reading the evidence.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The hon. member can see a copy of the evidence at the Mines Department and he can read it through for himself. I saw a copy in the possession of people who paid for their own copy. That Royal Commission was appointed for the purpose of deciding certain matters as between two sections of the community, the mine owners on the one hand, and the tributers on the other. It appeared to me analogous to an Arbitration Court case. On the one hand we had the mining companies contending that something was impossible and, on the other hand, the tributers setting out to show that what the company said was impossible, was, in fact, quite possible. If hon. members take the trouble to go through the large number of closely typed pages of evidence, they will find that on almost every item upon which evidence was taken, that evidence was most contradictory. The Commission, to put it crudely, had to decide which side "put up the best tale." I will not deal with the evidence before the Commission, however, but on the facts as I know them. Having been somewhat of a miner myself, I will endeavour to show what tribut-

ing on the mines really means. There are three parties to be considered in connection with the present measure. The first is the Crown, as the owner of the land; the second party to be considered comprises the mine owners who have leased the land from the Crown, and the third party comprises the tributers who are sub-lessees from the mine owners. To determine the position regarding tributing, we have to decide what actuates that aspect of the mining industry. Members will realise that the mining companies fall into a number of groups. First, there are the mining companies who directly operate their mines and who are in a prosperous condition. If a company is successful and prosperous it will not let tributers. Almost invariably that is the case. There are those companies who are unable to wholly successfully operate their properties, those who have failed to operate successfully; and, finally, those companies who cannot operate because they have not sufficient capital. We find that the last mentioned companies are those who let their leases on tribute. This means that the bulk of the mining industry during the next few years, will fall on the tributers, and, among the mines around Kalgoorlie and Boulder, which district embraces the principal centre where tributing is done, at present there are four companies who are wholly and directly operating their own mines; three are operating jointly with tributers and three are operating through tributers, while six are wholly manned by tributers. That is the position to-day and proves that the maintenance of the industry at the present juncture practically falls on the tributers. Hon. members should consider this question from the point of view of the State and not from the standpoint of the tributers or from the standpoint of the mining companies themselves. It is interesting to examine the tenure and terms of mining leases throughout the world. I have a few here which I would like to present to members. They are taken from Wagnall's International Mining Law, which is regarded as the leading authority in the mining world. In Canada, which covers New Brunswick, the unit claims are of three-quarters of an acre each and the number which can be taken up is unlimited. The lease has a duration of 20 years with a maximum period of 80 years. The fees and rentals collected from the companies—and this is an important point regarding my argument—amount to 50 cents, per unit per annum, and the royalty on the gross value of the product of the mines amounts to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Does that refer to gold mining only?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No, to all mining operations. In Nova Scotia the unit claims are of three-quarters of an acre each and, as with Canada, there is no limit to the number that can be taken up. The leases have a duration of 20 years with a maximum of 40 years. The rental is 50 cents per unit per annum, and the royalty 2 per cent. on the

