

have no doubt will prove to be invaluable and will result in substantial benefit to the progress of the State. I hope the Government will agree to the appointment of the proposed Select Committee, and I feel certain that much good will result from the inquiry.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 6th September, 1945.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### FISHERIES.

*As to Crayfish, Perth Herring, Canning, Etc.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, What amount of crayfish have been canned in Western Australia since the commencement of canning operations?

2, What was the output of Perth herring from Western Australian canning factories for the year ended the 30th June, 1945, (a) Perth, (b) Mandurah?

3, Now that hostilities have ended will canned fish and canned crayfish be made available for civilian consumption in greatly increased quantities?

4, What are the possibilities of increased expansion in either, or both, of these canning industries?

5, Is consideration being given to increasing the size permitted to be caught for canning purposes for (a) herring, (b) crayfish?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for the North-West) replied:

1, At Geraldton cannery, January, 1942, to August, 1945—56,635 dozen 7 oz. tins.

2, Year ended the 30th June, 1945: Perth—6,621 dozen 1 lb. tins; Mandurah—No canning done.

3, Small quantities of locally canned fish are at present available for civilian consumption. It is anticipated that greatly increased supplies will be available to civilians in the near future.

4, Supplies of Perth herring and crayfish indicate the possibility of considerable expansion in the fish canning industry.

5, The minimum legal lengths for Perth herring and crayfish apply in the taking of these fish for any purpose. There is no present intention of varying the existing legal minima.

### POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

#### *As to Regional Planning.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, Referring to the map showing the sixteen regions into which Western Australia has been divided for purposes of regional planning which was recently laid on the Table of the House, is he satisfied that, as proposed, the Albany region should be confined to the road board districts of Albany, Denmark, Plantagenet, Gnowangerup, Cranbrook and Phillips River, thereby leaving out a substantial proportion even of that area which is now known as the Albany Zone, and which is related to Albany geographically and by community of interest?

2, For what reason is it considered that road board districts as far apart, for example, as Bruce Rock and Upper Blackwood, where climatic, production and other conditions are so diverse, should be included in the Great Southern region?

3, Would it not be more advisable for such a road board district as Tambellup to be included in the Albany region, probably with others adjacent thereto, and for a road board district such as Bruce Rock to be included in the Eastern Wheatbelt region?

4, If not, will he explain what relationship the regional groupings have to plans regarding post-war development, and what are the reasons for the grouping that has taken place?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The Great Southern region was delineated to cover the areas affected by the Agricultural Areas Comprehensive Water Scheme—southern section.

3, The boundaries of these regions are not rigid and should a local authority desire to be included in another region, if it makes representations the Government will consider them.

4, The regions are a compromise in which the following factors, amongst others, were considered: Population, industries, geographical position, post-war works, road district boundaries.

#### PARDELUP PRISONERS.

*As to Record of Convictions, Sentences, etc.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

1, Will he lay on the Table of the House a list of the names of all the 37 prisoners held at Pardelup on the 15th August last, showing in addition—

(a) the convictions for which they were then serving sentences and particulars of the sentence each was serving;

(b) particulars of all previous known convictions and sentences in each case, specifying the crime or offence for which conviction was obtained in each case?

2, In regard to the prisoner, H. L. Carroll, and in view of his previous convictions and the nature of the offences involved, and the fact that he is detained at the Governor's pleasure for demanding money with menaces, what explanation can be given of an attempt to apply the honour system to a prisoner of this character or to class him as "responsive or a first offender," as mentioned in the Comptroller-General's report in 1942, in regard to the type of prisoner to be held at Pardelup?

3, Is it a fact that the prisoner Whelan was, in December, 1943, concerned in an escape from Fremantle prison when a senior officer was very badly injured as a consequence?

The PREMIER replied:

1, This information will take some little time to prepare. When complete it will be supplied to the hon. member.

2, By his outstanding good conduct and response to disciplinary treatment at Fremantle and Barton's Mill Prisons, and because the honour system is somewhat intermediate between parole and imprisonment, Carroll's case merited favourable consideration for testing under the more free and modified conditions obtaining at Pardelup. It is regretted that he did not fulfil expectations.

3, Yes.

#### GOVERNMENT TOURIST BUREAU.

*As to Re-establishing.*

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Premier:

1, In view of the cessation of hostilities, has the Government taken any steps to re-establish the Government Tourist Bureau with a view to handling the tourist traffic which is certain to be heavy following the lifting of restrictions existing during the war period?

2, If preparations have not been made will the Government take early action to build up the organisation necessary to ensure that this State does not lose tourist traffic owing to failure to advance the State's attractions?

3, What action, if any, is being taken to make known the State's attraction to tourists in the Eastern States and in other countries?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Answered by No. 1.

3, The Melbourne Agency of the Tourist Bureau will be re-opened in the near future, and a conference of Tourist officers from all States is being held this month to discuss the possibility of establishing Bureaux in all States.

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

*As to Gnowangerup District.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, Will he state how the water requirements of the Gnowangerup district will be adequately catered for under the general rehabilitation proposals as stated in the let-

ter to me under date the 16th July, 1945, from the Under Secretary for Water Supplies?

2, Will he give an outline of the details of any contemplated works?

3, Regarding the proposed gauging of the Waychinicup stream, as referred to in a letter from the Minister dated the 11th July, 1945, will he state to what area of the inland country (referred to in that letter) it is considered this stream will be of value in the future?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, Construction has been approved of a two-million gallon reserve tank at Ongerup, and approval has also been given to the enlargement and rehabilitation of the Borden Dam. The boundaries of the area to be provided for under the comprehensive Agricultural Water Supply Scheme would include the township of Gnowangerup and also a considerable portion of the Gnowangerup district.

3, Until gaugings have been taken over a number of years it is impossible to determine the quantity of water available from Waychinicup Brook and therefore the area of inland country which, if used for that purpose, would be served.

### FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

*As to Capital Cost, Annual Charges and Revenue.*

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

1, What is the total capital cost of Fremantle Harbour?

2, What are the present annual charges for (a) sinking fund, (b) interest, (c) maintenance?

3, What has been the average annual revenue derived from the harbour during the period 1935-1945?

The PREMIER replied:

1, £2,838,214 at the 30th June, 1945.

2, (a) £25,261, (b) £142,582, (c) £21,594.

3, £523,795.

### SUPERPHOSPHATE.

*As to Nauru and Ocean Islands Product.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he correctly reported in "The West

Australian" of the 4th inst. as having stated that it would probably be four years before Nauru and Ocean Islands would be in full production?

2, If so, in view of the grave need for obtaining phosphatic rock from these islands at the earliest possible moment (a) is the Government taking any steps to impress upon the Commonwealth Government and the Phosphatic Commission the need for earlier delivery; and (b) if so, what steps have been taken?

3, Have the required gantries been constructed as was urged in this House over 12 months ago, and if not, can he state what, if any, work on them has been done?

4, If work on the gantries still remains to be done, will the Government make urgent representations to the Commonwealth Government to utilise some of the munition plants and personnel that are being closed down and dismissed, on such work?

5, Will he also make at once urgent representations to the Phosphate Commission and the Commonwealth Government to make the obtaining of supplies of phosphatic rock from Ocean Island and Nauru a No. 1 priority work?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The Agricultural Council at each meeting has discussed various aspects governing the supply of phosphatic rock or other fertilisers and has impressed upon the Government the necessity of obtaining high quality rock from Nauru and Ocean Islands as soon as practicable. The British Phosphate Commission also is straining every nerve to obtain increased quantities of rock for the Commonwealth.

3, 4, 5, The construction of gantries is an engineering problem, and in view of the anxiety of the Commonwealth Government to obtain production from Nauru and Ocean Islands as soon as possible, it can be assumed with confidence that no effort has been spared in taking all practical steps. The Government, however, is prepared again to make representations to the Commonwealth, not only for the early construction of all necessary servicing equipment for these islands, but also that this project should be regarded as one of highest priority.

## RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Diesel Trains and Fares.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is it correct that passengers travelling by Diesel trains pay only second class fare?

2, Is it correct that, when steam trains are substituted for the usual Diesel train, passengers travelling by such steam trains still pay only second class fare irrespective of the class of accommodation used?

3, Are passengers, on subsidiary branch lines who require to make part of their journey by Diesel and part by mixed steam train, expected to pay excess fare for portion of their journey if they occupy a first class compartment on the coach attached to such mixed train?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

3, Yes.

(b) *As to Overcrowding of Trains.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Is he aware of the extremely uncomfortable overcrowding which occurred on passenger trains at the commencement and termination of the recent school holidays?

2, In view of the fact that the demand on rollingstock for military purposes has ceased, an explanation accepted as the reason previously necessitating this overcrowding, will he say why extra trains to accommodate school children were not provided?

3, Will he take action to ensure that the necessary additional trains are provided in accordance with seasonal demands, such as school break-up and commencement periods in future?

4, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, The demand on rollingstock for military purposes has not ceased. Two interstate military trains are run in each direction weekly, in addition to other local leave trains. On Friday, the 24th August, a special military train ran to Northam and three special trains each way between Perth and Fremantle for troops.

Usual extra trains were provided for school holidays but the position was aggravated by washaways over certain lines a few days earlier which caused additional passengers and extreme shortage of coaches owing to derailment of Albany train and Army demands mentioned.

3, Yes, to the limit of the Department's capacity.

4, Answered by No. 3.

**BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF  
(WAR SERVICE) ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Message.*

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

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [4.38]: In introducing the Bill, the Minister in charge described it as a small one. I think he said it was a remarkably small Bill, but it will be of considerable importance to a large number of workers and deserves careful consideration by this House. This is the first measure introduced by the Minister since he assumed office, and I desire to congratulate him on the clear and lucid manner in which he placed it before us, and to assure him that it will be of great assistance if he continues to explain with the same lucidity other measures introduced by him. I may be pardoned if I recall to this House the circumstances under which legislation of this character was first brought into existence and the justification for it.

In my early days on the Goldfields, when the mining industry was very young, we had no knowledge, so far as I am aware, of a disease such as silicosis. We certainly knew of T.B., because that is a scourge that applies to all communities. But, so far as I can remember, there were no cases of silicosis among the workers in the mines. May be that was due to the fact that the mine workings in those days were exceedingly shallow; or it might have been due to the fact that very few mines then had rock-drills; and of course it was the rock drill which led to the creation of the large volume of dust in the mines which, in turn, undoubtedly was a very great factor in causing the disease. However,

whether it was due to either of those causes or to some other, in the early years of this century there was a growing number of cases of silicosis and also, of course, a large number of T.B. cases. The figures reached such alarming proportions that it became necessary to take steps to remedy the position. The character of those steps was to provide for the removal from the mining industry of men who were suffering from either tuberculosis or from silicosis in the advanced stage, and even in the early stages.

That effort was crystallised in two statutes. One was the Miner's Phthisis Act of 1922 and the other the Mine Workers' Relief Act of 1932. The second measure was brought down by the late Mr. Scaddan, assisted by Mr. Munsie and, because of its passage through this House it was, I believe, a very fine effort in endeavouring to deal with these diseases by removing from the mining industry those suffering under them and by providing compensation for those suffering from them. The scheme of the Act was to remove compulsorily from the industry men who were suffering from tuberculosis, or from tuberculosis with silicosis either in its early stages or in its advanced stages. In order to do that, the men had to be compensated. That, therefore, led to the provision of the fund which is commonly spoken of as the Mine Workers' Relief Fund and which, of course, this Bill will affect. That state of affairs existed until 1940.

