

and administration. The only way we can adequately deal with the position is to place the details before some independent tribunal. I do not want a Royal Commission packed with medical men. I would be willing to give my evidence, and so would other medical practitioners, before a man skilled in the taking of evidence. We have already had a report from one such man when Mr. Justice Wolff submitted his well-compiled report on the University of Western Australia—a rather intricate matter. It would not be beyond Mr. Justice Wolff's capacity to investigate health matters in relation to Western Australia because the facts would be placed before him by those most interested. If the Royal Commissioner required assistance from a medical standpoint, the Government would naturally appoint someone fully qualified for that work, preferably someone from without the State. I do not think the medical profession would object to the appointment of a Royal Commission so long as the commissioner was a man trained in the taking of evidence.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 4th December, 1945.

ASSEMBLY, TUESDAY, 4TH DECEMBER.

	PAGE
Questions: Soldier settlement, as to properties offered to Government	2373
Wheat, as to price and stabilisation scheme	2373
Bills: Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment, 1R.	2373
Legislative Council Referendum, 1R.	2373
Hospital Benefits Agreement, 1R.	2373
City of Perth Sanitation, 1R.	2373
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Com.	2374
Milk, Message, 2R.	2374
Adoption of Children Act Amendment, 2R.	2379
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, Message	2380
Public Works Act Amendment, returned	2380
Criminal Code Amendment, returned	2380
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 2R.	2380
Timber Industry (Housing of Employees), 2R.	2382
Land Act Amendment, Com.	2384
Commonwealth Powers, Council's amendments	2384
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	2390

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

QUESTIONS.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

As to Properties Offered to Government.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Is it his intention to lay upon the Table of the House all papers in connection with private properties that have been offered to the Government for purchase for the purpose of soldier settlement?

2, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, It is expected that several hundred privately-owned farms will be purchased and a great number of papers will be created in connection with each. If the papers in respect of any particular purchase are required, they may be supplied.

WHEAT.

As to Price and Stabilisation Scheme.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Have decisions been arrived at—(a) as to the price of wheat to be paid for the coming season; (b) as to a wheat stabilisation scheme, and if so what is the scheme in outline; (c) as to necessary Federal or Federal-State legislation?

2, If these matters have not been finalised when—in view of the urgency of the matters involved—can a decision be expected?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, No official information is at present available.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Superannuation and Family Benefits Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Legislative Council Referendum.

Introduced by the Minister for Justice.

3, Hospital Benefits Agreement.

Introduced by the Minister for Health.

4, City of Perth Sanitation.

Introduced by Mr. Cross.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 29th November. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 22—New section, jetties:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Consideration of the clause was postponed because of queries raised by members, and I indicated that the Government would be prepared to accept any suitable amendment. Attempts were made to find satisfactory wording, but this could not be done on the spur of the moment. I move an amendment—

That after the word "directs" in line 2 of proposed new Section 234A, the words "and the Council agrees" be inserted.

If the amendment be agreed to, a consequential amendment will be necessary in line 4 of the proposed new section. These two alterations will enable any council to refuse to agree; and in such event the jetty will not be regarded as being within the district of the local governing authority concerned, and consequently it will have no legal responsibility in connection with any such jetty.

Mr. DONEY: I raise no objection to the amendment. It seems to embody a fair answer to all the objections various members have raised.

Mr. CROSS: I think the Minister intends to include road boards as well.

The Minister for Works: Not in this Bill. This deals with the Municipal Corporations Act.

Mr. CROSS: I know! It is intended to hand over jetties to the councils, and that would apply to the municipal corporations of Perth and Claremont; but road boards are affected.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the hon. member cannot discuss road boards under this measure.

Mr. HILL: I think this amendment will be acceptable to my council. I recently toured the South-West and saw a jetty at Busselton. We have a jetty at Albany which is far superior, but it has been shamefully neglected by the Railway Department and the Government. Had this clause not been altered, the Government would have

had power to pass that on to the municipality. Last Monday week the municipality of Albany had a chance of taking over the jetty at £1 a year rental, but refused to accept responsibility for its maintenance.

Mr. NORTH: I am pleased with this amendment; but there is an urgent problem arising which cannot be dealt with by this Bill regarding the Cottesloe jetty. That is not yet under the control of the Cottesloe Council and cannot be under the Bill. Yet that jetty in one place is standing on one leg and has a dangerous lurch and there may be thousands on it in the next two or three weeks. While I support the amendment, I would indicate that I intend to ask a question on the matter I have mentioned.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of proposed new Section 234A, after the word "directs" the words "and the Council agrees" be inserted.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—MILK.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [4.46] in moving the second reading said: The Milk Board has been in existence for about 13 years, and many requests have been made that it should be given permanence and also that its powers should be considerably extended. Great public interest has been aroused on the question of milk supply in this State, and many people have indicated their views as to what should and what should not be provided in that regard. Requests have been made for the Act to apply to other districts as well as to the metropolitan area, it being pointed out that if it is a good thing for the metropolitan area to be assured of obtaining a good, wholesome milk supply, it is equally good for other areas of the State

to be similarly assured. The logic of that argument is difficult to refute, and the Bill is to make provision for an extension of the area covered by this legislation. It is intended to give permanence to the board and to grant it additional powers so that an improvement in the State's milk supply can be effected.

It cannot be said that the board has given complete satisfaction to everybody; that, of course, is impossible. No board, however good, would give complete satisfaction. Neither would any member of Parliament, nor any Minister! One will find disagreement upon lines of policy—at times, quite violent disagreement. All that one can expect is that a board shall meet with the approval of the vast majority of people; and I think it can be truly said that the Milk Board has brought about a very great improvement in the industry, has given to the producers a guaranteed income, and has also guaranteed consumers a regular supply of good quality milk. I know it will be said that a great deal has not been done, so far, towards providing the State with a milk supply that can be said to be free from tuberculosis germs. It is intended in this Bill to give the board power to have the dairy herds in the State tested, and the reactors destroyed, with a view to reaching a position, ultimately, where for all practical purposes the herds can be said to be free from tuberculosis. To enable that to be done, it is proposed to use certain funds that at present stand to the credit of the Dairy-men's Compensation Fund and the Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund. It is proposed to use those funds to meet the immediate impact of the cost of destroying the diseased animals, and subsequently to meet the cost of improving all dairy herds in this way by a contribution not in excess of one farthing per gallon from the producers, with a contribution of a like amount by the State Treasury.

In order to get the views of various people in the State in different sections of the industry, and to have an over-all picture of the position, my predecessor in office, the present Premier, appointed an inter-departmental committee to take evidence and, in due course, to submit a report. The Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Mr. McKenzie Clark, was appointed chairman of that committee,

and had with him Dr. Kingsbury, Bacteriologist and Deputy Commissioner for Public Health, Mr. Cullity, Superintendent of Dairying, and Mr. Stannard, Chairman of the Metropolitan Milk Board. Those gentlemen were in a position, because of their existing backgrounds, to carry out a comprehensive survey of the position and to bring to bear on the evidence brought forward a knowledge and thought which would enable them to put up a worthwhile report. That they did. They took evidence from a number of representative people and visited a number of dairies in the dairying districts, and then submitted recommendations which they considered necessary to bring about a supply of high quality milk in this State.

The Bill follows fairly closely the recommendations of the committee, but we have not included a provision for compulsory pasteurisation. That will upset some people, while receiving the approval of others, because, as with all questions, there is room in it for difference of opinion. The Government believes it is not right at this stage to say to people, "The only class of milk you can have is pasteurised milk, and you can have nothing else." If people require pasteurised milk and are satisfied that they should have it, the demand for it will inevitably increase its supply, with a consequent diminution of the supply of milk not pasteurised. On the other hand, if the people desire to have milk in its raw state, and to do the scalding themselves, and that demand continues, it will take far longer to reach the stage where we will have an almost complete pasteurisation of the milk supply in this State.

The Government believes that instead of making pasteurisation compulsory it is at present better to prescribe the conditions under which milk will be pasteurised, so that the product will be guaranteed to the people who want pasteurised milk, leaving the rest to a change in public opinion and demand. In that regard the Government has not followed the recommendation of the inter-departmental committee, though it has done so as to testing for T.B. The Government also believes it is highly desirable that the people of the State be assured of a milk supply free from tubercular infection. It is intended that a system of inspection will be carried out in order that

diseased animals may be discovered and destroyed. As I have indicated, the owners of those animals will be compensated. Where it is decided that a herd is diseased and the dairyman must cease supplying milk from it, he will be compensated not only for the loss resulting from the action taken in destroying his animals, but also for the loss of revenue through his being prevented from continuing to supply milk.

The existing legislation provides that where the board revokes a license, because the milk supply is unsatisfactory, the dairyman shall have right of appeal. At the present time, pending the appeal, the dairyman is permitted to go on for several weeks supplying milk of an unsatisfactory quality, but that is considered undesirable and, under the Bill now before the House, it is intended that as soon as a dairyman is told that his milk supply is unsatisfactory and that he must cease supplying, to save time appeal can be made to the Minister. In the meantime, he must cease supplying milk. If the appeal to the Minister is upheld, the dairyman will be compensated for the loss of revenue during that period. I think it will be agreed that that method is preferable to the one operating at present where the dairyman may, for a period of weeks, continue to supply milk that the board regards as unsatisfactory, pending an appeal which might take a number of weeks to hear. We intend that as soon as the license is revoked the dairyman shall cease to supply milk.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Who will have jurisdiction in country areas?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board will still issue the revocation, and will work in conjunction with inspectors of the Department of Agriculture. When the dairyman is told that he can no longer supply milk, he can appeal to the Minister and, if the appeal is successful, he will be compensated for his loss.

Mr. Doney: What line of action will you take if an appeal is made to you?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Do not anticipate! I am dealing now with the provisions of the Bill, and not the lines that the Minister would take if an appeal came before him. He would deal with the appeal on the facts of the case, and on the evidence presented.

Mr. Doney: That is what I wanted.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Had the member for Williams-Narrogin considered for a moment he would have seen that there was no necessity to ask such a question. A number of requests have been received from Kalgoorlie, in particular, that the legislation should be made to apply to the Goldfields, and it is right that people residing there and elsewhere should have the same protection and guarantee as people in the metropolitan area, and the Bill therefore proposes to prescribe other areas for the supply and distribution of milk to the people. Certain of those areas can be left out of the provisions if the circumstances are such as to indicate that they should not be included. There is power under the Bill to extend the operations of the legislation to areas other than the metropolitan districts.

With regard to the constitution of the board, there is very little alteration as compared with the provision in the existing legislation, with the difference that it is intended to provide now for the representatives of dairymen to be dairymen. Under the present legislation it is possible for a man to continue on the board as a representative of the dairymen after he has ceased to be engaged as a dairyman. It is intended to prevent that in future, and so the representatives of the dairymen will themselves have to be dairymen. Further, it is intended to prescribe two districts for the purpose of the election of dairymen-representatives, and one shall be elected from each district.

Mr. McLarty: What do you mean by two districts? Will one represent the suppliers of the metropolitan area, and the other the dairymen in the country areas?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Two separate districts, to be determined as fairly representative districts for the purposes of the election of representatives, will be chosen. The hon. member would not ask me to define the boundaries now. Instead of saying that two men on the board shall be representative of the dairymen as a body, it is intended that there shall be two districts defined for the purpose, and it will be made perfectly clear that the dairymen in one district shall have a representative and that those in the other district shall have the second representative. Collectively, all dairymen will have representatives on the board in the two persons

elected in that way. It is required that there shall be effected very considerable improvements in the conditions of some of the dairies in the different areas; not all of them have been up to standard.

Mr. McLarty: Although the great majority of them are.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the member for Murray-Wellington would only give me sufficient time, I would say that myself.

The Minister for Railways: Most of them are in his electorate.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Most of the producers, as a body, can be complimented on the way in which they have endeavoured to keep their premises clean and up to standard, and also upon the manner in which they have endeavoured to improve their herds. They have been most anxious to co-operate with the Department of Agriculture and to effect improvement in the standards of their herds and, consequently, in the quality of the milk they supply. The great majority of them are anxious to do that, but there are some whose premises are not satisfactory and their milk could contaminate the whole of the supply. Thus it is necessary where there are a few not supplying satisfactory milk because of the condition of their premises, for the board to have power to discipline such people and cause them to effect improvements to bring their premises up to standard.

It was found in some instances when the inter-departmental committee went into this matter, that wells which were being used for a water supply were below the level of the surrounding ground, with the result that there was quite a possibility of drainage from the cowsheds finding its way into the wells with the consequent pollution of the water. That condition of affairs could not be tolerated, and where such conditions exist—they are by no means frequent—they will have to be improved. We will not then have any such potential source of danger to the milk supply. One of the big difficulties in the country districts is the question of water supplies, and it is realised that not only do we require good clean water, but an adequate supply of it. Water is freely used in the cleaning of dairies, the washing of machines and utensils, and so forth. Without a good supply of water a dairyman is in difficulties, and that has

been a problem very difficult for good, conscientious dairymen completely to solve. Then again cool water is required, and that is not always easy to come by.

Having regard to the difficulties that do exist, the impossible will not be expected, but steps must be taken to have improvements effected where it is felt that such improvements are possible. The aim of the legislation is to give to the people of the State a germ-free, good-quality milk supply. For that reason the board is to be clothed with more power to bring that about. Greater co-operation and co-ordination are visualised between the board, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Health. If we can get that better co-ordination of effort, we shall be able to make better use of inspectors who will be able, in turn, to get better results and so secure a general improvement all round. I deprecate the fact that in recent weeks considerable propaganda has been indulged in which has resulted in a great diminution of the milk consumed in Western Australia.

To use the vernacular, a number of people have got "the wind up" because they have come to the conclusion that the milk supply is full of T.B. germs. I do not think that conclusion is justified by any means. It is not fair to compare the conditions in this country where we have plenty of sunshine, with those obtaining in other countries where cattle remain for large portions of the year in barns or stalls and get very little sunshine. It is true there is a high incidence in some countries because of those conditions, but it would be safe to say that in Australia, and especially in Western Australia, with its sunny skies, there would be far less tuberculosis in our herds than is apparent in the herds of other countries. However, it is admitted that T.B. does exist here, and it is highly desirable that steps should be taken to have herds tested and diseased animals eradicated from the herds. It is proposed that that shall be done, but I do not think there is any need for people to be as scared as they are; because I am satisfied that when the cattle here are tested, the incidence of the disease will be found to be not nearly so high as it is believed in some quarters.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And the infection is not so high as in some places.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As a matter of fact, the infection is very low. The inter-departmental committee took evidence on the point, and elicited information from doctors and from hospitals about cases receiving treatment. The committee did not put forward any alarming figures which would justify the propaganda that has been indulged in during recent weeks. I repeat that it is admitted that tuberculosis does exist in the cattle, although we cannot assume from that that the germs find their way into the milk. It is possible to have a beast infected with T.B. and its milk to be quite pure. It is certainly wrong to assume that because cattle are suffering from T.B. their milk supply is diseased and unwholesome.

Instances have come before the board where adulteration has been practised by people engaged in the distribution and sale of milk. Even though such adulteration may not result in the supply of a product, which upon chemical analysis, is found to be less than standard, nevertheless any such adulteration should not be permitted. It is intended to give the board power to deal with that phase, and therefore it is provided that, without permission, separators cannot be used at depots where milk is brought in, the obvious reason being that if separators were permitted it would be possible to separate milk which was very high in butter-fat contents and so use portion of the excess to bring under-standard milk up to the required standard. In fact, the effect would be to reduce the standard of good quality milk, and steps will be taken to prevent that. Members will agree that that is a desirable provision. If it is found necessary for a separator to be used, a permit can be issued; and the board will then have an opportunity to determine whether such separator is proposed to be used for any wrongful purpose.

I think that covers fairly well the provisions of the Bill which may appear rather bulky to members. Its size has been necessitated by the fact that in order to effect the desired amendments it was found preferable to introduce an entirely new measure. Most of its clauses are similar to the sections in the existing Act, and therefore the Bill should not take as long to consider as one might expect at first glance at its size. I regret it was not introduced at an

earlier stage. It was my desire that it should have been brought before members earlier, but it could not be done. The matter had to be considered a number of times, and difficulty was experienced with the Government Printing Office because of the accumulation of work to be attended to there and the number of Bills that required attention at the one time. The Government Printer has had to work overtime to cope with the task and, in fact, a combination of circumstances has brought about the delay which, I assure the House, could not be avoided.