gross products. Dealing with South Africa, in Rhodesia the unit claims comprise 2 1/15 acres, with a maximum of 10 claims aggregating 20½ acres. There is a perpetual lease on joint account with the British South Africa Company; the royalty amounts to £4 7s. per acre and 30 per cent. royalty to the British South Africa Company. In the Transvaal, the unit claims are of 1½ acres in extent, with a maximum of 50 claims equaling 68.87 acres. The mining claim is held on a monthly basis at the Commissioner's discretion, and whilst the rent is paid. The rent is 20s. per month or £7 7s. per acre per annum, forfeitable immediately upon default of prompt payment of monthly fees. The mining there has to be diligently and continuously pursued to the satisfaction of the Commissioner. In Egypt the leases can comprise 1,280 acres, covering 30 years or a maximum of 40 years. There the State obtains £2 5s. per acre with 2 per cent. royalty on the gross yield. Coming to Australia, in New South Wales, 25 acres can be granted on a lease of 20 years with a maximum of 40 years and the rent there is 5s. per acre with royalty at 1 per cent. per man per two acres after the first 12 months. In Queensland, the area of the tenement reaches 50 acres with a lease for 21 years or a maximum of 42 years, and the rental there is 20s. per acre with no royalty. In South Australia the leases are 20 acres in extent, with a maximum period for the lease of 42 years. The rental there is 1s. per acre with a royalty of 2½ per cent. In Tasmania the maximum area is 40 acres with a lease the maximum period for which is 42 years and the rental 20s. per acre. In Victoria the maximum area is 640 acres on perpetual lease, the rental being 20s. 6d. per acre. In Western Australia the area reaches 24 acres the lease being for a period of 21 years and the rental 20s. per acre. There is this difference regarding the Victorian conditions, where leases of 640 acres can be obtained, that the great bulk of the mining done in that State is of the alluvial type, which necessitates a larger acreage being granted to admit of operations being carried on successfully. In other districts, where mining is carried on at depth, there is not that necessity for the large acreage. Probably this accounts for the difference where Victorian figures are concerned. In Western Australia the mining companies have generous terms. There is no royalty imposed. The Crown does not get a penny royalty on the mineral wealth produced in Western Australia. In view of that fact, I think we should expect that the mining companies, when they find it impossible to successfully carry on operations owing to their own overhead charges, should be equally generous in their dealings with their sub-lessees as the Crown has been with the companies themselves.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: They pay plenty of duty to the State.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is due to the amounts chargeable on the value of the gold

ore and on their dividends, and I think they are such that the State should be entitled to those payments.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I referred to the duty on machinery.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That applies to every industry. The farmers will say that the State collects a fair amount of duty from them, and I think they are pretty right too. Not only are the companies well treated, but the State has gone to enormous expense to provide water supplies, railways, geological survey, State batteries and prospecting plant in addition to a highly trained technical staff. All these things have been provided, not only for the benefit of the State, but largely for the benefit of the mining companies. I admit that the fact of the money being spent in the industry is of very great value to the State. Having spent all this money, a large amount of mineral wealth in low-grade propositions remains underground. This could be obtained by the tributers if they were given a fair opportunity and were not charged exorbitant rates, and the State would reap the benefit of the raising of that gold which otherwise would be left in the earth. As to the manning conditions, when the State lets a lease to a mining company it requires only one man to six acres and the depth is unlimited. When the companies come to sublet to the tributer, an average two-man block contains less than a quarter of an acre and is usually limited to a depth of 100 feet. Quite a lot of people are of the opinion that the tributer is making an enormous sum of money.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Twelve pounds a week, is it not?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: A tributer might make £12 a week out of one parcel of ore, but I have some figures here which will give members an idea of their returns. This is a statement of Duke and party working in oxidised ore on the Lake View and Star. Mr. Duke has been tributating on the Golden Mile during the last 20 years, and has been on the verge of starvation at times. He made sufficient out of a nice tribute to build a beautiful home and when he took on the next tribute he found it necessary to mortgage the place. The great majority of the tributers are not doing well. Duke and party got a parcel of 97,712 tons of ore and the value on which the company paid was £4 an ounce, working out at £204 7s. 6d. The companies say they can obtain only 85 per cent. extraction; consequently 15 per cent. was deducted, equal to £30 13s. 1d., leaving a total of £173 14s. 5d. The treatment charges were 17s. 6d. a ton, totalling £85 10s.; the royalty on the amount of £173 14s. 5d. was £12 14s.; stores, including fracteur and fuse obtained from the company, cost £12 8s. 7d.; insurance on the men £2 11s. 11d.; revenue stamps 3d.; making the total charges, including royalty, £122 5s. 1d. This, deducted from the £173 14s. 5d., left £51 9s. 4d., representing the cheque which the tributers received. But the tributers had other charges to meet. This party had to cart the ore from the shaft to the battery at a cost

of £12 2s. 6d.; an outside assay cost 15s., and other stores £11 11s., making a total of £24 8s. 7d. The net amount to the party was £27 0s. 10d. It took 90 shifts to break that 97 odd tons of ore and these men actually earned 6s. 3d. per shift in respect of the parcel of ore. This represents the position of quite a lot of tributers.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I wonder that they stick to it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Probably the hon. member has never been out prospecting for gold; it is even more fascinating than two-up.