No man could work in any mine unless he held a ticket from the laboratory certifying that he was free from tuberculosis or silicosis. If at any time he left the industry—as he was entitled to do—of his own free will and went to another industry then, after a specific period of time had elapsed, and if he wanted to return to the mining industry, he had again to be examined and certified free from tuberculosis or from tuberculosis with silicosis. It is gratifying to remember and to be able to record that these steps were successful and that the mining industry was, to a considerable extent, relieved from the existence of these very grave diseases. In 1940 we came to a state of war, and were in a state of war. Many workers on the mines volunteered for Service in accordance with the traditions of that industry, which are the highest of any industry in this State so far as patriotism is concerned, and, in addition, considerable num-

bers were withdrawn by reason of the regulations made under the National Security Act. The present Minister for Lands took steps to protect these men in a measure he brought before this House in 1940. It is to amend that Act that this present Bill has been brought down. That is a short statement of the facts leading to the introduction of this measure.

This Bill differs from the statute of 1940 in very few respects. I shall point them out, shortly, to the House. Firstly, "war service" is defined in the Bill in an entirely different manner from "war service" in the Act of 1940. The definition here includes any occupation which, in the opinion of the Governor, is connected with or incidental to the prosecution of the war. Therefore it is entirely a matter for the Governor, which means, of course, the Governor-in-Council, to determine from time to time what occupations this Bill is to cover. That differs materially from the definition in the Act of 1940 which follows the definition in the National Service Act. Secondly, a worker who is suffering from T.B. is covered and protected by this Bill, whereas he was not under the 1940 Act, which did not relate to tuberculosis. Thirdly, the liability of a worker to contribute to the fund established under the Act of 1932 continues under this Bill, whereas under the Act of 1940 the worker did not have any obligation to contribute.

Lastly, the benefits of the 1932 Act are not, under this measure, confined to workers taken by compulsion from the industry or those who volunteered for service in the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth, but to all workers whether they were removed from the industry by compulsion or whether they volunteered to leave in order to obtain employment in munition factories or other works established to help in the prosecution of the war. For my part, I do not propose to add any further observation than this, that I am certain the whole House is sympathetic to measures of this character. I feel certain that the House, as a whole, is sympathetic in a matter of this character, which really only goes this far, that it prevents workers who left the industry—whether voluntarily or by compulsion—for the purpose of taking part in the war effort in its various forms, from being in any sense penalised, when they return, by reason of their war service. If they establish that

they are suffering from a disease such as tuberculosis, which has been incurred in the course of mining and developed in the course of war work, they can recover from the fund.

My only doubt—I think it is one that the member for Mt. Magnet will be able to clear up—is whether the fund will be sufficient to bear this added burden. There is only a limited amount in the fund, and if we increase the burden beyond that limit some steps will have to be taken to increase the fund. But that is not a matter upon which I have any personal knowledge. The member for Mt. Magnet could, from his experience, answer that doubt. For some reason this Bill bears the stamp of antiquity. It appears, on the face of it, to have been drawn before the war with Japan collapsed, and certain expressions are used in it which are relevant to the period when we were at war, which is no longer the case. That is only a matter of arrangement, in Committee, and I am certain that the Minister will take any steps necessary to correct it. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet) [4.52]: I welcome this measure being introduced into the House at the present time, as I think it is one of the greatest improvements that has come to the knowledge of men connected with mining. As the member for Nedlands has pointed out, miner's phthisis in its present form was unknown in the mining fields of Western Australia up till 1926. Prior to that men had all sorts of ideas as to how they contracted miner's phthisis. It was generally considered that the ventilation in the mines was inadequate, and that men inhaled an atmosphere which was detrimental to the lung and which set up a condition that resulted in tuberculosis. However, by scientific examination it was found that dust was really the cause, and that if dust was eradicated from a mine it reduced the amount of silicosis that occurred. This proposal is to put men in such a condition that, if they are unfortunate enough to have to inhale an atmosphere containing silica dust, the silica will not be harmful, in its effect on their lungs, to any extent.

As the Minister pointed out the other evening, it is not the intention of the department to allow bad atmosphere to exist underground. It is the intention to keep the

atmosphere underground as clean as possible, and to continue the good work already done by the ventilation officers at Kalgoorlie. If, when a mine was originally opened, it had proper ventilation systems installed, the dusty condition would not exist, because the atmosphere would automatically be clean. As pointed out by the Minister, the size of the dangerous particles of dust inhaled is 150 times too fine to be seen with the naked eye, so the atmosphere could be apparently as clean as that in this Chamber and could yet be impregnated with dust that would cause phthisis. If we continue the good work and keep the mines clean and, in addition, give the men this special treatment, we will eventually eradicate miner's phthisis from our goldmines.

**Mr. Mann**: You are speaking on the wrong Bill.

**Mr. TRIAT**: I am sorry. I support the second reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison—in reply) [4.57]: I wish to tell the member for Nedlands that I do not think this measure need cause him any fear as to the number of miners who will become beneficiaries under the Mine Workers' Relief Act. Most of our miners either enlisted or were compulsorily drawn into the Army and they have already been catered for under No. 4 of 1940. This Bill merely covers those men, few in comparison with the total number that went out of the industry, such as those who drifted into munitions or into the Commonwealth Construction Corps, and a few individuals who found no service whatever in that direction and who were merely set adrift because they could not find employment in the industry. I do not think it will embrace a great number of men. Some of those men—I am pleased to say the higher percentage of those whom this Bill will cover—will be men who will be non-compensable, and who will return to the industry and give years of service before they go out on compensation. Taking the total number, in the first place, and viewing it from that angle, I would not have any fear if they were all compensable cases when examined under the provisions of this Bill, so few, I fancy, would be the total number. We are not going to get 100 per cent. of compensable cases. Many of them will return to the industry and give years of ser-

vice. With the Bill mentioned by the member for Mt. Magnet, we might never be called upon to pay the compensation at all, and I hope that is the case.

The second point raised by the member for Nedlands is, to my mind, fairly accurate. When this Bill was drafted—the draft was there when I took office—it was in those terms, so the hon. member is correct, but there is this point, that the Defence Act of the Commonwealth guides us in regard to the duration of the war. The duration of the war, as defined by the Commonwealth Defence Act, applies here, and, whether we are actually waging a war, or a cessation of hostilities has taken place, we are still in a state of war until the nation proclaims that the war is finished. I am assuming—I think there is ample evidence to fortify my view—that before all the Allied nations can get their Parliaments to ratify the peace agreement, and then call a meeting of all concerned to take steps with a view to making a proclamation to the ending of this war, at least 12 months will have passed by, and by that time this Bill will be of no value. All those men who are coming back into the industry will be back by then, I hope, and so I give the member for Nedlands this assurance; I will go further into this matter and, if I find there is some logic in his contentions—I suggest that there is and I have not assumed the temerity yet to challenge the hon. member's legal interpretation—the Bill will be amended accordingly, before it becomes an Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New section: Service incidental to war service:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the proposed new section relates to action that may be taken "during a time of war." It is quite true to say that in the circumstances of the war of 1914-18 it was necessary to declare a date when peace was established, but those circumstances do not exist with regard to the present war. Last time there was an armistice, which term has a distinct mean-

ing, and that state of affairs continued until the middle of 1920 when the peace treaty was signed at Versailles. On this occasion there will be no peace in that sense, seeing that as regards our enemies it was a matter of unconditional surrender. The victors have said exactly what they want—and that constitutes the peace, whatever it may be. In addition to that, proposed new Subsection (1) of the new section goes on to refer to service or employment or activity which "in the opinion of the Governor is connected with or incidental to or arises out of the prosecution of the war then being waged." In this instance, that cannot possibly refer to some period between the time when the enemy has surrendered unconditionally and the arrangement of terms of peace as obtained in the previous war. I am quite content with what the Minister has said about going into the matter, and I ask him to do so because we do not desire the Act to be brought forward again for further amendment or for it to be challenged in the courts.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: This is the first opportunity I have had to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your elevation to your present position. I feel confident you will perform the duties of Chairman of Committees equally as speedily and efficiently as did your predecessor in that office. For the benefit of the member for Nedlands, while I promised him that I would go further into the matter, I must make it clear that if I ascertain that the proposed new section as printed gives effect to the intentions of the Bill and of the Government, I shall not be inclined to amend it. Should that happen he may feel that I have let him down, and I do not want that. I can scarcely subscribe to his interpretation of the words appearing in the latter part of the paragraph. What we have to keep in mind is that the Bill seeks to cover those individuals who served in the war and, secondly, those who served in an avenue of employment contributing to the war. I am doubtful whether any other phraseology could be used, but I recognise that some alteration may be necessary in the earlier part of the proposed new subsection. I will give that matter close consideration and have an amendment made if necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 3—New Section: Special provision to apply in relation to mine workers while on service incidental to war service in time of war.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In paragraph (e) reference is made to a mine worker being found to be suffering from tuberculosis not being entitled "to any benefit under the principal Act." Clause (1) refers to the principal Act as the Mine Workers' Relief (War Service) Act, 1940. That Act contains no provision for benefits at all. It is simply an Act enabling certain workers to continue engaging in activities referred to in the Act, and in the circumstances the words I have quoted are valueless because of the fact that no benefits at all are set out in the principal Act. What is meant is that such workers shall be entitled to any benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Act of 1932, and the proposed new section should make that clear.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have to differ this time. As a matter of fact, I do not like the tone of the paragraph because it suggests the onus of proof being upon the accused, as it were; hence my amendment which appears on the notice paper. That amendment does not affect in the slightest degree the point raised by the member for Nedlands. During my second reading speech I tried to make it clear that tuberculosis is not accepted as an industrial disease. It never has been accepted as such in any of our legislation, and therefore special provision was included in the Mine Workers' Relief Act because of the opposition to the legislation going through without some compensation being provided respecting miners suffering from tuberculosis, although tuberculosis may be contracted practically wherever dust exists. We took strong exception to putting men out of the mines because they had T.B. simple and not T.B. complicated with silicosis. We argued that a man working underground, even if clean when admitted to the industry, might, in such an environment of damp and dust, contract the disease. The member for Nedlands read only the first portion of the paragraph. He must admit that a man will be entitled to compensation under the principal Act, provided—

Hon. N. Keenan: What, in your opinion, is the principal Act?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Act of 1932.

Hon. N. Keenan: Well, it is not. Clause 1 says this measure shall be read as one with the Act of 1940, hereafter called the principal Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and Clause 2 provides that it shall be read in conjunction with the Mine Workers' Relief Act, 1932-1943.

Hon. N. Keenan: What are the benefits under the Act of 1940? None, because none is stated in that Act!

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister had better continue his remarks and leave the member for Nedlands to speak afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: In the Act of 1932 benefits are set out to which these men will be entitled, as well as the men provided for in the Act of 1940. If a man endeavoured to return to the industry and, on examination, was found to be suffering from T.B. simple he would be entitled to £750, the same as any other beneficiary, provided he could prove to the satisfaction of the board that he contracted the disease while employed in the industry. I wish to amend that portion of the clause. A man should not be put in the invidious position of having to prove that he contracted T.B. simple while employed in the industry some years before.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: He might not know.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: How could he know of it? Under my amendment, a man will merely have to go to the laboratory and receive a certificate showing whether he contracted the disease while in the industry. If he contracted it before leaving the industry he will be entitled to £750. If he contracted it outside, the industry should not be called upon to pay compensation. I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (c) the words "unless he proves to the satisfaction of the board that the tuberculosis from which he is suffering was contracted as a result of his employment as a mine worker in the mining industry of Western Australia" be struck out and the words, "in the opinion of the laboratory his condition is the natural progression of the disease contracted as a result of his employment as a mine worker in the mining industry of Western Australia" inserted in lieu.