I think, however, that once members read the Bill they will discover a great deal in it that is not new. Much of it belongs to the existing legislation, so that the time to be taken in considering it will be much less than would ordinarily be expected.

Mr. McLarty: On what basis will the price of milk be fixed in future; on the same basis as that in the existing Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The board will have power to fix the price of milk and also to fix the charges for transport within an area, recognising that those charges will have a bearing on the cost of the milk.

Mr. Abbott: Will it have any relation to the price of butter-fat?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The standard quality of milk is fixed. On that point, now that the member for North Perth has mentioned it, representatives were made to the department that the standard should be raised. It was maintained that it was possible to supply milk with a higher butter-fat content; but we in this State have a particular breed of cow which yields a good quality milk; and, to have agreed to the raising of the standard, the first requisite would be to eliminate those herds as a source of milk supply. That was thought undesirable. Those animals, whilst they do not give a milk particularly high in butter-fat content, nevertheless supply a milk which is regarded as being of good quality, and that is the reason we did not accede to the request that the standard should be considerably raised.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Is there any power of direction given to the board by the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The board is to be given power to

direct that milk shall be supplied to certain persons or institutions. This provision is included to deal with situations that have arisen in the past, where hospitals required milk and the board did not have power to direct that it should be supplied. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [5.17] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a very short one and it is an amendment which I feel will meet with ready acceptance by the House. Its purpose is to amend the Adoption of Children Act in order to permit of this State entering into a reciprocal arrangement with the other States, or with any territory of the Commonwealth, for the notification of adoptions. The Bill, if passed, will empower the Minister administering the law of this State relating to adoption of children to make arrangements for the transmission to or by him, as the case requires, of a copy of any adoption order concerning a child born in this State and adopted in another State or territory, or born in some other State or territory and adopted in this State. When an adoption occurs in Western Australia and the Registrar-General is notified by the Supreme Court, the fact of the adoption is endorsed on the original birth certificate of the child.

Should an application be made to the Registrar-General for a copy of the original entry of birth of an adopted child, the Registrar-General would see, on referring to his records, that the child had been adopted, and he would not furnish the information. However, in the case of a child born in another State and adopted in Western Australia, the Registrar of Births in the State where the child was born would have no record of the adoption; and, in the event of an application being made to him for a copy of the birth certificate, he would doubtless issue it. It might be most undesirable that a copy of the original birth

certificate of an adopted child should be supplied; consequently, the aim of this legislation is to enable reciprocal arrangements to be made between the Ministers in the various States, so that immediately an adoption order is made in one State a copy of that order can be transmitted to the State where the child was born, and the fact noted on the birth certificate.

An application by a person subsequently for a copy of the birth certificate would cause an investigation to be made, and the Registrar-General would immediately see that the child had been adopted. He would therefore decline to furnish a copy of the original birth certificate. This legislation is solely in the interests of adopted children. Western Australia is the only State which, so far, has not passed this reciprocal legislation. All the other States have done so in turn and it remains for us to fall into line.

Mr. J. Hegney: Can the child get a copy of the birth certificate in his adopted name?

The **MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES**: If the Bill is passed and application is made for a birth certificate of an adopted child, a certificate will be issued in the adopted name. To put the matter shortly, under the Bill the original birth registration and the related adoption can be reconciled in the State most vitally concerned and a certified copy of the adoption entry, issued as a registration of birth, can be made available in such State. That is the object of the Bill, and for no other reason than to safeguard the interests of adopted children by preventing people discovering things which they have no right to know. This will not be automatic.

The Minister charged with the administration of the parent Act will have to enter into arrangements with the Ministers of the various States, as well as with the Commonwealth, for this reciprocity. When that arrangement is entered into, then power will be given for adoption orders to be transmitted to and from the Ministers concerned. We have had cases here where applications have been made for the issuance of a birth certificate under the adopted name; but, in the absence of the power proposed to be given by this Bill, the request had to be refused. If the Bill passes, such requests can be granted in the future. When an adoption order is made, a copy of it will be transmitted to the State where the child was

born, so that the entry can be reconciled with the birth entry. In that way the possibility of a copy of the birth entry being issued will be obviated. I think members will agree that this is a desirable piece of legislation and should not require very much consideration. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mrs. Cardell-Oliver, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Message.

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

BILLS (2)—RETURNED.

- 1, Public Works Act Amendment.
 - 2, Criminal Code Amendment.
- Without amendment.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.28] in moving the second reading said: The Industrial Arbitration Act has been amended on many occasions in this Parliament. Three very comprehensive amendments were made—one in 1902, one in 1912 and the other in 1925. On each occasion those amendments were made as the result of long experience of the conduct of cases in the Industrial Arbitration Court, which experience had proved the necessity for the amendments and alterations, particularly with a view to simplifying the method of approaching the Court and also with a view to making provision for as many workers as possible to be catered for by the Court. In addition to those three comprehensive amendments, many other amendments were made from time to time as necessity arose. Notwithstanding all of those amendments, we find two sections of the community—and very important sections too—are still prevented from being registered and from being heard in the Court. The definition of "Worker" has been amended from time to time. It now reads—

"Worker" means any person of not less than fourteen years of age of either sex

employed or usually employed by any employer to do any skilled or unskilled work for hire or reward, and includes an apprentice; but shall not include any person engaged in domestic service, in a private home, provided that no home in which more than six boarders and/or lodgers are received for pay or reward shall be deemed to be a private home.

So, in the definition not only are domestic servants, or domestic help, not provided for, but they are excluded from any right—organised or otherwise—to approach the Arbitration Court. This provision of the Bill is to bring the domestic worker within the definition of the term "Worker." The Government thinks it is desirable and essential for this section of the community to be given the same right as other workers to organise and go to the Arbitration Court for the settlement of disputes. Prior to the war one heard many complaints—they were almost daily—as to the difficulty of obtaining domestic help for other than boarding-houses, hotels and such establishments. It was almost impossible, according to the people who complained, to get first-class domestic help for their homes. We can hardly wonder at it, considering their hours, the conditions under which they work and the salaries or wages paid.

Prior to the war there was no section of the community, generally speaking, treated with less respect and having less status than that known as domestic servants. During the war it was quite impossible to obtain domestic servants because they were not looked upon as being in an essential service. Now that the war has ended, we will no doubt hear the old complaints once more. If that is so, it will only be because the same conditions will again prevail. I think, too, it will be agreed that whilst those conditions are with us and the wages paid to these people remain as they are, an inferior class of women and girls will be attracted to the work. We should endeavour to raise the status of this section. It might be argued that there is not much chance of raising the status by inserting this amendment, but it has been proved, since the Act was passed in 1902, that more and more of the workers who were less able to fight their own battles, but who now come under the Arbitration Court, have had their status raised, their hours lessened and their salaries increased, and these things have

meant a better class of worker, generally, for the industries concerned.

With the growth of industries that we are looking forward to in Western Australia, many of which will employ large numbers of female workers, we shall find that competition will be so keen that unless we raise the status of this section, the people who have been complaining will be left complaining for a long time because a decent class of girl will not take up this work. No-one, I am sure, wants an unsuitable class of worker for this occupation. We can see no way of raising the status of this section except by giving it the right to go before an independent tribunal for the purposes I have mentioned. No-one can object to giving any section of workers that privilege. So far as Western Australia is concerned, and I emphasise that, arbitration is the policy not only of the Government but of the people. The fact that we have a good Arbitration Act and a well-conducted Arbitration Court, has been the means of there being little industrial unrest in this State. If that has been so with workers generally, there should be no objection to this section being included.

The House should consider this amendment sympathetically and give these people an opportunity to prove their bona fides. It is proposed to delete from the Act these words, "but shall not include any person engaged in domestic service," etc. We propose to insert other words in lieu to provide for the domestic servant class. The other proposal in the Bill will interest members opposite because it deals with rural workers. Paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of Section 94 provides—

Limit the working hours of piece-workers in any industry except workers engaged in the agricultural and pastoral industries.

Most people were under the impression that the Act provided for rural workers, but a few months ago, in a case between the A.W.U. and A. Crombie and others, that was held to be not quite the position. The ex-President of the Court, Mr. President Dwyer, held a different opinion. This case was heard on the 8th March, 1945, and in his decision Mr. President Dwyer said—

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the phrase used in the section "limit the working hours" means simply, limit the ordinary working hours which may at the present time and usually are 48 or 44 or 40, according to circumstances. Perhaps the

wisest thing in the circumstances would be to give the Legislature an opportunity of setting forth the meaning of the section by altering the verbiage and stating the meaning in clear and unambiguous language.

We thought on that occasion that the court could and would make an award covering farm workers, but Mr. President Dwyer had different ideas. We propose to take his advice and use in the Bill language which will leave no doubt as to whether the Bill provides for farm workers. Here again I suggest that if the best men are required—and I do not care whether farm work or some other industry is involved—the best conditions and at least a decent wage must be offered. Up to date those things can only be obtained through the Arbitration Court. We may talk about conciliation, but there always seems to be some stumbling block in that method and so in this State the adopted policy is arbitration. The Government, therefore, desires to give farm workers an opportunity to organise themselves and to register in the court. As a result, we propose to amend the Act by including words in this Bill giving those workers the opportunity to have their case heard. The alternative is the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

The A.W.U., about which I know something, is registered as a Federal and a State organisation. For years past the shearers have gone to the Commonwealth court, but the rest of the A.W.U. workers, without exception, have gone to the State court. The construction workers, fibrolite workers, cement workers and others have gone to the State court. Chaffcutting employees work under an agreement registered in the Arbitration Court, or under an Arbitration Court award, but there are certain farm workers who are unable to get redress in the State court. The alternative to the provisions of this measure is to force them into the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. We should be the last to force workers to go to the Commonwealth court, not only because of the delays that occur but on account of the tremendous expense involved. The Commonwealth court rarely comes to this State. As a result, we have to go to some other State, prepare our case and take employers and employees as witnesses to Melbourne or Sydney, or wherever the case is to be heard.

I suggest that the House give earnest and serious consideration to these two questions. They are the only two principles in the Bill. The first proposal is to delete certain words with a view to giving those engaged in domestic service an opportunity, if they so desire, to become registered and take their case to the court. The other is to clear up what Mr. President Dwyer regards as very ambiguous language. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY (HOUSING OF EMPLOYEES).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [5.43] in moving the second reading said: If there is one thing the war has taught us it is the necessity to provide more and better amenities for workers in industry. In munition works, and works generally for war purposes where the best possible work was required together with the greatest output, it was soon found in England, America and Australia that the better the amenities the better the work produced. Now that the war is over there is no reason why we should go back to pre-war days. We should profit by the lessons we learnt during the war and put them into practice for the benefit of industry generally. This Bill applies particularly to those workers who are removed some miles distant from the city or from towns of any decent size. The general opinion is now held that if good work is to be expected we must provide reasonable opportunities for contentment amongst the men, and particularly amongst the wives, who are compelled in the cases with which I am dealing to live in places far removed from towns and any settlement.

The timber industry of Western Australia is a case in point. Large concessions have been granted in various ways to various companies to enable them to cut out the bush; mills are erected, and these concessions are such that in most instances they take many years to work over. Consequently a mill has to be erected and employees work at the mill. The necessity has therefore arisen for the provision of houses in which the men

can live and for other amenities that may be required in order to keep the employees on the mill. In these cases not only is the man working but the wife is there from day to day and from week to week living on that particular mill. I suggest that up to the present the amenities associated with the timber mill, particularly as regards housing, have not been very magnificent. I admit that in this respect some mills are better than others, just as the Minister for Agriculture stated earlier when moving the second reading of the Milk Bill that some cows gave more butter-fat than did others. So it is that some mills are worse than others in the matter of housing and amenities.

The Government is of opinion that the time has arrived when legislation should be introduced to alter the present conditions. At present there is no law to say what the employer shall do in the matter of housing. He may put up shacks for the employees to live in if he likes so long as the men themselves are prepared to occupy them and to pay rent for them. This Bill provides that there shall be sufficient housing accommodation for sawmill employees engaged in the timber industry, and it is to be read in conjunction with the Timber Industry Regulation Act, 1926-37. There are only two or three principles contained in the measure, the balance of it being chiefly of a machinery nature. The first principle is that this legislation shall apply only to buildings required for residential purposes on timber holdings. We are not suggesting that the owner of the mill or the employer shall erect buildings for dance halls, etc., but only those that require to be used for residential purposes. The Bill will not apply to any timber holdings within the boundaries of any city or town unless the Governor-in-Council declares that the Act shall so apply. At the moment I am not able to visualise any mill that would come within that particular definition, but it has been decided to give the Governor-in-Council this right, if it is necessary to apply it, to places where the boundaries are within any city or town.

The measure also provides that the Minister may exempt the whole or any part of a holding from the operations of the Act. The reason for that is obvious. Some of these concessions comprise a large section of country. There may be times when the

men are sent out to do a certain job that will take only a little while, such as the running of a railway line or some work of that nature. Because the men may be located in a particular spot for a short time only the right is to be given to exempt part of the holding from the conditions set out in the Act. In such circumstances it would be rather foolish to expect employers to erect new houses or remodel others in conformity with this measure. Under certain conditions, therefore, the Minister may exempt the whole or part of a holding from the provisions of the Act.

The Bill provides that the owner has to construct and maintain buildings suitable for residential purposes for the employees of any sawmill on any timber holding. This means that the mill owners will have to erect buildings for the workers, but at the same time the worker will be liable to pay rent for the house he lives in. This question of rent may be the cause of a good deal of discussion. Under the Bill the rent is to be based on the size, the nature of the buildings and the facilities and amenities provided. The better the house and the better the amenities the more rent will the employer probably ask for. The rent is to be fixed in the manner provided by the award or industrial agreement under which the workers are employed, or it may be arranged by mutual agreement between the owner and the union.

In the event of the employer and the worker being unable to agree to their mutual satisfaction the matter will be determined by the board of reference that is provided for in the award. There are several ways in which the rent can be fixed and provided for. The Bill makes provision for proper and sufficient accommodation being made available to the workers. No building is to be situated nearer than 200 yards to any other building operating on the mill. Anyone who knows anything about timber mills will appreciate that there are two objectionable features about them. I have never worked on a mill nor have I slept on one for any length of time, but I have been made fully aware of the big sawdust heaps that are burning all the time smothering everything with smoke, and I have been conscious of the continual whirr and noise of the

machinery and of the big saw that runs through the logs. It is required that houses shall be not nearer than 200 yards from any building operating on the mill. Provision is made for the height of the walls of the dwelling houses and for the proper ventilation.

The clauses of the Bill dealing with the questions speak for themselves. The houses will be provided with rooms, other than a bathroom and laundry, which will be lined with timber or any other material that is used for the purpose of lining. Electrical installations are to be fitted as may be specified by the district inspector. There must be a suitable stove or oven for cooking purposes, which will be installed in one of the rooms. If there are two or more rooms there must be an open fire place in one of them. There must be an adequate supply of clean and wholesome water provided for drinking purposes, and for culinary and washing purposes available in each dwelling. Sanitation at timber mills has always been a troublesome subject. When I was Minister for Health I visited some of the mills and generally found there was a complaint about the sanitation.

This Bill provides for proper sanitary arrangements, and in cases where the Public Health Department or the local authority considers it necessary a sanitary removal service must also be provided. That should appeal to the member for Canning who has given notice of the City of Perth Sanitation Bill this afternoon. Where buildings are occupied by men who are living alone provision is made for bathing and for the washing of clothes. There will be many single men who will be living alone on a mill. Whilst we are not asking that every place where single men are living alone shall be provided with a bathroom, shower etc., we are providing that community showers shall be installed with the approval of the district inspector. I see no reason why there should not be a sufficient number of showers according to the number of men concerned, such as are seen in a military camp, so that if they so desire they may take their showers each evening. No doubt many buildings in which employees are living alone have already been constructed in places in which the men sleep and which they have to leave to get their meals from some boarding-house. Those dwellings may

still be used provided the walls are not less than 7 feet in height and the total floor space is not less than 80 square feet. The object is to get rid of the shacks as fast as possible and to abolish anything resembling slums on a mill.