Hon. J. Ewing: I think you are right.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: There is always the fascination of striking perhaps 1,000 ounces in the next fortnight and consequently they keep going. The point I want to make is that, when these men go into a block, they have practically to prospect, and if they do well the companies do well. However well the tributers do, the companies do equally well, because they get the whole of the treatment charges of 17s. 6d. per ton and the 12½ per cent. royalty. The average price of gold at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, prior to the premium being paid, was £4 4s. 11½d. per ounce.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is the standard value.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: What is the premium worth to-day?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: About 25s. The tributer is paid £4 per ounce. The companies argue that they buy the ore on a sample value of £4 per ounce, although the standard value of gold is £4 4s. 11½d. The 4s. 11½d. does not go to the tributers; the companies deduct it. Then they deduct 10 or 15 per cent. to cover non-extraction and then they take the royalty off the value of the gold at £4 an ounce. Since the premium has been paid on gold, the value, roughly speaking, has been £5 10s. an ounce.

The Minister for Education: It is £5 4s. now.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: That is near enough for the purpose of my argument. Say the premium on the gold extracted from a parcel of ore was £50, the companies take 12½ per cent. royalty out of that and then divide it fifty-fifty with the tributer. If there were any equity in the business at all, the tributer should first get the standard value for his gold. The companies get their treatment costs and should not take the royalty out of the premium. I maintain that the tributers are not getting a fair deal with regard to the royalty. There is another question which will create a good deal of debate, namely, that of extraction. The question of extraction has been a big factor in the dispute between the tributers and the Chamber of Mines. The companies contended before the Royal Commission that they could not obtain 90 per cent. extraction, but I find in a book entitled "Mining Costs of the World" presented to the Mechanics' Institute by the Chamber of Mines, and which, therefore,

ought to carry some weight, that in 1911 and 1912 the Associated Gold Mines obtained 92.57 and 94.29 per cent. extraction from 7-dwt. ore. In 1910 and 1911 the Associated Northern Blocks reported having obtained 94.55 and 92.9 per cent. extraction from 7-dwt. ore. The Kalgurli Gold Mines Ltd. reported in 1910, 1911, and 1912 94.32 per cent. from 11.6 dwt. ore; 94.75 and 93.67 per cent. from 10.2 dwt. ore, or a mean extraction, if we take the whole lot, of 93.27 per cent. from 8.9 dwt. ore. These figures are taken from the official reports obtained by those gentlemen who compiled the mining costs of the world. The figures were supplied by the Chamber of Mines.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They show how good an extraction can be got from the ore.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The evidence goes to show that they cannot get 70 per cent. extraction.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I suppose the Royal Commission had the opportunity of considering all that you are saying?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: They may have done.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I am only asking for information.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That evidence was not supplied.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Did not Mr. Worthy quote those figures?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The hon. member had better ask Mr. Worthy.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I understand he did.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: He may have done so, but the point I want to make is that if those are the official figures of the mining companies for the years 1910 to 1912, I want to know whether the mining representatives can tell me how it is that the companies cannot obtain 90 per cent. to-day. Surely they cannot make me believe that between 1912 and 1920 machinery has so deteriorated that they are not able to as successfully deal with the ore as they did then. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent on machinery since 1910.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: The quality of the ore might be poorer.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It does not matter whether the ore is 10 dwt. or 20 dwt., so long as it is oxidised ore, but there may be a difference where sulphide ore is concerned. They have, however, overcome the difficulty by mixing one with the other and in doing that they can obtain a good extraction.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Is there such a thing as refractory ore?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, but the refractory ores of to-day are no different from what they were 20 years ago.