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

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## **BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

**MR. MANN** (Beverley) [5.19]: I support the second reading. If there is anything we can do to help suffering humanity, our job is to do it. The Minister was very optimistic in his belief as to possibility of preventing the occurrence of silicosis, and I trust that his hopes will be realised. Only in 1926 was the first attempt made to control the disease by the aluminium process, and I am anxious to know whether he has any definite proof that the treatment has been fully successful in other parts of the world. We have only heard how this treatment has been carried out in other parts of the world; and all I hope is that we shall not raise false hopes in unfortunate miners afflicted with silicosis. The Minister has said the treatment is not a cure, but a preventive. The question is whether it is one hundred per cent. effective. The other point I wish to make is that, if the treatment proves successful, there must be no let-up of the regulations. Men's lives are too valuable to be sacrificed and, if their health is such as to make it dangerous for them to engage in the mining industry, they should not be employed in it. I take the opportunity to congratulate the Minister on his second Bill and upon the excellent way in which he introduced it to the House.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [5.22]: It appears to be desirable that this legislation should enable provision to be made for the adoption of standard and improved methods of treatment of complaints that may afflict miners as a result of their industry. This Bill enables the Minister to prescribe methods of treatment to be carried out, or precautionary measures to be taken, at mines for the prevention of silicosis or other prescribed industrial diseases. As the Bill is drawn, it does not relate to any particular remedy. The Minister indicated to the House that he had in mind the treatment by aluminium dust; and from what he has said I am prepared to believe

that that treatment has obtained a measure of support in Canada and other parts of the world where people are interested in these types of industrial disease. The Bill, however, is quite wide in its terms. It enables the Minister to cause or direct the employment of any remedy or means that might be usefully applied for the prevention of silicosis and other industrial diseases in mining. I myself cannot see any difficulty that might be raised with regard to a measure which is designed to safeguard the health of those engaged in an industry where precautions are so very necessary.

I want to say, however, that time has not permitted me to obtain the opinions of those engaged in the industry. The Bill was introduced on Tuesday, and discussion is taking place this afternoon. I would have liked to be able to refer the Bill to organisations which are concerned in the conduct of the mining industry for their observations. As I say, I do not see that there can be any valid objection to a measure which is designed to achieve an end we all should have very much at heart.

**Hon. J. C. Willecock**: The Minister for Lands, when Minister for Mines, held a conference at Kalgoorlie with the employers in the industry.

**Mr. McDONALD**: I am afraid I overlooked it.

**Mr. Mann**: The Minister for Mines did not mention it when introducing the Bill.

**The Minister for Lands**: The conference was very anxious to have the measure put into operation. I held a big conference.

**Mr. McDONALD**: That removes the difficulty I feel in not having had an opportunity to consult other interests that might be affected. If these have been consulted already and if, as I say, the Bill is desirable and we are all in accord with that view, then the sooner we put it through the better. However, although the Bill will pass this House—I hope today—there will no doubt be an opportunity in another place, if it is desired, for any constructive suggestions to be made by any interested organisation that might assist in making the Bill more effective than it is at present. As far as I can see, the Bill is desirable. Its end is one that would command sympathy from everybody and it will be a desirable addition to our mining law.

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet) [5.26]: My previous remarks were premature, but on this occasion they will be in order. As I said before, I strongly support the Bill. I do so because in my opinion it will to a very great extent remove the fear of miners' phthisis from our goldminers, and not only from the men engaged in the goldmining industry but men whose work brings them in contact with silica. Many men employed in sewerage works contract silicosis in exactly the same form as do the men who are employed in the mines at Kalgoorlie and other goldmining centres. From what we can gather, it is obvious that the treatment referred to by the Minister will prevent the men from contracting silicosis. As I have already pointed out, as far back as 1926 there were few men working underground in the mining industry, or connected with the industry, who really understood the cause of miners' phthisis. As I said, it was considered by some to be caused by the atmosphere. It was only after some experiments had been made that it was ascertained the silica got into the lung and set up an irritation which lowered the resistance of the lung to such an extent that it became tubercular, and when the man reached that stage he was taken out of the mine.

As a result of the legislation providing for the keeping clean of the mines, we live in hope, if this treatment is successful, that we shall not have any more cases of silicosis in Western Australia. I am glad that it is not proposed to make the treatment absolutely compulsory at present, because there is always a fear in the minds of men that there might be something wrong with a new treatment and that it will injure them in other ways. After reading all the articles on the treatment which I could obtain, I am of opinion that there is no danger in it. I earnestly hope that when the first plant is installed at Kalgoorlie many men who are now suffering from miners' phthisis, and who have left the industry, will return to Kalgoorlie and undergo a course of treatment. The treatment is not supposed to be a cure for silicosis; it is more a preventive than a cure.

The Minister for Mines: It will arrest the disease.

**MR. TRIAT:** It will arrest silicosis in the early stages, and even in the second and third stages. From the articles I have read on the subject, its effect on men suffering

from silicosis has been beneficial in the first, second and third stages. The experiments were first made in 1937, so the treatment is not new. It has been in use for some time and the results obtained in Canada were exceptionally good. I have a copy of "Industrial Medicine" for June, 1945, and shall read from it the following extract, at page 479:—

Observations indicate that aluminum therapy is productive of better results in the pre-silicotic and early stages of silicosis than in the more advanced cases, although some individuals in all the categories claimed improvement. The effect of the powders on the normal individual was not studied, nor was it possible to use a placebo to assess the psychological effects of the treatments. While two cases of third degree simple silicosis claimed remarkable results from the hydrate, little improvement was claimed by those men with conglomerate lesions.

Of the 13 who claimed benefit from the inhalation of metallic aluminum three were pre-silicotic, seven had first degree, two had second degree, and one had third degree silicosis. Of the 11 who were improved by the hydrate three were pre-silicotic, four had first degree, two had second degree, and two had third degree silicosis.

So it has been proved that improvement in first, second and third degree cases can be made by this treatment. But the treatment is peculiar in this way: that two different powders can be used. One is metallic aluminium, and the other is hydrated alumina; and there is some doubt as to which is the better. I feel sure that the experts who were responsible for the introduction of this particular class of treatment in Canada—and who, I believe, will be responsible for the introduction of the treatment in Western Australia—will be able to give to the people of the State later knowledge of the treatment with these two powders. This article states further—

From the results obtained in this study the following conclusions may be drawn:—

1. Hydrated alumina and metallic aluminum both seem to be effective in relieving the symptoms of silicosis in a significant number of cases.

2. A material difference in the effectiveness of the two powders, if any exists, cannot be determined from such a limited series of cases.

3. Ordinary clinical methods are inadequate to reveal improvement in work performance following the treatments.

4. The hydrate seems to be superior to the metallic powder for the treatment of silicosis and deserves further clinical trial.

That was written in June, 1945, so it is not very old; and there is still some doubt in the minds of experts as to which is the better powder to use, the metallic or the hydrated.

The Minister for Lands: But both are good.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. I am glad to know it is not compulsory for men to undergo this treatment until such time as the experts in Western Australia—that is the medical men—become efficient in the use of aluminium, whether in the hydrated or the metallic form. We have very capable men in Western Australia, connected with the Commonwealth laboratory in Kalgoorlie, and also with the mines. We have capable medical and technical men; and once they get the knowledge from the experts who come from Canada, I believe a great advance will be made by them in the use of these two powders for the treatment of silicotic conditions in Kalgoorlie or elsewhere in Australia. If the treatment can be proved to be 50 per cent. as effective as is claimed by the people responsible, those connected with the mining industry in Western Australia will have much for which to thank the Minister and this Government, and also the discoverer of the treatment, in the removal of one of the most horrible diseases known to mankind.

It does not matter how physically fit a man may be; it does not matter how strong and healthy he is; he has only to take silica dust for 12 months to become silicotic and for the rest of his life to suffer various degrees of the trouble. It is a disease that continues to increase in intensity when he leaves the mining industry. If a man has spent 12 months in a bad, dusty mine, he becomes early silicotic and can depend on it that in ten years' time his lung condition will be much worse—even if he leaves the mine immediately upon contraction of the disease—than will that of a man working in any other occupation and contracting this complaint. In 20 years' time that man's lung condition will be in a very bad state. That is something we hope to be able to overcome. I feel sure that every member of this House will vote for the Bill.

MR. LEAHY (Hannans) [5.35]: I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without having something to say on this very important matter. At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Minister on bringing the Bill forward, and also on the very compre-

hensive outline he gave of the subject when introducing it. I remember many years ago reading in "Collier's Weekly"—long before Robson and Irwin issued their paper in 1937—that quite a lot of investigation by scientific men had taken place in connection with the application of aluminium in the treatment of this disease. The first knowledge of the possibilities of some advantage being obtained from the inhalation of aluminium dust was provided by the Aluminium Company of America, which employed about 4,000 people. That company decided there was a distinct possibility that some ill effects might occur as a result of men working amongst aluminium dust. Consequently, a test was made to determine the possibility of such an occurrence. Men working in the dustiest places of the plant were selected and examined to see what effect the dust had upon them.

Experts went exhaustively into the whole position and had all the scientific data that were available; and the experiment proved conclusively, to the satisfaction of everyone interested, that the 125 men examined were in much better health than were the 3,000 men working outside the dusty area. It was proved that they did not suffer from any ill effects following inhalation of the dust into the lungs. That led to the inquiry by scientific people into the possibility of applying this dust to the treatment of persons who were working in a silicotic atmosphere. If I remember rightly, experiments were conducted with animals. It was not done hurriedly; it took quite a long time; and after extensive experimental work it was found that those animals did not suffer in any way from any lung trouble from dust provided that they were supplied with aluminium. After that, men were selected who had been employed in very bad surroundings. Some of them had worked for 26 years. The lowest period of employment was six years, and the average period of employment was 12 years.

Those men had all been working under very dusty conditions and were all proved, by clinical and x-ray examination, to be early silicotic. They were then subjected to treatment with aluminium dust. According to the reports I have from Canada the McIntyre Research people are quite satisfied that they have the correct dust for this treatment. It is an aluminium dust which

is 17 to 20 per cent. metallic and about 80 per cent. oxide of aluminium. Those people are in a position to tell the rest of the world what they consider, as a result of their experiments, is the correct dust to use in this treatment, and the dust I have referred to is that which they use on the silicotic men who were asked if they would be treated. They were volunteers; there was no compulsion. It was found that men who were in the early stages of silicosis benefited by the treatment; also, men who were in an advanced state and perhaps bordering on T.B. had their condition arrested as a result of the effects of the dust on the lung.

According to the statements made by Denny, Robson and Irwin, and also by Dr. Hannan and others, most men suffering from advanced silicosis can look forward to only one end, namely, T.B. If we can prove that we can prevent such men progressing to the tubercular stage we will have done something of great value to the mining people all over the world. But they have done more than that, and given conclusive proof. I have taken a lot of convincing because I have been thinking about this for a long time. I followed closely many of the experimental ways of using this dust. I remember that at one time they thought it might possibly have a greater beneficial effect by being sprayed into the ends after firing. I understand that it did too, but it was found that that was rather a cumbersome way of administering the dust and so it was decided to go on experimenting. They invented a small apparatus, costing very little, which gave exposures of from five to 15 minutes according to the degree of silicosis in the patient. They found, as they advanced, that if they could get the men to have confidence in them and to realise that they were endeavouring to do something in the men's interest, they could use this treatment in the change-room, which would be convenient and do away with much unnecessary work.