Every employee occupying a home will be called upon to keep the place clean and in a sanitary condition, and see that all fixtures and other chattels are not in any way destroyed or removed. We propose to give the right to the owner or his agent at any time that is reasonable during the day to enter and inspect the buildings to see that the conditions are carried out. I understand there is a district inspector attached to these mills. He will be authorised to enter and examine the buildings with a view to seeing that the provisions of the Act are carried out both by the employer and the employee. A district inspector plays an important part in the housing scheme under this Bill. He is a Government employee and to a large extent we are throwing the onus on him to carry out certain of the machinery clauses. We feel it is not much use having an Act of Parliament if it is not properly administered. There is no need to create a number of new inspectors to see that the conditions of the Act are observed, especially when there are inspectors already on the job practically the whole time.

If an employee who is occupying one of these buildings ceases to be an employee at the mill he may be called upon to vacate it. The Bill provides for his being given seven days' notice or such time as may be mutually agreed upon. If there is any dispute on the subject that will be settled by the inspector. When an employee ceases to be employed he will have no further right to occupy the home. This is an important part of the Bill so far as the Government is concerned. We appreciate that this is something new in respect to saw-mills generally, and that it will impose a good deal of expense upon these mill owners. We also appreciate that several new mills have come into existence and that more big mills are to be erected in the South-West.

Now is the time to put this legislation into operation, if possible. We are also conscious of the fact that the session is drawing to a close, and we also believe that this House should have the benefit of all the information it is possible to get con-

cerning this legislation. The Government therefore proposes that if the Bill passes the second reading it shall be referred to a Select Committee, which between now and next session can visit the mills, take all the necessary evidence, and be ready to report to the House when it re-assembles. We believe that this will be in the best interests of the employees and the mill owners. The Select Committee could be converted into an honorary Royal Commission so that it could take evidence during the recess and then, when Parliament re-assembled, consideration of the Bill could be resumed in the Committee stage and members would have before them all the information that it was possible to gather. If the Bill passes the second reading this session, as I hope it will, the honorary Royal Commission will be in a position to place before members a great deal more information than I can possibly do. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Willmott, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 121:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: During the second reading the member for Nedlands suggested a limit and the Leader of the Opposition voiced ideas about facilities for transportation. The clause reads—

Section one hundred and twenty-one of the principal Act is amended by deleting therefrom the words, "Provided that any such land must be situated within twenty miles of a railway, or of the intended route of a proposed railway the construction of which is authorised by Parliament" in lines seven to ten, both inclusive, of the section.

I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "amended" in line 2 be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu of—

"as follows:—

(a) By deleting the word 'twenty' in line eight of the section and inserting in lieu thereof the word 'forty'."

(b) By inserting after the word "Parliament" in line ten of the section the words "or of the established route of some other authorised form of

transportation which provides facilities for transportation comparable with those of a railway”.

That should meet the wishes of the Leader of the Opposition who thought provision should be made where there was no railway but where there was a transport system, as in the Lake King country.

Mr. WATTS: What is wrong with the amendment is the distance of 40 miles from some other authorised form of transport? My point was that it would be quite wrong to limit the provision to 20 miles from a railway or from an authorised line not built. A considerable area of land would be included within 20 miles of some authorised form of transport. The transport service could be 100 miles from a railway and the Minister could go 40 miles beyond that. I was hopeful that the Minister would content himself with a distance of 20 miles from a railway or from an authorised form of transport. I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out paragraph (a).

That would leave the Crown in a position to purchase land within 20 miles from any railway, authorised railway, or recognised form of transport.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I discussed that phase with officers of the department. There is one property situated over 22 miles from a railway and, under the strict interpretation of the Act, we cannot purchase it. There is no other means of transport in the district. To retain the limit of 20 miles in a district where there is no other recognised means of transport would leave us in the same position. I am suggesting 40 miles in order that we might be able to purchase any place offered within that distance, while other properties up to 50 miles away would be included so long as there were transport facilities.

Mr. WATTS: I admit that it would be largely a matter of discretion. I shall not press the amendment, but will allow it to go to the Committee.

The PREMIER: I think the Leader of the Opposition is raising his point on the wrong paragraph. The point is valid with regard to road transport where railways may not be built for a considerable time, if at all. The hon. member's desire should be met by inserting after the word “or” of paragraph (b) the words “or within 25

miles of the established route of some other form of authorised transport.”

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This amendment by the Minister requires very careful following in order to trace it to what it is intended to amend. It does not amend the Bill that passed the second reading apart from taking away every portion of it except the first few words, which state that the Bill is intended to amend Section 121 of the principal Act. I have no objection to the procedure, but I know that the Minister on other occasions has delivered homilies to the Chamber on matters of this kind.

The Minister for Lands: I was in another chair then!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know where the Minister was; but he is the last man in the Chamber to allow other members such a wide scope of departure from the Standing Orders. Not that I object to it, because if a Bill is brought down to amend a certain section of an existing Act, I consider it should be open to members to deal with the whole of that section. But that, unfortunately, is not the view which prevails. As regards the amendment as I read it, it simply means that the objection I took on the second reading that the Bill as introduced gave a blank cheque to the present and any future Minister for Lands to acquire land at any distance from a railway is removed and there is a limit of 40 miles, which I think exceedingly reasonable. It then provides that that 40 miles is to apply not only to an existing railway or, in the words of the principal Act, to a railway the construction of which is authorised by Parliament, but it is further to refer to established routes—

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that we are now discussing the deletion of paragraph (a) only.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I regret that I have unwittingly broken the rule. I think the amendment is reasonable. I would have been prepared to go to 100 miles.

Mr. WATTS: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment on the amendment with the object of moving another one to the ensuing paragraph.

Amendment on amendment, by leave withdrawn.

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the amendment be amended by inserting after the word "or" in paragraph (b) the words "within twenty-five miles."

That will mean that it will be within a distance of 25 miles from a recognised transport service which provides facilities, as the amendment says, comparable with those of a railway.

Mr. SEWARD: I do not know that I am very enamoured of the proposal. If this is passed it means that the Minister could take up land almost at Forrestania which is not within 100 miles of any railway, because there is a transport route going from Newdegate to Lake Camm, which is 60 miles from Newdegate. If one travels another 25 miles one is nearly in Forrestania. I do not see any reason for such a wide range over which to select land, especially when we are looking for land for soldier settlement. I know that the Transport Board considers this transport service I have in mind as comparable with if not better than a railway, but the settlers complain it is not as good as a railway and they want a railway.

The Minister for Lands: This is only to purchase land; not to take it up.

Mr. SEWARD: That is so; but if it is done, in a year or two there will be a demand for a railway 100 miles in length.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think we shall be buying land out there!

Mr. SEWARD: That is the effect of the amendment. I would like to see deleted all that part which refers to the established route of some other form of transport.

The Premier: Suppose it was some such route as from Boyup Brook to Cranbrook?

Mr. SEWARD: That is a more closely settled district. I am thinking of my district. I have in mind the area from Hyden to Carmody.

The Premier: I do not think what you fear would be done; but in order to provide for other available land it is necessary to have the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: This is a matter where a degree of discretion must be exercised, and I assume it will be. I hope my assumption is not ill-based. If my assumption is correct, such an area as the member for Pingelly mentions is hardly likely to come into the dispute. But there will be other areas, such as the Premier mentioned by inter-

jection, where it is desirable to have land where road transport is fairly well developed and can be improved; and unless we have some such amendment as this, we will not be able to accept surrenders of such land. In a State the size of Western Australia, it is almost impossible to provide any amendment that will cope with every circumstance that might arise. I have been trying to provide opportunity for accepting land where conditions are reasonable, and have expressed the hope that land will not be accepted—notwithstanding that there may be authority for it—in areas where there is no amount of settlement or no close connection with settled areas. If the Government throws people into the backblocks because it has power under the Act, it will be in trouble.

Amendment on amendment put and passed; amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

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

No. 1. Clause 1—Delete all words after the word "on" in line 25 and substitute the words "the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six."

The PREMIER: Two of the Council's amendments deal with the duration of the Act. In connection with the first, the Bill as drafted provides that the Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation, and the Council's amendment is that the Bill shall come into operation on the 1st day of January, 1946. It is difficult for me to explain the position without mentioning the subsequent amendment which, if agreed to, would limit the operation of the Act to two prescribed years commencing on the 1st day of January, 1946. At the Premiers' Conference, in an endeavour to stabilise prices and prevent chaotic conditions owing to inflationary tendencies that are obvious at this stage, an agreement was reached to extend such powers to the Commonwealth for a period

of three years, and, in order to be consistent as to the duration of the powers, that they come into operation at a time to be fixed by proclamation. In the initial stages the Crown Law Department thought it best to adhere to the date to be fixed by proclamation, but with the attitude I intend to adopt on a subsequent clause and on the point raised by the member for West Perth when the Bill was previously before the Chamber, I do not intend to oppose the first amendment. The National Security Orders apply for the duration of the war and six months thereafter, and that might mean that such a provision would apply for more than one year still to come. I have no objection to the first amendment provided a prescribed period is specified in a later amendment on which I intend to speak. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 3:—Insert the words “and other than real property” after the word “Services” in line 33.

The PREMIER: This amendment alters the Bill, as it left this Chamber. The effect would be to give force to the desire for inflationary tendencies in land transactions, which at this stage many people are anxious to exploit. The effect would be greater, in relation to land deals, being passed on to the community in costs and charges, than in the case of any other commodity mentioned in the Bill. It strikes at the root of control and would prejudicially affect thousands of people in this State. The Commonwealth now has the machinery available but, if such control lapsed, the State would have to deal with the matter, which would mean another administration or section to control it. There is some relationship between land values and their control throughout the Commonwealth and I therefore think we should retain the Bill in its original form. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Mr. WATTS: Could the Premier suggest how the Commonwealth could be induced to take out that date, the 10th February, 1942, the date upon which it based the real estate calculations? That date in many instances has unduly depressed land values. That was approximately the time of the fall of Singapore

and there was nervousness in all sorts of transactions at that time. Adherence to values operating about that time and subject to that state of affairs has had a depressing effect on values. There was no great number of actual sales of importance about that time on which to base a sound judgment of values. Valuations made by the Commonwealth Sub-Treasury have unduly depressed the value of land. It has been a deflation of values and has not been fair to vendors of property. Many reasonable sales, where people agreed they were getting a reasonable bargain, have fallen through because the Sub-Treasury has declined to assent to them.

I have had instances of where valuations, if they were to be accepted by the Rural Bank in some districts, for instance, would result in the bank being justified in writing off 25 per cent. or 30 per cent. of the debt owing on the property, whereas when asked for a valuation of an adjacent and comparable property that institution's valuation has been greater than the amount of debt and consequently an application for writing down could not be considered. The Sub-Treasury has forced sales through or the parties have abandoned them because they could not agree on figures lower than the valuations of the Rural and Industries Bank or the Agricultural Bank, and no one will suggest that their valuations are improperly high. Broadly speaking, their valuations are made by sound men with a wide knowledge. Unless we are to have a deflationary period of land values for a further period of three years I think the Commonwealth should adopt some more reasonable date as, for instance, the 31st December, 1939.

The Premier: I will tell you something of what we have done in the matter.

Mr. WATTS: I will be more content if action has been taken. I realise why the Legislative Council sought the exclusion of real estate, because members there have possibly come more into contact with real estate matters than I have, and with extraordinary cases that have given them great concern.

The PREMIER: A Royal Commission inquiring into the effect of land values on costs of production, which operated in the Commonwealth during 1942 and 1943, made an exhaustive inquiry into the effect on farmers' disabilities of high land values. The outcome was a recommendation to the

Commonwealth that the date line for the adjustment of land values was inappropriate when fixed at February 1942. The Commission recommended that such valuations should be based on the 10th September, 1939. I do not think the Commonwealth showed any disposition to act on that recommendation. The Government has been in communication with the Commonwealth suggesting that that variation be made to the rule. So far we have had no replies to the communications and cannot conjecture what the replies will be, but the Government thinks that it would be more just in all land transactions if the date were fixed at 10th September, 1939. With the strong support of the other States I hope that date will be agreed to.

Mr. McDONALD: This matter is more important than would appear from cursory consideration of the provision in the Act and the amendment. I have not read the debate that took place in the Legislative Council, but the Council's intention may have been that land prices should be regulated by State legislation. I would support such a proposal. I was approached recently by a man who gave me an alarming account of the blackmarketing in real estate in this State. I was informed that blackmarketing in land sales is on a larger scale than we who have not made specific inquiries would imagine. These regulations restricting the sale of land are irksome, and are regarded as unjust by many people who feel no moral compunction in evading them when possible. The vendor and buyer each have their own ideas of the value of the land, and when a lower value is determined by the Commonwealth Sub-Treasury the parties consider themselves entitled to do what they consider just to both.

Mr. Watts: They give £100 for something of little value.

Mr. McDONALD: There are many well-known techniques under which blackmarketing is carried on in relation to land. That is a disturbing factor from an ethical point of view in any community, and I understand the State is losing revenue in stamp duty because it is not collecting the ad valorem duty on the transaction. I believe this practice is prevalent in the Eastern States, and it exists to some extent here. It was pointed out to me that it is now a penalty on the honest landowner-seller or buyer, and people who are not prepared to stoop to

blackmarket tactics feel they are penalised by those who have no hesitation in resorting to such means to get round the regulations.

Following that statement, which I regarded as sufficiently serious to merit further inquiry, I got in touch with some reputable estate agents who confirmed the tendency to a certain amount of black marketing in land. They pointed out from their point of view that one result was that reputable agents were avoided because they would not be parties to transactions of that description. I inquired as to their views and they told me they were completely in accord with the principle that the price of land should be subject to price-fixing legislation. They thought that if there were no legislation to ensure stopping the inflationary tendency, it would be serious for the community. They were content with what apparently the Legislative Council considered—and it is in accordance with my views, too—that the fixation of such prices should be in the hands of the State. It would mean an amendment to our Profiteering Prevention Act to bring this matter within the purview of the State legislation. That should present no great difficulty, and no danger would be incurred in the meantime because the Commonwealth regulations will continue for some months.

There is a good deal to be said in favour of the view of the Legislative Council—it is certainly my view—that this is a local matter that could well be controlled by the State authority under the State Profiteering Prevention Act. It is unlike matters that are subject to interstate trade, and in respect of which as the Premier pointed out Commonwealth control is desirable. The control of the price of land by the State within the State is desirable, particularly as the Commonwealth regulations give no guide as to the principle to govern the valuation of land. Certain rules have been prescribed by the Commonwealth Treasury, but they are merely office rules and can be observed or not observed or amended by the Commonwealth Treasurer as he may think fit. There is no appeal from the Treasury officer except to the Commonwealth Treasurer, who naturally will rely upon the advice of his local representative in such matters. Attempts have been made to secure a tribunal to which appeals could be made in cases where large

amounts were involved and respecting which a sense of injustice has existed with regard to some decisions, but the Commonwealth has refused to grant any such independent tribunal.

I listened to Mr. Fraser, M.H.R., a member of the Commonwealth committee to revise Federal regulations, who, in a public address in Perth, said he regretted that many recommendations by the committee had not been translated into action, including one for the setting up of an independent tribunal in cases where it was advisable that outside judgment should be resorted to. He did not mention land, but essentially land is a matter that should be referred to an outside tribunal. I have been told that the administration of the regulations has varied in different States. In Western Australia we have had a most zealous officer, to whom every credit is due for his attempt to carry out his duties in a proper and efficient manner. It is understood that that officer has claimed that prices have been kept lower in Western Australia than in any other State. That may be very creditable but, on the other hand, it may have wrought an injustice in many cases and may have been a limitation respecting transactions here. I have been informed of one case where a city property was to change hands at a figure which would have involved £30,000 of Eastern States' capital. The property was to be sold for that figure and there was on it a mortgage for £25,000. The Treasury price for the property was £24,000, or £1,000 less than the mortgage. Naturally, the whole transaction fell through, with the result that £30,000 of Eastern States' capital did not come to this State.