Hon. T. Moore: Or the refractory men.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: They are not nearly so refractory to-day as they were in the old days. The nature of the ore does not count so much; the improvement in machinery together with scientific knowledge and general experience have proved that it is possible to obtain an extraction equal to that obtained in 1912.

Consequently the tributers are justified in demanding a 90 per cent. extraction so far as their ore is concerned. I desire to say a few words with regard to royalty. According to the evidence which was taken in 1903, the Kalgoorlie amalgamated companies accepted a flat rate royalty of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., irrespective of the value of the ore, whether it was 10 dwt. or 40 dwt. ore. I have here a table of eight mines and the information contained in the table was submitted to the Commission. It shows an average from 7 dwt. ore of from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 25 per cent. To-day the Perseverance Mine, the whole of the work on which is being done by tributers, is receiving in royalty from 7 dwt. ore 9 per cent.; from 9 dwt. ore 10 per cent.; from 12 dwt. ore 12 per cent.; from 20 dwt. ore 15 per cent.; from 30 dwt. ore 20 per cent.; from 40 dwt. ore 25 per cent.; from 80 dwt. ore 30 per cent.; and over 80 dwts. 40 per cent. I claim in view of the fact that the companies are not paying royalty to the Crown, the tributers have a right to expect from the company a little more equitable division than they are getting to-day.

Hon. J. Duffell: The company would have to pay interest on the machinery which they have on the mine.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If it were not for the tributers working under the conditions they are doing, the company would have to keep its mine closed down. Owing to overhead charges the big mines are unable to work. Consequently they let tributers in. The tributers say that if the companies are not prepared to give them equity and justice, the work will not be done and the legislature should step in.

Hon. J. Duffell: The tributers use the machinery belonging to the company.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, but they pay 17s. 6d. per ton to the companies for the use of that machinery, and in addition to that they pay royalty. These particular costs have advanced in the course of a few years from 7s. 6d. to 17s. 6d. But the men are not complaining about that; they complain about the royalty and the extraction. I have endeavoured to place the position as it appeals to me before hon. members. As I see it, and as Mr. Sanderson said last session, if the Bill goes through there will be no tributers left. I am sorry to say, after having discussed the position with the tributers, that if the present Bill does not give them a fair chance of making a living, these men will not take any tributes and the ore which is lying idle will remain unworked, and the State will suffer a loss. I hope hon. members will consider the matter not from the point of view of how it will affect the individual, but how it will affect the State as a whole.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM (North-East) [5.55]: Last session we were called upon to pass an amendment of the Mining Act for the purpose of covering tribute agreements. As a result of the passing of that measure,

tributing work ceased on the Eastern goldfields. The real object of amending our mining laws relating to tributating last year was to bring into use large areas of land containing gold areas held as gold mining leases. Tributating ceased owing to the fact that the mine owners were not prepared to let tributates in accordance with the Act passed last year. I do not wish to dwell at any length on the action of the mine owners, but I do desire to bring under notice the fact that if mine owners are going to take up the position that they are not prepared to do business in accordance with the law as enacted by Parliament, then perhaps at a later date other people may take up a similar stand. Following on the refusal of the mine owners to let tributates, the Minister for Mines appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into what was known as the deadlock between the mine owners and the tributers. As a result of the investigation, the Bill we have now before us was drafted, and we are asked to pass it with the full knowledge of the fact that the mine owners absolutely refuse to honour the legislation which was enacted last year. What guarantees have we that in the event of the passage of this Bill, the mine owners will not take up a similar position to that which they took up in the early part of this year? They certainly had their witnesses before the Royal Commission, but in the event of some hitch occurring they will be in the same position of being able to refuse permission to any tributer, or party of tributers, to enter on their leases. The real object of the amending legislation of last session was to bring into production large areas of land which were not being worked, and I desire to draw attention to this fact that although we have a Bill before us at the present time, it does not contain any provision which will compel land now held up to be brought to a state of production, either by the companies themselves or by tributers. That perhaps is a phase of the question which was not dealt with by the Royal Commission, and apparently has been lost sight of by the Minister for Mines and the Government. We know that on the Eastern Goldfields, and for that matter throughout our gold mining areas, there are companies holding mining leases which they operate under the provision of the Mining Act permitting concentration of labour. Particularly is that the case in and around Kalgoorlie. Valuable mining lands are hung up, and have for years been hung up, without any considerable development work being carried on. In my opinion, if Parliament desires to assist the development of the mining industry, our mining law must be amended so as to permit of concentration of labour only in a most urgent case. I refer to a case where a company, having taken up a new leasehold, find themselves in financial difficulties, perhaps owing to limited capital, and thus prevented from working the whole of their leases in a particular locality. In that event concentration of labour might be allowed. But Parliament should take such action as will prevent what has