With the permission of the compensation authorities at the Poreupine Mines in Canada, and also the miners themselves, it was agreed that the change-rooms should be so arranged that this treatment could be administered to give the maximum results with very little expense. Although our change-rooms in Western Australia have improved in the last 12 to 14 years they are

not yet up to the standard of change-rooms in other countries. It has only been by hard fighting that we have got them to the improved conditions in which they are today, and even so they are still far behind the up-to-date change-rooms in other parts of the world. The system prevailing in the change-rooms, to which I have referred, is that when a man comes to work in the morning—and the starting times are different in Canada from what they are here—he walks in and removes his clean clothes and then goes into a chamber where his working clothes are. It takes him, on the average, 10 minutes or perhaps a little longer to change. But immediately he goes into the change-room it is sealed off; all vents are stopped. There are only two exits from that sealed chamber.

The atmosphere is charged with this aluminium dust which is driven through by compressors at a pressure of about 30 lbs. to 40 lbs. Compressors are situated at each corner of the sealed room. One operates until it has exhausted the limited supply of air, and then another commences. All fans are stopped. The men leave that treatment and go to work. It has been found that men who were verging on the silicotic stage improved; the silicosis did not advance and their health was better. In addition, they started to eat more. It was also shown that men who were affected, and had advanced silicosis, did not have the violent pains in the chest, or the coughing associated with that condition, but were relieved of the innumerable disabilities connected with the mining industry. So these people continued quietly with their investigations until today they are satisfied that this process must have a good effect in all its applications.

The people to whom I refer are Denny, Robson and Irwin, and Hannan and others. They are above reproach. They have scientific minds, trained to develop anything that is possible to be developed in the interests of sufferers from silicosis. As a matter of fact they have spoken of this treatment for T.B. in the early stages, but they are not definite about its results. They do not quite recommend it although they say it can do no harm. They have found that in many instances it has done a great deal of good to affected persons. I heard the Minister make some remarks about the expense of this treatment. I have a full report but unfortunately I have not it here—in any case

I am not good at reading these things—from Denny, Robson and Irwin in which they state that they patented their process, and did so for one reason which is that they believed that people in other parts of the world might be only too anxious to get hold of it, irrespective of whether it proved successful, or partly successful, and would, of course, make capital out of it. That was one of their objects.

The Minister for Lands: And the main point, too.

Mr. LEAHY: According to the report I have—I do not know where the other report came from; it may be a later one, but mine was sent direct to me not very long ago—they say the only fee they require is the payment of a license.

The Minister for Lands: That money is going back into research into this complaint.

Mr. LEAHY: The license fee will be very small. The patentees do not wish to make a penny piece out of it, and do not ask for compensation or reward. The object of the payment of a license fee is to ensure that they will have sufficient money to continue their investigations, so that the work will not remain stationary at the position which it has reached today, and so that they may go on with the voluntary help of everyone associated with the mining industry. They want a little money to keep up research work and so on. Whether my report is correct, or whether the Minister has some later report, I do not know, but mine is official and came over only a couple of months ago. The expenditure should be very small indeed. The plant concerned is a little tube mill, to manufacture the dust, and the patentees have some control over the type of dust that will be used. They finally arrived at this type of dust—as I have stated—and are satisfied that it is the best dust that can be provided for the purpose. They are to have some control over that, which is only reasonable. There is no compulsion about it, and never has been.

I feel certain that the people of Western Australia, particularly those associated with mining, will not need compulsion, but will be pleased indeed to offer themselves—as the miners of Western Australia have always been—to help in any way possible to overcome this dread complaint, known as miners' phthisis. I am sure there is not a man in Western Australia who, if approached tomorrow, would not say, "Very

well. Take me. I will volunteer immediately, and you can do what you like with me." The people are rushing this treatment at Porcupine, and are insisting on the treatment. In almost every part of the world mining people have, at all times, interested themselves in anything that has for its purpose the improvement of the health of the miners but, strange to say, in Western Australia where millions of money have been paid in dividends, very little has been done. This has been going on for ten years, and very little notice has been taken of it, though I believe that on one mine a report was put up. I say that is not playing the game by the people of Western Australia.

The Minister said that the expense to the Government may be great, but if I have my way—and while I am here—I will use every power I possess to see that the mining companies, and not the State Government, bear the expense. I would be pleased if the Minister so administered this Act as to make it compulsory for all mining companies immediately to instal this treatment. By "immediately" I mean as soon as the appliances are procurable, and if the Government is satisfied, as I am and as is everybody else who has studied this question, that it is the most effective treatment discovered up to date. I appeal to the Minister not to split straws in dealing with this question, but to say to the mining companies, "You have done very well in this State, and you cannot expect us to hand-feed you"—though we have hand-fed them. It has been the Government of this State that kept the mining industry in existence, and it is due to the Government that the mining companies exist today. Surely, after all the assistance that has been given to the mining companies by the Government, it is not too much to ask a mining company to endeavour to preserve the health of its workers.

I have seen, in a report, that each case of advanced silicosis in Canada has cost 11,000 dollars. Safety committees have been operating on the goldfields over the last 12 years, and have done a good job in eliminating minor accidents, and so on, and in giving good advice. There are committees set up on the mines, and also central committees, on which are representatives of the mining companies, the inspectors of mines, the workers, and everybody associated with the mining industry, and great good has come as the result of those conferences, but not

enough good, and not quickly enough. I am glad this matter has been opened up and I can assure members that I will leave no stone unturned, and will fight with all the power I possess—be it little or much—to see that the mining companies of this State are compelled to instal this treatment, under scientific supervision. If they do so, I feel confident that men who now enter the mining industry will emerge from it years later—if they remain too long in the industry they are fools—as reasonably healthy men, and not like those men who have now retired and who are walking about, dying on their feet.

I wish also to thank members of the Opposition who have spoken so candidly on this matter, as they have always done, to my knowledge, in connection with miners' complaint and, if this measure is to provoke a fight, I am certain they will be on our side. I know there is not a man in this Chamber today who, if he realised what is really meant by the words "miners' complaint," would not stand up and support anything that has for its purpose improvement of the health of the miners. When one mentions miners, one refers, in my opinion, to one of the greatest types of men on earth, a class that has proved to the world that there are no better men. In Kalgoorlie it was not a matter of asking men to enlist; members know that had we not prevented men from enlisting there would have been no goldmining industry—we had the whole question investigated—and that is the type of men whose health I am anxious to preserve. I know that, unfortunately, many of the older men in the mining industry have gone past that stage, and we can say farewell to them, but if the possibility exists, as I believe it does, to treat effectively even advanced stages of silicosis, we can prevent the tuberculosis which, according to this report, causes most deaths. If we can do that we will have done something of which we can be proud and, if we do not adopt this treatment, I feel we will be letting down one of the finest types of men in the world.

**MR. READ** (Victoria Park) [6.0]: I would like to add my few words in support of the Bill, which has for its object the control of silicosis. I congratulate the Minister for Mines on the concise manner in which he placed the measure before the

House, and explained in simple words the process by which the miners' lungs are injured through irritation caused by foreign bodies. I also congratulate him upon introducing legislation, the object of which is to assist in saving human lives. In the immediate past years we have had the aid of scientists in the task of destroying life. During that period many things were discovered that now we hope will be applied in the opposite direction, and will be used for the preservation of life. I am not very exercised in my mind as to the details respecting the quantity of aluminium to be used in the treatment, the form in which it is to be used or the number of grammes that will go to each cubic foot of air, because such matters will be controlled by experts and the treatment will be given to patients without any danger to them. The cost of the treatment will not, in my opinion, be very great, but the benefits to be derived will be above all considerations of cost. The manner in which it will be used will be left for experts to determine.

The Bill does not seek to compel any sufferer to undergo the treatment. No man is obliged to submit himself to the benefits or otherwise of the treatment. The Bill merely gives power to those people who consider it necessary to use it for the benefit of mine workers. The suffering caused by work in the mining industry has been such over a period of many years that it is a wonder to us that men can still be found to run the risk that such work involves. It is certainly remarkable to think that any man would place himself in the position of being able to contract this industrial disease. I feel that not one member of the House, irrespective of party considerations, will oppose a Bill of this description. I hope it is the forerunner of other measures to be introduced that will have for their object the taking advantage of improved scientific methods for curing the many ills to which humanity is heir, and particularly those developments that have been effected during the war period and in connection with industry. The use of aluminium in the treatment will be minutely gone into by experts and I feel that nothing but good can accrue from the application of that treatment. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [6.4]: I would not like the opportunity to pass without commending the Minister for introducing the Bill, and also upon the very clear and concise manner in which he placed before members matters associated with its object. There should be no doubt whatever in the mind of any of us as to the ultimate results that will accrue, and we can base our judgment on what has been achieved in Canada and the United States of America. Because of what has been accomplished elsewhere, there can be little doubt as to the future success likely to attend the use of the treatment in Western Australia, particularly with regard to the benefits it will contribute to the future of the men in the mining industry. I feel that the inauguration of the aluminium therapy treatment here will have marked effect, particularly as it will be carried out in conjunction with continued vigilance on the part of the inspectors of mines associated with the industry. There are, however, one or two points upon which the Minister may perhaps enlighten the House when he replies to the debate.

During his second reading speech the Minister said that he intended to enforce the installation of the equipment on all companies, and in that regard the point that exercises my mind is that there is a vast divergence in the status of various companies. There are some very large concerns and there should be no hesitation whatever in making such companies, particularly large financial corporations, instal the plant requisite for the application of the aluminium therapy treatment, at whatever cost the work is likely to involve. On the other hand, there are companies that, because of the small amount of capital with which they commenced operations, or because of small results achieved and the much reduced capital now at their disposal, might in respect of any such compulsion to instal what is required in order to carry out the treatment, be unduly hampered and, in fact, any such course might even cause small companies to close down. We should also bear in mind that many of the smaller mining shows are being worked by syndicates and yet, under the definitions applicable to this measure, they would be classed as companies.

If the smaller shows are to be brought into line with the large mines and called upon to incur considerable outlay, great

hardship will be inflicted and some of those shows might be compelled to close down. Still, I wish to make it perfectly clear that the cost of installing this process, no matter how great it might be, would be justified. The Government should make it compulsory to have the process installed, but some qualification should be inserted in the Bill to require the Government to contribute to the expense, just as it, as well as the companies, contributes to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Of course there is a difference insofar as the miners also contribute to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, but no contribution should be required from them to carry out the objects of this Bill. If the measure is made compulsory and some assistance is required by smaller mining shows, part of the cost should be borne by the Government and the remainder by the companies.