Hon. N. Keenan: And the transfer fees were lost as well.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, on £30,000. The responsible officer of the Commonwealth Sub-Treasury in Perth exercised his discretion, but, in the absence of any appeal tribunal, his decision was virtually final. I suggest that a very simple amendment involving the addition of a few words to the Profiteering Prevention Act would place in the hands of a local price-fixing authority power to control prices, and in that case the control of the price of land would be in the hands of men with local knowledge and atmosphere, which would ensure that

there would be no runaway inflationary prices, and they would be able to assess fair prices more satisfactorily than has been our experience under the Commonwealth authority. Where the fixation of prices is undertaken by a local authority more in accordance with the consensus of local opinion as to values, we would save a good deal of black marketing which, I am informed, goes on today and may grow to greater dimensions.

Mr. Mann: It certainly will.

Mr. McDONALD: That is a highly disturbing feature in our present life.

The Premier: Neither State nor Commonwealth legislation could overcome that.

Mr. McDONALD: I admit that is correct but, in my opinion, there has been far too little vigilance in many ways with regard to dealings of this description.

The Premier: How do you suggest they could be combated?

Mr. McDONALD: I admit that it would be difficult, but I think there are ways.

Mr. Mann: A more reasonable value could be placed on land.

Mr. McDONALD: One method that could be employed would be by having men specially qualified who would go round with their ears open to hear the things that are heard by so many, not only with regard to black marketing in connection with land but in connection with questionable transactions in other directions. If that course were adopted, something might be done to bring this matter home to offenders. My point is that there would be more confidence in local administration, which would fix prices more in accordance with fair local opinion. If prices are in accordance with reasonable local opinion, they will be accepted.

The Premier: The seller's price is always likely to be high.

Mr. McDONALD: That may or may not be so. One reason for black marketing is the feeling that prices have been fixed unreasonably low, and people therefore feel no compunction in getting round the law.

Mr. Mann: Farming land values are 50 per cent. below those operating in the Eastern States.

The Premier: That may not be a serious disadvantage.

Mr. Mann: Not in some ways, but the controlled price is far too low.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for West Perth has the floor.

Mr. McDONALD: If prices are fixed by men who know local conditions, those prices will be more in conformity with local opinion as to fair values, and in that case the sense of injustice would not be present to the same degree. This matter deserves consideration and, on the distinct understanding that the control of the price of land is to continue but in the hands of a local authority, I think the amendment of the Legislative Council could be accepted.

The Premier: Will you comment on the two dates that have been mentioned?

Mr. McDONALD: In that respect I agree with the Premier completely. The information given to me is that the date fixed, namely, the 10th February, 1942, was the most unfortunate that could have been chosen for Western Australia because, first of all, our State was always regarded as fairly vulnerable and, from the commencement of the war against Japan, there was a tendency for prices to be deflated in this State. The same position did not arise in other parts of Australia. They did not operate in New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia, and therefore the price, which is the datum price for this State, was about the worst and lowest that could have been selected for many years. I think the action of the Premier in seeking to find a new datum point would be helpful, but I do not think it will remove part of the present difficulty. I would like the possibility of amending the State Profiteering Prevention Act by the inclusion of real estate considered by the Premier.

Progress reported.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 28th November; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

Vote—Mines, £124,483:

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison) [8.14]: May I be permitted to preface my remarks by some observations which may be placed in the category of policy and problems, although particularly appertaining to the Estimates which are now about to be discussed? I put it to the Committee that the Government does not share the view that the rehabilitation of the mining industry

means the placing of a few men first on this goldmine and then on some other goldmine, providing meagre financial assistance to various propositions and adopting what might be termed the policy of pre-war days. I think it can be said that Western Australia contains auriferous belts of country of great wealth, discovered and undiscovered. Therefore it is obligatory upon the Government to give consideration to the possibilities and the prospects of ascertaining in some degree at least how much of this latent wealth the State really possesses. First, we have to appreciate the fact that every ounce of gold taken from the industry and every pound of metal or mineral mined reduces, to that extent at least, the value of our asset. This clearly indicates that unless we pursue some vigorous policy of encouragement to prospectors to find new propositions the mining industry must die.

We can say that the most important thing in mining is prospecting; because, unless the industry is developed, it must decline. Bearing those facts in mind, the Government realises there are problems ahead which will be difficult to solve. Their solution will be far from easy. Firstly, the type of individual whom we knew many years ago on the goldfields and who now is commonly referred to as the pioneer of the industry is no longer present in our midst. He was courageous, self-reliant and self-sacrificing, and seemingly loved the freedom of the bush and the isolation. That type is not prevalent today. In consequence, some altered policy will be essential in order, if possible, to instil into a large percentage of our young folk the inclination to take up the vocation of prospecting. We can ill-afford to let up on such a policy, because of the great asset that goldmining has been to the State and probably will be in the future, along with mining generally.

For decentralisation purposes, I do not know of anything that offers greater prospects of encouraging people away from the seaboard and to venture into the more isolated portions of the State than does mining. All members who have an appreciation of the goldmining industry will fully realise that when a gold deposit is found to be valuable and a mine is established, a community immediately grows up about it. The auriferous belts of our State offer us many opportunities in that respect. It will take away from the seaport towns those men of

an adventurous spirit, who love the freedom of the more remote parts of the State. Now the Government must face up to the realities of the situation. I do not suggest to the Committee that the Government possesses all the knowledge which may be essential and necessary for the purpose of encouraging prospecting; and therefore I invite criticism from those who do understand the industry and what constitutes the factors of a vigorous policy to encourage development of mining generally. I put it to the Committee that there are hundreds of square miles of auriferous country in this State that have received little, if any, systematic and searching examination. True, most of it has been walked over and prospected a little; but, for reasons which I will explain, I feel that much of our auriferous areas has not been properly or systematically investigated. In view of that fact, it would appear that much latent wealth awaits discovery and this wealth will ultimately prove of great economic benefit to Western Australia.

In my opinion, one of our finest belts of auriferous country is that represented by the member for Pilbara. I respectfully suggest that that area has not been by any means thoroughly prospected. There are hundreds of square miles of other country within the auriferous belts which also have not been geologically surveyed or properly prospected. In the search for gold, many prospectors have discovered other valuable minerals and metals. These are recorded and tabulated in the Mines Department, but beyond that nothing more has been done. It is therefore quite safe to assume that had a more vigorous policy of encouragement to prospectors been followed at that time, further work and further prospecting might have revealed that Western Australia possesses unlimited quantities of most valuable minerals and metals. I propose to inform the Committee that, in order to encourage men to venture out prospecting in these days—men who have not had the experience of our old pioneers and who will be badly handicapped—they will be aided with scientific advice and information and given every assistance and the education to fit them for a prospector's career.

Up till now we have permitted prospectors to waste much of their time because of their lack of information about the dis-

coveries they make. For instance, I have known of prospectors who have discovered what appeared to them to be something of value. They have had no bulletin of information given to them; they do not know what it is; they feel that it might have some value. Their only course then was to send it down for analysis by the Government Geologist or the Government Laboratory. In the meantime, the prospector had to idle away his time waiting for the information as to whether the particular discovery had any value or not. What is now being done by the department is this: All known minerals and metals catalogued will be published in a bulletin which will give full information of their commercial value, where sales can be made and through what medium, and, where practicable, a full description of such metals or minerals, and also, if possible, the colours of such minerals. The bulletin will be circulated throughout the mining districts. It will be sent to the various mining registrars for distribution, and any man who takes up prospecting will be supplied with a copy. If he makes a discovery of something unknown to him he can refer to the bulletin for information. I feel it will only be on very rare occasions that a discovery will be made of some mineral or metal which is not described fully in the bulletin.

I do not think there is any possibility of entirely eliminating the cumbersome method of prospecting known as loaming, either by means of the pan or the blower-shaker. Loaming is the first move in order to locate the point from which gold has been shed, and probably other metals or minerals. I know of no process that can take its place. But here again, having decided upon a spot which might in all probability be the point from which the valuable metal is shed, prospectors to-day are under an obligation either to do a great deal of costeeing or sink a shaft. This is rather laborious work, and he has no certainty of the reward he will get for all his labour. Very much time is involved in doing that hard work and therefore I feel some more expeditions, lighter, and easier way should be found in order to give the prospector the opportunity to discover whether or not he has, below the surface anyhow, some deposit of value.

In that regard, the department is doing all it possibly can to get a supply of very light drilling machines. We are hopeful that we can get a number from the Allied Works Council and from other Commonwealth departments, which made great use of these types of machines during the war period. Such a machine would give the prospector the opportunity to make a more expeditious examination in a much easier and less laborious way than has been the custom up to date. We have also had a small machine handed over to the department for examination, observation and probably utilisation. It is the result of the ingenuity of some gentleman who I believe of recent time has been most successful in his discoveries. I hope that is so. He will be well rewarded. This gentleman manufactured a very light type of machine which will bore down to about 80 or 90 feet. Such a machine would be of great value to a prospector because he could put a bore hole down in a fraction of the time that he could sink a shaft of the same depth, the dimensions being about 5 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in.

The Government proposes to do whatever it is advised by its departmental experts and supply, if necessary, these machines or hire them or make them available in whatever way is suitable both to the department and the party concerned. We propose to make them available and we think that we shall be rewarded in that regard because of the labour that the prospector will be saved. He will be able to get over the country much quicker and make a more thorough examination of it than by any other means. The Government is faced with another problem in regard to the assistance to mining generally. Prospectors have been seriously inconvenienced in realising upon their discoveries. Gold presents no such problem but copper, tin, tantalite and like metals or minerals give prospectors a considerable amount of inconvenience because, after they have won the product, they experience delay in marketing it and realising upon it. The system of disposal of these products is cumbersome, inconvenient and protracted.

The Government, therefore, considers it advisable to adopt some other means to give quick payments to the prospector. That can be done in two ways. Either his product can be bought at the assay value, or

an advance can be made upon it and the balance paid when the Government realises upon the product in the open market. Something like that must be done to induce men to prospect for metals and minerals other than gold. Sooner or later these base metals will be almost as important to the nation, if not more so, as gold. That position is likely to arise as the country develops. Though one cannot speak derogatively of the great value that goldmining has been to Western Australia, and may continue to be, we must make every possible effort to have our auriferous belts thoroughly examined so that we can obtain a correct alignment of the true position by getting an assessment of the latent wealth that lies there.

There are many discoveries of minerals reported in the Mines Department, and if an investor or some country looking for such minerals approached me and asked if we had a certain mineral in Western Australia, I could answer promptly in the affirmative, but if I were asked in what proportions such minerals were present, I could not say. That is a bad business deal. The Government contends that, where it is not profitable for the prospector to continue longer, he having revealed to some degree the actual value of a deposit of some metal or mineral, the Government should carry on deep, free boring to find out what quantity of the mineral is in that deposit, and its value. If that were done, I could reply to such inquirers, "I can assure you there are deposits of this or that mineral, here or there, proved, by virtue of boring, to possess so much in quality and so much in actual metal value." We would then have a sort of stock-taking of our basic metals. Any such free boring could be recouped from those who might ultimately develop the deposit. That would be an easy and expeditious way to get a correct valuation of our mineral wealth, and it would be by no means expensive.

Another factor that retards a prospector, and gives him no encouragement, is the difficulty he finds in getting treatment of ore containing metals other than gold. Also there are certain gold-bearing ores which are refractory in their characteristics and are not easily treated. Up to date we have not been too encouraging in this matter. We have done nothing to devise a treatment

plant to be added to what is already established at the State batteries. With a sort of combination of plants the base metals could be separated while the battery was not being used to treat gold-bearing ore. We could use some of the processes that are employed for the purpose of treating tin ore and tantalite ore such as the vanners or Wilfley table and others which separate. In the final analysis, the mineral from the muck. We could, after an examination by our Geological Department, put up several plants for this purpose, so that a prospector would know that no matter what mineral he found, there would be some hope of getting it treated, and every hope of realising on the product when it was treated. That would be encouragement for him to continue opening up our mineral and base metals industries. These are problems which must be solved before we can look forward to men rushing enthusiastically into the prospecting vocation.

This work calls for much self-sacrifice. There are no amenities; it is a hard, rough and dusty life. Some men like it, but most do not. If we offer every possible encouragement to these men their ultimate reward will be an inducement for others to carry on the work of prospecting. I repeat that the basis of the success and the continuity of goldmining, or mining in any form, depend upon a vigorous policy of prospecting. But that does not say that that is all the Government is going to do. It will carry on with the policy that it has had right through the history of goldmining in Western Australia. It will do everything that is physically and financially possible to encourage the mines that are in operation. Again, in order to give encouragement to a small syndicate or even a prospector, to use their labour to the best advantage, portable air compressors and small drills may be supplied with a view to proving the worth of the discoveries. The Mines Department is making a search. It is investigating the inventories of the Commonwealth in an endeavour to get a supply of these important mechanical contrivances with a view to giving every encouragement first to the prospector, then to the syndicates and finally to the companies operating.

What I have to say now will not make the Treasurer smile. These Estimates were based on the war period, and I want a lot more money. I am pleased to say, however, that immediately prior to the Japanese

Army collapsing it seemed so evident, to those who were interested in goldmining that the collapse was imminent we had many inquiries at the Mines Department as to what was and what was not going to happen in regard to rehabilitation of the goldmining industry, having regard to the sacrifice that it was called upon to make for the war effort. Many goldmining companies had a bitter experience. Some were struggling in the first place and were then obliged to close down altogether. They now find themselves in the invidious position of having no capital, and their mines have been under water for some considerable time so that much damage and inconvenience have resulted. It will now be most costly to do what is commonly termed in the mining world as, "Pick her up again and put her in a state of productivity."

I am pleased to say that already there is a sign of increased activity in the goldmining industry. The gold production for the nine months ended the 30th September 1945, was 355,192 fine ozs. of a value of £3,789,171, as compared with 350,670 fine ozs. for the same period in 1944, valued at £3,674,694, or an increase of approximately 4,500 ozs. That is not much, but still it is an increase and it shows that there is a move towards bringing the goldmining industry back to a state of prosperity. On the mineral side we have activities in several places. These were brought into existence mainly by Commonwealth requirements for war purposes, but out of that process I think we have established some industries that should remain with us for a long time.

The blue asbestos at Hamersley Range is one we hope will last for a long time. The companies operating had a particularly hard experience and still are not enjoying an atmosphere of prosperity. Owing to the war they had very heavy overhead costs while irregular shipping, floods, etc., added to their burden of trouble, but the greatest trouble of all was the shortage of markets for the commodity. However, I am pleased to say that orders are coming in from abroad and I feel confident that, once users realise the value of the blue asbestos, we can hope for a gradual increase in the demand. I believe it is the highest class asbestos in the world, but unfortunately it has a strong competitor in the asbestos produced in Canada and South Africa. However, I feel confident that the great value

of our article will be realised and that it will be used in greater quantities, and that ultimately the companies operating the deposits will be rewarded for their enterprise

I need not say anything about the iron-ore deposits at Cockatoo Island. This matter has already been discussed at length. Activity is taking place there under the control of the B.H.P. Tin at Greenbushes is being produced in small quantities. I had hoped that with further prospecting and development work some increase in the value of the production would have been recorded, but the industry is just carrying on in a normal way without any great discoveries being made. The pyrites industry at Norseman seems to be established and apparently will become a permanent industry. At any rate, we hope that it will; there are prospects at the moment of its doing so. The alunite at Lake Campion, the felspar at Coolgardie and the phosphatic guano at Pelsart Island near Geraldton are being actively exploited and it appears that there is some permanency attached to those industries.

The plans for the future are, firstly, to make a thorough geological survey of those regions which so far have not received such attention. When one looks at the auriferous belt of the State and realises that such places as Yalgoo, Nullagine and other well-known parts, have not been reported on geologically, some surprise is justified. I think this should be the first thing to be done, and so we have added materially to the staff with a view to having the field surveys made as quickly as possible in order that they will be available to the prospectors who follow in the wake of the scientific men. We must have a staff of geologists for many purposes apart from the making of geological surveys. One thing that makes these scientists a great asset is their ability to advise mining companies that have been operating for many years on the question of where they might go to follow up lines of gold-bearing ore.