been going on for years past, companies holding up valuable mining lands and thus retarding the progress of the mining industry and also to a great extent the progress of the State as a whole. Before the Royal Commission it was stated that a certain company now operating on the Golden Mile hold about 600 acres of land as goldmining leases, and that in respect of the majority of the leaseholds there is concentration of labour. Some of those leaseholds have only been worked on tribute, and not at all by the company themselves in such a way as most companies have operated their leases. Until the Government take some action in the direction I have indicated, not much can be done towards the substantial development of the mineral areas now held in idleness. Such action is the duty of the Government in the interests of the communities directly concerned, the people working, and living, and doing business, in and around our goldfields. There is another matter of great importance to the goldmining industry, and that relates to mines which have been actively operated by companies for a number of years, the companies eventually ceasing mining operations. We all know that some valuable mines have been closed down, and that the water has been allowed to rise in them, with a resultant distinct loss not only to the miners and the goldfields community, but to the State as well. To my mind, when a company have operated for a number of years and thereupon have reached what they term the unpayable stage, the land should be made available to tributers immediately. That position does not obtain to-day; it rests entirely with the management of the company to hold the ground in idleness or to let it on tribute. Such are some of the difficulties with which the mining community is faced at present. I am disappointed with the Bill. It deals only with one matter—the grievance of the tributer against the mine owner. Had the whole question of mining received adequate consideration, the Bill would have contained a provision designed to bring idle mineral lands into use. Now as regards the work of the Royal Commission: I was in Kalgoorlie for some days while the Commission were taking evidence and sifting evidence, and I am bound to say that I was disappointed with the work of the Commission throughout that period. Nobody seemed to be taking any particular interest in the Commission's work, and, generally speaking, the Commissioners themselves did not appear over-anxious regarding the question they had to examine, though I should say that one Commissioner, Mr. Munsie, did his level best to keep the thing alive and get the best possible results in the interests of all concerned. Had Mr. Munsie not taken such an active part, the Commission would have simply faded out of existence. Therefore I do not attach too much importance to the Commission's recommendations. As to the Bill itself, I shall support the second reading. Before concluding I desire to refer to Mr. Sanderson's observations of a few

days ago on the second reading. Mr. Sanderson said—

The measure enacted last session caused tributing to cease. It was a most discreditable performance on the part of members claiming to represent the mining industry, to pass a measure that is now thrown into the waste-paper basket.

I claim that ours was not a discreditable performance. I make that claim as the representative of a goldmining constituency, and as representing the industry in addition to the men engaged in it. The measure enacted last session was, I contend, equitable and satisfactory. Had the Act been given a trial, it would have been time enough for Mr. Sanderson to tell us that on the occasion in question we did something discreditable, as representatives of the mining community. I am not prepared to accept Mr. Sanderson's strictures. My firm belief is that had the Act been given a fair trial, the results would have been satisfactory. However, the Act has not had a fair trial in any way. Let me add that I personally prefer that piece of legislation to the present Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 17th November, 1921.

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

QUESTION—WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT, FUND.

Mr. MUNSIE asked the Premier: 1, Have the Government increased the premiums under the Workers' Compensation Act since the liabilities have been increased