There is another matter that should receive mention when the Minister replies, namely, that of the change-rooms. The Bill is based on a proposal to utilise the process through the medium of the change-rooms. Members interested in the mining industry know that the existing change-rooms are, as the member for Hannans ably expressed it, no better than they should be, but they have served the purpose and possibly would be quite adequate to meet future needs. However, if the installation of this equipment is insisted upon without there being any compulsion on the employees to accept the treatment, which is quite reasonable, a small difficulty will be created in regard to the change-rooms. Suppose 40 men were working on a mine and 30 of them elected and the other 10 refused to take the treatment, it would mean that the company would have to instal another set of change-rooms for the 10 men who did not want the treatment. The Minister should tell us what he proposes should be done in a case like that. I commend the Minister for having introduced the Bill and believe that the industry will derive a great benefit from it, not only from the point of view of the health of the miners, but also from the increased standard of efficiency that must follow the installation of the process.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [6.12]: I, with other members, feel particularly pleased that scientists have evolved means by which they believe they can treat the curse of silicosis in the mining industry.

Unquestionably it has been a curse. If one visits the cemeteries on the goldfields, particularly those in the outback centres, and reads the inscriptions on the tombstones, one will find that the majority of them have been erected to the memory of men who were not more than 30 years of age. Therefore, if this process proves to be the boon that it is alleged it will be, we must all feel grateful to Drs. Denny, Robson and Irwin who discovered it, but I wish to sound a note of warning with regard to the application of the measure until such time as we have had greater experience of the process.

I think I am right in saying there is no medical man in Australia who knows anything definite about the treatment. I doubt whether there is any medical man in Australia who knows more about it than we do. Doctors have merely had an opportunity to read the reports such as have been quoted by the Minister and by other members. I feel diffident about subscribing to any measure which will require either compulsory or voluntary acquiescence of the miners until I am absolutely certain that the treatment will have no detrimental effect. If the Bill becomes law, it does not follow that the mining companies must instal the process immediately and that the men will be compelled to accept the treatment.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

MR. STYANTS: I was issuing a warning against the introduction of this treatment in a precipitate manner. Of course, the measure does not provide that it shall be introduced immediately, but only that the Minister shall be given power to introduce it. The Bill does not provide that it shall be compulsory for the men to undergo the treatment, but I believe, with the member for Hannans, that if this legislation is passed and the Minister decides to introduce the treatment, the men will accept it in good faith, as they will have confidence in us that we have had the treatment thoroughly tested and know that it will benefit them. To my way of thinking, that places a very grave responsibility on us. I would very much regret—as I know every member would regret—to learn that after not 10, 20 or 100 but perhaps thousands of men had been treated, detrimental effects ensued. It is true we have had painted a

glowing picture of this treatment in Canada and the United States; but we have not heard whether the climatic conditions in those countries were the same as those in which the treatment would be given in Australia. Neither have we ascertained whether the silica dust in Canada and the United States is of the same type as that which is encountered here.

I do not intend to oppose the measure: but I express the hope that the Minister will not give instructions for the treatment to be used here until Dr. Robson has conducted the experiments which he has been invited to conduct on our Goldfields. He was invited to come to Western Australia by the Mines Department of this State, and by the mining panel of Australia, to investigate the matter thoroughly and it was hoped that he would be in Queensland some months ago. If he does not come, then the Government or some other authority should send a man to America to undertake the necessary investigation. As I mentioned earlier, there is not a medical man in Australia who has had the opportunity to test the treatment; and until such time as we make further investigations into it I hope it will not be employed in our mines. To do so would be taking an undue risk in view of the small amount of evidence we have before us by way of reports, and it must be borne in mind that most of those reports are issued by the people concerned in making the investigation. Before we paint a glowing picture to our afflicted miners of the beneficial effects of this treatment, we should make absolutely certain that it will do all that is claimed of it and will not leave any detrimental effects.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.35]:—The goldmining industry has been a source of very great wealth to this State. In fact, I suppose that without it our development, slow though it has been, would have been infinitely slower. We have, however, no justification for continuing to expand the goldmining industry and to take into account the belief, recently expressed, I think, by the former Minister for Mines, that it will be a tremendous source of employment in the post-war years. I believe he went so far as to say that more men would be employed in the industry after the war than before.



The Minister for Lands: I am still of that opinion, notwithstanding Mr. C. B. Williams.

Mr. WATTS: We are not justified in continuing to expand the goldmining industry unless such expansion is justified. I do not doubt that it is the Minister's opinion because I anticipate, when he made that statement, that he had a report or information at hand. I do not question the correctness of his statement for one moment. I was using the argument for quite another purpose, which was in support of this measure.

The Minister for Lands: It has been said that my statement was fantastic.

Mr. WATTS: I said there was no justification for encouraging an increase in goldmining and increased employment in that industry unless we were prepared to use all and every means available that could be proved to be useful and satisfactory for the benefit of the health of those working in the industry. It is no use, to my mind—and I know every member of the House agrees with me in this sentiment—refusing to make every inquiry into any method which is an advance on or is likely to improve the very unfortunate state of affairs that existed in the past in regard to silicosis and kindred diseases occasioned by work in the mines of this State. We have had two or three notes of warning struck here this evening about the process which is in contemplation by the Minister and which is the subject of the Bill. As I understand the measure, it merely gives the Minister power to prescribe the use of the treatment in question. In supporting the measure, I am not saying for one moment that the Minister intends, as an act of administration, to order the use of the treatment unless he is fully satisfied that it will produce at least some of the results claimed for it; and if it will only produce some of those results then its use will be, I am sure, amply justified.

My attitude to the measure, in common with my colleague the member for Beverley, who addressed himself to it this afternoon, is that in the interests of common humanity we have to look for every expedient that will assist in remedying the evils which have been so fully explained by members who have had a lifelong experience of these diseases. If we do not do that, we are merely making a travesty of justice and humanity. If these methods are available as the result of scientific experiment and

research, I am certain that it is our duty to take advantage of them and to see that they are used for the benefit of all concerned, and, incidentally for the State and its wealth. There will be no greater encouragement to men to seek a reasonably profitable living in the goldmining industry and so help in its further development, if that be possible, than some assurance that their health is likely to be improved. So, because I feel sure that the Minister and the experts who are associated with him in the department, and the medical men who are concerned, will satisfy themselves that this treatment can be used effectively; and that when they have satisfied themselves in that direction they will, by every means in their power, make use of it, I am prepared to support this Bill wholeheartedly.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison—in reply) [7.41]: There are only one or two points I wish to make a little clearer than I did in my second reading speech. The member for West Perth raised a query regarding the enthusiasm of miners in relation to the application of this treatment. In that respect—

Mr. McDonald: I did not query it.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** I am given to understand by my predecessor that the miners were practically 100 per cent. enthusiastic. Notwithstanding that, as was rightly pointed out by the member for Kalgoorlie, we are responsible. We are the ones who are as well versed as it is possible to be in the results of the treatment as applied in Canada and afterwards tested in America and, to a somewhat lesser degree, in England. In all three countries, there was little doubt about the results. Nevertheless, we propose to work very cautiously in the matter; and because of that, neither the department nor the Government has been over-eager to apply the treatment. Nor do I suppose that there will be any hasty action in the future. That is all the assurance I can give to the member for West Perth. The member for Mt. Magnet raised a point in regard to confirming the findings of the experts before making treatment compulsory. No compulsion is intended; no compulsion has ever been intended. I do not think the Government had that in mind at all. The only compulsion likely is in regard to the installation of the

plant and not in regard to the treatment of individuals alleged to be suffering from this fearful malady.

As I pointed out in my second reading speech, this particular treatment has been patented. McIntyre Research Limited are the patentees, and they are particularly cautious in regard to the people to whom they issue licenses for the use of the treatment. They do not propose to issue licenses warranting the legal right to use this treatment haphazardly, and our negotiations with the company in Canada have been along those lines. They suggested that in order that they should have some guarantee of security concerning the correct utilisation of this process, the Mines Department should become the lessees of the patent in view of the facilities for supervision which are at the disposal of the Government. We still did not make any further move, because Dr. Robson is expected in Australia at any time, and the Government is under the impression that it would be wise to make haste slowly in view of the fact that it is hoped he will be coming to Western Australia. It is proposed to obtain the best advice possible from him. He will have an opportunity to inspect our mines, and he will be able to have the silica analysed. He can then compare it with the silica he has been accustomed to use in America. He will be able to see the conditions in our mines and the state of health of our miners. Those facts are on record in the Kalgoorlie laboratory. Not until Dr. Robson is satisfied that this particular treatment can be safely applied, will any move be made by the Government. In regard to the charges for the right to use this process, seemingly I must have over-estimated the position when I last spoke. All that is charged as a license for the use of the patent is one dollar per man per year and I am given to understand that the Chamber of Mines will readily pay that bill. It is not intended by the company that any profit shall accrue to the shareholders of McIntyre Research Limited.

As was rightly stated by the member for Hannans, the money is to go into a fund for further technical and scientific investigations. I put it to members that it was the goldmining companies of Canada that created the first fund making it possible for these investigations to be inaugurated and brought to their present stage. I suggest

that as they have made a discovery of such great value to our mining industry and to humanity in general, the charge of one dollar per man per year is not excessive, especially in view of the worthy purpose to which the money will be applied. The cost of the plant, which it will be essential to instal in order to apply the treatment, will be so infinitesimal that it is hardly worth mentioning, and the companies will gladly and cheerfully carry that burden. Even the process of manufacturing the dust is simple and inexpensive; so much so that there will be no quibble, I am positive, on that point.

The agreement is so worded that if the company feels that the results from the treatment—if attempted—are not all they should be, it will send a representative to Western Australia. What I previously said was that that representative would expect all his travelling expenses to be paid, plus 50 dollars per day while travelling, plus 100 dollars a day while on the job. However, that will not be a daily expense or a monthly cost; it may not be an annual cost. It may be something we shall never experience.

Mr. Styants: Costs are only a side issue in the matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I subscribe to the view of the member for Hannans that the goldmining companies up to recent years—and my utterances apply only to the older goldmining companies of this State—have not done much to make the life of the Western Australian miner happy and contented. Outside of doing what they were compelled to do by law, they did nothing. That, however, does not apply to the later companies who have done at least a little in the way of providing amenities for the workmen, their wives and children. What I have mentioned is the total cost of the treatment. Having cleared up that point, I hope members will fully appreciate the insignificant sum that will be involved if and when the Government does decide to avail itself of the patent. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie is somewhat fearful that the compulsory clause that will be necessary for the installation of this plant might become burdensome on small companies. I ask the hon. member to walk before he runs. We can get over these hurdles or obstacles as we are confronted with them. The difficulty he mentions may be something of a problem, but it will be time enough for us

to be concerned with it when we come to it. Possibly men employed in small mines, adjacent to a large one, will be able to get treatment at the large mine. There may be other ways of adjusting that small anomaly. I ask him to be patient and to allow us to take the hurdle when it appears before us.

I congratulate the member for Kalgoorlie because of the cautious way he went about his contribution to this debate. That attitude is peculiar to the hon. member. He watches every step he takes, and his warning will be noted. I recognise the logic of it and I can advise him that he need have no fear. As I said, when I rose to reply to the various points mentioned, the Government does not propose to rush into this thing. Notwithstanding that the miners may as a body endeavour to compel the Government to do so, it will still hesitate until it is sure that all the conditions under which these experiments took place are similar in their characteristics to what will happen when effect is given to the application of this treatment in Western Australia. A Minister for Mines, or a Government, would always be cautious, and I want to say that, in my humble judgment—and I have read all the documents and statistics relating to the various experiments that have been made—there is not the slightest doubt about the results that will be achieved here.