I well remember some years ago when a mine manager of Kalgoorlie told me he had experienced some difficulty in the mine. Evidently the lode was chopped off by a bar of some composition, and the company went through it and found nothing on the other side. The company was about to give the mine up when a geologist was called in to advise. He told the manager to go a few feet further east, which was done, and there a lode was cut which is still being worked. Thus

these scientific men are of great value to the industry. In consequence, we have done our best to bring the staff up to full strength, having regard to the number who will have to take the field to make the geological surveys in those parts of the State that have not yet been so blessed.

Then we have the Government Laboratory which comes under the Mines Department. To meet the ever increasing demands, we have added to the staff. Thirty-one chemists are now employed, nine of whom have been added in the last 12 months. This indicates the great activity in this institution. Apart from making analyses for the gold-mining industry and other metalliferous sections, they do all the research work involved for all departments of the State. They make analyses with regard to soil, plants, and diseases affecting animals. They are constantly following up problems of all departments. Their work is of great value to the goldmining industry. These men are able to give the prospectors a good indication as to whether their propositions are worth continuing with or whether they had better be abandoned.

We have another branch of the institution where we are employing a coal research officer. I think all members appreciate the value of having a thorough scientific investigation made into Collie coal or any other of our native coals. For years we were informed that it was not possible to gasify Collie coal; now we find that such a thing is not impossible. There are many other purposes to which Collie coal may ultimately be put, and only by employing men of scientific knowledge to make the requisite investigations shall we be able to ascertain for what purposes the coal may be used. So we are adding a branch to the laboratory to prosecute these particular inquiries.

Our State Batteries, although they have had a very lean period, have operated throughout the war period. Having regard to the fact that the rank and file of our prospectors were depleted to join the Fighting Services, a lean time was only to be expected. We are hopeful that with a constant trickle of men being discharged from the Services, quite a number will return to the old avocation and that the State Batteries in the near future will experience lively activity once more.

An important discovery to the goldmining industry has been made by a couple of men

possessed of some ingenuity at Ravens-thorpe. Those members who know the gold-fields are aware of the problem of extracting gold from copper-laden ore. We have some wonderful deposits throughout the State—at Gabbinietha, Bellevue, Mt. Fraser, Laverton and other places—of gold-bearing ore laden with copper that does not lend itself to efficient extraction. Gold is very adulterous in character; it can be found side by side with any other metal, and from some of its colleagues it refuses to part. This has caused our metallurgists many headaches. The presence of copper in gold ore is one of the problems. At Ravens-thorpe these men made a small plant in a piecemeal way, gathering bits here and there. The plant treats about 50 tons of copper-laden ore per day.

The first process is through an oil flotation cell. From this they get the concentrates, which are dried and roasted in a sintering plant. This drives off the sulphur and yields a product ready for smelting. In the sinter it is fluxed with siliceous gold-bearing ore, and smelting in a water-jacketed furnace gives copper bullion wherein reposes the gold which was in the ore. A trial run recently showed 90 to 95 per cent. of pure copper in the bullion. The copper bullion is forwarded to Port Kembla for refining. There the two metals are separated and the prospector gets his reward.

The trial run of the plant, according to the experts of the Mines Department, was very successful, and they believe that with a few variations it will bring a revolution in the treatment of copper-bearing ore. Should this be so, members from the gold-fields will realise how valuable the discovery will be in treating other well-known deposits. These deposits are at present lying idle and would prove a great asset to the State if only the copper could be separated from the gold. Unfortunately, up to date, our scientists and metallurgists have not been able to solve the problem.

Investigations are being continued at the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, with a view to solving the problem of treating some of our more difficult forms of sulphide ore. We are carrying on experiments there which I hope will prove successful. I do not wish to encourage goldfields members too much, but we are very hopeful of being

able to force the most difficult of our sulphide ores to respond to treatment.

The results of the last examinations made by the Kalgoorlie Laboratory were sent to me together with a comparison for the year 1940. I do not want goldfields members to feel fearful when they hear the figures. There is nothing to be startled about, although they are not as favourable as they should like them to be. When we get the facts, however, we must realise that there is no need for concern, although we would all like to know that the very dangerous malady—silicosis—was entirely absent from the industry. When the results of the examination in 1944 are compared with those of 1940 a general increase is shown. But when we realise that about 3,000 of our picked men went out of the industry into the Army, we understand why the figures appear in that light. Even so, the increase is not so material as to cause any alarm.

There is one strange fact revealed as a result of the comparison, and I think other members from the goldfields will be as surprised as I was. The figures appear under the heading of silicosis early, silicosis advanced, silicosis plus tuberculosis, and tuberculosis only. The most remarkable thing is that, when one looks at the figures everything appears to be normal until one reaches those relating to silicosis plus tuberculosis. These are the figures for 1940 previously reported as normal etc., nil; previously reported as silicosis early 4; previously reported as silicosis advanced, nil. Coming to tuberculosis only we find this previously reported as normal etc., 4. The remarkable thing is that a victim of silicosis in an advanced stage has not contracted tuberculosis at all under either examination but they all come from the normals and the silicosis early group. There is a slight increase over the 1940 figure, but, when it is realised that 3,000 of our picked men were taken out of the industry the rise can be understood. I am confident that when our men return the percentage will drop to the 1940 figure, and, I hope below.

With regard to silicosis plus tuberculosis the 1944 examination shows the following:—Previously reported as normal etc., 1; previously reported as silicosis early 7; previously reported as silicosis advanced, nil. At this juncture I would mention that the Kalgoorlie Laboratory visited Collie and

made a thorough examination of the Collie miners. We had some fear of the effect of coal on coalminers' lungs. However, Dr. Donovan on his return to Perth interviewed me and I have since seen his report, and he stated to me and it appears in the report that coal has no effect on the miners. Dr. Donovan said that teeth were more trouble to them than silicosis. We are delighted to know that coalminers are free from any possibility of contracting silicosis. The Schools of Mines at Kalgoorlie, Wiluna and Norseman have been kept busy, even during the war period. They provided valuable education for young men who proposed to remain in the industry and are doing much in the way of assisting in other directions than mining. At these schools many other trades and professions are taught. Some people think that a school of mines teaches only those trades and callings connected with mining itself, but they also give instruction in branches that are contributory to mining practice but are far removed from actual mining. Students taught there can qualify to take jobs miles away from mining areas, such as engineering, electrical engineering, turning, fitting, etc. While members of the R.A.A.F. were stationed at Kalgoorlie, many of them took the opportunity to attend the School of Mines and, I hope, profited from the time spent at that institution. We have at the Kalgoorlie School of Mines an experimental plant doing a good deal of research work into the treatment of refractory ores, particularly those of sulphide characteristics, and we hope for some degree of success.

That brings me to the subject of coal. The Government has done all that it is possible for a Government to do to step up production of coal. There is nothing we could do that we have left undone.

Mr. Thorn: It is a pity other Governments did not follow suit.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: But there does not seem to be any great result.

The Minister for Lands: They have not the machinery.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is not altogether a matter of machinery.

The Minister for Lands: I was speaking to the member for Toodyay.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I suppose the drawback is manpower, just as it is in other industries. We are severely han-

dicapped. Since the revival in goldmining, I understand quite a number of miners have left Collie and gone back to goldmining, where they enjoy a better climate and higher wages. They did not like Collie. Without being over-critical with regard to the management of the mines, I would say that they are experienced enough and they know their work, but the great trouble is that they have not had a variety of experience. They have grown up in those particular mines and they know no others. Unfortunately, I do not think they have had any education in modern ideas of mining and the more up-to-date methods used today. The men who work down in those pits—some of them 1½ miles from the pit's mouth—have to walk to the surface up a grade averaging 1 in 8, after having done a day's work. That does not encourage men to give of their best underground. That anomaly should have been adjusted a long time ago.

Companies should do all those things that are necessary to keep men contented. The coalminers in this State have been wonderful throughout, notwithstanding what has been happening in the other States. Our men have stuck loyally to the job. There are certain industries which have patronised Collie coal; and because they have been unable to get the supply they wanted, the men in the open cut decided they would work two hours' overtime each day for three months, provided that the coal committee distributing the product gave a guarantee that those people who had always been customers would get the increased production. They are doing that today. The men went out on strike on one occasion but I cannot blame them for that. When people make every possible effort and explore every avenue in order to get their grievances adjusted and are rebuffed at every move, the time comes when they resent it.

Mr. Abbott: Even when they are rebuffed by a judicial authority.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot hear the hon. member. The Government has done all it can to step up production. It has financially assisted some companies and has always given the assistance of its experts to advise in every way. I am pleased to say that one company—the Wyvern—has equipped its mine with a very up-to-date plant. It has gone right to the top in

modern ideas. It has elevators and scraper-shovels and everything of the latest. It is only a shallow mine but we are hoping that the daily output will be increased; and when the Proprietary Mine gets its stone drive through and a road laid, it may be able to step up production to the extent of 450 tons per day. We expect to see that happen in a few weeks' time.

Mr. Doney: Which mine receives financial help from the Government?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Wvern. The Government has assisted it to the extent of £39,000. Our exploits at Eradu and Irwin have not been altogether successful. Although I do not want it to be understood that the deposits in the Irwin district have been completely abandoned, the experimental work and reports from the expert advisers show that the seams are very small and are of very low quality. But when labour and material are in abundance, I think that probably a further effort will be made to explore the area with a view to seeing whether there is not something of more value than we have discovered up to date.

With regard to Eradu, unfortunately when approaching the coal seam, the experimenters met with an inflow of water which made it utterly impossible to carry on for the time being. They had to alter their methods. The idea was to cement the water off. All preparations were made and everything was ready. But then we were told that we could not get cement. We wanted coal to get cement and now we want cement to get coal, and we have got neither! Men were wanted at Collie so I did my best to induce the Manpower authorities to direct men to work at Collie. Some were willing to go; and then we had no homes for them. So we had men and no homes and could not utilise the services of the men. Those are the problems we are confronted with, but we are doing all we can to overcome the difficulties and step up the production of coal.

The Government is exploring the Ewington deposits to see if we can exploit them. I understand there is a valuable seam of high quality coal there at a shallow depth and the Government is taking preliminary steps to explore that particular company's lease. The Woodman's Point Reserve has been handed back by the

Commonwealth. I had the pleasure and opportunity of looking over that reserve. There has been trouble in that regard, as with every other department, concerning handing over. We find the Navy more difficult than the Army, but we hope to make some arrangement with the authorities.

Because goldmining has had a lean time during the war, owing to its great contribution to the war effort, the Commonwealth Government brought into existence a mining panel, on which Western Australia and other States have expert representation. That panel recently made recommendations to the Commonwealth Government advocating heavy financial assistance. If that is granted, it will enable us to lend assistance to mines that are going to find difficulty in re-opening. Many mines are in a bad way and will require a good deal of money to recondition them for further operations. If financial assistance is granted by the Commonwealth, we shall be able to assist these companies in re-opening their mines. Many companies are now making a move and are endeavouring to get labour to commence their activities. The Big Bell is one mine that is experiencing more difficulty than most, because much of its valuable machinery was impressed and taken to other parts of the Commonwealth. However, that company is making preliminary arrangements and what it understands is to get some machines, possibly from Wiluna, to assist it to carry on for the time being.

The Government has been active in its assistance to the Freney Oil Co., which had to cease operations when the Japanese entered the war. In fact, the Commonwealth Government, for strategic purposes, called on that company to cease operations prior to that. It is about to commence again with the aid of the State and Commonwealth. The Caltex Co. was unfortunate in losing its head geologist in an air accident, and it will be difficult to replace him. When he is replaced, that company will continue its geological survey in the hope of finding a suitable site on which to start boring. I wish the company every success. Arrangements are being made by the Commonwealth Government for a geological examination of the oil prospects of the rest of the North by a composite party of Commonwealth and State officers. The State and Commonwealth are to act jointly in a geological survey of the whole northern portion of Australia.

tralia. The State has also joined with the Commonwealth in having an aerial survey made to photograph the country, which will be of assistance to the scientists making the geological survey.

The Mines Department also controls the machinery department, and, in view of the very small number of accidents that have occurred, it must be admitted that this department has faithfully carried out its obligations to the State. The department has worked about 80 officers short during the war period and, though it had other jobs put on it by my colleague in civil defence matters, it did a good job. The staff always does its job thoroughly. We hope our officers will soon be back again. We have taken action to bring our inspection staff up to date because, with the reconditioning and re-opening of mines, there will be considerable danger and the work will require constant supervision and examination from day to day. The lives of miners are more valuable to us than the mines, and we must, therefore see that every care is taken to protect against accident the men engaged, as well as to look after the sanitation and ventilation of mines. I invite suggestions from members and if any proposals come forward that are of advantage to the State they will receive serious consideration.

To facilitate mining and prospecting, we propose soon to advance sustenance at the rate of 30s. per week per man, with the loan of tools, issue of rail passes and the supply of explosives, when considered necessary. Parties are to be limited to two or three men. Instruction in prospecting and mining operations, and in simple geology, are to be given at the Schools of Mines for a limited period, where considerable desirable, and sustenance is to be continued during this time. A Government geologist is periodically to visit parties and advise, particularly when mining operations are in progress. Once a party starts to work a property and our inspection shows it to be warranted, a compressor and drills are to be hired or loaned. Assistance thus given is to be repaid by 25 per cent. of all gold won. A prospecting supervisor is to be appointed should the number of prospectors warrant it. That is our policy, and I invite criticism from those who have had mining experience. I welcome proposals as

to what we should or should not do to co-operate in bringing about a state of prosperity in the mining industry.

[*Mr. Mann took the Chair.*]

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [9.25]: Whatever criticism may be offered on the administration of its duties by the Mines Department, no-one, either inside or outside this Chamber, doubts the enthusiasm of the present Minister for Mines in the discharge of his duties. He has covered an immense area of ground, both inside and outside the Estimates, which I do not propose to traverse; for one reason, that my knowledge of a number of matters mentioned by him is of a limited character. The Minister told us that he intends to ask the Treasurer for a considerable amount of money more than appears in the Estimates. That is a consoling statement if made with legitimate hope of success. If made only as a request which it is not anticipated will be granted, it is of little value. I assume that when the Minister made the statement he did so with the authority of the Treasurer, and that this request is one that we can expect will receive favourable consideration by the Treasurer. It is necessary for an additional amount to be made available over and above the amount specified here because the amount last year, a year of low expenditure, exceeds by £3,500 odd the total estimate for the present year, and that in spite of the fact that the present Estimates show an increase of £4,300 odd, so for services outside of salaries, the present Estimates are, in round figures, down by £8,000 odd compared with the expenditure last year. It is necessary that we have an assurance by the Minister that these Estimates will be greatly exceeded during the present financial period.

I listened with interest to the advice given by the Minister on modern systems of mining and the improvement of those systems over others to which we have been accustomed; for instance, loaming, as against drilling. In my day, and that of the member for Hannans, loaming was considered a more accurate way of prospecting than was drilling. One could drill without result because a bore covers such a limited area, and one does not get the signs of the country which tell the prospector that he is in the ore channel or possibly approaching

more favourable country. All that is hidden from the drill, which discloses only what the core brings to light. I attach no faith to drilling unless associated with some other scientific investigation such as geophysical examination. If one knows that an ore body does exist, one can possibly trace it by a number of bore holes, which would be an expensive method if done by sinking shafts. I think the men who are to be sent out will have to rely on the old methods if they are to be successful. When they find indications shed by some gold-bearing body they will have to trace them by loaming until they find the source, if possible, and make a valuable discovery.

The amount on the Estimates for this year is not encouraging and an increase in expenditure is necessary. Since last year I find—looking at the expenditure during the reign of the late Minister for Mines—that expenditure on explosives, magazine reserves, maintenance to sidings, repairs to trucks and upkeep of horse and cart, was £13. That does not seem very extravagant. In fact, it would appear almost farcical. Fancy £13 spent on all that!

Mr. Watts: They could not have fed the horses too well.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It serves to show that the expenditure last year was not of a wildly extravagant character, and therefore if we are to make any real effort—I am sure the Minister intends to make it—to secure the revival of the mining industry we should be prepared to spend a good deal more. Among the many matters respecting which I would like to see expenditure considerably increased there is the provision of mining school scholarships. I agree with the Minister, and appreciate his statement, that the age of science has arrived, and we must very largely abandon old methods and old beliefs and rely much more on science carefully applied to industry. It is very important that mining school scholarships should be made available on a much larger scale to those who are prepared to offer themselves for further studies. Last year the money spent on these scholarships was £102—a mere bagatelle, and quite valueless.

If we have any belief in what is likely to be developed by means of mining school scholarships, we must be prepared to put our hands deeper into our pockets to sub-

sidise this avenue of expenditure to the extent of ten or 20 times the amount expended last year. The Estimates show that the amount provided for expenditure under this heading during the current financial year is £155, or an increase of £53. I hope that with the advent of more money, and therefore more opportunities to spend it, this will be one of the first directions in which increased funds will be expended. I have always had the idea—and the belief is shared by those more in touch with mining at present than I am—that we have never spent enough upon the education of clever young mining men, the type of man that has learnt the practical side and wants to go in for the theory of mining so as to fit himself to the highest possible degree to apply theory to the practical side of mining. I am sure that goldfields members in this Chamber, and even those who are not associated with mining constituencies, will grasp the importance of this work and assist in bringing it to fruition.

I mentioned earlier that we are always fighting nature in an endeavour to take from her the treasures she has hidden from man, especially gold. It is a very old struggle and involves the effort to separate gold from many other minerals with which it is associated and which needs must be separated before the gold can be recovered. The Minister has held out some hope that a new process has been found by which one of the greatest difficulties experienced in the past will be dealt with, namely, the conjunction of copper and gold. That conjunction has to be overcome. In the old days, as the member for Hannans will agree, it was necessary to recover the copper with the gold contents and send the ore away. That was a very costly matter and it was expensive because it had to be sent to the Eastern States for treatment in smelters. Apparently some brilliant young man has discovered a new process which, I take it, will be something in the nature of a flotation process, as a result of which the copper and the gold can be separated. I presume it is a development of the flotation process.

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then the Minister is still more mysterious than ever. I imagined it would be a development of the flotation process, which would have the effect of separating the copper and the gold. In any

event if the new process is a success it will be extremely valuable to this State. I do not propose to deal with the question of coal, of which I know little or nothing beyond the fact that it seems to me to be one of the most irritating forms of industry in connection with which those engaged in it are in a state of perpetual turmoil all over the world. It is not only in Australia but the world over that disputes have arisen in connection with the coalmining industry. However, I do not wish to comment on that phase. On some more appropriate occasion I may do so. I shall not touch upon it to-night except to say that I hope that our other industries will be in no way more damaged or incommoded by the coal troubles in this State than is inescapable.

There is a peculiar item on the Estimates respecting which we should have some particular explanation. I refer to the item dealing with the Wiluna gold mines and the production of arsenic. We could understand such an item appearing during the war period, but I always understood that the expense incurred in the recovery of arsenic was borne by the Commonwealth, at any rate in the greatest proportion, and that any such operations were undertaken with the assistance of the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is right, but this State had to pay a considerable proportion of the expense to keep the industry going.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Is it not about time that we followed the example of other States and did nothing without being paid for it? Although this is not relevant to the Mining Vote and I may receive curt treatment at the hands of the Deputy Chairman of Committees, I cannot understand why, in connection with railway matters, the Queensland Government was able to make such a lot of money from the carriage of troops and supplies for the Commonwealth, whereas in Western Australia we undertook the same task but at cost or perhaps below cost.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No, the same rates applied, but the Queensland Government had a vastly bigger turnover.

Hon. N. KEENAN: At any rate, the Queensland Government made a lot of money on that account.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In this instance why should we bear the expense of the £5,000

provided for the production of arsenic? What is arsenic wanted for now? If it is required by the Commonwealth it is purely as a luxury—possibly to deal with the Government's opponents, political and otherwise. Why should we provide free arsenic for the Commonwealth? I regret seeing such a provision made in the Estimates, particularly as we could spend the money much better in other directions. Here we are asked to spend £5,000 on producing arsenic, which has not the smallest value, even in the Eastern States.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The agreement was made for 12 months and it has just run out, but we have to pay this money.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not know that the member for Geraldton has not allowed his enthusiasm to over-rule his accuracy.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No. Perhaps you can show where that is wrong.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I realise it would be difficult to find the hon. member out. However, I do not propose to indulge in these little quips on a matter of this description.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is very disorderly.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I have spoken to these Estimates for two reasons. I am still intensely interested in the mining industry although long past active participation in it. Secondly, I have discussed the Vote because there are some matters to which it is advisable to direct the attention of the Committee. Those matters are the ones I have just mentioned. Particularly I refer to the fact that in this scientific age we should not hesitate to spend generously in the provision of mining school scholarships for the purpose of encouraging men who are practical miners and have that knowledge at their fingertips, and who desire to receive theoretical and scientific instruction in order to become more valuable in the industry.

[*Mr. Rodoreda resumed the Chair.*]

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [9.40]: I congratulate the new Minister for Mines on his excellent effort in presenting the Mines Estimates to the Committee. I was pleased to hear him say that the Budget had been framed in wartime, and the mining figures were not such as he intended to spend in peacetime. I assure the Minister that the men connected with the mining industry throughout Australia have viewed his eleva-

tion to the Ministry with considerable favour. To use mining parlance, they consider they have "got a good prospect, from which they will get payable values." I feel sure that will be the position. The member for Nedlands is just as anxious as any member sitting on the Government side of the House could be, to see the promotion of the interests of the mining industry. The contribution he has made to the discussion of the Mines Estimates was indeed satisfactory, except on the question of the provision of scholarships for young men. I realise that some such provision is long overdue, particularly in view of the large sums of money spent in this State on the development of mining for gold and other minerals and the excellent results and returns that have been achieved in that respect.

During the period I was secretary of a trade union at Kalgoorlie—it was during the depression years—the School of Mines turned out a young man who was a brilliant scholar, particularly in metallurgy. He was particularly brilliant in the theory of mining but he lacked practical knowledge. He wished to obtain practical experience in one of the mines and on behalf of the young man's parents and himself, armed with the certificate of the Director of the School of Mines, I approached every mining man of standing at Kalgoorlie and placed the lad's qualifications before him, but was told on each occasion that no use could be made of his services. In the end that young man took on railway construction work with the pick and shovel and he was lost to mining. That shows how much consideration the Kalgoorlie mining people are prepared to give to the training of a brilliant young man such as that.

When the member for Nedlands talks about the Government providing more money for mining school scholarships, why not ask the mining companies that have made so much out of the gold deposits of this State, to join with the Government in making the necessary provision. On that score I will meet the member for Nedlands, but I believe the mining companies as well as the Government should participate in the provision of scholarships. The Minister invited criticism; I do not think he will get it. No one is more qualified to speak on behalf of the mining industry and of the prospectors than the member for Murchison himself.

For many years he was engaged in the industry and, as a member of Parliament, he has been able to present the case for the prospectors and for the goldmining industry in general. The Minister will certainly not hear any criticism from me or from other members representing Goldfields constituencies for we realise that he is perfectly genuine in his attitude and he will do everything possible to assist the goldmining industry. There are, however, certain suggestions that can be made and his department can be criticised in some respects. It can be pointed out that some of the work undertaken could be carried out more efficiently.

The Minister said he wanted to encourage prospectors to go outback. That is an excellent idea both from the point of view of the Government and of the men. On the other hand, what has happened? Men have gone out and have spent the best part of their lifetime in the outback, but have never got anything of value. Where they have discovered goldfields they have received nothing in return, although those men have been responsible for bringing much wealth into the State. Take the instance of the greatest Goldfields identity—Paddy Hannans—who discovered the presence of gold—he died practically in poverty. I think the Government gave him a miserable pittance of about £2 a week; but, although millions of money were taken away from Kalgoorlie by mining companies, not one mining company came to his help. Not one company said to him, "On account of your having found the most valuable field in Australia we are prepared to pay you 50 per cent. of the pittance you are getting from the Government and so let you have a little more comfort."

Prospectors who discover a field and do not receive any benefit from their discovery should be recognised by some payment from the Government. A man who goes prospecting goes out with the chance of receiving no reward at all, with no chance of getting any return for his labour. There was certainly no guarantee about that in the old days. He may find a field which is rich, but he may get nothing out of it himself. We give him a reward claim, provided he works it. The Minister made reference to other minerals. I agree with him that there are many excellent prospectors in the State who have no knowledge of minerals other than gold, copper, silver

and perhaps lead. These are well-known minerals, but we have other minerals in Western Australia which require something more than the ordinary prospector's knowledge.

If the Mines Department can issue bulletins which will describe these various minerals, their peculiarities, their hardness and their value, that might be of great assistance to the prospectors. We have some valuable minerals. We have a mineral known as tantalite. We all know that quite recently it proved to be most valuable; but up to the outbreak of the war it was practically of no value in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Mines: And we have beryl.

Mr. TRIAT: Beryl is not valuable compared to tantalite. It is found in very small quantities and fetches a very low price, 38 dollars per ton.

Mr. Styants: Tantalite is more valuable than gold.

Mr. TRIAT: It is worth pound for pound with gold. When the war broke out, tantalite was being sent to America. They still want it, I believe. When the tantalite reached America it was found that, by treating it properly, its value increased. Two tons of tantalite residue was worth £37,000, but we received £4,000 for it when exported from Western Australia. As I say, the value in other countries was £37,000. We had no method of extracting tantalum from the tantalite. The only countries that could do so were Germany, America and Japan, who evidently had men of higher scientific attainments than we have in Australia. The department will have to get busy and ensure that minerals of such a high value are not permitted to leave the country in a raw state. The money paid for tantalite outside of Australia should be spent in the State. The man who produces the stuff should get the value, less the amount required to treat it.

The Minister told the Committee that the department employed 31 chemists. Let us hope they can devise ways and means of extracting the valuable residue from tantalite. According to a history of mining which I read, tantalite got its name because it was so difficult to extract the valuable material from it. That is probably correct. Let us discover some method of obtaining that valuable material. As to other minerals, I remember a case in Yalgoo of a prospector who had discovered scheelite, which is used

for hardening steel. In my district the prospectors found a reef a mile long and 200 feet wide; pieces of the mineral were many pounds in weight. The percentage of WO₂ in the scheelite is over 13, but nobody would spend money on the show. The Government would not spend £200 to sink a shaft. That find is four miles from Yalgoo and is practically untouched, with the exception that the men produced two tons of scheelite by crude methods and sent it away.

The Minister also said that he is prepared to assist prospectors to break ore with drills, the prospectors to pay back to the Government 25 per cent. of the gold won. If the gold won is sufficient in quantity to pay the man his wages, the Government should ask him to pay back 25 per cent. of the gold won; but if the gold is not sufficient to pay wages, the Government should use its discretion about making the request for the 25 per cent.

The Minister for Mines: The Government always does.

Mr. TRIAT: I think it does, and that it is on the right track by assisting prospectors. There are many ways of assisting them. As the Minister pointed out, they can be assisted with compressors and rock drills in country where the rock is hard. By such means the man could obtain a bigger tonnage and get it treated faster. Living allowances should be paid to prospectors while they are in search of gold, provided they do the work. As in the case of the Munsie scheme, a prospector should be under the control of a supervisor. I do not favour groups of three, four and five men prospecting, because usually they cannot agree while working on the job. In instances where men desire to go out in groups, however, a supervisor should be sent with them. On the other hand, if a prospector desires to prospect on his own account, he should be entitled to an allowance sufficient to keep him in food while he is working. If he earns sufficient to pay wages, then he can make a refund to the Government out of his winnings from the gold.

Quite recently I read of a new development that occurred on the goldfields. A young man had drilled only 80 feet on an abandoned field and I am given to understand that he now has a valuable goldmine. Many mines have been pegged in the district, where nobody anticipated mining would again be undertaken. There seems

to be a prospect in that particular area of another mine or two being opened up. When a prospector finds a goldmine, he has to meet many difficulties. Our old State batteries are definitely rattletraps. There is not a State battery in Western Australia—including the crack one at Coolgardie and the other at Kalgoorlie, the two best—that is capable of crushing a good tonnage or getting a decent extraction of gold. The time is overdue for them to be scrapped. We should be more modern in our methods. We should treat ore in the way that the mining companies treat it. They do not treat it as it is treated by the State Battery Department. The companies crush it by modern methods; but when the gold gets into the sands at the State battery the Government asks too much of the prospector. I think the State Battery Department left in the sand 3 dwts. 8 grains.

The Minister for Lands: Two dwts. 8 grains.

Mr. TRIAT: I can remember the ex-Minister for Mines making an endeavour to remedy the matter. He brought the quantity down to 1 dwt. 18 grains. We were overjoyed that night. I wired the information to my people and received in return congratulatory telegrams, saying that the Government had done a wonderful job. When we got to the Mines Department, however, we found the department had discovered that to reduce the quantity in that way would cost some thousands of pounds. The department therefore immediately altered the percentage and arrived at the exact figure of 2 dwts. 8 grains. The department said, "No, you cannot give the men the increase." The Minister definitely did intend to do so at the time. He said, "I have done something for the prospectors at last, but the department finds that it has made a mistake." The State battery could not get enough gold out of the sands, in its opinion, to warrant the reduction to 1 dwt. 18 grains. No mining company in the State would leave 1dwt. 18 grains in the sands. I am not talking of treatment, but of what is left behind in the sands. The metallurgist who would do that would get the sack.

I respectfully suggest to the Minister that he deal with the State Battery Department and ask the staff to give better consideration to the treatment of pros-

pectors' ore, particularly in view of the increased crushing charges as the result of increases in wages and materials. If the Minister does give that attention to that department, it may be that more effective methods will be undertaken to treat semi-sulphide and sulphide ores. There are sulphide ores in my district with 2-oz. dirt, but the State battery will not touch it at 2 ozs. to the ton. A prospector in my district has a claim called "Rose Marie," but the State Battery Department will not treat the ore because it is refractory and the department cannot get the gold out. At Ravensthorpe an oil flotation plant has been installed. Cannot the Government install such a plant? New blood is required in the State Battery Department.

The Minister for Lands: Two men at Ravensthorpe were backed by the Mines Department and got expert advice from Kalgoorlie.

Mr. TRIAT: The State Battery Department should get expert advice from Kalgoorlie also. The Minister drew our attention to the fact that two men were treating copper ore; but the member for Nedlands was on the right track. It was the same old method; a greater quantity of ore can be treated at a cheaper cost. To treat ore of that type 20 to 30 per cent. of copper would be required. This is a question which should be investigated. If a man has 3 per cent. of copper ore, I understand it cannot be treated. The Minister said he was going to ask the Treasurer for extra money. I think he has as much hope of obtaining it as I have.

The Minister for Lands: Do not be pessimistic.

Mr. TRIAT: I heard the Treasurer say, when he made his Budget speech, that he was up against it and I do not think conditions have improved. I am afraid the Minister will have some difficulty in obtaining the money which he expects. I doubt whether his anticipations will be realised. I would like him, however, to approach the Commonwealth Government. There is not the slightest doubt that the Commonwealth Government has taken millions of pounds from the industry during the last few years. Today it is taking 17s. 7½d. for every ounce of gold won from the goldmines in Western Australia, and it does nothing for the industry, except put out its hand to take the money. That state

of affairs cannot continue to exist with friendly feelings by Western Australia towards the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth should be prepared to return to the industry some of the money it has taken from it. I admit that the Commonwealth did make us a grant of £100,000 to keep our mines in reasonably decent working condition while they were closed down during the war, the Commonwealth having taken the men away. I think the Commonwealth Government has made another advance of £50,000 this year to continue the assistance it has already given, at least so I am given to understand by the mining companies.

For the re-habilitation of prospecting, State Batteries, semi-sulphide ore treatment, battery plants, living allowance, water, etc., the Commonwealth Government should have no hesitation in handing to Western Australia £500,000 of the millions it has taken. I feel sure that the members of the panel representing Western Australia will put to the Commonwealth Government the proposal to pay back to this State some of the £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 that it has taken by way of a totally unfair tax. That tax is on production and not on profit. I trust that the Minister will contact his representatives on the panel and request them to ask that some of that money be returned to this State to assist in getting us out of the position in which we are today. Western Australia can be thankful for the goldmining industry and will again look on it as one to assist it out of its troubles. Butter, meat and wheat are all right today while they are wanted overseas, but as soon as we have met those requirements we will have to find other means of getting revenue. We can easily revert to the position in 1938 and 1939 when wheat was 1s. 10d. a bushel and no one wanted to grow it or to sell it. We must be prepared for a rainy day, and look for a commodity that we can put on the world's market, and which will not be turned down by anyone, whether he be black, white or brindle.