After all, if the theory is correct, and it must be to have got the results already accomplished, the characteristics within the particle of silica itself will have very little effect, because the silica will be prevented from dissolving by virtue of the aluminium dust and, because it cannot dissolve, it will be quickly taken back to the air tubes of the lungs and disgorged from the human body. Its great curse has been that it has been dissolving and setting up a toxic state in the lung. For the information of the member for Kalgoorlie and the member for Mt. Magnet, there are two forms of aluminium dust. We propose to get Dr. Robson's opinion as to the class of dust that will be used here. He will be given an opportunity to observe in detail every particular of our conditions and, having satisfied himself which we should use, or whether we should use both, then and only then, and when the Government thinks fit and necessary, will the treatment be applied. I hesitate to become any more enthusiastic about it. I

suppose the wish is father to the thought, but when men have had experience, as have many of us who were born and reared on the Goldfields of this State, in seeing the misery, anguish and pain suffered as a result of this disease, not for a moment or a second but for years, they thank Providence, if there is a Providence, for this discovery at least.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

## **BILL—NATIONAL FITNESS.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [7.58]: On the whole, I intend to support this Bill, although I trust that when it is in the Committee stage one or two clauses will be altered slightly. Having been a member of the National Fitness organisation since its inception in this State, I feel I have the right and the knowledge to speak on the advantages and disadvantages of this measure. The Minister fully explained why the Bill has been brought forward, and I do not intend to duplicate his statements. The essence of the matter is this, that in the early days the Council of Physical Fitness was composed of a number of persons elected by annual meetings of delegates of all organisations with fitness aims, such as sporting, non-sporting and nutritional bodies. I represented the Free Milk Council. Now the idea is—and has been for some time past—for the Minister to nominate the council. In the early days the Government gave a grant, and the council decided how it should be expended. That is more or less as it is now, but this Bill proposes to alter that, so that the Government will be more responsible for expending the amount allowed. Notwithstanding many difficulties in the early days, the organisation did gain popularity, mainly owing to the activities of Mr. Halliday, the schools' director of Physical Fitness, the results of which members saw last night on the screen.

I am one of the old-fashioned people who fought against camps for children. Members last night saw one of the camps portrayed on the screen, and many other such camps are proposed. I fought strenuously against week-end camps, but my protest was conditional; the condition being that the camps should be under trained guides. In my opinion the difficulty of week-end camps is that children have no religious training there and lose the atmosphere of home life and training—at an age when it is important to them—during the only part of the week when they could be with the entire family, that is with the father, mother, brothers and sisters. I thought, also, that the danger in camp life lay in the creation of a youthful brigade which could be exploited for political purposes, as was the case at one time on the Continent, and I am convinced that it may become a danger here, because already we have in the field political organisations that are out to exploit camps such as these.

I consider that these camps might be used for purposes other than those for which the National Fitness Council formed them. Such a feeling exists in many religious bodies today, and they are advising their youths not to take advantage of these camps unless they are accompanied by their own people. Members heard last night that the camps can be let to various organisations, that can take advantage of them during week-ends or holidays, under their own leaders, should they so desire. This overcomes some of the objections. I feel that these camps, under good leadership, may be useful to non-religious people, but only if moral, spiritual, health and nutritional guidance is given, which very often is lacking in ordinary home life. In a country such as ours the climate lends itself to a nomadic life, and therefore the greatest care is necessary, in such camps as were portrayed last night, if we are to preserve our civilisation. It is essential that we give careful training to the children who go to those camps. Members will remember that the scouts and girl guides have a spiritual background, and I think it is because of that spiritual background that these two bodies have endured. They have had behind them the parents of the children who attended them. I am sure members will agree with the physical culture that we saw portrayed on the screen last night, in the film "In Our Schools Today,"

and feel that under leaders such as were seen there everything will be just what we desire.

What is needed today is not a small grant, such as is now given by the Commonwealth Government, but a large grant to enable the Education Department to launch out on a physical fitness programme that will be not only State-wide, but of national importance and worth in Australia. Such a programme should include training in home life. I hope members will not think what I am saying is not in connection with the Bill, because I believe it is. I think it is necessary that we should have grant large enough to provide for our launching in this State of a programme that would enable the Education Department to instruct children in home life, cooking, domestic science, making clothes, making furniture and other activities. Many years ago, when I visited America, I found that in the schools there one-third of the day was given to such activities. During one-third of their curriculum the girls were learning to take care of home activities, and during that period the boys were learning to make furniture, and were being instructed in various trades and crafts. The same thing applied in Russia, where the activities were exactly the same as I had seen, many years before, in America.

In Russia one could see boys and girls learning to make useful articles for the home. I believe that national fitness does include all those activities. There is another point I would like to stress. It is that in New South Wales a grant—it has been provided not by the Government but by the City Council of Sydney—enables many of the suburbs to conduct pre-school national fitness activities. There are 10 such centres where they help the pre-school child with tuition in craft work and minor physical exercises more or less along the lines we witnessed last night in the screening of the picture dealing with the activities at the Youth Centre at Bickley. That is the type of work that the Sydney City Council sponsors for the very young children. Getting back to the Bill itself one thing that really impressed me when watching the screening of the picture last night was the wonderful Oslo lunches enjoyed by the youth, and in particular the milk that was poured out in a lavish manner such as we have not been able to do in our schools.

Unless national fitness embraces health from the food standpoint, I feel sure we shall not achieve all that we desire. Under the Bill the Minister desires to attain his ends. He has the right now to nominate certain people to act on the National Fitness Council. As I mentioned at the outset, we were originally nominated by the various bodies we represented. The Minister now has the right to nominate the members of the council. We may think that, given that right, he would probably nominate only those whom he considered to be pro-Minister or pro-Government. Personally I have not found that so. As the Minister is aware, I have quite a mind of my own—yet he nominated me as a member of the council. I rather wondered why he did so but the fact remains that he did. While I have been a member of the council he has withstood any criticism that I may have indulged in. There are many others on the council who certainly could not have been nominated on the ground that they thought as Labour supporters think. On the other hand, the Minister has been most careful to select those he thought would do most in furtherance of physical fitness in this State. For my part I have the greatest respect for the Minister's discrimination in that regard.

The time has come when the Government is furnishing a monetary grant so that we may spend the money upon certain activities, and the Minister wishes to have some jurisdiction over that grant. I feel that the man who pays the piper should be able to call the tune. As the Government is providing the grant and as the Government is the elect of the people, I consider that the Government should have the say in that respect. If we do not like what the Government does, we must turn it out—that is all. I feel that the Government has due to it the right that it seeks and I would not like to think that this House would regard the Ministers of the Crown as being in any way biased when it comes to a decision upon what is best for the people. I have faith that the Minister will do the best he can when it comes to spending the money that has been allotted to him for that purpose. The Bill contains one or two clauses with which I do not agree but on the whole it is a very good measure. I have attended every meeting of the National Fitness Council that has been held and I can assure the House that the

Minister has been extremely fair in every way. I have confidence in him and I am sure that if the Bill is passed this House will not regret having extended to it its approval.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [8.16]: I support the Bill on behalf of the oldtimers in this Chamber. In the House at present there are about half a dozen I would place in that category—not because of age but of length of membership of this Chamber. I have in mind the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Lands, the member for Geraldton, the member for Wagin, and I could mention a few more. Possibly those half dozen or more members will recollect the occasion in 1928 when the Parliament of the day, with its limited knowledge of this problem, tried its best to do something to give effect to what the Minister has since carried out so well. It will be remembered that in 1928 it was the day of the food cranks. At that stage, we were all furnished with booklets on the subject; we had articles to peruse and there were from time to time lectures—all on the subject of dietetics. The average member of the general public at that time thought it was a great joke to get hold of a food crank who would harangue them about the virtues of raw carrots and uncooked foods generally.

Eventually I myself, forced by the people of Claremont who in their hundreds took up the advocacy of raw carrots and the virtues of suchlike uncooked foods and attended big meetings at which that diet was cordially advocated, had to take up the question in the Press in order to place the importance of diet before the people of Western Australia. At times in dealing with the subject I had to talk to hard, pokerfaced business men who were not inclined to listen to anything about this new-fangled topic. On the other hand the Minister for Health at that time, the late Mr. S. W. Munsie, took the question up enthusiastically. I moved a motion in Parliament dealing with this matter and he supported it, with the result that it was eventually carried. May I now, in support of the Minister for Education in his present-day task, quote to the House the motion that was passed by Parliament in 1928 when we endeavoured, with our humble beginnings, to inaugurate something in the

nature of what is now being carried out so well and thereby has cheered us older members so very much.

The Minister for Lands: We would have had better figures today had we been more successful then.

Mr. NORTH: That is so. Although at the time we were only able to utter words, so to speak, where the member for Subiaco and others are now taking action, we did pass a motion which read as follows:—

That this House is of opinion—(1), That the social and economic burdens arising from faulty nutrition merit the serious attention of the Government. (2), That the State system of education should embrace a curriculum in which physical well-being would assume even greater importance than reading, writing or arithmetic.

In those days those words were very daring and not exactly bound to ensure success. Physical jerks, as such, are not the only objective of the National Fitness movement and are not in themselves, in my humble opinion, the real objective of the great work confronting the Government. Physical jerks may be described as an attempt to cure faulty living. It is the man on a faulty diet who needs to trot around and cure his physical condition. If we study Nature, we find that in the jungle there is no such activity amongst animals, unless it be to obtain another meal. Even the tiger is very lazy once it has fed.

It may be that a lot of the physical jerks in which we indulge in our generation and which today are sports, such as the playing of golf, might have arisen from faulty nutrition, which a kindly Providence urged us to cure by excess exercise on Saturday afternoons. Consequently, I hope that the Minister, with his astuteness, when presiding over this body, will not overlook the motion passed in those days when we in the House thought there was a need to pay very careful attention to what was put into the body. I think the remarks made by the member for Subiaco on the subject were quite in place, but I do not say that the problem has yet been solved. The lessons of this war may be cited—the great advance in the feeding of the troops. Still, I believe there is a great future for the scientists who study nutrition and who ten or fifteen years ago were laughed at and regarded as another class of cranks. I support the second reading, though, in Com-

mittee, it is expected the member for West Perth may have something to say as to whether some of the clauses are too wide.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—SOIL CONSERVATION.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [8.23] in moving the second reading said: I regret that the printer has not had the instruction that was supposed to have been given to him to alter, on the Bill, the name of the Minister to introduce the measure, but I take it that makes no difference. In introducing the subject to the House, I do so with great confidence, because I am sure that the attitude of people towards the necessity for soil conservation has spread to this State to an extent that has brought home a realisation of the severity of the problem.

Public consciousness of soil erosion has developed materially in the last ten years. At about the time when the subject was very prominent in the United States of America, almost the whole world was agog because of the difficulties associated with the dust bowl of America. Although it must be stated that erosion in Nature is a beneficial process, without which the world would have died long ago, the difficulties associated with man-made erosion have indeed already become a threat to civilisation. Over very many centuries the mal-adjustment occasioned by man received very little notice, but the process nevertheless continued. The tragedies through the ages, strangely enough, have been almost completely forgotten.

I think the most striking example history has given us in connection with soil erosion is the work of the archaeologists in unearthing cities that have been buried for centuries. Certain parts of Africa and also of Asia have become world-famous on account of the discoveries of the archaeologists. The tomb of Tut-ankh-amen received such publicity that it was almost regarded as one of the wonders of the world. Perhaps it is, but I think the lesson to be drawn from it is not that it is one of the wonders of that age or of the many achievements and accomplishments of the men of those times, but rather is it a lesson to be learned of

the severe destructiveness resultant upon unbridled soil erosion.

Many of the cities that have been unearthed during the last 50 years have been discovered many feet beneath the soil deposited during recent centuries, cities such as Antioch, cities once flourishing, once garden cities, now buried beneath feet of debris and feet of drift. If we take the case of the cedars on the Lebanon mountains, the history of which has been dealt with by many writers, we are led to the conclusion that the depriving of those hills of their timber to meet the needs of maritime interests caused the despoiling of thousands of acres of land and the entire destruction of cities with populations exceeding 400,000 people in those days. Above the very spot where the city of Antioch stood is a poor and primitive Arab village, while beneath that village the work of the men of those times is there as evidence of a very advanced stage of civilisation.

Very unfortunately, however, the real lesson that this should teach has been obscured by the discoveries of those interested in archaeological work. In Mesopotamia, the river Tigris, which once irrigated an empire, is today an elevated bed, the banks of which have risen many feet from the deposits of soil, simply because the tribesmen and people, using the timber maliciously and ruthlessly, despoiled the surface of the hills, enabling subsequent rains to carry the soils to the plains below. We have such evidence in very recent times in Egypt, where large public works and tremendous dams have been rendered absolutely ineffective and unusable because of siltation caused by the soils washing down from the watersheds and silting up even to hundreds of feet. Those are examples which show that soil erosion has been one of the most potent factors in the downfall of earlier civilisations.

There are numerous instances of ruined cities lying in barren wastes that were once among the world's most fertile lands. World authorities claim that man-induced erosion is taking place in every country of the world today, except north-western Europe. In north-western Europe—including much of England—we have a striking illustration showing how land use, well controlled, can avoid many of the sad effects of soil erosion in the more recently developed and occupied countries. There has been an agricul-

ture to suit the climate and the soil. The people have endeavoured to replenish what they have taken away. That, unfortunately, is not the case in the more recently developed countries. I shall make a quotation from a world authority on this problem whom I met very recently. I shall make other quotations at a later stage. He said—

Today, destruction of the earth's thin living cover is proceeding at a rate and on a scale unparalleled in history, and when that thin cover soil has gone, the fertile region where it formerly lay will be uninhabitable deserts.

The writer applies that statement to many countries where farming has developed beyond safe boundaries, but even where farming has not developed beyond safe boundaries the technique and use of land has been such as to encourage not in an insidious way, but in a most obvious and serious way, the despoiling of the surface and the despoiling of the fertility of the soil. So that although we may adopt an agriculture suited to the climate we can, by the use of that agriculture, render our lands very subject to erosion problems. In almost every instance where the limit of safety, so far as rainfall and land use are concerned, has been exceeded, soil erosion has followed. As soil erosion has become a national problem in every country, it is essential in a young country such as Western Australia to heed the lessons of the past which are written in striking language in the examples before us.

In America, which also is a comparatively young country, it has been necessary to change the minds of the people about the management of their rural lands. Perhaps the force which brought to the world the curse that could follow from land abuse is most strikingly illustrated by the story of the dust bowl of America. World-wide publicity followed the experiences in Central America and South America after the droughts which ended in 1934. So widespread was the effect that it was extremely easy to get public opinion on the side of a Government which attempted to cope with the problem. Very large tracts of low-rainfall country had been developed. Particularly can that be said of the years following the 1914-18 war, when there was a big demand for agricultural products.

The difficulties associated with the encroachment into the low-rainfall areas is a

story similar to the one that can be told of other countries where agriculture, under force of necessity of greater production, has penetrated beyond safe limits. The dust storms of America in the early nineteen-thirties left in the minds of the people—not only those immediately adjacent to the scourge, but those hundreds of miles away—the seriousness of the problem unless it was faced. It was in 1933 that America started her soil conservation service. Accurate surveys were made and, although these disclosed that serious erosion had taken place during the preceding 150 years, in many cases it had only occurred in the last 50 years of America's rural life. It was found that over 100,000,000 acres of cultivated land had been irreparably destroyed by water action, and that over 4,000,000 acres had been destroyed by wind action. In addition, very much more arable land had been partially destroyed.

The Soil Conservation Service of the United States of America set out on an extremely ambitious plan. It worked out methods of control, subdivided areas of erosion hazards in particular districts and took charge of the agriculture in those districts. There were over 1,200 soil conservation districts formed and these covered over 600,000,000 acres of farm lands. I am using America as an important illustration because the successful work undertaken there is a striking example of what can be achieved if we are prepared to face the problem in a national way. America's method of approach was that the nation was much more important than the individual, and that if the individual was in the way the national need became paramount and was the one to receive attention. A recent report shows that even during the war 8,000,000 acres has been reclaimed and, in spite of wartime conditions and difficulties associated with manpower and the like, that achievement has not only been maintained but is being progressively advanced.

It is an unfortunate fact that both in America and in this country the early approaches of soil erosion are very insidious, barely noticeable unless one is in country where water courses and steepness of terrain make them more evident. One of the early stages in Australia, particularly in our wheat lands, is the loss of fertility due to the endeavours to get from the soil in one lifetime—or, indeed, in less than one genera-

tion—all that the soil has stored through many generations. Much of Australia's farming has been of that type. Once the structure of the soil is altered through loss of fertility, there is ample scope for the several types of erosion that are so well known. Although one can see in the gullying type of erosion a spectacular aspect, sheet erosion—which covers, even in this country, hundreds of square miles—is perhaps less spectacular but all the more effective and positively destructive.

Many methods have been adopted in all countries to allay this menace. Contour farming, dams, cross gullies, wind-breaks, and all sorts of mechanical devices have been used in an attempt to control the menace in places in this country where it has properly begun. The destruction of forests at the head waters of some of our rivers in Australia has set in motion something very difficult for man to stop. There are evidences of this for anyone to see who is privileged to travel far enough abroad in this continent, far enough away from home, in the steep slopes of the Atherton Tableland or the Eungulla Tableland behind Mackay in Queensland, or in the hills near Scotsdale in Tasmania, and even in parts of the now bracken-covered hills in Victoria. In these places are to be found striking lessons as to what should be the limits of man's enterprise in his endeavour to farm steep slopes. There are many outstanding examples of that type of destruction. The denudation of the steepest slopes of all their timber, some attempts at cultivation for some years, and then abandonment because of the impossibility of getting an implement to work on such slopes—this has been the procedure.

It is very unfortunate that the story of forestry in the early days of this country furnishes striking indication of the rewards that a country derives from one generation of greed. In 1936, Australia had had so much publicity from concerns overseas that a public conscience was awakened in regard to the menace of erosion in this country, and in that year a soil conservation service was set up in each State. Organisations established in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia did valuable work in stocktaking, in awakening the public to the danger, and in early preparatory work prior to embarking on more ambitious undertak-



ings to control erosion in larger areas. Those services have performed very valuable work in reclamation and in examining all types of controls suited to Australian conditions.

With some humility, I would recommend to members who have copies of the third report of the Rural Reconstruction Commission in their possession the reading of the chapters on the subject of erosion contained in that report. Not only will there be found therein valuable plans of areas affected by erosion in Australia, but also very candid comments on what might have been done if the Commission had had the opportunity to visit almost all the eroded areas of Australia. The Commission entered into the examination of the problem with an absolutely open mind. It was not affected by the intemperate language of the writers on the problem in other countries, but felt that it should endeavour to measure the menace on an Australian basis. Very frank comments on the subject will be found in the report. I am not sure just how widely the report has been circulated in this State. I do know that following an initial printing of 5,000 copies, there has been a demand from overseas for over 5,000 copies. I am hoping that the warning it sounds in connection with the menace in all States will serve a useful purpose towards the solving of this very vexed problem. At page 32 of the report the Commission makes these observations—

From the erosion survey, it is apparent that in the Eastern and Central Divisions of New South Wales, some 50 per cent., or approximately 60,000,000 acres of land, for the most part of high fertility, and in moderate and good rainfall areas, are suffering actively from erosion.

Sixty million acres in New South Wales! I am certain that the percentage of Australia's population that realises this fact is very small indeed. The damage from erosion is very widespread in the United States of America, but proportionately not as widespread as it is in this country. Of the area affected, 500,000 acres are classified as being seriously affected and due to water action, and over a third of a million acres are classified as being due to wind action. It is stated by the New South Wales Erosion Committee that urgent action is needed over 30,000,000 acres in that State. The Soil Conservation Board of Victoria

considers that soil erosion is a major problem throughout the greater part of that State. It has caused serious deterioration of agricultural, grazing and timber lands in many and various areas there. I am certain that members who have in recent years travelled by rail from Perth to Melbourne, cannot fail to have been affected by the serious views they had of the country lying between Port Pirie and Adelaide in South Australia. Much of that land has, for some years, been on the move, and due north from there, taking in the very rich district of Bowmans, extending into the pastoral areas of South Australia, there is a tremendous area that will need very quick action, and all the ingenuity of man with his present knowledge of control of soil erosion, to overcome the trouble.

In Western Australia we also set up a Soil Erosion Committee at that time. It consisted of the following:—The Under Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. Baron Hay, the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mr. Stoate, the Plant Nutrition Officer, Dr. Teakle, the Superintendent of Horticulture, Mr. Powell, the Superintendent of Wheat Farming, Mr. Thomas, the Officer in charge of Irrigation, Mr. Clifton, the Sheep Officer, Mr. Murray, the Director of Land Settlement, Mr. Fyfe, and Mr. Kessell, Conservator of Forests, who was first appointed as Chairman. In his absence Mr. Fyfe acted as Chairman. That committee in 1939 obtained returns from 373 farmers in this State, as a result of a questionnaire sent out to 660 farmers nominated by road boards. These returns show, as stated in the report of the secretary of the committee, that—

Farmers generally are aware of the problem of soil erosion and indicate that they would be ready to collaborate with any authority established to assist in control of the menace. It is considered that soil erosion, though widespread throughout the agricultural areas, in most cases has not yet become severe. However, there is no doubt that the damage is increasing and measures should be adopted as early as possible to effect appropriate changes in farm management to promote conservation.

That is an exact quote from the report of the secretary after receiving answers from 373 farmers, and it definitely shows they are interested, and it also shows their fears. It will be remembered that in 1940 a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the pastoral industry. The question of soil

erosion in our pastoral districts arose, and some 281 stations by their replies to a questionnaire, showed that in 21 cases only was there evidence of severe erosion. On 162 stations there was reported to be no eroded areas, and on 98 stations there was slight damage to land from this cause. But in the Kimberley division a reconnaissance of the Ord River Valley, made not only to effect a check on soil erosion but also in conjunction with the survey being made for irrigation prospects, showed that very severe erosion occurred there. As a matter of fact it has given the engineer, the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas, considerable worry because of the possibility of severe siltation, such as has been experienced in Egypt in many of the big dams on the Nile.

I have a report by Captain Medcalf, who is a licensed surveyor, and who traversed many of the areas along the Ord River, at my direction, working under the Surveyor General. I intend to table this report, which is only typed. But in it are many photographs—some taken from the air—which will, I am sure, give all members, and not only those from the northern parts of this State, cause for considerable concern. We had aerial photographs taken not only of the Ord River basin but of the watershed of all the rivers that will run into the Ord. These photographs show strikingly just how severe is the incidence of soil erosion in that part of the State. I will quote very briefly from the introduction of this report by Captain Medcalf. He said—

A combination of air and ground observation was made and a map showing the detailed incidence of erosion in the worst sections has been compiled. Altogether some 10,000 square miles of country were reviewed, of which 1,000 are affected by accelerated erosion in varied degree from minor to severe.