Although gold is of no value to us to eat, it has a large trading value. Let us not lose an opportunity of availing ourselves of this wealth while it is at £10 15s. 3d. per ounce—and in my opinion it will increase in value beyond that figure. I do not know what the position is in regard to the selling of gold in Australia, although I know that

the Commonwealth Bank has control of it. Whether the Commonwealth Government will continue to control the handling of gold, I do not know. I assume that the Minister will be able to obtain that information. If it is found that the Commonwealth Government intends not to retain that control for all time, I urge him to exploit the world markets for gold in the same way as they have been exploited for wheat. When one Federal Minister—Dr. Evatt I think—was speaking in America or England recently he said that there was no gold in Australia; that there were no substantial stocks of gold here. He gave the world to understand that the quantity of gold that had accumulated during the war was disposed of. If that is so I, who am a goldmining representative, would like to know where it has gone.

Hon. N. Keenan: And at what price!

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. We all realise that gold has a variable price in different parts of the world today. It is £10 15s. 3d. in Australia, £8 8s. sterling in England, and 35 dollars in America. When we leave the sterling countries we find that in India it is worth up to £25 Australian. There must be a demand for it. In Holland we can get £4 for every golden sovereign. We all know that the exchange in Dutch currency, against Australian currency, before the war, was terrific. The Australian pound in Java was worth only 11s., but the people there are prepared to pay £4 for every sovereign which is equivalent to £16 an ounce. In addition, India is prepared to pay up to £25 according to the latest information we have received. I quote a few figures. In 1944 the production of gold was 472,588 ounces which at £10 15s. per ounce—the value at that time—was worth £5,080,321. In round figures the value of gold at £10 15s. per ounce was £5,000,000 Australian. The same amount of gold sold to the Dutch would be worth £7,500,000 Australian, or £2,500,000 more than we are getting in Australian currency. In India the same gold, at £20 an ounce—and that is not the maximum figure that gold reached in India—the total value would be £9,500,000, or £4,500,000 more than in Australia. These are valuable markets that can be exploited.

If anyone is entitled to get a rake-off on gold it is the people who produce it and not the Commonwealth Government, which has its rake-off now when it gets 17s. 7½d. on

every ounce of gold. Surely it does not want as a further rake-off the difference between £10 15s. 3d. an ounce and £16 or £20, wherever it may be. We have a bank—the Rtral and Industries Bank—that is capable of handling our gold and if we later control it ourselves, instead of the Commonwealth Government, then we should get the high price for the benefit of the men who produce it. In addition, we might get ourselves out of the troubles that we may then be experiencing. I trust the Minister will stick to gold because he will find it one of our most valuable products for some time to come.

I have recently travelled through the South-West and have seen the wonderful land there, but I say there is no possibility of that land producing, in the next 100 years, anything like what the goldmines will produce. The industries carried on there will not pay in wages and expenses what the mining companies will pay. There is no greater production of wealth to the working man or to the lucky prospector than gold. I think that the Minister's term of office is one during which this Government should spend a lot of money on gold. The other day I heard a man say, "We should spend £1,000,000 on the Bunbury harbour." Well, let us get £500,000 and spend it on gold. We will then get a much quicker return. I am not going to deal with the number of men who might be engaged in mining, because the Minister knows that the mining industry will carry more men per acre than any industry in Australia, including the celebrated iron foundries.

A short time ago the Minister invited me to pay a visit to the coalfields. I did so and to me that trip was a great education. It was the first time that I had been below in a coalmine. I was dumbfounded! I could not believe that such conditions could exist in any part of Australia as existed there. The Minister said that many of the men in charge may not have had experience in other parts of the world. I do not know about that, but any man who has had experience in gold-mining and who saw those conditions would be disgusted to think that they could be tolerated. I am not talking about conditions that cannot be overcome, such as miner's phthisis, but ordinary surface conditions for a start. The change-rooms were disgraceful and would not be tolerated for five minutes

on a goldmine. It took me the best part a quarter of an hour to scrub the coal out of myself after being underground for two or three hours. How these men get on at the end of a day. I do not know. Their change-rooms and bathrooms were filthy, and the gear overhead would not be tolerated in a slum let alone in a valuable up-to-date coalmine. When the men went to work they carried all the material down below. They filled inside their shirts with dynamite, and put detonators in their hip pockets. They carried two bottles of water in a knapsack, as well as their food, and had to walk 1½ miles down below.

Mr. Kelly: Is there an inspector there?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, two.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, but the companies are not breaking the law. Those conditions would not exist for two minutes on a goldmine where the miners are not allowed to carry any tools underground, and they certainly do not carry dynamite or detonators.

Mr. Perkins: Do they use dynamite and detonators in the mines?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes.

Mr. Thorn: What is the member for the district doing?

Mr. TRIAT: He has nothing to do with it because these things are permitted under the regulations. I hope the Minister will bring in new regulations to give these men better working conditions so that they will not have to carry underground the tools of trade or drinking water, and to provide travelling facilities for them so that they will not have to walk a mile and a half after work. Also better conditions should exist underground at the working places. I am astounded to know that the men at Collie have continued to work at various times. I am not a belligerent sort of man, and do not believe in strikes, but I am surprised that the men have worked under the conditions existing at Collie. That they have done so shows that they must be peaceful and law-abiding men. As the Minister pointed out, they voluntarily worked two hours a day in the open cut, in addition to a day's work, and produced as much coal in that two hours as they did in the previous two hours. That was done to give the Government an opportunity to meet the requirements of the Waroona factory,

the Swan Cement Works, and the State Brick Works. These men must be a good type but they are not getting a fair deal and in my opinion they never have had a fair deal.

I trust that in the first session of the next Parliament the Minister will bring down new mines regulations giving them decent conditions in regard to change rooms, transport and better working facilities underground. I regret that the Collie coalminers had to undergo the ugly position that arose last Sunday. The men quarrelled amongst themselves as to whether they would continue working because they had had another raw deal. When a dispute occurred there some time ago the miners went on strike for a day and decided to go before a board of reference, composed of local practical men, and that board decided in favour of the men. The owners of the mines have certain redresses and on this occasion they appealed to the Commonwealth board, which sat and said that the men were wrong and the company was right. Usually we appeal to the Arbitration Court against the decisions of a board of reference, but that cannot be done in Western Australia today. Under the Commonwealth coal regulations, that is not permitted. I hope that the Commonwealth Government will agree to stand by the Collie coalminers in their desire to have the State Arbitration Court function on their behalf, and thus give us a chance of maintaining peace in the industry instead of having the Commonwealth coming in and messing things up. If the Commonwealth cannot handle its own disputes in the Eastern States, it cannot manage ours.

Mr. Kelly: The Commonwealth refused to give the State control.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, but as a gesture of decency to men who are willing to work and who worked during the war without a stoppage except one of infinitesimal proportions, the Commonwealth should be prepared to say, "We will permit you to run your industry under your own Arbitration Court." If this were done, it might prove to be an inducement to people in the other States to revert to normal conditions instead of going on as they are at present.

There are some conditions at Collie for which I am prepared to give considerable praise. There is, for instance, the open cut, which is second-to nothing in Australia for

the production of coal. I commend the people who were responsible for the production of coal in the open cut. The conditions might have been bad and dirty at the outset, but I can conceive of nothing better than the work that is going on there at present. It is clean, healthy and very productive.

The Minister for Lands: Everybody did his best to prevent the Mines Department from opening that up.

Mr. TRIAT: Everyone would now give the department credit for having opened it up because it has put into operation one of the most effective means for producing coal. The open cut produces 100 tons of coal an hour, and the work is performed quickly, cleanly and expertly. I give credit to those who were responsible for the open cut, whether the Mines Department or the company.

The Minister for Lands: It was Dick Wilson who was responsible for opening it up.

Mr. TRIAT: Then it is a credit to him. When I was at Collie I saw the Wyvern coalmine to which the Government has advanced £39,000. The method of operation in that mine was excellent. The men were transported to the coal face on a trolley and the coal was pulled, not by tubs or skips, but by an endless belt. The rate of hauling coal from the mine was 100 tons an hour which quantity, of course, could be increased by using a larger belt.

Coal is capable of producing an immense amount of wealth, but more investigations are needed than have been made in the past. Many people talk of what is going to be done in the direction of producing charcoal iron, but I am of opinion that we can produce coke from Collie coal. There is a Government inspector at Collie, Mr. Gillespie, who seems to be a knowledgeable man. He told me that four years ago he had attempted to gasify Collie coal by a crude method. He took a pipe 4 ft. long and 4 in. in diameter, filled it with Collie coal, sealed the ends, put it in a furnace and got it red hot. When he applied a match to the gas thus generated, it ignited, and on opening the tube he found coke inside. This was known to the Mines Department four years ago. Yet during those years not a piece of coke has been produced in Western Australia, apart from the work being done by Mr. Fox at Midland Junction. I understand that Mr. Fox, under the Mines Department or the Department of Industrial Develop-

ment, is putting in a furnace for this purpose. Why should this work be in hand only now when four years ago it was demonstrated that coke could be produced from Collie coal? We are spending a large sum of money on a charcoal proposition, the reason given being that we cannot produce coke in this State. The real reason is that we have not tried. Research work is most important in regard not only to Collie coal, but also to Irwin, Mingenew or any other native coal. If research can show that we are able to get useful by-products from native coals, we shall be doing good work.

I have no intention of wearying the Committee. I have spoken of gold and coal mining, and I feel sure the department is in the hands of an excellent man provided he can get funds to enable him to carry on the work. Of course, if funds are not made available, he will not be able to do impossibilities. If he can get the funds, I am satisfied that he is capable of doing the job.

The Minister for Lands: You are not the only man to find that out.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. The Minister for Lands, when he held the Mines portfolio, was in the same position. Let us hope that if there is no other course open to the present Minister for Mines, he will approach the problem from a different angle and try to get the Commonwealth Government to assist. I think the Commonwealth would be prepared to help if it could see the possibility of getting some tangible return. I hope the Minister has a successful term of office and that his efforts will result in considerable good for the people of this State.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans) [10.21]: I congratulate the member for Murchison heartily upon his elevation to the Ministry, particularly when I realise that two very important departments, Mines and Railways, have been allocated to him. Having followed the hon. member's career for many years, I feel sure that he will be quite capable of handling the Department of Mines, but I would not say the same of Railways. I have no intention of casting any reflection upon the Minister, but I believe the joint responsibility of the two departments is too great for any Minister. The Mines Department alone would be a full time job for one man.

In Western Australia today, more so than for the last five or six years, we are looking to the mining industry to assist in the rehabilitation of many of our returned servicemen. Most people have a very faint idea of just what the goldmining industry has meant to Western Australia and to the Commonwealth. The first gold that was reported allegedly was discovered by a convict settler in New South Wales in 1841, but the holders of the immense acreages in those days feared that if the secret leaked out, they would not be able to hold one of their workmen, which I suppose was rather an accurate calculation. So nothing was done until, in April, 1851, a man named Hargreave, who had had considerable experience of gold in other countries, discovered gold close to Bathurst, New South Wales, and within two days, although the means of transport then were very slow, 400 men were on the spot frantically searching for gold.

Following that, many other fields were discovered, which tended to create a brighter atmosphere in this new continent. The news spread throughout the world, and although Hargreave discovered gold only in April, 1851, in Victoria, as early as July, phenomenally rich fields were found.

We should bear in mind that at that stage only portions of the fringes of the continent were inhabited, and I venture to say that, but for the discovery of gold, the British people would not now be holding this island continent. Victoria at the time was struggling along under a penal system. Many of the best settlers had left their own country for their own good, not for their country's good. Anyone who had the audacity to express unpopular political views or snare a hare or shoot a pheasant was sent out to Australia as a convict. Yet these are the men who helped to build up the great Commonwealth of today. The Imperial Government attempted to make this country a repository for people whom it considered were rather too advanced in their political views or who were not wanted on account of having committed some trivial offence, political or otherwise.

Within two years of the opening up of the first goldfield in Victoria 173 tons of gold were produced of a value of £14,000,000. Up to 1906, Victoria alone had produced £544,000,000 worth of gold. This gold was obtained from what we in this State

call alluvial mining; it was surface gold obtained by merely scratching the surface, which showed the phenomenal wealth that existed there. The result was that the population in four years increased to about six times the original number. Had that ratio of increase continued, I venture to say that the population of Australia today would have been 20,000,000 or 30,000,000.

No other country in the world has such rich goldfields or has produced so much gold as has Australia. There is no other country that has produced lumps of virgin gold anywhere near approaching the nuggets that have been unearthed in Victoria and elsewhere. The Welcome Nugget, which contained 2,248 ozs. of pure gold, has never been approached. I think the next largest outside of Australia was found in the Ural Mountains, while other nuggets were found in South Africa and in California, but the content of pure gold was only about half of that of some of our nuggets. The Welcome Nugget was only one of many that have been discovered in Australia.

Later came the discoveries in Western Australia which have surpassed those of Victoria for richness of production, not in alluvial gold, but in reefs and lodes which are the richest in the world. We often hear talk about the wonderful ore deposits of the Rand in South Africa, but the richest line of lode ever worked on the Rand would be about half an ounce to the ton. Yet it is quite a common thing in Western Australia for mines to work reefs and lodes running from 3 ozs. to 8 ozs. to the ton. In 1886 the first return of gold in this State that I know of amounted to a value of £1,148. Within a few years the production increased in value to £7,000,000, and from 1905 to 1939 Western Australia exported £164,000,000 worth of gold. We have also in this State the largest, longest and richest chute of gold in the world, on the 1,200 feet level of the Great Boulder Mine. That is the original lode. We have not even scratched this country yet, in my opinion. At Kanowna, one of our oldest gold discoveries, a man the other day found a reef between two of the oldest mines in the State, the Lily and the White Feather. He took with him a small portable drilling machine and came on a reef of 12 feet, worth any amount, according to reports I have received. There is coarse and free gold showing everywhere in it.

Mr. McDonald: How deep was the lode?

Mr. LEAHY: It was 12 feet. They cut the cap of the reef at 12 feet. They had bored 62 feet. Some people during the war seemed to be of the opinion that gold was unnecessary.

The Minister for Lands: Some people still have that idea.

Mr. LEAHY: We could not load our guns with it, but we find now that all countries are frantically trying to obtain gold. The British Empire is very anxious to procure it, anywhere, at almost any price. No substitute has been found for it. It is of greater value today than it has been in its history. I think the price today is £10 15s. 3d. per ounce, the greatest price ever paid for Australian gold. I believe gold went to £25 an ounce in India, but that does not obtain today.

The Minister for Lands: That is the black market.

Mr. LEAHY: We went through a trying time during the war period so far as the goldmining industry is concerned. Owing to the loyalty of some of the men who were slightly affected with miners' complaint, and who jumped into the breach, the mines were kept going. Even with depleted staffs, we find the mining companies have been continually paying dividends. During the war, the Commonwealth Government took from the mines much machinery and appliances that were urgently needed to keep the mines working. No-one objected to that action, as the machinery was required for war purposes. We hope, however, that the Minister will use every endeavour to get that replaced with new machinery, thus giving the industry a new start and a new outlook. Let the industry receive what it needs and deserves.

I remember one old prospector. My friend, the member for Nedlands, will remember him very well. His name was Malachi Dwyer. He had his own version of what constituted a prospector. In one of his wild moments, he summed up a prospector in this way: "A prospector is a peculiar kind of bird. You don't know why he came here. Nobody asked him to come here. He came here, he arrived. He was a hard liver and a hard doer. Suddenly he took it into his head to vanish into the virgin bush, with his waterbag in one hand, his pick in the other, and his life in the other—out into the wild virgin bush, where the

hand of man had never set foot, and where the only sound that broke the stillness of the silent bush was the bones of the dead men who went before him." We cannot pay a tribute high enough to those wonderful men who, by their courage and perseverance, discovered gold in the outback of this State and made the outback what it is today, a place where decent people can live; the prospectors who made the coast and the metropolitan area what it is today, simply by their courage and their desire to do something out of the ordinary. Many of them lost their lives. Many were successful, not too many, unfortunately. I always will remember the vivid summing up of the prospector by that old man, although his summing up is rather vague.