Mr. McLarty: What causes the erosion in that area?

The PREMIER: That is a regular rainfall area, all of it being summer rainfall varying from 24 to 35 inches and mostly occurring on lands that have been overstocked. I can remember travelling along the Fitzroy River in 1923 when the only waters, with one exception, that were used by the stationholders were those provided by nature in the rivers. The exception was a bore, the name of which I think was Camballum Bore—that is a memory test—on Upper Liveringa Station. That was the only bore, in those

days, away from the river frontages. At that time—22 years ago—in the hundreds of miles of country between Derby and Wyndham there were few fences, practically all cattle being grazed where nature provided the water. With the exception of the Antrim Plateau, where these bores exist, that was the position obtaining. That resulted in the heavy stocking of areas where there was natural water. Whatever may have contributed subsequently to the widespread erosion in that country, I suppose that overstocking was one of the initial causes, and perhaps the principal one. If we take the areas in the middle North—those in the district represented by the member for Roebourne—we find that many properties which in 1934 carried a sheep to 10 acres and less, will never do it again. The reason why they will never do it again is because they carried them in 1934; because the country, after continuous overstocking will take more than this generation to enable it to survive!

Mr. McLarty: And the increase of vermin.

The PREMIER: The vermin in parts of the north is not plentiful now, but in those days vermin was very plentiful. On Minilya Station, which carried about 50,000 sheep, 35,000 kangaroos were shot in one year. I admit that vermin was one of the contributing factors, but let us not deny that the effects of drought and overstocking have been tremendous in our North-West. The further north we go the better can we see the lesson of erosion, and its causes, which are quite obvious to those who wish to understand the reason, by observing the condition of the country along the river frontages.

To members who have not had an opportunity to read much on the subject, but who find an interest in it from a national point of view, I can commend no better book—in a world sense—than that entitled "The Rape of the Earth." This book is a world survey of soil erosion, and is written by two men, G. V. Jacks and R. O. Whyte, men who have studied the subject in all countries. While they almost give us cause for alarm at the threat that soil erosion is to this country, they point a way, I believe, to the control of it, and through the control of it to the better use of the land. In this publication will be found not only a thoughtful approach to

the problem, but a practical way of controlling the menace in its various types. In the Bill before the House—I do not wish to bore the Assembly by over-stressing what has happened in a world sense—there has been an attempt to prepare for all the phases of soil erosion that Western Australia can expect.

The Bill has been very carefully drafted, after a close study by our own Soil Conservation Committee, and after a lot of time put into it by myself, in an endeavour to present to the House a realistic approach to the curbing of the problem in this State. The proposals, in brief, can be said to be that, by the appointment of a commissioner of soil conservation, with a limited staff attached to a branch of the Department of Agriculture, we can launch out confidently to develop plans to realise the existing menace and to control it in the future. So far as I can anticipate what will be done, the commissioner must be a man well versed in agriculture and thoroughly acquainted with the agricultural areas of Western Australia. He will need to be a man who can win confidence in himself and his plans in the farming districts, and from farmers as individuals.

The Bill will be found to be in six parts. The preliminary section deals with definitions and the co-ordination of various departments likely to be interested. There will be found one clause, in that first part, which is very embracing, as far as inter-departmental relationships are concerned. For example, there will not be found in the Bill much dealing with the control of watercourses—that is specifically, as such—but there will be found in the first part of it, when read in conjunction with the schedule, a complete cover of that and many other particulars. It embraces and works side by side with such Acts as the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act, the Forests Act, the Land Act, and many other Acts that are mentioned in the schedule.

The next clause, dealing with administration, places the administration of the Act under the Minister for Agriculture. The expenses of the service will be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament, and it is envisaged that the service will be an entity within a branch of the Department of Agriculture. Without any

anticipation of who might be the Soils Commissioner, I am hoping that it will be possible for an expert and well-known officer of the Soils Branch to be the first commissioner and, until the scheme is launched, for him to have the responsibility of organisation, because at present he has the confidence of the farming community of this State, due to his past service.

In order to bring all the interests in the various departments together, it is necessary to have a man who has that confidence, as well as the soils knowledge that this officer possesses. The Bill, in its design to give to him the necessary powers, and also in the second part, arranges for the establishment of a Soil Advisory Conservation Committee. On that committee will be one member from the Department of Agriculture, one member of the Department of Lands, one of the Public Works Department, one of the Forests Department, one from the Rural and Industries Bank. One shall be a member of the agricultural community, and one a representative of the pastoralists. That committee is to consider all aspects of soil conservation, and will make recommendations to the commissioner, and to the Minister, in respect of action found necessary for controlling soil erosion. The committee will conduct investigations as required, and will make reports, with advice or with information.

The next part of the Bill deals with the conservation service. In that part it will be found that soils districts will be proclaimed and, though farm management is the responsibility of the farmer himself, that service, through the active officers of the department, will do its best not only to advise the farmer in connection with immediate problems, but—not alone through expert advice, but by visual happenings either on the particular farm or in selected areas—to convince him as to the measures necessary to be adopted in his case, and in the district's case. Regional committees will be appointed, with purely local people on them, to assist in the smaller or local problems of a given district. I am sure that active district support of this description will do much to mould public opinion, to achieve public confidence and to get the right results within a district.

A further part in the Bill arranges for the acquiring of soils conservation reserves,

which gives the Minister power to acquire land and create soil conservation reserves should that be found necessary in the future. Still another part deals with areas to be known as "areas of erosion hazard." Where these areas are proclaimed and where erosion is active or likely to be active, power is given to constitute them as areas of soil erosion hazard and there the soils commissioner must be prepared to put into effect some scheme of operation or control.

One other important matter prescribed in the Bill in three places is one I hope the House will applaud, and it is an attempt to deal with the farmers' angle very generously. For example, if a farmer does not wish his property to be included in an area of soil erosion hazard or, as set out in another part of the Bill, if he does not wish that certain work shall be undertaken on his property, he has the right of appeal to a local court. With regard to expenses, whether he is successful with his appeal or not, provided his appeal is not frivolous or vexatious and provided he has a case, there shall be no costs given against him. What we are anxious to do is to achieve in the first instance public confidence not only in individual cases to control the menace but in a national way to have public interest created, to show that this legislation is not designed to harass or to insist unnecessarily but rather to encourage and to educate. On the other hand, I stress the point that should erosion ever become the menace to this State that it is in other parts of the Commonwealth, every recourse should be taken by authorities in the interests of the nation as against those of the individual.

In a further part of the Bill will be found authority for appropriate action to be taken to preserve trees, shrubs and other vegetation on private property where their removal may give rise to the danger of soil erosion. I would like to mention an aspect that has been apparent to many members of this Chamber and which has induced soil erosion in districts here because of the actions of certain Commonwealth departments. Every member can see roads where wonderful avenues of trees have been destroyed to permit telephone wires to be erected.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: One striking example is the beautiful avenue that could be seen between Walebing and Moora, where there

is no longer an avenue. In the districts of the member for York, the member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Avon will be found examples where soil erosion has been induced in the first instance because of the destructiveness and thoughtlessness shown by those who have wielded the axe in cutting down trees mercilessly in order to run telephone lines through the country.

Mr. Perkins: Notwithstanding vigorous protests by the local authorities.

The PREMIER: And also notwithstanding protests by the Government. I sought to include in the Bill a provision that would give us some control over that phase. When I found that our Parliamentary Draftsman said it was quite useless for me to attempt to include any such provision in the Bill, I wrote him a minute on the subject in order to obtain from him an opinion that I could quote for the information of Parliament, because this question is likely, in our outer wheatbelt areas particularly, to worsen the position through the activities of people who are so fond of wielding the axe. Under yesterday's date the Solicitor General submitted the following opinion to me:—

1. Referring to the question submitted to me whether or not provision can be made in the Bill to prohibit, regulate or control the cutting of timber by Commonwealth authorities, when such cutting of timber may prevent soil conservation or aggravate erosion.

2. Section 109 of the Federal Constitution enacts that when a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail and the former shall to the extent of the inconsistency be invalid.

3. Sections 84 to 87 inclusive of the Commonwealth Post and Telegraphs Act 1901-1934 confer on the Commonwealth express power to cut down timber and excavate soil from any land in connection with the construction and maintenance of telegraph lines; the Commonwealth Defence Act contains similar express provisions in connection with the construction and maintenance of fortifications and other defence works; and doubtless the same provisions are contained in many other Commonwealth Acts conferring express powers in connection with the construction and maintenance of other Commonwealth works.

4. It will be plain to you therefore that in view of Section 109 of the Federal Constitution any provision included in the Soil Conservation Bill which in its operation may in any way interfere with the enjoyment by the Commonwealth of any of the express powers aforesaid contained in the Commonwealth Acts mentioned would be invalid.

5. In these circumstances, the only alternative will be to seek some co-operative arrangement with the Commonwealth authorities. The member for York mentioned a moment ago that no protest had induced them to adopt any attitude of consideration.

Mr. Mann: Nor even commonsense.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth Government has, in the last five years, expressed itself as particularly interested in this problem in a national sense. It has been discussed at meetings of the Agricultural Council and at Premiers' Conferences, and I am hoping, as I have no reason to doubt the Solicitor General's point of view, that we may achieve the assistance which the Commonwealth has refused to give us in the past despite strenuous protests, and that we may achieve it somehow by co-operation and instructions from one Commonwealth department to another.

I feel, without labouring this subject any further, that if we can arouse public sentiment upon this very vital problem so that no person can be expected deliberately to threaten the existence of his own property or neighbouring properties, we can at this stage in Western Australia do much to avoid the sad experiences of other parts of the world.

Mr. McDonald: Would it not be convenient to include in this Bill measures against the encroachment of salt in agricultural lands?

The PREMIER: I think salt is a very different problem. It is a menace in many areas, again because of the raising of the water table by the destruction of timber, but this is something that I think must be treated separately. In fact it is being treated separately, and it is being treated successfully by the research officers of the Department of Agriculture. Research has been undertaken in certain districts, and methods are being evolved which are showing great promise respecting the control of salt in many of our valuable lands.

Mr. Perkins: Where are those areas, in the South-West or in the eastern districts?

The PREMIER: In the eastern areas, and in the northern areas from Northampton to Mullewa where salt is very prevalent in places. I feel that unless the incidence of erosion is checked, we might have a repetition of the experiences of other countries. Although this Bill may be considered to be, in some respects, in advance of the needs of today, I think it will be found to include

all the requirements for controlling the menace, fairly and reasonably, by the farmers in co-operation with the Government, and that it will meet the necessities of today and tomorrow. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 11th September, 1945.*

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

### RESOLUTION—THE WAR.

*Message from the Prime Minister.*

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter, dated the 29th August, 1945:—

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of the 24th August, conveying the terms of a resolution passed by the Legislative Council of Western Australia, expressing the thanks of the people of Western Australia to the fighting men of Australia and appreciation of the services of those men and women who assisted them in the various theatres of war.

I am forwarding copy of the resolution to appropriate Commonwealth Ministers.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN J. DEDMAN (for Prime Minister).

### QUESTIONS.

#### TRAM ACCIDENTS.

*As to Losses, Compensation, Etc.*

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Regarding the tram accident which occurred in Beaufort-street on the 19th July, 1944, in which 12 people were injured—

(a) What was the nature of the respective injuries?