The Minister for Lands: It is Irish.

Mr. LEAHY: I should say that a man by that name would be Irish. I want to impress upon the Committee particularly that our great mining industry will again be called upon to perform wonders in the rehabilitation of our soldiers. I do not know of any young miner who has returned from the war who is not talking about returning to the Goldfields. Naturally, it is the lure of the gold, the lure that calls men to go into the bush, endure hardships and be free and independent. I never knew a man yet who went into the industry seriously and was anxious to leave it. Unfortunately, many were compelled to do so on account of their health. If I had my life to live again I would go back and live on the fields as a miner. These men are going back. I meet them every day.

I found one curious thing, namely, that although mining companies are continually complaining of lack of manpower, the last time I was in Kalgoorlie I met a Scotsman, about 46 or 47 years of age. He asked me whether I could get him a job. I inquired whether he was out of the Army and he replied that he was. I then asked him whether he could not go back to his old job and he replied that he could not. He said he had been working on the Great Boulder mine and I asked him whether he could not go back. This man had been in two wars. He said he had gone to the mine and asked for a machine, but to his surprise the underground manager said, "No, we cannot give you a machine, but we will give you a job." "All right," replied the man, "that will do

me. What is it?" The reply was, "Contract bogging." Now, this Scotsman was a little man and contract bidders on the Golden Mile are as wide across the forehead as I am across the chest. And the underground manager wanted to put this small man on to contract bogging! Is that playing the game? I got the man a job somewhere else. That is his side of the story, as I know it. I believe that at present there are 150 men looking for work in Kalgoorlie. That is both strange and astonishing.

A conference was held in Kalgoorlie recently as to placing returned men in employment, and it was generally agreed that they must go back into the mining industry, but if they do, they must be segregated. By that I mean they would all be put together on one shift or in one mine. It would not be possible to take them in by one's and two's. I have been speaking to quite a lot of them and they have said, "That is all right but it has its drawbacks. This is the position: They put us on one mine. They select one shift on one particular mine for us." The miner is a freedom-loving kind of bird and does not like to be ordered and fooled about, and the average good miner, if he finds there is a job in another mine where he can make more money, desires to go there. I want this to be understood: If a number of men are selected to work on a particular mine, they have at all times the right to go to any other mine that will employ them, if they think they can better their conditions. That may appear to be something not worth while considering. But I can give members a personal experience I had when I was contracting on one of the big mines on the Golden Mile a few years ago. Before I come to that, I would say I do not want a repetition of what occurred then. I want the freedom our boys have fought for retained, and I want the miners to have the right to say where they will work and when they will work. I do not want any one mining company or anyone else to tell men they have to remain here or have to go somewhere else.

On the occasion of which I was about to speak, I was on one of the big mines and I was desired to do something that was not in my contract. I did not argue; I simply left and walked across to the other

mine, which was 120 yards away. As soon as the manager saw me, he took me to a big plan on the wall and told me where he wanted me to work. I told him I would be ready in three days. I went back at the appointed time, but when I got there he told me he was sorry but the contract was off; that they were not going on with it. I thought that rather strange. But a couple of months afterwards, I was speaking to one of the staff, who had overheard a telephone conversation between the man I had left and the one I was going to. The man I had left asked the other not to give me the contract because he wanted me back with him. I do not want that kind of thing to happen to our returned men. I want them to have the same freedom that has always existed in the Eastern Goldfields and on every other goldfield on which I have worked. A man is entitled to go where he likes. For a company to say that a man must remain in a certain position, when he feels that he could improve himself if he left, is wrong; and if that is attempted I think it will be a tragedy. With regard to the aluminium treatment, I hope the Minister will do the very best he can to push that along. I think we are delaying a little too much. It is something in the interests of the miners and a step in the right direction.

The Minister for Mines: You know, of course, it is patented and we cannot use it until Robson comes out.

Mr. LEAHY: I understood they were prepared to explain the whole system to anyone requiring it and also to have it installed at a very low cost—really the cost of administration. I did not know, from any report I received, that they had to send a representative over here to instal it or see it installed.

The Minister for Mines: As a matter of fact, one of our doctors has gone to Canada.

Mr. LEAHY: That is even a better idea. The future of the gold industry is very bright. With improved mining machinery, and more modern ideas of how to mine the ore we are today mining very low-grade ore—lower than has ever been mined in the history of Western Australia; and there is a great possibility of our mining still lower-grade ore. There are many big propositions on the Eastern Goldfields today that are being considered by very wealthy

companies. There is a report that one of the options has not been exercised; but it is not very authoritative. Even if it is, in one case the company that owns the property is quite wealthy enough to carry on operations; and I feel sure that the future of the goldmining industry in Western Australia is assured if it is correctly handled. I also believe that a great improvement could be made if we had two or three plants handling the whole of the products of, say, the Golden Mile. We had a couple of plants at one time, but I think we should have larger plants and more of them. That would tend to reduce costs.

Regarding prospecting I think that last session I mentioned something in connection with modern equipment, and the selection of the right type of man to undertake prospecting. I suggested that when he found something, he should be equipped with efficient, up-to-date machinery and should not work under the old system of hauling up with a windlass and bucket. He should have a compressor sufficient to drive a friction winch and a jack hammer and a sinking machine. In that way we might get somewhere with our prospectors. The ore reserves in Western Australia are very good at present. A couple of years ago the Lake View and Star had 4,000,000 tons with a grade of 5 dwts. and a value of £10,000,000; the Great Boulder had over 2,000,000 tons, with a grade of 5.5 dwts., and a value of £6,797,270; North Kalbarli had 1,020,622 tons with a grade of 6.34 dwts., valued at £3,235,370; and so on. That shows that the future of the goldmining industry is assured once we can get men back into the work, and if we have a sympathetic Commonwealth Government. We do not want the Commonwealth Government continually coming in and playing a shabby trick on us. They take three or four millions from us and give us a couple of hundred thousand back.

Mr. Abbott: They do not charge income tax, you know.

Mr. LEAHY: I am not talking about income tax.

Mr. Abbott: The gold tax is in lieu of income tax.

Mr. LEAHY: On production?

Mr. Abbott: Yes.

Mr. LEAHY: I disagree. I think the most atrocious offence committed against the interests of the industry is the Common-

wealth tax on production. I would not mind a tax on profits, but a tax on production is a distinct injustice to this State.

Mr. Abbott: You are entitled to get a certain value before you are taxed.

Mr. LEAHY: That is only in a small show. That does not refer to big producers at all. The hon. member is referring to the small man who has to produce 25 ozs. before he is taxed.

Mr. Smith: The big companies have to make a profit before they are taxed.

Mr. LEAHY: I would like to know when they have not made a profit!

Mr. Smith: Some have not.

Mr. LEAHY: I do not know of them. I do not want to delay the House any longer. I think enough has been said on the subject. I am pleased to know that the Minister has decided to endeavour to get a little more money.

Mr. Thorn: He ought to be able to fix that himself; he is an authority on finance.

Mr. LEAHY: This will be a test case for him.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn - Coolgardie) [10.51]: The Minister, in the introduction of his Estimates, has made an honest and encouraging approach to some of the difficulties that have beset the mining industry, not only in the past few years, but over a number of years. He said that the Mines Department was fully appreciative of the great field that existed, from an exploratory point of view, in untried areas. That remark also meets with great approval. The hon. gentleman dealt to some extent with the vigorous policy that is to be pursued by the Government in prospecting. He further said that the most important aspect of the mining industry is the prospector. I am pleased that that expression has been used in this Chamber by the Minister. On many occasions members have laid stress on that aspect and it has seemed, over a period of years, that those supplications have fallen on deaf ears because although we did, at one time, have a prospecting scheme to assist prospectors, it was most inadequate and the amount of the advance was a bare pittance and did not allow of any great activity.

The Minister has, during the course of his remarks, invited criticism. When he asked for criticism he naturally asked for

constructive criticism. There are times when criticism, though unpleasant, has a very desirable effect in bringing about necessary changes in departmental administration. The member for Mt. Magnet referred to State batteries as rattle traps. That remark amplifies and describes the position in regard to the machinery and the method employed in the State batteries, but at the same time we must realise that these batteries, spread as they are throughout the auriferous country of this State, have done a magnificent job in the opening up of much of the back country. If it had not been for them far less gold would have been recovered in this State. At the same time that does not relieve the Government of the responsibility of at least putting these batteries into suitable working condition. That has not been possible during the past few years when the majority of these plants were closed down. But now that activity is again coming to the mining industry one of the first and most essential jobs to be carried out by the Government is the placing in order of the various plants throughout the State.

Little mention was made in the Minister's speech of the sulphide ores in the State. We all realise that goldmining is a wasting industry and that once taken from a mine gold can only be replaced, as a medium of revenue to the State, by finding new mines. There, of course, the prospector comes into his own, and it is by his efforts that much of our progress in the mining industry has been made. At the same time there are many known sulphide zones of tremendous value to this State lying latent at present because of the lack of facilities for the treatment of sulphide ores. During his term of office as Minister for Mines, the present Minister for Lands gave a very interesting talk to a fairly large gathering at Southern Cross about the activities of the Mines Department, and its desire to decide on a plan that would be suitable for the treatment of sulphide ores.

We understood from what the Minister said that an officer had been despatched to the Eastern States to find out the most suitable type of plant for installation or for adoption in the various sulphide zones of this State. With all due respect to the decision to send that particular man to the Eastern States I still contend that he could

have got more valuable information had he visited and remained for a while on the Golden Mile where this type of ore is being successfully treated. I regret that nothing has been heard of the result of this man's visit to the Eastern States, because I feel that one of our most valuable adjuncts to the mining industry, the sulphide zones, is at present practically unworked. These are to a large extent in several of the fields now operating and working oxidised ores.

The Estimates have been correctly described as having been based on a war period. The 1945-46 Estimates disclose a decreased expenditure of £3,533 compared with 1944-45. They mostly cover departmental expenditure and do not provide, to any great extent, for other than salaries and general departmental expenses. To think that in this year when goldmining should be receiving the greatest amount of attention and the most lavish expenditure that the Treasury can possibly afford, we find that instead of an anticipated increased expenditure we are faced with a decreased one! I feel that a genuine excuse exists on this occasion for increased expenditure compared with any past year of mining activities in this State. The industry will call for a great amount of assistance in many directions that, in past years, it never had any reason to do. As we have not received any information, other than some promises that the matter is being reviewed, and as we have had no indication from a State point of view that there is going to be any large amount of finance found for the rejuvenation of the mining industry, we can look only to the Commonwealth Government for a general rehabilitation of the industry.

At the Commonwealth's request the goldmining industry was reduced to a dangerously low level during the war. The Commonwealth Government undertook maintenance, through the State departments, and the first advance by the Commonwealth for expenditure on maintenance in this State was £100,000. A second advance of £50,000 will, I understand, last only until about the 31st December. Apparently no further grant is anticipated from the Commonwealth. Though certain recommendations have gone to the Commonwealth Government from the Goldmining Panel, no decision has been made

up to the present. It is time the State Government made it clear that we will not stand for such treatment any longer. This is an industry which is one of the mainstays of the State and yet, because of an agreement reached during the war period, the State is being embarrassed financially and will be more embarrassed as the year goes on. I think the State Government should approach the Prime Minister in this matter. Many mines that closed during the war period will require advances for their rehabilitation. Most mines depleted their finances and ore reserves and ran themselves to a standstill during the trying period between 1942 and 1945.

The Commonwealth assisted this State to maintain those mines but before they can again go into production, or even carry out the preliminary processes of re-establishment, the maintenance is to be cut off. The delay that is taking place in opening the mines will have a detrimental effect on the employment of men returning from the war. The member for Hannans commented on the method of employing many men who are returning to the Goldfields and said there are about 150 men unemployed at present. I have heard estimates as high as 400 men but I think 150 is more accurate. We find that many of these men are not prepared to go back into the industry until after Christmas. They are having a well-earned respite after years overseas. Others would return to the industry tomorrow if they could get work of a particular type. Men have declined jobs underground and have insisted on surface jobs. There is a limited number of surface jobs on any mine, and the selection in that field is therefore narrowed.

The Mines Department has recently put forward the names of 124 key men for release, and until they return many mines will be unable to engage other men who are seeking employment. There must be machine miners, winding engine drivers and other key men before large numbers of other men can be employed. The difficulty is caused not by mine managers, but by the tardy release of men from the Services and other factors I have mentioned. I know of one mine that worked until the end of 1943, when the amount of capital remaining was £10,000. Since then that mine has been maintained under the Commonwealth Government scheme, and at present it is faced

with the cessation of that maintenance at about the end of December. Mine experts have approved an expenditure of £28,000 to place that mine on a production basis. With only 10,000 on hand the balance must be got from somewhere. As the mine has depleted ore reserves, and its machinery is in need of repair, a call on shares would be out of the question. The only means of getting finance is from the Commonwealth Government, under its maintenance scheme, or a scheme of rehabilitation for the mining industry. The £28,000 covers a great amount of developmental work besides maintenance, as with the ore reserves down to a minimum it is obvious that there must be an extensive developmental policy before the mine can be put into a position to produce. If the mine is to open, as it probably will do, on the £10,000 in hand, this money will quickly dwindle and the mine will be in such a position that unless further finance is made available by the Commonwealth Government, it will have to be closed. This mine has employed an average of 80 men and up to 100 in the peak period, and the loss of employment to them will be very serious indeed. This is only one of many mines affected in a similar way. I urge the Government to approach the Commonwealth early. I know that the matter is receiving consideration, but there is need for immediate action. If the dire necessity of the industry were represented to the Commonwealth without further delay, I believe that a favourable response would be received.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 5th December, 1945.

Questions: Jetties, as to departmental expenditure	PAGE
Goldmining industry, as to discharge of key men	2413
by Services	2413
Bills: State Electricity Commission, 3R.	2414
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 3R., passed	2414
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 3R., passed	2414
Building Operations and Building Materials Control, 2R., Com.	2414
Land Act Amendment, 1R.	2437
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1R.	2437
Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance, 2R., Com.	2437
War Service Land Settlement Agreement (Land Act Application), 2R., Com., report	2438
War Service Land Settlement Agreement, Com., report	2447

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

QUESTIONS.

JETTIES.

As to Departmental Expenditure.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT asked the Chief Secretary: What amounts have been spent since 1935, by the Harbour and Light Department on the following jetties:—(a) Coode-street, (b) Mends-street, (c) Mill Point, (d) Como, (e) Applecross, (f) Point Walter, (g) Bicton, (h) Mosman, (i) Keane's Point, (j) Claremont, (k) Neerim lands, and (l) Cottesloe?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Chief Secretary) replied: (a) Coode-street, £1,521 5s. 6d.; (b) Mends-street, £332 16s. 4d.; (c) Mill Point, £9 1s. 8d.; (d) Como, £4 12s.; (e) Applecross, nil; (f) Point Walter, £164 11s. 9d.; (g) Bicton, leased to Melville Road Board (no expenditure); (h) Mosman, £162; (i) Keane's Point, £200; (j) Claremont, £3 7s. 2d.; (k) Neerim lands, £2,738 13s. 1d.; (l) Cottesloe, not a Government jetty. This expresses actual outlay on these jetties. Minor expenses have been charged to Maintenance of Jetties Authority.

GOLDMINING INDUSTRY.

As to Discharge of Key Men by Services.

Hon. W. R. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: Owing to the fact that there is a very considerable number of unemployed men in the Goldfields, and the number is increasing weekly, and that the mining industry, generally, is relied upon to absorb a large number of discharged servicemen, will the State Government press upon the Commonwealth Government the urgent necessity of speeding up the discharge of key men, so as to enable the industry, especially on the Goldfields, to get back to its pre-war production with the least possible delay?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Chief Secretary) replied:

Towards the end of the war, the State Government directly approached the Prime Minister for release of men and machinery. As a result, it was agreed to release men listed by the industry as key men and action in this regard has been instituted by the Manpower authorities, one of whom recently visited Kalgoorlie to explain what was being done. Some of the men are still absent from Australia and delay in those cases is unavoidable. The State Government